NEGOTIATING CRITICAL BILITERACIES: LANGUAGE AND LITERACY LEARNING IN A BILINGUAL ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

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Negotiating Critical Biliteracies:
Language and Literacy Learning in a Bilingual Elementary Classroom

A Dissertation Presented
By
MARSHA JING-JI LIAW

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

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
February 2019
College of Education
Negotiating Critical Biliteracies:

Language and Literacy Learning in a Bilingual Elementary Classroom

A Dissertation Presented

By

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to the loving memory of my mother, Liaw Chen Cao-Shun (1934-2006), who embodied multiple literacies and set me off on the journey to explore how to transcend the boundary of one language and thrive within multiple languages, literacies and cultures.

這篇論文要獻給我的母親，以紀念她一生具體實現了多元素養，因為她的起蒙，引導我探索如何超越一個語言邊界的旅程，並在多語言文化的學習中，茁壯成長～
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply indebted to many people in my life for their love, encouragement and support and help throughout this long doctoral journey. First, I would like to give special thanks to the fifth-grade children at my study school, their parents, and the school administration team for all their support. This dissertation would not have been completed without Hu Laoshi (Teacher Hu) and the fifth-grade class. In particular, I want to thank Hu Laoshi and my six focal student participants Mo, Ai-lan, Xiao-yu, An-an, Mei-mei, and Na-na. For the past year, I have developed a close, deep relationship with them. My dissertating process was inspired by their work. Their writing, their video clips, their voices, and their dialogues with Hu Laoshi kept me moving forward and discovering new insights. Thank you!

Second, perhaps foremost, I offer my heartiest gratitude to my advisor and the chair of my dissertation committee, Dr. Maria José Botelho, who has supported me throughout my entire doctoral studies and dissertation writing with great patience and knowledge, while allowing me the room to work in my own way. This dissertation work would not have been possible without her guidance and involvement, her support and encouragement on a daily basis from the first day I entered the program till now. She has nurtured my academic scholarship step by step with patience. Under her guidance I successfully overcame many difficulties and learned a lot from her. Her own zeal for depth, coherence, rigor, criticality, reflexivity, and passion has always inspired me to do more. She has taught me another important aspect of life, “Love is the only creative and constant revolution” (Krishnamurti). Love is vital for human life because it has the potential to resolve bias and prejudice, allowing us to respect every individual. For all
these contributions, I sincerely thank her from the bottom of my heart. I will also forward this love to people around me in the future.

My earnest thanks also go to the members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Ives, Leonard and Lau, for supporting this dissertation work. No research is possible without valuable advice, intellectual support, and alternative perspectives. Dr. Ives provided me with insights and constructive feedback on the methodology, particularly classroom ethnographic research and data analysis. Dr. Leonard offered much advice, insight and positive appreciation throughout my work on second-language writing and multilingual literacy practices. Dr. Lau offered consultations on critical literacies as well as collaborative researcher-teacher inquiry throughout the study, which led to the successful completion of my research work. I also thank her for travelling over 500 miles from Québec to Amherst to participate in my dissertation defense.

Special thanks are extended to my very close family friend and editor Claire Baldwin who has always read my writing since I started my doctoral studies. She has not only offered me masses of support for my doctoral studies and academic writing, but also taught me how to think logically and critically for my research. Her generous care and contributions also helped me overcome the phobia of academic writing and hard moments as a doctoral student.

I also want to thank Mary Strunk as a friend and casual editor who was willing to discuss and support my dissertation writing process. My dialogues with her encouraged me in my writing and setting deadlines for every chapter.

In my daily work I have been blessed with a friendly and cheerful group of colleagues. Dr. I-an Chen, a dear friend, has been supporting me in many ways since I
came to UMass Amherst. Her support continued even when she finished her degree and returned to Taiwan. For the past six months, she has listened and discussed the data analysis over and over with me. I am very grateful for her valuable feedback as well as her patience and support. Shinji Kawamitsu, a dear friend, who supported me with his friendship and was willing to share his wisdom. We have had numbers of academic conversations and walks through the years. Brenda Abbott, thank you for listening, offering me advice, and supporting me when I encountered difficult situations. Kathyrn Accurso, who is generous with her valuable time for dialogue about our mutual research interests. Jenny Krichevsky, my writing partner, who wrote with me for many years. In addition, I want to thank Hunsook Shin and Sangchi Lee for encouraging me and listening to my complaints and writing ideas when I was frustrated.

I greatly appreciate the sponsorship from Wego Foundation in Taipei, Taiwan. Chairman Lee, Principal Chi, and Director Huang have offered me support, inclusivity, and a warm welcome as a member of the Wego school community. I am also grateful to Sujane Wu, Yuri Kumagai, Yalin Chen, Ling Zhao, Liyan Luo and Lu Yu from the Smith College Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures for supporting me during the years of my assistantship in that department. I would like to acknowledge the efforts and supports from UMass Amherst Graduate School Office of Professional Development and Writing Center as well. Thank you for providing summer writing retreats to graduate students. The organizer and writing consultants did a fantastic job in supporting dissertation writers. I appreciate the writing strategies, tips, food, and writing consultations you provided in the retreat, which propelled me into reaching several doctoral work milestones.
Dr. Payal Banerjee, a dear friend, has always supported me with her sincere encouragement, kind words, caring, and friendship throughout my dissertation writing. It is my fortune to gratefully acknowledge the assistance of my former students Elysia Hung and Ariel Deng for their support during data analysis. Jenny Hou and Diana Hou, Jennifer Fennema-Bloom, Pei-Ying Lin, Chia-Hui Lin, Holly Chiu, Ya-hui Chen and all my friends from Taiwan offered emotional and material support consistently throughout my doctoral studies. Thank you for being with me whenever I needed a friend.

Finally, I owe a big thanks to my family. I want to thank my beloved brothers and sisters who have been nurturing/nursing me with enduring love, affection, and selfless contributions for success in my life. Specially, I want to thank my younger sister Lisa who traveled from Taiwan to the United States for five summers consecutively to support my dissertation work. Words alone can never express how grateful I am to all of them. I consider myself the luckiest person in the world to have such a loving and caring family, standing beside me with their unconditional support.

As a side note, I want to thank some local eateries and Pandora for nourishing my body and mind while dissertating: Panda Garden, Goyang, and Bombay Royal restaurants, and Dmitry Shosatkovich Radio.

In closing, I want to offer my regards and blessings to all who supported me in any respect during the completion of my dissertation.
NOTE FOR READERS

The main title of my dissertation was originally *Exploring Critical Biliteracies*. As I took this work through several revisions, it was clear that this research project represents a series of micronegotiations for critical biliterate learning and teaching. I decided to build on Barbara Comber and Anne Simpson's *Negotiating critical literacies in the classroom* and Vivian Vasquez's *Negotiating critical literacies with young children*, books that document important developments in critical literacies, that is, enact critical practices in schools and with young children. My title punctuates another development - critical literacies and second language learners - a group of students that schools deem not ready for critical work. This study's student and teacher participants show us otherwise.
NEGOTIATING CRITICAL BILITERACIES: LANGUAGE AND LITERACY LEARNING IN A BILINGUAL ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

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For over two decades, US bilingual education has been underdeveloped and underexplored due to the No Child Left Behind policy. Thus, additive bilingual-education programs, which develop students' primary language while simultaneously adding a second language (L2), are becoming more popular in K-12 schools. Traditionally, L2 theories and education tend to focus on narrow aspects of language learning, e.g., vocabulary, grammar, and skills in listening and communication. Students have rare opportunities to contextualize language or participate more deeply in an L2.

This work considers a contextualized approach to bilingual education, an integrative model of critical biliteracies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015; Luke & Freebody, 1997;), which considers dynamic identity making as part of language learning. This approach combines critical literacy pedagogies with a multimodal approach to language teaching to support students in learning how to interpret, critique, and produce writing by taking advantage of writing, speech, visual and tactile representations, in both their home
language and L2. I examine the intersections between L2 acquisition, specifically writing and writing processes, and dynamic identity making for fifth-grade students in a bilingual elementary school in New England, where I conducted ethnographic research through critical sociocultural perspectives that allowed me to understand how language and literacy learning work with power relationships and produce student identities. Specifically, I consider students’ “becoming” and how an immersive language-learning environment develops transcultural and transnational student identities. My research, whose design is based on critical ethnographic case study, investigates the cultures of a fifth-grade classroom during one school year.

My results could subvert mainstream assumptions about L2 acquisition by examining whether fostering dynamic identities for L2 learners is crucial to becoming bilingual and biliterate. My findings challenge the linear perspective of language learning, i.e., the idea that language acquisition need not impact students’ core identities, by questioning whether accepting and fostering students’ dynamic identities facilitates their attaining fluency in the L2. My results address a glaring research gap by offering educators an alternative way to support L2 learners as they interact with the wider world. The findings should greatly interest L2 educators, researchers, and curriculum specialists, by offering a new pedagogical approach to language and literacy learning, one that combines applied linguistics with a critical attention to sociocultural dynamics.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

An appropriate metaphor for how young children learn a second language (L2) is Eric Carle’s story, *House for Hermit Crab*. The crab festoons his house with many decorations, so that his little shell soon becomes too small for him to live free and develop an open mind for adventuring out in the ocean. After searching for a more spacious shell, he finally finds one! He is much happier with a new and bigger shell because it gives him confidence to explore other possibilities and launch adventures in the open sea. Similarly, children learning a L2 to become bilingual must learn not only L2 linguistic components, but also how to use the new language in context. Thus, the pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, texts and linguistic meanings of L2 are the decorations for a small shell that provides the basic needs to grow up, whereas the demands of L2 in context are a bigger shell that might nurture a child’s mind in developing critical awareness of the texts and language.

1.1 Background of My Research

My interest in the study of writing, identity constructions and critical literacies in L2 education originated from my experience as a L2 learner and educator. L2 education has been a jewel in my heart because I have been working with L2 learners either in my native language (Chinese) or my L2 (English) throughout my life. Being bilingual and

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1In this dissertation, I have mostly used L2, a general term relating to a second language studied by young students in an additive bilingual model. Alternative terms such as *target language*, *additional language*, or *new language* are used sparsely. In the language education, this model is classified as *foreign language* (Cammarata, 2016). I have not used the term *foreign language* because students are learning their second language in an immersion environment. However, L2 sometimes connotes English language when multilingual learners learn English in the United States. In this dissertation, L2 refers to Chinese. Commonly, L2 refers to second language. L2 language education includes language and literacy. However, I found that this aspect of literacy is often ignored in L2 pedagogical practices. In this study, I purposely use “L2 language and literacy” to emphasize both.
biliterate allows me to engage in L2 across contrasting pedagogical perspectives, linguistic systems and cultures. These cross-language and cross-cultural educational experiences both in Taiwan and the United states have enriched my understanding of L2 learners in divergent views of L2 education, i.e., the classroom, pedagogical practices, curricula, policy and administration from K-12 to college level. In particular, I am interested in young bilingual learners. The most rewarding part of studying young learners in L2 acquisition is the joy of watching their identities shift as they move across two languages and cultures. Their developing minds are like sponges absorbing everything quickly. I have wondered how children’s life experiences and bilingual identities were shaped or impacted by their social world such as the curriculum, teachers’ pedagogical practices, course materials, peers, and teachers. However, my questions could not be answered by traditional L2 teaching ideology.

My beliefs and knowledge about L2 education were informed by this traditional ideology and teaching training methods such as behaviorism, grammar, translation, audio-lingual, natural approach, communicative approach, and task-based language learning. Due to the linguistic hegemony of English in Asia, English has been the most popular subject and strongly emphasized in most school curricula, so all schools compete to mandate what is called a “highly efficient curriculum” to strengthen linguistic competence to help students reach academic excellence for standardized tests. As a result, the L2 classroom teaching was designed to demonstrate productive learning such as form, patterns, drills, and tests. Such focused literacy practices attend to the material facets of L2 learning, but sabotage real-time teacher-student interactions, meaningful curriculum planning, and students’ interest. Although some of these practices might have practical
pedagogical uses in L2 classrooms and help L2 learners to use the language quickly, they do not internalize the language. Even more, these classroom practices generate very little recall of information when they are connected to real-life contexts. This achievement gap made me aware of the gap in one part of my beliefs about language teaching, i.e., contextualization. As a L2 and literacy educator, I consider that L2 pedagogical practices should conscientiously nurture young L2 learners’ minds. For that reason, talking back to the dominant ideology in L2 education requires an alternative view.

Since entering the academic world of language, literacy and culture, I have assimilated multiple academic discourses and have realized that L2 and literacy education are not limited to a single paradigm or epistemology. One advocate of the sociocultural theory of language learning says, “Language is the most pervasive and powerful cultural artifact that humans possess to mediate their connection to the world, to each other, and to themselves” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, p. 201). Indeed, without language, people are isolated. What’s more, language involves co-constructing learning through social processes and interactions, in that an individual’s cognitive realization is influenced by the beliefs, values, and culture of others (Vygotsky, 1986). In other words, language is not merely owned by speakers, but is learned by interacting with others. Thus, interactions and connections to sociocultural aspects of L2 learning take priority over other approaches to developing language competence and broadening students’ understanding from the classroom to the world.

However, the critical element missing from the sociocultural theory of language learning is how language and literacy shape who we are across languages, cultures, and power relations. The critical sociocultural perspective on L2 and literacy learning focuses
on students’ agency, social world, and multiple identities (Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007). These three foci grapple with the dominant L2 education discourse to make L2 and literacy more attainable for L2 learners by examining students’ process of becoming L2 speakers and writers as well as the product of communicating in the L2 (Lau, Botelho, & Liaw, 2017). This alternative approach considers students’ minds as funds of knowledge, and identity as performing and doing, thus providing students opportunities in the L2 classroom (Moje, Luke, Davis & Street, 2009).

1.2 Background and Problem Statement

Conceptualizing L2 education needs to be revolutionized by drawing attention to digital technological advances and rapid global changes that have affected our everyday life, thinking, schooling, and future possibilities. In the past two decades, globalization has been intensified by all forms of technological inventions. Thanks to technology and the Internet, the time, spatial and cultural distances between people and places have diminished, with people migrating across continents. Globalization has been defined as “…the expansion and intensification of social relations and consciousness across world-time and world-space” (Steger, 2013, p. 15). This definition expands my view about globalization by clarifying that it is not only a consequence, but also an evolving social process. One point worthy of attention is that globalization leads to migration (Shin, 2012) and shifts patterns of language use (Steger, 2013). That is, English is still the most popular global language that people want to learn (Noack, 2015), and interest in learning other languages such as Spanish and Chinese is tied to people’s perceived needs for future political and economic success. As an educator, I wondered how this new global experience influences language learning, literacy practices, and schooling.
In the United States, globalization has brought about historical changes and challenges in bilingual education, particularly in terms of its pedagogy. That is, language ideology advocates educational and human equalities in teaching English as a L2 to culturally diverse students/groups and maintaining cultural and linguistic heritages for their minority languages (Hornberger 2012; Cummins 2007; Garcia, 2011; Nieto, 2010). Evidently, the core value of bilingualism is to acknowledge and take advantage of English language learners’ (ELLs) first language and culture to acculturate and assimilate them into a new culture and empower them to master the academic discourse of the L2 English. However, under President George W. Bush’s administration, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (2002) impacted school curricula, teaching, and students’ learning by promoting high-stakes testing to evaluate academic learning outcomes, particularly for culturally diverse students. To align with the NCLB, Massachusetts in 2002 passed the Question 2 Act, also known as the Massachusetts English Language Education in Public Schools Initiative. This initiative changed transitional bilingual education to monolingual English-only classroom instruction to enhance the L2 English competence of ELLs and improve their outcomes on standardized achievement tests.

In contrast, additive bilingual education or L2-immersion (see Section 1.5.4) programs are becoming more popular in K-12 schools. These programs develop students’ primary language while simultaneously adding an L2. To be competitive in the globalized world of the 21st century, independently operated charter schools have been inaugurated within the public-school system to provide high quality and innovative education programs (Massachusetts Charter School Law, Chapter 71, Section 89, 1993). This pedagogical vehicle provides opportunities to initialize and establish additive
bilingual-immersion schools in the United States. Indeed, outside the United States, additive bilingual education has been a universal trend in elementary or K-12 schools for learning a L2 such as English and French, thus promoting prestigious bilingual or multilingual countries such as Canada, Singapore, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and many European countries.

L2 programs vary across the world. Their common interest is to embrace L2 immersion from kindergarten, elementary school, and even high school by long exposure to learning a new language for future success. For this purpose, young L2 students not only learn basic interpersonal communications, but also subjects such as math, science, history, and social studies by following the academic standards of L1 or a second foreign language model for curriculum design (Baker, 2006; Brisk 2006; Cummins, 2014; Garcia, 2011; Genesee, 1984 & 1987, Swain & Lapkin 2013). Thus, bilingual schools might adjust curricula, course materials, pedagogical practices standards, and language standards to meet the high proficiency levels of two languages.

US K-12 foreign language education has been influenced by two documents: Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language [ACTFL], 2006) and the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (2012). These standards structure goals and indicators in five spheres, the Five Cs: communication, culture, connections, comparison and communities. Although the design of the Five Cs is thoughtful and offers a vision for foreign language education in the 21st century, the standards focus only on the introductory level, which is not suitable for an immersion school. In addition, some aspects of the Five Cs and content of the standards require further considerations to implement in the language school curriculum. For
example, Kramsch (2014) views the content and standards as problematic due to “modernist presuppositions” (p. 303) that do not present a worldview or reflective practices to meet rapid changes in a technological and global era. Instead, Kramsch (2014, p. 303) suggests a more global perspective of culture: “the link between one national language and one national culture has been significantly weakened as people belong to different cultures and change cultures many times over the course of their lifetime.” I agree that such modernist views might be static and fixed with a certain ideology because I observe that the ACTFL standards for Chinese language are heavily weighed on factual knowledge, the material aspects of culture, and linguistic elements.

Even though I admit that language learners should have a deeper understanding of the target culture through language learning, not all students would readily engage in the target culture without connecting to their own experience or social world. I am concerned that these presumptions might not sustain young learners’ interest in learning a language or becoming immersed in a global view. Hence, educators need to consider contextualizing language and relevant cultural content by incorporating students’ experiences, interests, and funds of knowledge in knowing the world. In that sense, teachers might have an opportunity to adopt alternative tools to advance L2 literacy. One example could be designing pedagogical practices and curricula that engage language learners to critically reflect on the text or content (Kubota, 2016) as a new form of literacy practice. My standpoint is not to deny all aspects of the ACTFL standards. Rather, my intention is to encourage educators to reconsider learners’ knowledge and needs, the curriculum, pedagogical practices, and course materials in L2 education for the global era.
My charter-school research site, the Jumpstart Bilingual School (JBS, a pseudonym), adopted the innovative philosophy required by a charter school to provide bilingual education (additive bilingualism) by adding L2 Chinese to their L1 English. In Spring 2014, I visited the school informally to get a sense of its administration, classrooms, and students for a course paper on students’ L2 literacy practices in a Chinese-English bilingual elementary school. After the visit, I was very interested in further investigating the connection between teachers’ pedagogical practice and students’ process in becoming biliterate because the bilingual model is similar to my experience in an English-Chinese bilingual school in my native country, Taiwan. I was also eager to learn in-depth about their L2 literacy practice in the upper grades, in which more advanced L2 literacy practices are used.

In Spring 2016, I visited the school intermittently for one semester to explore a possible classroom case for my dissertation research. I discovered that fourth graders were encountering a big transition in both L1 and L2 literacy practices due to advanced content and topics, with less concrete concepts. This transition made me wonder what students would experience when only one language was involved when they were trying to create meanings for their language learning. To further my understanding, I followed the original fourth graders to fifth grade and conducted a one-year ethnographic case study in the classroom. During my initial stage of making sense of students’ experience in learning two languages, I discovered that their classroom had several features: 1) early bilingual immersion at age 5 by adding a new language (L2) to the students’ first language; 2) learning L2 involves not only learning oral communication, but also acquiring academic content; 3) Chinese is a critical language; 4) the L2 curriculum is still
developing; and 5) the end goal is to master two languages (Garcia, 2011; my fieldnotes and students’ interview data). In the following section, I will elaborate on these features.

One unique aspect about early bilingual schooling is that children become familiar with the oral form of the target language because they have been immersed since age 5. In early grades, the content and topics are concrete, more comprehensible for learning. However, as L2 students proceed to higher grade levels, they become less enthusiastic about engaging in L2 literacy practices because of the challenges of becoming literate in Chinese and the achievement gap between L1 and L2. One reason might be that they prefer to read in L1 rather than L2. Since these students were avid L1 readers, their L1 literacy and comprehension level might have developed progressively as they moved to higher levels.

Another reason might be that Chinese is a critical language. Reading and writing Chinese involve several complexities due to the characteristics of Chinese linguistics (see Section 1.6) and differences between English and Chinese as languages and cultures. Chinese language is tonal, with no similarities to English alphabetic principles and orthography. Chinese orthography uses meaning-based logographics or characters, which are composed of strokes, components, and radicals. An independent character (one syllable) might have one meaning or combine with other characters to form words (multi-syllables) with different meanings.

Pinyin, similar to English phonics, is a phonetic system for sounding out the characters. One character can have the same sound with different tones to produce words with different meanings. In addition, learning Pinyin and characters involves two separate learning systems. Pinyin is used only at the very beginning level of learning literacy.
Moreover, Chinese texts are written without Pinyin. To be literate in reading Chinese, one must understand phonology, orthography and semantics. Learning L2 to read and write Chinese involves considerable repetition, memorization, and review to build automaticity in recognizing words and writing characters before moving to a textual level. However, reading and writing are reciprocal. Although fourth-grade JBS students are skilled in oral speaking and listening comprehension, these two practices become obstacles for reading and writing due to the slow learning progress and low return on time investment in L2 (Chinese) literacy. As time goes by, a gap is created between oral and written language, which influences students’ acquisition of L2. Subsequently, reading and writing L2 (Chinese) becomes challenging.

Furthermore, the L2 Chinese classroom at JBS depends on its teachers and curriculum. Indeed, L2 teachers are crucial to the students’ literacy practice because they are the students’ major access to L2. Not only do teachers need to create the curriculum, but also prepare their own course materials. Like other L2 curricula, course materials in the JBS curriculum are commonly self-created but not prescribed. Certainly, like all immersion-language schools, JBS has the top priority of developing its students’ linguistic competence by accumulating sufficient vocabulary and knowledge to communicate on a variety of topics. In that sense, L2 education potentially focuses on the narrow aspects of language practices, such as building vocabulary, learning grammar, and developing listening and communication skills. Strategies such as repetition and pattern practice are used to make language acquisition explicit and to enable students to input and output a great deal of linguistic information to demonstrate learning outcomes. Rare are the opportunities for contextualization or for students’ deeper participation in the L2.
Thus, during the process of students’ becoming proficient in both languages, teachers’ beliefs inform the curriculum, course materials, and pedagogical practices.

Last, but not least, the process of becoming bilingual and biliterate is a complicated identity-negotiation process that has been ignored in L2 education. Educators and scholars in the field are more concerned with the major issues of staffing, curriculum development, and students’ level of linguistic/literacy competence and proficiency (Kim, Hutchison, & Winsler, 2015). The implementation of bilingual programs or policies has been well studied (de Jong, 2016; Pacific Policy Research Center, 2010) as well as the linguistic effectiveness and competence of L2 or biliteracy (Bialystok, Peets, & Moreno, 2014; Christian, 2016; de Jong & Howard, 2009; Lindholm-Leary, 2011), but few classroom-based studies have explored how L2 students make sense of their learning while becoming bilingual and biliterate.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the possibilities of practicing critical literacies in a L2 context and to understand how knowing two languages could contribute to language learners’ being critical in a bilingual elementary classroom. Learning a new or second language not only involves learning to communicate in that language, but also shapes diverse identities. Particularly, learning, writing, and identity making and critical literacies among elementary students have rarely been addressed in L2 literacy research. This study centers on L2 literacy practice to understand how texts/words shape students’ social worlds and how their social worlds shape texts/words. Through the lens of critical sociocultural perspective on L2 and literacy learning, this study closely and discursively examines teacher’s pedagogical practices, curriculum, classroom discourse, students’
dynamic identities, students’ work and meaning-making processes to understand
criticality between the writing process and its product. My rationale is that Language
learners tend to be passive in learning L2 when they lose their purpose in learning. They
might shut down or accept passively whatever target language and cultural resources are
available around them. Thus, language teachers play an important role in encouraging
students to become active L2 learners, e.g., through teachers’ critical and reflective
practice, curriculum, or pedagogical practice.

Foundational to a wider aspect of language learning Kramsch (2006, 2009) refers
language learners as “multilingual subject”. The term conveys an anti-traditional view of
L2 acquisition. She argues that language learning is not simply acquiring linguistic codes
(i.e., grammar, vocabulary, alphabet, sounds, and the like) for communication or rational
thinking. L2 learners and users negotiate identities and form their subjectivities by
interacting with others and the environment, which implicates that their language
experience and everyday life with regard to this language learning process would
transform who they are as a whole person. Equally important, students have different
ways of meaning making process through their multi-sensory experiences while
constructing themselves as a multilingual subjects (Kramsch, 2006, 2009). In that sense,
considering more alternative opportunities, we can offer our students, in raising their
consciousness and critical awareness of their social world (Horton, Freire, Bell, &
Gaventa, 1990). This could be an important intention for L2 education.

The design of this study is a critical ethnographic case study, which investigates
the culture of a fifth-grade classroom during one year in a bilingual elementary school in
Mountain State in the United States. One taken-for-granted assumption about the goal of
additive bilingualism is that learning L1 and L2 together leads to proficiency in both L1 and L2. However, this assumption might not reflect the outcomes of current programs. In the real world, L2 classrooms are more complex. Considerations include not only external circumstances such as educational policy, institutional ideology, the curriculum, pedagogy, teachers, and students, but also internal factors such as students’ agency, linguistic competence, and identity construction. Ethnographic-informed research has the feature of recursive research practices accommodating multiple data-collection and analytic methods, which allow researchers to learn participants’ culture and engage in-depth with their perspectives. Therefore, this study adopts a critical ethnographic-case design, which draws on the methodological and theoretical conceptualizations of critical ethnography and ethnographic case studies. Such flexibility helped the researcher collaborate with teacher participants to co-design a critical literacies curriculum unit on history. This collaborative unit design embraces a multimodal approach to language learning and teaching. Students can take advantage of multimodality to produce a journal entry and video projects to advance literacy practices.

The guiding question for this study is, “How does multimodal text production contribute to students’ identities, criticality and biliteracies” I approached this question in two ways: from students’ journal entries (Chapter 5), and from their video projects (Chapter 6). Students’ journal entries foreground the writing process from multimodal experience to text product, and their video projects showcase multimodal text production by incorporating different modes to produce text. In Chapter 5, I examine the data on learning processes and micro-interactions between teachers and students or among students to elucidate how L2 teachers contextualize literacy practices to support the
writing process and encourage students to enact new identities in learning L2. In Chapter 6, I analyze students’ video projects to understand how L2 literacy practices can provide a space to integrate critical literacies into the L2 classroom within a bilingual elementary classroom, and how the production of the texts can contribute to students’ bilingual identities, criticality and creativity.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it challenges the mainstream view of L2 pedagogy by exploring the practice of critical literacies with language learners in a bilingual elementary school. It also explores whether L2 learning can become a positive force in the K-12 pedagogical or classroom environment through critical and multimodal literacy practices. This work calls for focus on critical and social perspective on language learning. Due to the lack of classroom-based research literature in the aforementioned discipline, more research is needed to develop better understanding of a trajectory of development through which learners move L2 literacy forward through critical literacies in the elementary classroom. Thus, this study fills a research gap. Another essential aspect of this research is adding the focus on learners in understanding how students’ dynamic identities are enacted during the learning process and through curriculum work. Significantly, this study might also provide L2 educators, researchers and curriculum specialists an alternative view of expanding language and literacy learning across linguistic, sociocultural and critical aspects. In the following section, some terms will be defined and an overview of the Chinese language will be offered because these concepts are central to this project.
1.5 Terms and Definitions

1.5.1 Bilingual

In a broad sense, the word “bilingual” conveys a vague idea about speaking two languages. In the Merriam-Webster dictionary (Bilingual, 2018), bilingual has two definitions. One refers to “having or expressed in two languages”; the other refers to “using or able to use two languages with equal fluency.” The second definition emphasizes equal fluency in using two languages, thus presenting a traditional, narrow definition central to a high degree of proficiency in L2. In contrast, the first definition provides space for various interpretations. A bilingual person is defined as one who has developed competencies in two or more languages “to the extent required by his or her needs and those of his or her environment” (Grosjean, 1989, p. 6). This definition offers a view of bilingualism as partially or wholly knowing two or more languages. Meanwhile, purposeful communication plays a role in bilingualism. In my view, bilingualism should be interpreted as having ownership of two or more languages to allow one to communicate meaningfully and purposefully through multiple modes (e.g., reading, writing, speaking, listening, signifying, and performing) to different degrees.

1.5.2 Biliteracy

Biliteracy more specifically refers to reading and writing in two languages. Similar to bilingual, biliteracy also has different degrees. One definition refers to biliteracy as “…the acquisition and learning of the decoding and encoding of and around print using two linguistic and cultural systems in order to convey messages in a variety of contexts” (Brisk, 2006, p. 4; Perez & Torres-Guzman, 2002, p. 60). This definition suggests the idea that learning and meaning making are intertwined through
comprehending texts and transforming ideas into productions by using two languages and cultural systems.

1.5.3 Bilingual Education

*Bilingual education* refers to the partial or whole use of two languages in instruction or the curriculum during schooling (Pacific Research Center, 2010). Bilingual education could also be broadly defined as any “educational program that involves the use of two languages of instruction at some point in a student’s school career” (Nieto, 2000, p. 200).

1.5.4 Bilingual Models

The broad concept of bilingual models is generally understood as subtractive and additive. Subtractive bilingualism means students replace their first language (L1) with a second language (L2). A typical example in the United States is an English language program for culturally diverse learners learning English as a L2. The end goal of the program is to master only L2 to enter the mainstream school system and culture. Additive bilingualism, also known as L2 immersion, refers to students learning an additional language as a second or foreign language beyond their home language or L1, such as Canadian bilingualism (García, 2011). The end goal is to develop two languages but not simultaneously. One similarity between subtractive bilingualism and additive bilingualism is one language used at a time.

The design of bilingual programs has been categorized differently depending on the educational purpose, development of the target language, student background, and time exposure in L2. The models include: a) transitional (use L1 first, but not throughout; L2 is the main pursuit), b) partial immersion with two-way or one-way immersion
(around 50-50 model with L2 in some subjects), c) total immersion (100% L2 in all subjects). For one-way immersion, students primarily have the same first language background, and L2 teachers are usually the source of the model language and culture. In the classroom, two-way immersion has been considered a better model because the distribution of the two languages is 50-50, and two groups of students who speak either language are involved. Students are offered many opportunities to read, write, and speak in both languages (L1 and L2) to facilitate their language development. (Brisk, 2006; Cummins 2007, 2008; García, 2011; Garcia & Wei, 2014; Gomez, Freeman, & Freeman, 2005; May, 2008; Pacific Policy Research Center, 2010).

1.6 Chinese Language: A Brief Overview

Chinese is considered a critical language due to its linguistic features. The Chinese language, which originated from the Sino-Tibetan language family, is a tonal language spoken by the largest global population (Steger, 2013) in Taiwan, China, Hong Kong, and Chinese communities all over the world. Even though people speak different Chinese varieties, they can communicate with each other in one writing system. In 1949, the Chinese government wanted to reduce the illiteracy rate of its people by simplifying Chinese characters (the writing system) and Latinizing Chinese pronunciation into an alphabetic, phonetic writing system called Pinyin. This change divided the Chinese writing script into two systems: traditional and simplified characters. Simplified Chinese is used in China and traditional characters are used in Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan. Traditional characters can also be found in Chinese classics. However, since 2004, the Confucius Institute in China has been promoting the learning of Chinese language and culture overseas. Confucius Institutes have been established with Asian
language departments in universities worldwide to fund college students and Chinese
language learners to study Chinese in China (Peterson, 2018; Theobald, 2014). Thus,
simplified Chinese dominates the major Chinese-language learning market
internationally. The research bilingual school site (JBS) has adopted simplified Chinese
characters.

As for linguistic features, the phonology, morphology, and syntax of Chinese is
far different from European languages (e.g., English, French, Spanish, etc.). The phonetic
system in simplified Chinese is called Pinyin. Phonetic sounds are used to pronounce the
characters and words. Pinyin has different spelling rules from English, which initially
confuse English users. Chinese is also a tonal language. Mandarin Chinese has four basic
tones and one neutral tone. One Syllable structure is composed of an initial consonant, a
medial, a vowel and a tone. The concept of one Chinese syllable can be understood as
initials, finals, and tone. Tone variations make different meanings.

Chinese orthography is a meaning-based instead of sound-based. It means that in
Chinese writing systems character formation is not phonetic but logographic. The
Chinese characters (hànzi 汉字) are made up of radicals and the arrangement of strokes.
There are six principles of graphic representations guiding Chinese characters. According
to Sun (2006), “xiàngxìng 象形 “pictographic” (3.9%), zhǐshì 指示 “ideographic” (1.3%),
huìyì 会意 “compound indicatives/semantic-semantic compounds” (12.3%), xǐngshēng
形声 “semantic-phonetic compounds” (81.2%), jiǎojiè 假借 ”borrowed” [loan words]
1.2% and zhuǎnzhù 转注 “explanatory” (0.07%)” (p. 104). These principles suggest that
the pictographic is used to indicate a small amount of characters. Therefore, the lexical
knowledge is closely related to transcription skills (Yeung, Ho, Chan, & Chung, 2017).
One of the features of Chinese language is morphology, which refers to the relationship between words and meanings. The characters are non-alphabetic, each character is a symbol, and different combinations of characters will produce words with new meanings. Each character ( hànzì 汉字), a phoneme with its own meaning, has certain similarities with other characters. Chinese writing is complicated and has many homophones (Yeung et al., 2017). In addition, in Chinese grammatical structures, no inflections (no tenses) are used to convey meaning; the word order in a sentence begins with the topic comment; articles are not used but classifiers; and meanings are created based on the shared understanding of the context.

In terms of cultural values, Chinese society has long been influenced by the thoughts of Confucianism, Chinese philosophical concepts, religious practice and historical background. One example is that moral values and ethics are embedded in the literature and reading materials (Sun, 2006). Another example is the use of idiomatic expressions across all different genres or social contexts. These idiomatic expressions, which originated many thousands of years ago, are commonly seen in writing or literary texts. The above examples might be taken for granted in Chinese society but could be decontextualized for new language learners.

1.7 Organization of the Dissertation Chapters

This dissertation is organized into seven chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the background of conducting this research, issues of problems leadings to this study, the research questions and potential contributions to the field, and classroom practice of critical literacies in a bilingual context. Chapter 2 first reviews the epistemology and the historical traditions of critical literacies and then compares empirical studies in critical
literacies. This comparison includes two groups of literature: critical literacies in L2 elementary classrooms and identity texts. Chapter 3 reviews the theoretical conceptualizations that enlightens this study including critical sociocultural perspective on L2 and literacy learning, social semiotic theory, reframed pedagogy of multiliteracies, integrative model of critical biliteracy and translanguaging. Chapter 4 describes the methodology of the study including the characteristics and rationale for a critical ethnographic case study, research context, and data collection and data analysis procedures. Chapter 5 presents the first part of the findings, which is how multimodal experiences embody ideas for L2 writing through translinguistic curriculum. Chapter 6 presents the second part of the findings, which is how a multimodal digital project informs students’ dynamic identities, criticality and biliteracies. Chapter 7 discusses findings of the study by offering further explorations and explanations that I gleaned from relevant research literature. This chapter also discusses the implications, contributions and possible challenges for future research and practice in teaching critical literacies in bilingual classrooms. Last, the dissertation concludes with my reflections and positionality in conducting this research to highlight and rethink this type of research for future directions.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

In this literature review, I explore how critical literacies are conceptualized and enacted in global educational contexts by two schools of thoughts, post-Freirean and contemporary literacy. Then, I comprehensively review the literature on critical literacies within L2 education to explore critical literacy practices in K-12 settings.

To explore the research literature in the areas of critical literacies and L2 context at the elementary school level, I focused on literature published from 2011 to 2015. My literature searches originally used three search terms: “critical literacies,” “second language” and “K-12 setting.” However, searching the literature with these terms retrieved few empirical studies, since critical literacies have rarely been addressed in L2 acquisition and in K-12 settings. The first issue is that L2 is a broad term and is not usually used in the literature. Most researchers specify the L2 context as “English as a foreign language” (EFL), English as a second language (ESL), or emergent bilinguals. In this dissertation, I refer to L2 learners as students who learn a new language or additional language beyond their home language (L1). However, students from culturally diverse backgrounds are often mentioned as emergent bilinguals, ELLs, ESL, or culturally diverse learners. In addition, few research studies on critical literacies take place in the elementary school setting. Therefore, I broadened my search terms to include terms used in critical sociocultural research. I prioritized the literature with critical concepts and literacy practice framed in a sociocultural paradigm or under the conceptual lens of
critical sociocultural perspectives of literacy such as translanguaging and pedagogy of multiliteracies that focus on identity, power and agency.

This literature review is organized into three major sections: theoretical review of critical literacies, review of critical literacies practices in L2 education in K-12 contexts, and affordances and limitations of critical literacies and identity texts.

2.2 Theoretical Review of Critical Literacies

2.2.1 Historical Background of Critical Literacies

The concept of critical literacy was first developed in philosophy, science, and sociology. Greek philosophers argued about and interrogated the truth of the universe and were the first to be aware and use language to take advantage of power in knowing language and literacy (Morrell, 2008). Language was treated critically as an art of persuasion through logic and dialectic practices over various subjects in political philosophy and epistemology. In the 18th century, the German philosopher Kant centered on “what is possible” and innovated the processes of acquiring knowledge across time and space through human experience (Morrell, 2008; Peters & Burbules, 2004; Seidman, 2013). Kant’s approach was to question the source and nature of knowledge critically to develop skills and knowledge in demand of multiple perspectives on ideas and concepts. In the same era, Hegel proposed a dialectic method and historical perspective with consciousness and collaboration to overcome the contradictions of different theories of knowledge over reality. Influenced by these German idealists, Marx, a German philosopher, sociologist and economist, asserted that the power of reasoning was not sufficient to discover the truth and bring social change to a hierarchical society (Morrell, 2008; Peters & Burbules, 2004; Seidman, 2013). Marx’s work critiques and questions the
material existence embedded in capitalist society regarding assumptions of class and false consciousness of society. Marx feels that asking larger questions about the discontent or inequality of social conditions encourages the working class to seek theories as a direction for social and political change. Thus, inquiry strategies can raise critical awareness to examine the relationship between human consciousness and institutional ideology by contesting dominant power and class structures.

In contrast, a group of critical theorists of the Frankfurt school found tension in Marxism due to its limited voluntary social structure and human agency (Agger, 1998). Their criticism of Marxism was in Marx’s major interest in labor and its relation to the economy. Marxism provides unclear views and ambiguities in understanding human actions between mechanistic and organic models of society, which indicate either one perspective of society or only some interrelations among the whole. Critical theory, a new version of neo-Marxism, aims to study society and its change to a better humanistic form. Thus, the critical theorists of the Frankfurt school argued that “society was understood as structured by multiple interacting causative factors, and history was viewed as the voluntary creation of human action” (Seidman, 2013, p. 118). In that sense, literacy is perceived as an access and social process to become aware of grand assumptions and the ideologies enacted in social relations (Gee, 1996; Luke & Freebody, 1997). By extension, apart from the European critical literacy theorists’ conceptualizations, scholars from the “othered tradition,” e.g., Edward Said, Gayatri Spivake, and Homi Bahabha, contributed to theorize critical literacies as a way to contest the hegemony of colonialism and post-colonialism for equity (Morrell, 2008). Therefore, human beings would function as free individuals or social agents, which would permit the opportunities to liberate a
free and self-determining society (Morrell, 2008). All these antecedent thinkers emphasize that meaning is mediated through active constructions within the context by processing critical information, which leads to the two most prominent schools of thought in literacy education on critical literacies, the Freirean tradition (Freire, 1970) and the critical discourse analytical approach (Luke, 2013).

2.2.2 Traditional and Contemporary Critical Literacies Worldwide

2.2.2.1 Freirean Approach, Post-Freirean Tradition, and Critical Pedagogy

Paulo Freire, an influential Brazilian educator and philosopher, drew a dialectical approach to literacy based on the thoughts and theorems of Marx, Marcuse, Heidegger and Mao both in Eastern and Western contexts. Freire noticed a culture of silence among learners when he reflected on his experience of teaching literacy to peasants in rural Brazil. He was concerned that they were sectarians and locked in a “circle of certainty” (Freire, 1970, p. 23) where they only believed the truth created by their oppressors. His work problematizes the real-life world on naming and renaming issues through “reading the word and the world” (Freire, 1970).

Freire’s educational philosophy (1970) advocates that teaching is a political act and educators should aim for social change and transformation. For example, he disagrees with the traditional narrative of education as a banking model of education where teachers deposit knowledge into students’ accounts. Thus, as a humanist and revolutionary educator, Freire proposed a problem-posing pedagogy and critical aspects of learning literacy by questioning issues around the situations in which people find themselves and breaking the taken-for-granted assumption of an authentic level of knowledge in support of intellectual development on creativity, true reflection and
transformative actions (Freire, 1970). In that sense, dialectics is a concrete method for fostering subjects (oppressors) and objects (the oppressed) to co-produce knowledge grounded in reality by engaging in critical and liberating dialogues. While moving Freire’s ideas to the classroom, continuous dialogue and communication would possibly adjust the positions and power relations among teacher, students, different texts and literacy practices. Thus, radicalization is encouraged by a critical spirit, which promotes creativity in both the oppressor and the oppressed.

Paulo Freire’s work aimed to help minorities against dehumanization with ongoing development of conscientização, which was translated from the Portuguese as critical consciousness, and referred to as praxis for recognizing struggles and connecting to theories, application, reflection and actions. A Freirean scholar, Shor (1999) defines “critical literacy is language use that questions the social construction of the self” (p. 3). However, this definition raises the question of how we teach such discourses to build dialogues among the oppressed and authorities or power of domination. Freire and critical literacy theorists Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren, and Ira Shor shaped one kind of critical pedagogy involved in teaching and learning through democratic process and critical problems (Leonard & McLaren, 1993) to resist hegemonic reproduction, which meant a ruling class dominating through intellectual and moral leadership, or one class articulating its interests over one or more groups (Aranoitz & Giroux, 1993). Giroux (1988) expands the idea of “teachers as transformative intellectuals” and argues that teachers should reflect and analyze their roles while participating in various teacher education programs and classroom teaching. As reflective practitioners, teachers could construct a theoretical perspective and redefine current educational issues since they are
empowered in many educational settings. While critically examining the quality of teacher’s work, the school bureaucracy and curriculum objectives, teachers would lessen the degree to which they are teaching technicians and elaborate for critical democracy as transformative intellectuals by paying more attention to educating students in becoming thoughtful and active citizens.

More recently, many critical literacy theorists expands the Freirean tradition and appropriates it for the specific context and participants for diverse student populations. Morrell (2008) develops critical media literacy to support students who suffer socioeconomic oppression to develop agency through literacy practices in urban schools. In new literacy studies, Anne Haas Dyson (1993) and Shirley Brice Health (1983) value students’ funds of knowledge and understand learners’ social world by engaging students in literacy practice. Sonia Nieto (1992) advocates critical pedagogy and multiculturalism of teacher education to understand the lived experience of linguistically and culturally diverse groups and support their learning. In Dear Freire: Letters from Those Who Dare Teach (Nieto, 2008), many educators related stories of their real-life practice of applying Freire’s educational approach to the classroom.

Critical literacies are even practiced in early childhood classrooms with young learners. For example, Vivian Vasquez (2004, 2010) conducts critical-literacies projects in her research with young children to take on issues and actions for a better living environment with fairness in their daily life. In her work, Vasquez aims for social justice and transformation by adopting the four dimensions of critical literacy: 1) disrupting the commonplace, 2) interrogating multiple perspectives, 3) focusing on social issues, and 4) taking actions to promote social justice (Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002). In these
four dimensions, language and literacy are identified as social practices in personal, social, historical and political aspects. These dimensions often serve as a reflection on the literacy curriculum (Flint & Laman, 2014) or as an analytical framework to explain research data and understand how individuals form their critical identity in relation to the larger social perspective of the world through literacy practices. Vasquez (2013) calls it “justice-oriented citizenry” as an end goal that learners can think and articulate critically about their status quo and complicated social world to make a change for equality in terms of race, gender, class, learning, and real-life issues. As Paulo Freire (1970) said, education is not neutral but ideological. Therefore, critical pedagogy offers alternative practices apart from the dominant linear literacy curriculum and teaching that students can engage in literacy work to know their potential, develop ongoing identities and deepen their values and beliefs in developing into free and independent individuals through democratic education (Giroux & Giroux, 2006).

However, according to current educational policy requirements for curricula and published research, practitioners and researchers still have limited work practicing critical literacy in high schools, elementary schools, kindergartens, and even in teacher education (Rogers & Wetzel, 2013). In addition, migration and globalization (Shin, 2012) have increased the number of emergent English learners in the United States, Canada and Australia as well as other places with better economic opportunities, expanding the need for L2 education. Some critical theorists critique that the Freirean tradition does not provide explicit instruction for developing the acquisition of L2 and students usually lack specific linguistic resources to deal with text complexity and a variety of genres to become involved in school literacy (Halliday & Martin, 1996; Luke, 2013); that is,
linguistically and culturally diverse learners need both linguistic and sociopolitical awareness to develop agency to talk back to the grand assumptions of school knowledge or the culture of everyday life. Through talking, reading, writing and performing from multiple perspectives, these learners gain access and attend to sociocultural or sociopolitical issues relating to them or their worlds and, eventually, take a critical and transformative stance to create social change instead of reproducing their cultural worlds (Gee, 2014).

2.2.2.2 Poststructuralism and Critical Literacies

Poststructuralism is a continuum of the Frankfurt school of critical theory and shapes the further development of critical literacies. Peters and Burbules (2004) give emergent meaning to poststructuralism as “a mode of thinking, a style of philosophizing, and a kind of writing” (p. 17) embedded in the ideologies of various critical practices. A linguist from structuralism, Saussure (1916/1959) challenged the anti-traditional view of interpreting the world and languages with a neutral perspective. Saussure’s perspective on semiotics brought up the question, what is meaning? Due to the arbitrary relationship between the word and the world, he proposed in his communication model that words (signs) are decoded into two parts: signifiers (images and sounds) and the signified (concepts), with meaning varying depending on context and the signified and signifier lying within the same linguistic system (Peters & Burbules, 2004; Seidman, 2013). Claude Levi-Strauss incorporated social thinking into Saussure’s semiotic linguistics. Levi-Strauss assumed that language is governed by the patterns of all social phenomena, which are universal laws since these structural social codes are composed in our social world but not individuals. Thus, situated meanings are determined by socially constructed
relations of differences in these signs with regard to binary oppositions and correlations (Seidman, 2013).

As a response to structuralism, poststructuralism conveys a contradictory, diverse, dynamic manner and characterizes knowledge is contestable in relation to unequal power and dominant ways of thinking or doing (Lankshear & McLaren, 1993). Since poststructuralism is defined more loosely than postmodernism as a philosophical and theoretical approach to understanding knowledge and one’s social world, poststructural thinkers like Foucault, Derrida, and Lyotard highlight “the ways meaning is an active construction radically dependent upon the pragmatics of context and, thereby challenge the universality of truth claims” (Peters & Burbules, 2004, p. 19). Thus, these poststructuralists have developed characteristic forms of analysis such as grammatology, deconstruction, archaeology, genealogy, and semanalysis by critiquing dominant ideologies, specific institutes, and agendas (Peters & Burbules, 2004). For example, genealogy is an analysis that disturbs the nominalizing role of dominant discourses and knowledge by deconstructing the norms to enact critical transformation for social justice (Seidman, 2013). This view critiques the limited and neutral assumptions of structuralism. In that sense, poststructuralists are skeptical, questioning existing truths and language systems as well as arguing that knowledge is built upon on interactions with others and social processes. For poststructuralists, knowledge is always connected to power, and meaning is created and re-created within specific texts and contexts. The only way to properly understand meaning is to deconstruct the assumptions and systems of knowledge that was produced with the illusion of singular meaning.
Foucault is prominent in reconceptualizing knowledge and meaning in relation to power by examining discursive practices (Weedon, 1987). Foucault’s intention about discourse is interpreted as having several crucial elements on how language and discourse influence learning, identity construction, and self:

... [discourses are] ways of constituting knowledge, together with social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledge and relations between them. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the 'nature' of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern (Weedon, 1987, p. 108).

Discourse here, by Foucault’s account, refers to “rule-governed practice that includes meaning set within a knowledge system as well as institutions and social practices that produce and maintain these meanings” (Gibson-Graham, 1999, p. 9). In this sense, discourses can be seen as “forms of power” that draw on and create the social, historical, and political conditions under which statements come to count as true or false. For poststructuralists, the subject is not autonomous in nature but is constructed within various “discursive systems” that normalize what it means to be a subject in the first place (McHoul & Grace, 1993). Lankshear and McLaren (1993) argue that “the subject is an effect of the structure of language and the signifying system” (p. 385). In that sense, poststructuralists consider all human subjects are different because our identities are working definitions due to the availability of meaning making system (signifying) and the kind of discourses we participate in.
Classroom discourse serves as a good example to explain the relationship between subject and discourse. Actually, classroom discourse is associated closely with what should be learned in each lesson, and the power of authorities and different layers of hidden ideology govern the classroom language from the macro-level of national educational policy or/and school curricula to the micro-level of everyday classroom practice. Such classroom discourse subjects position both teachers’ and students’ thinking, values, beliefs, and even inspirations in learning and further shape their identities and positions in becoming who they are.

Foucault has reimaged the subject and illustrated how different forms of power intersect with knowledge production by giving certain validity through history (Gibson-Graham, 1999). What is considered true or false depends on the specific “game of truth” or “regime of power” (Foucault, 1980). Furthermore, subjects will be able to resist or reconstruct power in various ways and construct their identities and future selves through discursive practices in literacy (Lankshear & McLaren, 1993). Therefore, poststructuralists claim multiple and opposed views of knowing that meaning is naturally formed in our environment and involved in the formation of identity (Lankshear & McLaren, 1993). In addition, Fairclough (1989) and Janks (2010) argue that not only discourse but also text constructs identities and positions us to a particular discourse community through various social practices (Janks, 2014), which leads to a text-oriented critical approach for literacy education. Based on Foucault’s concept of power, Botelho and Rudman (2009) create a critical multicultural analysis as a critical lens to examine power, resistance and agency by analyzing texts and images in multicultural children’s literature relative to social issues and social justice.
In Australia, the United Kingdom, and South Africa, critical literacies have taken Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics (SFL) as resources. SFL has been described as “a functional-semantic approach to language which explores both how people use language in different contexts, and how language is structured for use as a semiotic system” (Eggins, 2004, p. 21). Halliday (1994) argues that the register theory: Field (topic), Tenor (relationships with others), and Mode (form of communication) covers various dimensions of immediate contexts of situations on language in the language events. Making sense of meanings depends on how the semiotic systems are interpreted and how different resources and choices are used in the contexts. Thus, Australian critical literacy theorist Luke (2011) argues that such an approach can engage learners with critical questions, e.g., how the texts are used, by whom and in whose interest through resource of genre. Janks (2014) even argues that grammar can serve as a resource for critical literacy, and analyzing how grammar and lexical choices are made can help researchers understand how social relations are constructed in our cultural worlds. This orientation of critical literacies has been practiced and associated with the term “critical discourse analysis” or “discourse analytical approach.”

Although Freire’s tradition on sociopolitical consciousness toward educational equality still influences the development of the discourse analytical approach, attention has been paid to how invisible power is situated in language, discourse and texts. Australian critical literacy theorists and practitioners tend to focus on practical educational issues to help L2 learners move away from the disadvantages of reproducing hegemony in schooling. From metalinguistic and metacognitive aspects in languages, texts and discourses influence L2 readers’ and writers’ worlds and minds (Luke, 2013).
In particular, when cultural and linguistic minority groups or L2 students are learning a new language, the explicit pedagogical instruction and systematic generic features expand their learning for L2 literacy and transformative change. Therefore, the generic features of language should be explicitly taught to L2 learners. Mastering a variety of genres provides access to becoming critical in language learning (Fairclough, 1992; Luke, 2012, 2013).

The four resources model (Freebody & Luke, 2003) was developed in Australia to map meaning-making processes and practices into the model’s components (code breaking, text participating, meaning making, and text analyzing) to help teachers use multidimensional teaching practices to inform a range of curricular and pedagogic possibilities and activate students’ capabilities. Code-breaking refers to decoding semiotic and nonverbal communicative cues such as sounds, symbols, parts of speech, paralinguistic cues, spellings, and sentence structures. Text participating indicates how teachers and students connect to their background knowledge of topic texts to understand the complex meanings of texts. For text users, the model reveals how to demonstrate knowledge of the purposes for which texts are used and helps them to understand the sociocultural purposes within texts and use a variety of texts for different purposes. Text analyzing shifts reading positions, thinking and challenges authors’ texts and the ideologies embedded in their words and images through interpretation (Botelho & Rudman, 2009; Freebody & Luke, 2003).

The idea of genre pedagogy to build students’ resources in literacy was developed by Australian scholars James Martin and David Rose (2012). The concept of genre is used to understand the impact of cultural context through structural sequences inside or
outside of institutional ways to communicate purpose (Eggins, 2004). Genre is goal-oriented. Martin refers to how people within a community can recognize similarities in texts and interact with each other from their repeated experience of those texts (Martin & Rose, 2012). Being familiar with these process functions directs people to complete the goal more successfully. In this sense, writing practice allows people to read, interpret and represent through language socialization. However, genre pedagogy is criticized for not being critical enough to lead to social transformation (Luke & Dooley, 2011).

In the United Kingdom, critical literacy also follows a Hallidayan approach and perceives literacy as a discursive and social practice (Fairclough, 1992). Based on the concepts of SFL, Fairclough developed critical language awareness to specify three dimensions of texts (text, discursive practice, and social practice) to understand how a complete picture of discourse functions in our society through the processes of description, interpretation and explanation. Indeed, Fairclough (1989) maintains, “Language is a part of society; linguistic phenomena are social phenomena of a special sort, and social phenomena are (in part) linguistic phenomena” (p. 23). Thus, critical language awareness affords a wider range of linguistic and lexical analysis for deconstructing and reconstructing texts as one kind of critical literacy, social imagination (Janks, 1997; Janks 2010). In addition, critical literacies go beyond texts by including other modes such as images, texts, colors, fonts, layouts, and semiotics codes. The concept of design offers opportunity for text production and multimodal representation, and further “contextualize[s] social positions and relations, as well as knowledge in specific arrangements for a specific audience” (Weinberg, 2010, p. 139).
In South Africa, Janks (2014, 2010) designed an interdependent model of critical literacy with four major concepts: power, identity/diversity, access and design/redesign. Power means that how language constructs our understanding of the world, our sense of self and of others, which might cause social differences. Language is powerful to help deconstruct and reconstruct the dominant ideology in the societies and rename ourselves and our place in the world. The concept of identity/diversity refers to people in different communities encounter differences in terms of linguistic, cultural and social ways, which produce hybrid identities either benefiting or affecting production and resources. Having access means to question our everyday life in relation to power such as what knowledge is valued and who has access to participate in knowledges. Design and redesign relate to the actions of deconstruct and reconstruct, which creates new meaning as a resource for transformation. Janks (2014) advocates that social transformation is the heart of critical literacy. These four concepts are based on the integration of theory and practice and are mutually interactive. This model emphasizes that critical literacies should be approached through various modes and the powerful impact of design and redesign. Language permeates our everyday lives. We speak, read, hear, live and think with it. The design and redesign practices of critical literacy help students to understand how language works through social practice and recognize the tensions since “[k]nowledge is constructed as a form of discursive production” (Lankshear & McLaren, 1993, p. 381).

In language education, language has been perceived as concrete, tangible and material. However, its ideological aspect has been neglected since it is not functional to detect how the language and the world we encounter shape individuals and how our social identities are formed. Critical literacy education can bring language and social
practice together though an internal and dialectical relationship (Lankshear & McLaren, 1993) and encourage students to attend to the ideological dimension of language.

To me, being critically literate is to use language to question and make sense of our world and act through any mode of literacy practices. When we can locate subject positions in texts, the ideological aspect of language can help us to take on oppositional discourses through multiple ways of understanding the world to invent a possible future for ourselves, others and our culture (Botelho & Rudman, 2009; Fairclough, 1992; Janks, 2014; Lankshear & McLaren, 1993; Luke, 2012; Shore, 1999).

In the next session, I review two groups of the empirical studies: critical literacy practices and identity texts in L2 education in K-12 contexts.

2.3 Review of Critical Literacies Practices in L2 Education in K-12 Contexts

Critical literacies have been practiced across various disciplines in literacy studies: teacher education (Lewison et al., 2002; Rogers 2014), curricula and textbooks (Comber & Simpson, 2001; Pandya, 2013), and classroom pedagogical practices (Alvermann, 2002; Morgan 2002; Vasquez, 2014; Wallace 2001). In recent years, L2 educators and researchers have increased the possibilities of practicing critical literacies in ELL/EFL/bilingual programs. For example, Canagarajah (2004) inquiries in what ways students can maintain their first language while learning a L2. He claims a social turn in language learning by understanding students’ identity positions and tensions. He found that students can create a safe space by alternating identifies between the hidden curriculum, home discourses, and academic discourses. Identity negotiations offer students a space for critical learning with critical reflection by crossing the boundaries of the norm curriculum. The formation of self as a human subject among these discourses
makes students become successful learners. Kamagai (2007) employs a critical approach to explore moments of tension among textual representations, students' identities, and the instructor's discourses in a college-level Japanese language classroom in the United States. Huang (2011, 2013) explores students’ critical perspective on reading and writing beyond texts in a college-level EFL classroom. However, these contexts were at the college level.

In reviewing the contexts and practices of critical literacies in L2 learning in K-12 classrooms, I found two studies. Lau (2010) re-conceptualized critical literacies teaching a L2 to beginning ELLs in a middle school in Canada through collaborative participatory research. The collaboration between the researcher and classroom teacher created a transformative influence on learning. Students not only improved L2 reading and writing, but also experienced a social change in understanding bullying and adjusting to the new culture. Worthy of mention, the findings also show that students have an ongoing identity of becoming critical language users (Lau, 2010). Norton and Vanderheyden (2004) conducted their research in a multilingual elementary school. They used comic books from pop culture with immigrant students to promote literacy development and foster social interactions between the teacher and students as well as among students. Their study shows that comic books provide a space for students to employ multiple strategies to make their own meaning through reading nonsequential texts and images, which breaks the taken-for-granted definition of good reading, to produce new meaning through writing. Their significant findings show that L2 learners’ identities shift from a struggling learner to a confident learner having ownership over meaning making. The findings also
suggest that multiliteracies, a new perspective of literacy in the digital era beyond traditional texts, should be considered.

As mentioned earlier, I found very limited research on critical literacy within L2 education in K-12 school settings after 2015. In the following section, I review two sets of literature: 1) critical literacy research published recently in the context of elementary classrooms and high schools, and 2) identity texts, critical perspective of literacy practices focused on learners’ identity and agency, particularly in L2 contexts of elementary and high school settings (K-12). The reason that I reviewed the literature on these two topics in elementary school classrooms was because I needed to understand critical literacy practices with young learners and how they are used in the authentic context of a classroom. First, I will review how critical literacies are currently practiced with young learners or in K-12 classroom since the topic is close to my research context. Then I will discuss a critical perspective of literacy practice called identity texts, which incorporates reading and text production for L2 learners through curriculum work.

2.3.1 Critical Literacies

As for critical literacies, critical identity construction can be visualized through microperformances (shifting critical moments) and dialectical interaction among teachers, students, texts, power, and discourse communities (Lau et al., 2017). My review of the recent literature includes three major findings: 1) critical literacies expand classroom literacy practices with critical approaches and multiple ways of knowing (Flint & Laman, 2012; Labadie, Wetzel, & Rogers, 2012); 2) critical literacies construct identities by investing in multimodal literacy practices (Exley, Woods, & Dooley, 2013; Johnson & Vasudevan, 2012; Pandya and Pagdilao, 2015); and 3) critical literacies create
literacy curricula for new understanding and social transformation across time and space (Comber & Nixon, 2013; Silvers, Shorey, & Crafton, 2010). In the following sections, I will present the findings on critical literacy practices in mainstream elementary school contexts.

2.3.1.1 Expanding Classroom Literacy Practices with Critical Approaches and Multiple Ways of Knowing

Gee (1989) states that “language is not grammar, but it is what you say, how you say it, and what you are and do when you say it” (p. 4). This view considers language and literacy as social practice (Gee, 1996; Halliday, 1994; Street, 1995) and emphasizes that learning is connected to social relationships and social roles in cultural and political contexts. School literacy curricula tend to follow prescribed curricula (Pandya, 2013) and focus on fundamental literacy practices and content knowledge to apprentice students to be able to read, write, and become accustomed to their cultural world. However, language and literacy learning contain not only words, grammar, and linguistic practices, but also various social and critical literacy practices. A critical stance in literacy expands the definition of literacy to multiple literacies, which offer learners accessible formats, i.e., all types of texts, images, sounds, space, and movement to help students become fluent not only in discourse, but also in academic and social situations and make sense of social worlds. But in what ways?

Wooldridge (2001) suggests the social, political, and ideological situatedness of literacy should incorporate different communication modes in comprehending and producing texts through multiple ways of knowing. One of the crucial ways Wooldridge suggests is questioning because it leads to a learning process of problematizing the
assumptions in the texts instead of seeking answers. Foss (2002) even uses the metaphor of peeling an onion to explain how critical-questioning practices unpack the meanings of texts layer by layer based on readers’ identities and backgrounds.

In the elementary school classroom, reading aloud storybooks is an everyday literacy activity. These young students can be taught using critical literacy to examine their presumptions, creating possible theories for new understanding (Labadie et al., 2012). Indeed, young students were found to reflect on book concepts, illustrations and story content when prompted by purposeful questioning strategies to think more deeply during daily storytelling or book reading (Labadie et al., 2012). This approach is similar to that in which different types of questions are used to facilitate alternative views of a text because questioning not only prompts students to read for meaning or information, but also opens dialogues to naming and renaming what they notice in the book (Johnson, 2004).

Another important aspect of questioning elementary students about their reading is repositioning the notion of “silence” after asking questions (Labadie et al., 2012). Silences between students’ and the teacher’s talk allow a transitional space for students to think and develop their ideas to share. In that sense, teachers can use the time for close observation about students’ participation and meaning-making process, and facilitate understanding of a particularly important concept if necessary (Labadie et al., 2012). Literacy educators often take time in the classroom to develop children’s early literacy by talking about books. Whereas I feel that Labadie and colleagues reframe a simple idea of introducing a book during a traditional read-aloud activity, the notion of creating a
critical moment to engage students while introducing a book is crucial because it gives students an opportunity to become co-constructors of knowledge.

However, I believe that the results of Labadie and colleagues are limited by not using the idea of introducing books to expand literacy practices to elicit students’ voices and thoughts. In fact, young learners can contribute more of their own critical thoughts on a simple storybook than teachers expect, if they employ multiple strategies (Vasquez, 2010). From my perspective, even young learners have the imagination and interpretative strategies to explore storybooks more deeply through the varied meanings of semiotic modes and can tap into how texts are socially constructed. I was hoping to see how writing could transform learners by incorporating multimodal text production. In that sense, writing would allow teachers and students to observe how texts are constructed and how classroom discourse influences learners’ identity formation.

As an example of text production, writing poetry as a literacy practice was used in an elementary school setting (Flint & Laman, 2012). In this study, students’ ability to develop diverse identity positions through writing is shown by two findings. First, integrating critical literacy and poetry study into the curriculum helped students develop a deeper understanding of texts and connected their relevance to social justice issues, processes not commonly seen in scripted curricula. Second, culturally and linguistically diverse students were encouraged to stand against the dominant cultural power by incorporating their linguistic and cultural resources into their poems (Flint & Laman, 2012). These findings support my perspective that allowing students to express their thoughts and feelings about their social worlds in two languages (L1 and L2) rather than translating directly from the linguistic meaning to produce a whole new understanding is
one way of translanguaging. Furthermore, the poetry-creating process is a hybrid space in which teacher and students share equal power in constructing knowledge and exploring important issues within their classroom or community (Flint & Laman, 2012). What students present in their writing is the result of a transformative effect that “… not only embraces the personal, but also positions students to be advocates for themselves and the world in which they live” (Flint & Laman, 2012, p.79).

Although Flint and Laman framed their study with the four perspectives of critical literacies (Lewison, Leland, & Harste, 2008) to explain how textual data were transformed to social data for pedagogical purposes, readers can only see the representations of students’ work instead of their production process and the scaffolding of writing. I was also unpersuaded by the findings because it seems like the teachers took control of the data by presenting only a small collection of students’ work, without showing the process of creating critical moments of learning. Similarly, Moje and Luke (2009) contend that identity construction is an ongoing process since identities are enacted, negotiated and produced through what we read, write and talk about. Thus, teachers cannot control identities. Despite the student-generated poems showing strong feelings relating to social issues, the language and identity-negotiation processes were not articulated. Indeed, showing how teachers scaffolded the writing process would show their negotiations and interactions with others, thus serving as important resources for other educators to understand the complexities in producing transformative texts. Lastly, the findings section only features a few poems among the data for two schools with 25 students. I wonder about the process for selecting poems and other students’ perspective in producing these poems.
Specifically, Flint and Laman (2012) demonstrate that a critical curriculum emerges while exploring important issues within their classroom or communities based on teachers’ understanding about the students. Flint and Laman emphasize that created materials can reposition curricula to provide both teachers and students a personal and social space for thoughtful ideas and creative production out of traditional or confined ideology. Repositioning also allows readers to image the shifting power relations among text, teacher, and students. Moreover, repositioning allows students to enact multiple identities to affirm themselves, understand texts, and share feelings with others in social and cultural contexts. Pandya (2013) also advocates that a new curriculum reform, i.e., a teacher-created curriculum, should be practiced by literacy educators and create space for critical literacy in highly curriculum-structured classrooms. Pandya argues that using scripted curricula to incorporate critical literacies would force scripted “inquiry” on teachers and students, possibly generating counter-effects on critical literacy practices. Meanwhile, the outcomes would become even more negative because students might follow fixed directions and offer their teachers right answers when classrooms or schools are currently focused on getting the right answers for tests and evaluations.

2.3.1.2 Constructing Identities by Investing in Multimodal Literacy Practices

Many people question whether critical literacies are too difficult to practice with young learners. However, in one study using a critical literacy approach to teach young learners in an Australian public school, texts familiar to young students served as a resource to foster their critical literacy (Exley, Woods, & Dooley, 2013). Fairy tales that young learners were familiar with were taught differently to teach them how to understand the stereotypes embedded in the texts and pictures they read. In addition, their
curriculum and pedagogical practices incorporated linguistic development, the genre of fairy tales, and critical language awareness, which are important for developing highly linguistically and culturally diverse populations (L2 learners) (Exley et al., 2013). For young learners, developing a critical identity was challenging. First, they had to examine common stereotypes in fairy tales, think critically through texts by understanding how texts portray stereotypes, and then reinterpret the text for social equality. Teachers were eager to enhance language development, but were careful not to control students’ identity positions for social transformation. In a sense, students were engaged in dialogue by freely expressing their thoughts. Reflecting on the previous weakness, the researchers adopted a pedagogical shift using process drama to facilitate critical-language awareness for thinking by having students perform in and out of the roles in the fairy tales.

Critical literacy practices in early education should not follow one single approach or method because “[critical literacy] consists of a range of approaches for teaching and learning about cultures, societies, texts, and discourses” (Exley et al., 2013, p. 68) and even challenges the texts. A critical literacy lesson in early grades classroom is possible and learners’ identity positions can be enacted through multiple strategies such as performance drama and reading stereotypes in picture books. Furthermore, in their study (Exley et al., 2013), students were allowed to shift their identity positions as learners or as story characters using various critical literacy strategies such as sharing multiple perspectives, counterclaims, and shifting positions. Learners’ identities were constructed by doing and mediated within social interactions with peers and teachers. From my perspective, the curriculum and pedagogical activities were clearly connected through the scaffolding process throughout the unit lesson, and teachers knew students
very well through close observation. Thus, at the end, a new way of thinking emerged. Although the political aspects of critical literacies were not mentioned (Exley et al., 2013), I found that teachers and researchers carefully created a democratic classroom where every student felt comfortable and safe to express various viewpoints about the subject through the literacy practices. In the L2 classroom, a similar challenge is that linguistic competence is always rated as a top priority. Thus, the findings of this research do have relevance and promise for critical literacies in L2 education.

However, in considering the learner’s language level, I found that oral discussion was exercised more than writing. As for reading and writing, the practice was limited to completing sentences with framed questions. Whereas students completed the sentence writing with different perspectives by filling in blanks, it would be more reflective if students were given some opportunity to involve in the production with other modalities as an inventor, writer or designer. My final comment about the study (Exley et al., 2013) is that its conceptual framework, “the classification and framing of pedagogical discourse” (Bernstein, 1996), creates some methodological confusion for readers in building connections between power relations and social transformation toward a bigger society. I wonder if a different theoretical framework would better explain the power relations, discourse, and knowledge, or even lead to different interpretations of the findings.

The following study (Pandya & Pagdilao, 2015) demonstrates the approach of multimodal production with critical literacies by taking advantage of the rich and effective resource of contemporary technology. Third-grade students in that study completed critical digital literacies projects to make meaning of their learning by utilizing
resources in the school community to show their understanding of other people’s lives. Their duties included writing video scripts, creating questions, interviewing people in different jobs and positions, and making videos to learn about other people’s lives. The curricula were grounded in community and local resources that students could access without difficulty. For every topic of the video assignment, these 9-year-old student participants produced different ideas on their videos. Throughout the production process, student participants gained a deeper understanding of the jobs of people in their environment and were naturally positioned as text designers and critical-language users. Students’ identity, assignments, and pedagogical practices closely intersected through the teacher-created curriculum because teachers and students were both located as thinkers and active doers. Compared to a prescribed curriculum, a teacher-created curriculum offers more potential for students to move between diverse learning positions and inspire creativity. Along the same line, Pandya and Pagdilao (2015) suggest that prepackaged curricula might have a space in schools, but teachers and educators need to adjust to meet students’ needs for creativity and criticality.

The critical aspect of this digital project centered on naming, deconstructing, and reconstructing by focusing on how culturally diverse students’ social awareness is shaped to understand sympathy critically (Pandya & Pagdilao, 2015). Through the lens of sociocultural perspective and critical pedagogy, students as critical text users have the authority and power to construct their own knowledge and interpret the world in a new way by re-voicing people’s lives. However, the research context was in a Spanish-English charter school with a diverse population: 70% Latino and 60% ELLs. I feel that more scaffolding of literacy practices should be added to understand ELLs’ identity.
construction in producing texts. In addition, the findings are quickly presented. The
discussion did not address how these students managed to write the script after the
interviews. I feel this assignment project could be expanded with more critical and
transformative actions leading to social change either within or outside the community.

Beyond the above examples, critical identities can be enacted in different
representations. For example, one study with tenth graders examined critical performance
of pop culture in the mainstream classroom (Johnson & Vasudevan, 2012). This study is
a good model of how critical literacies are performed in everyday lives and throughout
pop culture. Critical performance expands the definition of critical literacies and
considers the body as a text. In this context, critical performance translates the way that
teenage students show resistance to the current social system or school materials in
various contexts by acting out a different criticality in various forms (e.g., talking,
laughing, or dressing). The results of this study (Johnson & Vasudevan, 2012) provide
rich information for understanding students’ critical performances in class and their
teacher’s perception on critical literacy. However, authors should show more connections
between literacy within and outside of school. Indeed, I recommend that the researchers
should show the process of changes how teachers involved in engaging students in the
school curriculum and academic literacy. Moreover, researchers should also explore how
power and resistance are negotiated in learners’ identity construction and how agency is
developed for social transformation during the learning process.

In South Africa, Stein and Newfield (2003) claim that enacting identity works
well as a powerful instrument to discover students’ talents beyond academic work
because talents reflect the student as a whole person instead of reducing students to
particular skills. Due to apartheid and low socioeconomic status, many South African students reject the dominant English-literacy curricula because it does not make sense to them. However, the students found agency when teachers incorporated learners’ cultural and linguistic resources with multimodal production into literacy practice. One project in this study (Stein & Newfield, 2003) was body tracing, which I call a multimodal personal narrative because students see a representation of the visual narrative self beyond writing and talking, by incorporating personal history and experiences. The body images show how each student author made an identity, and conversely how viewers reflected their thoughts in interactive discussions with each other, peers and teachers. The work of Stein and Newfield (2003) considers the social stance of literacy practices, which is known as the ideological mode of literacy because it values students’ culture and background knowledge (Street 2003; Gee 2011). In this study, culture provides an opportunity recognize learner’s identity and capacity for the future. Such identity recognition is crucial for literacy engagement because identities can be seen as an artifact that settles in texts as an indicator for meaning making through text production (Powell & Kate, 2011).

The above studies demonstrate how multiliteracies help educators and researchers understand how students communicate in varied ways in the classroom and in everyday life. A literacy and language curriculum allows learners to produce through different modes to make meaning and enact criticality by tending to layers of meaning in texts from personal and social spaces to larger contexts.
2.3.1.3 Creating Literacy Curricula for New Understanding and Social Transformation Across Time and Space

Place-based pedagogy, in which learning and curricula are conceptualized to emphasize one’s relationship to place or environment, and critical literacy provide rich information and in-depth critical perspectives connecting academic subjects to everyday life (Comber & Nixon, 2014). In this study, content subjects and local resources were integrated to enact critical literacy practices based on teaching pedagogy and a teacher-student-generated curriculum. Meanwhile, multiple opportunities were offered to immerse elementary students in both learning and production through multitasking such as taking pictures, interviewing, writing, making interview questions, presenting, public sharing and embodying thoughtfulness and responsibility about the environment and resources. Students were positioned as learners, photographers, architects, public speakers, reporters and writers and caretakers of the surroundings. In addition, students demonstrated agency in reaching literacy expectations of the state curriculum: “future, identity, interdependence, and thinking” (Comber & Nixon, 2013, p. 91). One feature discussed in the study was the process and protocol used to scaffold L2 language development. Usually, L2 learners need to exert themselves to prepare ahead in terms of learning the generic repertoire because it differs from scripted curricula or testing. In supporting L2 students to be comfortable and confident using a new language, the teacher created a learning community to support their every move in literacy practices such as rehearsing a speech before presenting it, interviewing, writing lists of questions, and familiarizing themselves with the tasks that co-researchers needed to do. All these are
important practices to build L2 learners’ language knowledge and connect to relevant curricula.

Comber and Nixon (2013) constructed their critical literacy study with theoretical concepts of spatial literacy, place-based pedagogies, and design. Their purpose was to invite young learners (age 10-12 years) to develop a sense of belonging to the environment and place, connections with each other, and carefulness about resources through investigation and multimodal text production. The findings suggest that young learners can interpret their understanding and views. Comber and Nixon also reconfirmed that critical literacies can be practiced in early school years. Young students certainly have the ability to participate in learning critically, enjoy doing so, and can create thoughtfulness toward their place and space through critical literacies. In addition, student participants learn through actions and contribute to their local space and school what they learn by interpreting the knowledge into new understandings, and learners can apply their learning and transform the community as well. I used to think critical literacies involved just reading and writing. The study by Comber and Nixon sheds new light on literacy education for all types of learners because these literacy practices occur across time and space. Such a transformative experience shows how students move from experiencing, conceptualizing, analyzing and applying through curriculum work and pedagogical practices. Although I was inspired by this study, I had a minor concern with the time needed to conduct such a big project while handling teaching and many authentic tasks.

Another study on literacy and identity construction in young learners is the Hurricane project, which incorporated the little-studies event of Hurricane Katrina with
multiliteracies (Silvers et al., 2010). What I like about this research is its use of the four resources model, thus allowing readers and teachers to observe first graders moving in different positions from code breaker, text participant, text user and text critic. In my opinion, the authors feature three key ideas for sociocultural researchers and literacy educators to consider as resources for implementing critical literacy projects. First, social consciousness is an element seldom incorporated in mainstream classrooms due to the implementation of prescribed curricula. The Hurricane Katrina group project demonstrates a process in which young learners can develop social consciousness through critical inquiries by observing real-life situations and engaging in various literacy practices such as thinking aloud, reflecting, acting out, reading, discussing, drawing, writing, and publishing. Through these processes, young students become empathic toward others and aware of power relation, in this case, the situated racial issues. The learning outcomes were transformative because the literacy practices are situated social practices based on a current event, provoking the students’ interests and attention to social issues that young children care about instead of abstract and linear knowledge. It also reconfirms Comber’s (2001) ideas that young students can engage in critical literacies through their lived experiences and interests.

The second idea emerging from this project is transformative practice, which was defined as being “… about living one’s beliefs as one has come to understand them, developing new ways of participating, and implementing new understanding” (Silvers et al., 2010, p. 386). This statement explains how the process of identity negotiation facilitates students identifying their thoughts and beliefs and turning them into new learning through actions, which leads to learning across space. The persuasive point is
that critical identities were embodied in the students who participated in the hurricane
group project and transformed them into thoughtful global citizens, not just in the present
but also for the future. One year of unforgettable learning experiences impacted the
participants’ thinking and practice to another year. The memories and experiences will
last for a lifetime.

Lastly, another important point to note is the community of practice. Practicing
critical literacy in education needs to be hybridized with local and authentic curricula to
meet students’ needs. Interactions play a crucial role in developing agency in learning
with peers, teachers, or even people in the community. Creating a learning community
offers children a space to engage in dialogue with people to gain multiple perspectives.
Students could develop a critical identity in the lived experience of the classroom and
outside world. Although the Hurricane project was conducted in a mainstream classroom
instead of an L2 classroom, multiliteracies have a great capacity to enact students’
semiotic meaning-making systems to accommodate the needs of L2 learners and connect
critical inquiry with curricula. Perhaps literacy educators and curriculum specialists need
to add language components crucial to L2 students to scaffold language-knowledge
construction as part of the school curriculum.

One challenge for me as a reader and researcher is the findings section. This
section appears incomplete because it omits some data explaining the students’ learning
process and then moves directly into transformative practices. If more data resources
were provided, the findings would more convincingly help readers understand how young
learners’ subjectivities are positioned and negotiated.
All the above-mentioned studies were conducted mainly with culturally and linguistically diverse learners. These findings have contributed to my studies by helping me to understand that the curriculum and pedagogical practices play crucial roles in enacting learners’ diverse positions as they partake in various pedagogical experiences. Students could conceptualize what they learn and incorporate it into their own knowledge through analytic and inquiry processes in various language modes. Their literacy acts and identity work are interactive and ongoing processes in performing transformative changes. Thus, curriculum work is crucial for developing critical identity because studies show that packaged curricula limit learners’ thoughts and creativity. Self-created curricula provide space to use authentic resources around the learners or community to challenge the power behind the policy. Moreover, technology and new literacies facilitate literacy learning and reconfirm that young learners can do critical literacies by employing multiple ways of approaching knowledge production. However, this conclusion is limited by only a few studies incorporating linguistic development of L2 into critical literacy practices. If there were more scaffolding on language and literacies, L2 learners’ identities could be reinforced and/or reimagined. Even in L2 settings, both L1 and L2 might be reinforced through translanguaging and a critical perspective of language and literacy learning.

2.3.2 Identity Texts

Identity texts, also known as dual-language identity texts, refer to multilingual writing (Fitzgerald, 2006). This concept of identity texts challenges the monolingual assumption of one language competency and the dominant ideology of a native-like norm in learning a second or new language (Canagarajah, 2006; Cummins, 2007). Identity texts
are students’ writing products that value students’ funds of knowledge because they invest their identities and creativity in writing not only in two languages, but also in multimodal forms, e.g., writing, video, voice, and music, which create an interplay of meanings in the text. Collaborations among teachers, peers, and the community support students with positive feedback, affirming students’ agency and identity. Therefore, an identity text “holds a mirror up to the students in which their identities are reflected back in a positive light” (Cummins & Early, 2011, p. 3).

In L2 contexts of K-12 school setting, multimodal and multilingual text production could provide a critical aspect on language learning, which supports students becoming agentive in learning. The findings of recent research on identity texts show that they: 1) provide opportunities to engage learning with students’ knowledge and semiotic repertoires (Early & Yeung, 2009; Cohen, 2011); and, 2) enact dynamic identities through the interplay of identity positions, power, and subjectivity (Giampapa, 2010; Ntelioglou, Fannin, Montanera, & Cummins, 2014; Stille, 2011)

2.3.2.1 Engaging Learning with Students’ Knowledge Repertoires

In a wide range of research on L2 education, many scholars discuss theories of identity and address how identities promote agency of L2 learners and lead to their engagement in literacy and academic work (Cummins & Early, 2011; Lewis et al., 2007; Moje et al., 2001; Norton, 2006, 2013). Identity texts are also writing products that value students’ funds of knowledge because they invest their identities and creativity in writing not only in two languages but also in multimodal forms, e.g., writing, video, voice, and music, which create an interplay of meanings in the text.
Creating dual-language identity texts is one literacy act that examines students’ learning tensions during the writing process. In a high school classroom with French as a L2, Early and Yeung (2009) employ different literacy tasks such as linguistic, visual, drama, writing, rewriting and peer editing to produce multimodal picture books and dramatize the stories for elementary students in a similar French-immersion program. Their purpose was to enhance students’ French L2 language awareness and literacy skills. Using both L1 and L2 supports metalinguistic understanding of the content. The theoretical lens of multimodality offers tools for all modes of the meaning-making process (Kress, 2003), including symbolic meaning in two languages. Such identity texts motivate students to explore different meanings embedded in modes by translating and creating their script in two languages. Translation is employed as an integral strategy to add meaning to writing dependent on the aid of dictionary. However, the problem is that meanings are restricted to linguistic understanding rather than contextualized uses for production. Some people might even argue that translation, as a method, cannot address the larger matter of applying new understanding to writing in other contexts because of the uncertainty about placing word choices and forms in appropriate contexts. Thus, metalanguage should be developed to construct multiple meanings in social contexts.

In the United States and Canada, teachers often struggle how to balance students’ background knowledge and dominant-language curricula with culturally and linguistically diverse learners (Cohen, 2011). Writing negotiates and affirms identities. In Cohen’s (2011) study, two elementary teachers challenged power relationships in the school curriculum and incorporated students’ cultural and linguistic knowledges into the writing curriculum in support of their academic literacy. These two dual-language writing
projects adopt identical principles, but in different contexts. One teacher (Lisa) employs personal narrative writing based on students’ cultural and linguistic identity, and another teacher (Padma) designs a multilingual theater accompanied by flip storybooks. These two projects allow bilingual students to create new learning and mediate their identities as capable learners in writing and language learning. For instance, more experienced English students helped less experienced English students, with students’ cultural and linguistic identities enacted to express themselves in ways they might not otherwise be able to do because of their inexperience with L2. Hence, Cohen (2011) argues that creating identity texts is a way of transformative pedagogy, which enables students to acknowledge power and thus could be considered a critical view of literacies.

Acknowledging linguistic and cultural resources provides the initial start to create a hybrid space (Bhabha, 1994) for constructing linguistic and cultural identities. It is evident that these two projects weaved languages and cultures in which students were confident and their prior knowledge was valued. However, “identities” has not been discussed further in the literature except in the context of linguistic and cultural identities. Identity is a social construct (Moje et al., 2010). It would be powerful to expand to some social relevance based on this foundation since culture and literacy are situated in social practices and context. Two other points to consider are what kind of literacies students are developing and in what ways these literacies are critical.

2.3.2.2 Shifting Dynamic Identities through the Interplay of Identity Position, Power and Subjectivity

Within the context of a multilingual community, Giampapa (2010) is concerned with how educational policy and curricula impact culturally diverse students’ knowledge
attainment. Perminder, a minority teacher participant with a multilingual and multicultural background, drew on her own identities and experiences and found instructional possibilities acknowledging learners’ cultural and linguistic resources as an asset in a Canadian elementary school. Students, teachers, and parents as a learning community build interactive dialogues and collaborate through several stages of the writing process. Utilizing the linguistic and cultural resources that students possess works effectively to engage students in learning when teachers have similar multilingual experience. However, my concern is how this work can continue with another teacher without a similarly diverse linguistic background. Whereas students’ identities are negotiated and shifted from a silent learner to an author, deeper elaborations on identity negotiation matters because power is enacted from L1 to L2 to an interpersonal space. To incorporate these findings, other educators and researchers would need to know how the tensions of learning were resolved from linguistic and cultural boundaries to becoming agentic practices.

Another study (Stille, 2011) emphasizes ethical understanding of students’ text production, which challenges the boundaries between appropriateness and inappropriateness in classroom knowledge production. In this collaborative inquiry research, one participant, Asad from Pakistan, engaged in oral discussion, but was not expressive in writing. He could write only in short sentences and phrases, but added meaning to his stories by drawing. In his written work, the teacher found Asad’s detailed drawing of weapons irrelevant to inquiring into the academic subject and misjudged his behavior as disruptive without knowing his intentions. However, Stille facilitated communication between Asad and the teacher. Asad was asked to explain his feelings
about his home country and Canada. Ultimately, the teacher reconsidered Asad’s work as new knowledge and gave him permission to include these pictures in his writing. Although Asad eventually learned to express his ideas and produced meaningful writing expressing his ideas, this literacy act raises the issue of what counts as knowledge in the classroom. The findings suggest that educators should reread students’ text production in multiple ways and give social space for identity construction of self, particularly with culturally diverse students.

Unlike earlier research centering on ethnic identity, a recent study found that identities were constantly shifting in a third-grade classroom (Ntelioglu et al., 2014). Descriptive writing is usually a challenging writing task for emerging ELLs to follow school curriculum goals. Two new ELLs in the class enacted their learners’ identities from being hopeless to active in literacy practices with the aid of their home language and multimodalities. During the process of creating identity texts, literate practices are involved in various ways, such as performing, speaking, writing and dramatizing. Again, classroom teachers challenged the dominant English-only policy, a traditional monolingual ideology in L2 classrooms, and allowed L2 students to express themselves in multiple ways. Although I agree that these two students were willing to invest their identities and become agentive by engaging in these literacy activities, identities are constructed in different layers of interactions and reflections. I suggest that more data may be required to show some micromoments of agency to understand how these young authors developed different layers of identities, which were constructed through the writing work on the micro-level (classroom) and macro-level (school system). Their identities are influenced by the discourse around them. Similarly, we do not know if their
home language will continue to privilege their learning. Thus, it is important to further investigate students’ engagement by collecting data and becoming aware of how the power relations produced as ongoing identities affect students and others across time and space. Therefore, this work (Ntelioglou et al., 2014) challenges the work of earlier researchers and suggests that the social dimension of language learning provides more opportunities to invoke different ways of knowing. From the critical perspective of L2 learning, pedagogical practices form students’ identities not just on linguistic communications, but also in all aspects of texts including sociocultural, sociopolitical and historical understanding of texts that transform learners for social changes and create possibilities for the future (Norton & Toohey, 2004).

2.4 Affordances and Limitations of Critical Literacies and Identity Texts

After reviewing the two groups of literature in identity texts and critical literacies, I compared their similarities and differences to deepen my understanding and to examine their strengths and weaknesses. The key points are summarized in Table 2.1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical literacies</th>
<th>Identity texts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Similarities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Pursues a critical approach in language and literacy among culturally diverse learners in elementary school settings</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Employs the concept of multiple meanings embedded in multimodal production and representations with digital technological aids</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Focuses on learners’ identity construction</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Involves learners in the community through various social practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Utilizes accessible resources: learners’, local and/or authentic resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td>Strengths</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Reconfirms that young learners can do</td>
<td>1. Targets the concept that beginning L2</td>
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<tr>
<td>critical literacies</td>
<td>learners can write using L1 to develop L2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Uses dynamic curriculum elements to</td>
<td>2. Supports development of the dominant</td>
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<tr>
<td>gain multiple perspectives of knowing</td>
<td>language (L2) using the linguistic and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(multiple literacies)</td>
<td>cultural resources of L1</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Offers different identity positions to</td>
<td>3. Reconfirms or enhances learners’ identities</td>
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<tr>
<td>illustrate the process of becoming</td>
<td>by valuing their funds of knowledge in terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(agency)</td>
<td>of linguistic, cultural, and personal aspects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Learns across time: participants take</td>
<td>4. Incorporates different approaches</td>
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<tr>
<td>transformative social actions or social</td>
<td>(translanguaging and multiliteracies)</td>
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<tr>
<td>change</td>
<td>to transform learners toward critical aspects</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Learns across space. Uses the community</td>
<td>5. Uses language mode-text production</td>
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<tr>
<td>as a learning resource (broader and more</td>
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<tr>
<td>advanced than identity texts)</td>
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<td>6. Challenges dominant powers like</td>
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<td>scripted curricula or policies</td>
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<td>7. Uses various language modes and</td>
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<tr>
<td>attends to learners’ identity, subjectivity</td>
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<tr>
<td>and agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weaknesses</td>
<td>Weaknesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. The participants were culturally and</td>
<td>1. Static identity; needs more dynamics in</td>
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<td>linguistically diverse learners, but the</td>
<td>shifting identity such as curriculum or</td>
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<tr>
<td>linguistic development of L2 learners was</td>
<td>pedagogical practices.</td>
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<tr>
<td>not mentioned in critical literacies studies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Development of two languages at the same</td>
<td>2. Most literature on identity texts did</td>
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<tr>
<td>time.</td>
<td>not mention the process of becoming or the</td>
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<td></td>
<td>tension of negotiating identities.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>L2 identity seemed to happen instantly.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Most studies do not discuss how these</td>
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<td></td>
<td>learners merge with the mainstream curriculum.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>One wonders if the two languages will</td>
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<td></td>
<td>continue.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Lack of articulation on critical aspects.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Critical literacies | Identity texts
--- | ---
5. A larger perspective is missing in social transformation or moving identity positions
6. Some studies show only a small group of L2 population pulled out from class.

The comparisons in Table 2.1 show that critical literacies afford more opportunities to enact learners’ diverse identities and subject positions as well as a transformative curriculum to scaffold learning, but lack L2 literacy practices. Identity texts emphasize L2 literacy practices, but lack a transformative curriculum to scaffold students’ learning. In the following section, I discuss the affordances and limitations of these two research areas.

The pedagogical opportunities of identity texts value L1 and L2 and contribute to students’ identity negotiations. Identity texts draw on prior knowledge (L1), promote academic learning, and allow language transfer to build an interdependence between literacy and knowledge. With competence in two languages, L2 users have different mental structures from monolinguals (Cook, 2007, as cited in Cummins, 2007) and have the potential to think widely and critically in two languages through pedagogical practices in support of L1. In addition, the use of digital technologies is commonly seen as another means of engaging students in academic literacies to construct their identities through peer interactions or community participation. Such practices would inform multimodal text production.

However, my examination of the literature on identity texts reveals some limitations. First, the focus on text production pays attention more to linguistic and
cultural meanings. Second, students’ identities are more static due to the direction of translation work instead of understanding multiple meanings of texts through pedagogical scaffolding. Third, digital technologies sometimes override learning and text production. Fourth, the definition of critical literacy or the perspective of critical literacy was not articulated. Developing critical literacies needs practice through learning through a variety of pedagogical practices (Lau et al., 2017).

In creating a L2 education and language curriculum to support these students’ learning needs through literacy practices, educators need to consider that bilingual students might take advantage of cross-language and cross-curriculum connections when a dominant or target language is used as a medium for instruction. On the other hand, L2 researchers and educators should argue that sociocultural and sociopolitical perspectives on language and literacy learning offers educators and students insights to understand inequitable power and rethink their own classroom, curriculum, community, and the world.

Admittedly, identity texts are the foundation of biliteracy. The production of identity texts is a stepping-stone for beginning language learners or new young immigrants to generate texts. Such work really plays an important role in enacting emergent bilingual learners’ identity by valuing their L1 language resources. However, the findings in these two bodies of literature suggest that classroom text production is a complicated process because it involves not just identity, but also texts and curricula. L2 learners also need both linguistic and social awareness to understand their worlds. Indeed, Janks (2014) mentions that critical literacies have much to do with power and social imagination that social transformation should be centered with the uses the language as a
medium of communication. I maintain that literacy pedagogical practices, curricula, and students’ realization and performance are all connected closely with each other in developing critical awareness and identities to participate in the world.

How can we move from this point to have L2 learners understand all aspects of texts and make sense of texts through multiple meanings in maintaining L1 and L2? Since writing is a reflective practice, I argue that writing from a social perspective and using both L1 and L2 in writing will combine to critical literacies. Many scholars claim that reading and writing are equally important. However, writing is less researched than reading in critical literacy within L2 contexts (Janks & Vasquez, 2011). Indeed, “writers need a critical social consciousness to produce texts that make a difference to the ways in which we ‘name’ and understand the world” (Janks, 2010, p. 158). In that sense, when students have access to understand all aspects of texts through the curriculum and pedagogical practices, they will be aware that all texts are political (Pennycook, 2001). Such critical literacy practices may empower L2 learners to shift to other identity positions, develop ownership of their work, and produce more innovative work about texts and, at the same time, rewrite power relations challenging taken-for-granted assumptions of society and promote critical understanding of the world. Therefore, I claim that L2 pedagogical practices and text production need to focus on how language and literacy are mediated in our society, and to develop social and language awareness (Janks, 2010). To create such a setting empowers students to take actions to negotiate texts and make them meaningful.
2.5 Methodological Limitations and Affordances

The methodologies of the empirical studies in this review were all qualitative, but used a range of distinct approaches, e.g., design-based research (Comber & Nixon, 2013), descriptive case study (Cohen, 2011; Early & Yeung, 2009), collective pedagogical inquiry (Ntelioglou et al., 2014), ethnographic and action research (Stille, 2011), or combinations of two or three other qualitative approaches. During the annotating process, I discovered some methodological flaws. First, the methodology as a research design was mixed with the pedagogical project itself for research, but was not articulated enough to delineate the perspectives or the reasons for adopting the methodology. For example, Flint and Laman (2012) grounded their data in the writers’ workshop approach and analyzed the data using the four social practices or aspects of critical literacies (Lewison et al., 2002) without mentioning any research design. In another example, Giampapa (2010, p. 413) stated, "The data for this case study were collected over one and one-half years (2004-2005). This project was an ethnographic, action research in which I collaborated closely with Perminder ... " The confusion for readers occurs when terms like “ethnographic case study” or “action research” are mentioned, but the methodology is not explained or only briefly explained to help readers understand the rationale for employing it. Second, the descriptions of issue statement or theoretical framework overrode the methodology or research design and hastily moved to findings.

My understanding is that most identity-text studies are conducted using participatory action research methods. This approach emphasizes the collaborative work between researchers and practitioners since researchers also engage in curriculum planning or classroom teaching. The role between researcher and practitioner could be
confused while dealing with data and representing the research. Commonly, the literature was presented descriptively, with attention to the practical side of the project from a practitioner’s perspective. Next, some studies I reviewed need more data resources to answer their research questions or connect with the theoretical framework. If the methodology can be well defined in a study, I argue that the connection between theoretical framework and data analysis could be better integrated with an etic perspective to approach data. Connecting the theoretical framework and data will also help the researcher to interpret multiple data sources to triangulate the data for validity and credibility.

In the next chapter, several theoretical conceptualizations will be discussed because they guide this study with a sociocultural perspective. Chapter 3 begins with an overview that outlines the chapter.
CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Overview

In this chapter, I discuss four major theoretical constructs for my study: critical sociocultural perspective on L2 and literacy learning, pedagogy of critical biliteracies, social semiotic theory, and translanguaging. I prioritize critical sociocultural perspective as an overarching theory that addresses the importance of identity and subjectivity in the classroom and an alternative way to understand how children learn an L2 to become bilingual and biliterate in the school setting. Then, I synthesize an integrated critical biliteracies model to explore the pedagogical process of content-based L2 learning and the opportunities for teaching critical literacy. In the last two sections of this chapter, I present both social semiotic theory and translanguaging as approaches to learning in a meaningful space by taking advantage of multimodal experiences and students’ backgrounds, i.e., their first language (L1), in my study context of a bilingual immersion classroom. These four theoretical constructs in combination provide an insightful framework to understand learning as a process and product. Specifically, the synergy among students, teacher, curriculum, and learning environment can reveal their diverse identities and voice their ideas for L2 writing and multimodal text production toward becoming bilingual and biliterate.

3.2 Critical Sociocultural Perspective on L2 and Literacy Learning

3.2.1 Views of Literacy

In the field of literacy education and research, literacy has been defined in different ways depending on literacy paradigms, including psycholinguistic/linguistic,
cognitive linguistic, and sociocultural (Hall, 2003/2010; Kern, 2001; Larson & Marsh, 2015). For example, the psycholinguistic/linguistic aspect of literacy is connected to conventional grammatical rules and language forms to produce accurate sentences or oral/written languages by combining words in correct sentence order within the appropriate grammatical system (Hall, 2003/2010; Kern, 2001; Larson & Marsh, 2015). With such a functional view, literacy is defined in terms of traditional reading and writing practices and considered a set of skills or competencies (e.g., sounding out words, connecting sounds to written words, making meaning with accurate rules). As for the cognitive linguistic aspect, literacy learning concentrates on comprehension, cognition and metacognition, and the process of knowing involves active thinking processes such as thinking, referencing, inferring and connecting, contrasting, and even problem solving (Kern, 2000). Based on Piaget’s schema theory, new knowledge is constructed by placing authentic tasks and texts in context, which requires activating one’s foundational knowledge (Tompkins, Campbell, Green, & Smith, 2014). In that sense, literacy learning is considered context-specific and purpose-oriented, thus allowing knowledge to be mentally processed to build information in a person’s cognitive system (Kern, 2000; Tompkins et al., 2014).

In the contemporary era, the definition of literacy has been expanded to a wider sociocultural view. Fundamental to the sociocultural aspects of literacy is Vygotsky’s work. All learning, according to Vygotsky, is a dynamic process because development lies in the learner’s interactions with the external world and negotiating through these interactions in cultural, historic, linguistic, psychological, and social settings (Lantolf, 2000). In that sense, literacy is constructed through “socialization and acculturation”
(Kern, 2001, p. 35). One key component of Vygostsky’s theory, mediation, explains that learning happens when learners use external cultural tools (such as reading, writing) to internalize language into their thoughts through a cognitive process (Lantolf, 1994). A wider view of the sociocultural perspective of literacy is captured in Gee’s theory of literacy as social practices (Gee, 1996) because literacy is embedded in one’s everyday life as a social practice that people practice to make sense of the world (Barton & Hamilton, 1993; Gee, 2000; Heath, 1983; Luke, 2014; Street, 1995), whether that world is one’s school, home, community, intuition or society (Lave & Wegner, 1991). Such a sociocultural view of literacy helps to understand how language learners make sense of the world through language, and the centrality of a sociocultural world shapes and mediates learning and meaning making to internalize language (Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007).

However, sociocultural theories fail to provide concrete concepts for literacy practices and development in today’s world (Lewis et al., 2007). For example, sociocultural theories do not explain how individual identity, a sense of self, and multiple identities are produced through language and discourse; language and representations often remain unexamined. A critical sociocultural perspective is a social turn in examining the tensions in literacy and language learning and the enactment of identity and subjectivity in relation to power and becoming. Such a view contributes to the contemporary view of literacy learning, in which literacies are seen as having more than one meaning and learning is conceptualized as becoming and shifting identities (Lewis et al., 2007).
3.2.2 Identities and Positioning

Identities are recognized and developed naturally through people’s affiliations, groups or communities when they share common interests, information or participate in practices to maintain specific relationships. One’s socially and culturally constructed identities, which are affiliated with a title, an organization, or ethnic group, center one’s differences in racial, ethnic, social, and cultural identities, i.e., an individual is clearly distinguished from another particular group (Moje & Luke, 2011; Norton 2006). For example, I have identities as an Asian female graduate student and as a member of a Pokémon Club, in which I regularly meet with other club members to catch Pokémon monsters together. These different identities (Asian, female, student, Pokémon fan) are acknowledged by others’ recognition of these roles. Such identities may often be perceived as group identities instead of individual differences based on the nature of what one knows, does, and believes (Gee, 2001). Besides, these scenarios are attached to a particular context, that positions me in particular ways but not in multiple positioning contexts. For these reasons, the potential problem of one’s identities from these categories are tied and stable (Moje & Luke, 2011). This static identity will influence the view of literacy and perception of knowledge as a skill or linear understanding of literacy in the classroom. In contrast, conceptualizing identities as dynamic and changing provides a space and opportunity to pay attention to individual identity and agency to diversify various literacy practices for literacy development (Moje & Luke, 2011).

Language practices are considered crucial by poststructuralists to position individual and group identities because both identities are constructed through social relationships (Weedon, 1987). Indeed, language has been described by as “the place
where actual and possible forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity is constructed (Weedon, 1987, p. 21). Furthermore, subjectivity “is used to refer to the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the word” (Weedon, 1987, p. 32). Obviously, identities are socially and culturally embedded and interacted. These are discursive identities because power is drawn from people’s dialogues and discourse, and people are treated in certain ways and recognized through their interactions (Gee, 2001). The definition of subjectivity proposed by poststructuralists is “precarious, contradictory and in process, constantly being reconstituted in discourse each time we think or speak” (Weedon, 1987, p. 33). In other words, individuals negotiate discursive self-identities through dynamic multiple and diverse social positions across time and space (David & Harré, 1990; Lewis et al., 2007). These focused identities are seen as “the process of becoming instead of being” (Hall, 1997, p. 226). To conclude, poststructuralists view language and literacy with multiple meanings and pluralizes identities to indicate that “one person might enact many different identities, both across a developmental trajectory or within a variety of different contexts” (Moje & Luke, 2009, p. 418).

The critical social view of literacy and language takes its perspective from poststructuralism and proposes that different identities are enacted and performed through a variety of interactive practices such as discourse, body movements, reading, writing, listening, or dialogues around a text (Bakhtin 1981, 1984; Kramsch 2009, 1993; Norton 2006, 2012). This negotiation of identities through discourses, narratives, and power is
called identity positioning (Moje & Luke, 2009). Here power refers to how power relations assign one’s social position and how an individual accepts or struggles with this position. The positioning of identities values “doing” and “performing,” with identities constructed across time, space or place, and community. The shifting nature of these positions enacts the subjectivity not only from oneself, but also from others as an ongoing and continuous process to the next position. Shifting identities acknowledges learners’ power to make sense of self and literacy in various social positions.

3.2.3 Identity and Identity Positioning in L2 and Literacy Learning

Literacy and language studies are increasingly advocating for a social turn in theories of L2 acquisition to show interest in learners’ identities and agency because the critical sociocultural view of learning breaks the traditional view of discrete skills or competencies. On many learning occasions, bi/multilingual language learners might be unclear about the new language they are learning because little attention has been paid to the construction of identity and subject position (Kramsch, 2010). In other words, more attention has been paid to linguistic comprehension, reproduction, and skills than on how language, literacy, learning, discourse, and subject positions intersect with each other to shape a bi/multilingual to become agentive in a wider social context. Kramsch (2010) complicates communicative competence and expands L2 language and literacy learning to embrace sociocultural aspects of learning on how language learning shapes who we are across languages, cultures, and power relations. Language is constructed from symbolic codes with arbitrary and unitary meanings (Bourdieu, 1991; de Saussure 1916/1959). In Kramsch’s perspective (2010), subjectivity refers to how bi/multilingual learners negotiate their identities consciously or unconsciously by exercising the power to
interpret and internalize these codes to become a subject. Multilingual subjects negotiate identities and form their subjectivities through their interactions with others and the environment by conceptualizing all the perceptions, imagination and thoughts around them in becoming oneself as a multilingual subject (Kramsch, 2010). When learning is situated in practices and participation, multiple identity positions are enacted (Norton & Dooley, 2013). Understanding how the dynamic identities of L2/multilingual learners are shaped provides educational possibilities and opportunities.

In L2 education, the critical sociocultural perspective on language and literacy learning provides an alternate but important approach to examine the situated practices and micro performances of learners, with a focus on the tensions, struggles and disconnections that learners experience. Dynamic identities question the binary positions that have been socially constructed since they are often used to label, privilege or marginalize learners based on stereotypes, abilities, or performance (Lin, 2008). This shift in attention contributes to the learning process instead of its product, which allows pedagogical opportunities and access to resources by taking advantage of critical and teachable moments. Through all linguistic repertoires and shared ways of knowing, thinking, believing, acting, and communicating, learners interact with each other, engage in cultural practices, and participate in discourse communities to become a member of a discourse community (Gee, 2001). Therefore, understanding the messiness of the learning process and learners’ struggles can shape learning and language practices to help learners become long-term, participating members of discourse communities. Further, the construction of identities motivates learners to learn a language and engage them in
situated communication. Such a shift allows the transformation of identities from being to becoming an individual in a social place where learners belong.

3.3 Social Semiotic Theory

The purpose of this section is to examine social semiotic theory (Bezemer & Kress, 2016) because it provides a conceptual framework to approach and interpret research data on how students make sense of their learning through multimodal experiences in a L2 classroom. Social semiotic theory involves the intersection of semiotics, linguistics, multimodality, learning, and communications. First, I initiate the topic/discussion with de Saussure’s view (1959) on language and language systems since it is fundamental to social semiotic theory. Then, I discuss two schools of thoughts in semiotics and linguistics, those of two eminent scholars Charles Sanders Pierce and Michael Halliday, which greatly influenced the formation of social semiotic theory. After reviewing these perspectives, I focus on the pivotal characteristics of social semiotic theory and identify the different modalities with meaning potentials. Finally, I delve into the relationships among social semiotic theory, learning, and communications and how these elements might impact learning in the current era.

3.3.1 Historical Background of Social Semiotic Theory

In the field of semiotics (semiology), the fundamental language concept is in signs. Indeed, a pioneer scholar in semiotics, de Saussure (1959, p. 77), states that “[l]anguage is a system of signs that expresses ideas and is therefore comparable to a system of writing, the alphabet of deaf mutes [sic], symbolic rites, polite formulas, military signs, etc.” Furthermore, language is composed of signifiers (the written forms of sounds), the signified (the concept or idea of something), and meanings that are
realized through signs (de Saussure, 1959). What de Saussure meant is that language is used to convey meanings by combining the linguistic system, the thoughts of speakers, and socially and culturally constructed experience. de Saussure argues against a traditional view of language, its material and referential consequences, which is structured to name or define objects. de Saussure claims that meanings are constructed by agreement among members of a community who define signs together. Thus, relationships between the signifier and the signified are arbitrary. People from different communities develop different signs to similarly express a concept, but with slightly different definitions. For example, consider a cat. People from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds might have the same concept of a soft and furry animal. However, “cat” is read and pronounced differently in different languages, and the interpreted meanings might also be culturally diverse. Some cultures might perceive a cat as mysterious, secretive or supernatural, whereas others might associate a cat with cleverness and intelligence. Once a signifier and a signified are conjoined with a degree of agreement, they are inseparable. Therefore, people from the same linguistic community or system can understand the concept, but they might also use a different signifier and create meanings that are slightly different. In de Saussure’s perspective (1959), the purpose of language is to communicate thoughts through sounds/texts based on “signification,” or when people use the signs meaningfully and purposefully.

Taking a different view social semiotic theory, Kress and Bezemer assert that “[s]igns are elements in which the signified (a meaning) and the signifier (a material form) have been brought together” (2016, p. 8), but signs are never the same even within a shared culture. Although Kress and Bezemer agree with de Saussure that meanings
(signs) are used by combining these two language concepts, they claim that signs are made differently based on how the interpreted meanings are activated by people, sign-makers or participants (Lindstrand, 2008). The social semiotic theory they propose is rooted in the epistemology of semiotics and linguistics introduced by Charles Sanders Pierce and Michael Halliday.

Pierce (1965) considers a sign as existing within an interconnected triangular relationship: a sign (which he calls a “sign vehicle”), an object, and an interpretant. A sign vehicle is similar to de Saussure’s signifier; it means the form, the sounds, written words or utterances. What Pierce calls an object is like the signified; it refers to the ideas made or interpreted by a person. Finally, an “interpretant” is the effect of the sign and the object relationship (Pierce, 1965). In contrast to de Saussure’s binary view of signs, Pierce takes a critical perspective by adding the interpretant. This addition is significant because an object of the sign can be better understood when the relationship between an object and a sign is developed; also, the meanings can be activated by the person who participates in the communication. Pierce accentuates how representations and interpretations of signs are an inevitably interactive process. In Pierce’s view, anything in our environment can be a sign if it contributes to meanings and enables us to communicate either purposefully or unintentionally (Yakin & Totu, 2014).

Halliday, the first linguist to connect language and social semiotics, considers language a part of semiotics because it “is understood in its relationship to social structure” (Halliday & Hasan, 2012, p. 4). In Halliday’s perspective, signs might be too narrow to explain the phenomena of language and our relationship to language. The word “social” encourages more expansive thinking about language, which meaning and
meaning-making take priority while using different media in or outside language systems. In Halliday’s framework, social structure is defined as “a social system or culture, as a system of meanings” (Halliday & Hassan, 2012, p. 4).

In other words, language can have multiple and diverse meanings within a single cultural context. This concept is significant in language acquisition. In addition, due to variables in different cultural contexts, language acquisition should relate to three meta-functional meanings: ideational/experience (field-topic or events), interpersonal (tenor-roles of participants) and textual (mode-role of language).

Such a multi-dimensional view of language explains how language users can take abstract language concepts into concrete ideas and support them to make different linguistic choices to communicate or exchange information (Eggins, 2004). In addition, Halliday’s functional approach emphasizes that not only written texts, but also oral language serve as semiotic resources to make meanings in a context (Eggins, 2004).

3.3.2 What is Social Semiotic Theory?

Thus, social semiotic theory takes a multimodal perspective of learning and communication in various socialization situations or within educational domains where participants make meanings with supportive sources around them (Kress & Bezemer, 2016). The word “multimodal” expands meaning-making resources to a variety of mediums, beyond written texts and oral language, including visual images, music, gestures, voice, movements, comic strips, films, newspapers, radio broadcasts, and magazines (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; New London Group, 1996; O’Halloran & Lim, 2011). Traditionally, academics are solely or primarily concerned with written texts as the resource for information and communication. However, social semiotic theory
expands the word “mode” to embrace all the different resources with the potential to provide meanings. All are semiotic resources. Mode has been defined as “a socially shaped and culturally given resource for making meaning” (Kress, 2016, p. 60).

3.3.2.1 Examples of Modes

Written language includes handwriting, written texts, texts presented in different mediums (e.g. iPads, computer screens, or interactive whiteboards), and texts written in different linguistic forms. Reading and writing to create meanings for others can be part of this form. Spoken language includes any utterances, talks, dialogues, online stories, speaking, chatting, socializing and presenting. Visual mode/representation includes images, pictures, objects, crafts, animations, and symbols. Audio mode includes music, sounds, noises, alerts, hearing and listening. Tactile mode includes touch, smell, and taste, feel, sensations, hands-on and physical contacts. Gestural mode includes movements, gestures, facial expressions and gaze. Spatial mode includes anything related to space or environment, such as interpersonal distance, spacing, layout, place, landscape, streets, architecture/buildings, proximity. (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, 2013; Kress 2001, 1998, 2016; New London Group, 1996). These examples of modes are familiar, but are seldom considered meaning-making devices. In the next section, I discuss why modes are socially and culturally constructed in relation to meanings.

Social semiotics theory has three vital components (Bezemer & Kress, 2016): 1) the relationship between form and meaning, 2) how people opt to create signs, and 3) mode that allows any meanings that might create impacts. In the first component, every sign is newly made instead of being arbitrarily used because people develop their relationships with form. The forms are considered cues. Modes have various potentials.
The features of the form could have significant or insignificant meaning to people while creating signs. In the second component, people create signs based on their needs and the conditions when they are situated or interact in/with their environment. Modes have possibilities and limitations depending on where you are, how you use the signs, and in what ways institutions acknowledge them. In the third component, every mode conveys different meanings depending on whether it is a single mode or accompanied by two or more modes. Modes come in various combinations to create signs. For example, in one text, we can find multiple signs. In some situations, a single mode might produce one sign or another sign; in other situations, two or three modes might create one sign together. The combinations of modes vary specifically for each situation.

Bezemer and Kress’s approach takes advantage of modes of communication as semiotic and meaning-making resources, which offer sign makers “historically specific and socially and culturally shared options” (National Centre for Research Methods, 2012) as they mediate in relation with other modes and construct meanings. Meanwhile, learners create different signs situated in the modes and interact within their environment. One important aspect of social semiotic theory considers not only the meaning made by people who make signs, but also the impact on people who receive the signs.

By extension, semiotic meaning could change or happen within one mode or across different modes. Transformation is a term used to describe one or two categories of semiotic change; transduction refers to the changes across different modes (Bezemer & Kress, 2016). In my perspective, the meanings can be related across different modes, which means that learners make meaning in one mode first by drawing on the previous meaning in another mode. Let’s take one everyday scene as an example. When we are
engaged by music, movies or literature, many times we have some familiarity with some episodes, images, signs, or language styles because we might have seen them somewhere before. Such overlapping experiences might bring us closer to the texts because we might comprehend them better due to our experiences. Alternatively, we might add extra meanings on top of what the creator intended. The more we see it, the more we can understand by drawing from our experiences. Such a phenomenon is commonly perceived as intertextuality, which is used widely in literary textual analysis.

The concept of intertextuality, originated by Julia Kristeva (1980), appeared in *Dialogic Imagination* (Bakhtin, 1981). When Bakhtin analyzed classical Greek and classical Roman literature such as novels and narratives, he noticed that all these texts were like patchworks because they shared some degree of similarity. These texts contained dialogic features or heterglossia (multiple voices). In Bakhtin’s words, “[L]anguages throw light on each other: one language can, after all, see itself only in the light of another language” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 12). He maintains that one text is shaped by another text, which means that an author borrows text from other texts. Thus, we can see one text in another text.

Bakhtin’s concept of intertextuality was interpreted by Kristeva (1986, p. 37) as follows: “... any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another.” Expanding on Bakhtin’s concept, Kristeva proposed a new perspective by focusing on transformation: even authors can draw from others, due to different text purposes, authors might transform the topic and subject with new interpretations (Kristeva, 1986). More recently, the concept of intertextuality has been applied in the educational context to understand classroom discourses. For example,
intertextuality has been characterized as “the juxtaposition of texts….intertextuality can include conversational texts, electronic texts, and nonverbal texts (e.g., pictures, graphs, architecture, among others). In the classroom, …textbooks open on the desks, …in a conversation with teacher, …maps hang on the wall…teacher’s writing on the board…” (Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto, & Shaurt-Faris, 2010, p. 40). In the classroom, these objects comprise the typical environment, with teachers and students so accustomed to them in their daily teaching and learning that they never think that they can draw meanings from them. Even when teachers do draw meanings, they are probably not aware of it, because these surroundings are not generally considered part of the learning, or is this practice valued within school cultures. But of course, teachers do draw meanings from objects in the classroom. Social semiotic theory takes an anthropological approach to intertextual connections to understand how participants or sign makers create interpretations and meanings by interacting with the learning environment.

3.3.3 The Intersection between Social Semiotic Theory and Learning

Learning is perceived as communicating and is closely related with how particular meanings are made through different modalities or ensembles of modes. Multimodality provides “a multiplicity of modes, all of which have the potential to contribute equally to meaning” (Jewitt, 2016, p. 14). People can use semiotic resources to create meaning for their learning and representations and interpretation across different modes are critical to make meanings. “Synesthesia” is a term used to describe the process transferring meaning from one mode to another. It is often considered a feeling or an ability to build associations across modes and it also means the senses and the ability to mix at least two modes to make meanings (Cope & Kalantzis, 2016). Young children naturally have such
synesthetic capacity to shift their ideas fluidly from oral language to pictures (Kress, 1997). However, due to the emphasis of single mode-written language of school literacy, the capacities for synesthesia are thwarted by formal schooling, due to schools focusing on a single form of literacy like writing, thus confining learners to one kind of literacy (Kress, 1997). What follows is that students can make meanings in one mode but cannot transfer to another mode or translate two different modes into the same meaning. One possible reason for this is that the traditional meaning of school literacy concentrates students’ views exclusively on the single mode within print text. This is what schools are expected to do, but it is ultimately limiting because we live with various multimodal experiences and make sense of our world by creating meanings through these resources.

In sum, taking the social semiotic perspective on communication and learning will support students to engage with all different multimodal experiences in the world. In today’s schools, teachers need to build learners’ multi-tasking skills to meet the needs of an ever-changing society. Although it is difficult to observe the processes or changes that synesthesia exercises in our brain, the identity of synesthesia can be revived through multiple literacy practices. From a humanities approach, it is assumed that everyone has the potential for many future possibilities as they desire in the current era of globalization. Incorporating the perspective of multiliteracies into bilingual language and literacy education is a way to promote agency and make learning meaningful with alternative forms of design. Indeed, “[e]ach trace of semiotic work demonstrates learning: every sign and every sign complex is a sign of learning, regardless of whether and to what degrees others-guides or instructors-are there to shape the learner’s engagement” (Bezemer & Kress, 2016, p. 61). Thus, school educators and classroom teachers should
allow different semiotic resources to permeate the curriculum and classroom. In that sense, learners will have additional resources to draw on while understanding a new language.

3.4 Reframed Pedagogy of Multiliteracies (or Integrative Model of Critical Biliteracies)

In this section, I first introduce the original version of a pedagogy of multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996), then a reframed version of the pedagogy of multiliteracies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015). I mainly concentrate on the elaboration of reflexive pedagogy in these pedagogical models because their focus locates the process of how one teaches multiliteracies, which includes a series of micro-level pedagogical and learning practices crucial and critical to the curriculum work. Last, I discuss the limitations of these pedagogies and how reflexive pedagogy contributes to critical L2/bilingual education, while combining it with other textual and critical practices toward an integrative model of critical biliteracies.

3.4.1 Pedagogy of Multiliteracies

*Multiliteracies*, a term reflecting a wider view of literacies coined by a group of literacy experts and scholars (New London Group, 1996), challenges the assumption of traditional scholars that literacy is limited to printed texts. The term *multiliteracies*, which reflects changes in literacy due to advanced digital technologies and changing economies, refers to using different textual modalities such as images, sounds, music, text, space, gestures, symbols, and icons as teaching or learning resources in literacy instruction (Bezemer & Kress, 2016; Kalantzis & Cope, 2009, 2010, 2013, 2016; New London Group, 1996). The original pedagogy of multiliteracies included four pedagogical
processes: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practices (New London Group, 1996). These processes allow literacy practices to move between personal experience, immediate classroom situations, and other social contexts. Since multimodal text production is the main pursuit of multiliteracies pedagogy, these four processes are closely related and interwoven with three design concepts of producing texts: available design, design, and redesign. Available design refers to learners as active designers of meaning reaching out and taking advantage of the resources around them to create meaning. Design means that designers take actions while creating meaningful projects. Redesign speaks to how the newly produced work turns into new knowledge for learners and their audience, a process considered transformative (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; New London Group, 1996). In other words, designing and redesigning texts exposes learners to a variety of experiences with text production, e.g., understanding different text positions, creating meanings through different modes, as well as constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing texts (Janks, 2014). More importantly, such interactive and recursive cycles construct new understandings in connection to learners’ local, social and global contexts (Luke, 2012).

However, during the past two decades, new technological innovations such as the internet, smart phones, tablets, iCloud, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, online reading, and e-books have been constantly updated, dramatically impacting schooling and the world we live in. These innovations influence how current and future generations read, write, and learn in schools. When technology shapes a new perspective about texts and influences how we communicate and share resources in everyday life, we as educators must face the issue of what else to offer in the classroom. Therefore, beyond the digital
technology, educators need to examine how well existing school curriculums and classroom practices can cope with these changes for the current and upcoming generations in the 21st century.

3.4.2 Reflexive Pedagogy

A new perspective of the original pedagogy of multiliteracies was recently added in support of digital technology-integrated literacy in the contemporary classroom (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015). This reframed pedagogy of multiliteracies is like the original one in that modes of meaning and text production still play a part. The new part switches focus from “what” this pedagogy produces to “how” the process of pedagogical practices works. As shown in Figure 1, these knowledge processes include four major dimensions (experiencing, conceptualizing, analyzing, and applying) and two levels of pedagogical practice for each dimension (experiencing the new and the known; conceptualizing by naming and with theory; analyzing functionally and critically; and applying appropriately and creatively).

Figure 3.1. Knowledge Processes
In this reframed pedagogy, all pedagogical practices are not applied linearly, but are interconnected, with the challenge of moving between these practices to build connections in learning (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015). Moreover, Cope and Kalantzis propose a reflexive pedagogy to problematize traditional teacher-centered instruction, rethink the approach of constructivism, and emphasize design and transformative creation in the classroom (2009, 2015). I agree with this reflexive pedagogy because it articulates knowledge-acquisition processes with specific pedagogical actions in support of curriculum work, and design refers to a pedagogical approach that positions teachers as designers of teaching, acknowledging their capacity to reflect and plan teaching activities at various levels in a thoughtful and organized sequence (Cope & Kalantzis, 2012). In addition, the concept of redesign underscores process and production instead of replication, allowing learners to convey meanings or exchange information, ideas, feelings or intentions in their representations to connect with others in new situations.

I acknowledge that these pedagogical practices support learning from fundamental to advanced aspects that can effectively instantiate abstract concepts to concrete owned knowledge. These specific pedagogical practices also provide a framework allowing teachers to examine and reinforce teaching practices to avoid perpetuating ideologies and practices. One strength of reflexive pedagogy is its focus on creative and transformative production instead of replicating someone’s work for learning outcomes, a focus that is very important for the L2 classroom. Design-based learning connects the learning process and product. During the process, learners negotiate their identities and develop agency in acquiring literacy. Thus, producing work for another
context inspires students’ interest to engage in literacy practices and supports students’ success in the learning and producing processes. Such reflexive pedagogy positions teachers as designers and students as active learners because learner-generated texts are considered one aspect of the meaning-making process leading to transformative actions and learners’ contributing their production to the world (Kalantzis & Cope, 2009; New London Group, 1996). In a similar fashion, reflexive pedagogy echoes curriculum weaving, also known as a permeable curriculum (Dyson, 1990, 1993). That is, a literacy curriculum cannot be linear or one dimensional, but should be mixed or a hybrid lacing together different activities because learning progresses based on teachers’ and learners’ interacting and negotiating through a variety of teaching practices or activities (Dyson, 1993). Thus, weaving is used as a metaphor to highlight using and organizing different literacy activities to create a wealth of learning resources by considering learners’ experience and social world, while produce written texts in the classroom (Cazden 2006; Dyson, 1990; Luke et al., 2003). That is, students’ social world contributes significantly to their literacy growth.

3.4.3 Limitations of Reflexive Pedagogy

Whereas reflexive pedagogy as theorized by Cope and Kalantzis (2015) sheds light on multiliteracies-based learning in literacy education, second/foreign languages or subjects in other disciplines, I observed that some perspectives disappeared for the second/bilingual language classroom. L2 linguistic practices that move through different phases of learning a new language from understanding the linguistic codes and symbols to language uses in context are not articulated in reflexive pedagogy to highlight a road map from the text-making process to text production in bilingual and L2 classrooms. To
expand the ideas of reflexive pedagogy to the L2 classroom, I discuss three considerations: 1) L2 linguistic and textual dimensions, 2) orientations of criticality, and 3) transcultural and translinguistic phenomena.

First, reflexive pedagogy fails to anticipate how different aspects of L2 literacy relate to each pedagogical practice. In the L2 classroom, words and sentences serve as the basis of meaning-making resources. With these linguistic components, the phonological, morphemic, and syntactic resources, learners can make choices to create meanings and use the language. However, in the L2 classroom, literacy practices are more often focused at the word and sentence levels. Therefore, defining text positions and mapping out linguistic moves allow L2 educators and learners to move flexibly between different aspects of L2 literacy. Indeed, texts and discourses from metalinguistic and metacognitive aspects of learning languages have been suggested to influence L2 readers’ and writers’ worlds and minds (Luke, 2013). In that sense, it is essential to associate different text positions with each pedagogical practice to expand the perspective of how texts function in different contexts.

One model that has focused on textual concepts and processes that harmonize with reflexive pedagogy is the Four Resources Model (Freebody & Luke, 2003). This model can be used to examine pedagogical practices and teaching strategies to promote teachers’ beliefs and students’ learning efficacy in critical literacy education. The Four Resources Model also works well to critically interpret images or multimodal texts (Janks, 2014) since the advent of multiple literacies in the current era of digital technologies (Gee, 2014). However, the four-resources model lacks pedagogical actions to integrate into actual curriculum work and L2 teaching. In my view, the reframed
pedagogy of multiliteracies and the four-resources model can complement each other to support critical literacy practices in L2 contexts.

Second, the two practices, functional and critical practices within the dimension of analysis in reflexive pedagogy are connected in a logical sequence of teaching actions. However, these two practices share an ambiguous and narrow boundary because of the unclear orientation in which critical literacies has been practiced. Without concrete explanations, teachers might emphasize functional practices more than critical practices. Moreover, such ambiguities might distort teachers’ and students’ understanding of criticality or disorient them about what kind of critical capacity should be emphasized. Scholars have built an awareness that the confusion lies in critical literacies and critical thinking (Huang, 2015, Kubota, 2016)

As mentioned in Chapter 2, one well-known example of critical literacy is Freire’s critical pedagogy aimed at raising learner’s awareness to question the dominant power or ideologies in our everyday lives (Freire, 1970). Education is not neutral but ideological (Freire, 1970). In this sense, critical pedagogy offers alternative practices to the dominant linear-literacy curriculum and teaches that students can engage in work to know their potential, develop ongoing identities, and deepen their values and beliefs, thus developing into free and independent individuals through democratic education (Freire, 1970; Giroux & Giroux, 2004). In literacy practice, critical literacies can be practiced by examining the power relationships in texts or contextual situations. Critical literacies aim to focus on social issues and promote transformative actions to develop a fairer living environment.
Critical thinking refers to higher-order thinking, i.e., reasoning and logical thinking related to learning content (Huang, 2015; Kubota, 2016), which falls into the cognitive aspects of individual skill-based learning (Atkinson, 1997; Glaser, 1941). These two aspects can have a relationship, in which critical literacy might lead to critical thinking skills due to examining sociocultural and sociopolitical intentions in multiple positions. However, critical thinking is not necessarily concerned with power relationships or social changes.

Third, from my perspective, reflexive pedagogy, like critical pedagogy, falls into a trap of European epistemology of knowing because it might overlook transcultural and translinguistic/translanguaging phenomena in L2 education. In fact, when learning a foreign or second language, language classrooms naturally become spaces for developing hybrid cultures and languages (Byram, 1998; Kramsch, 1993, 2003) because both learners and students encounter more than one language and culture in the curriculum and classroom every day.

Translingualism can be defined as a fluid use of two languages by moving freely between two languages when writing and speaking. When students encounter two languages during their learning process, they constantly compare, either consciously or unconsciously, similarities or differences between the target language (L2) and their own language (L1). For example, L2 learners learn course materials in L2 with the teacher, who usually speaks more than one language besides his/her mother tongue; learners interact with other students in L2 through literacy activities; and they socialize with other students in L1. All these scenarios matter in L2 learners’ learning. As L2 users, they might draw connections from their semiotic resources by referring to their own language.
to understand the target language. In that sense, translingualism plays a critical role in language learning because all the L1 and L2 repertoires become semiotic resources to support language users in making sense of their learning and communication. Therefore, pedagogical considerations should maintain a translinguistic/translanguaging space that emphasizes not only the products of learning, but also the learning process.

As for transculturalism, its definition echoes that of translingualism. Transculturalism refers to people who encounter different cultures being able to move freely between cultures. From an anthropological perspective, culture refers to everything relating to human experience. Culture is invisible, but it contributes to individual identity because everyone has their personal history of culture, e.g., their own experience, interests, and life (Kramsch, 1993). However, teaching culture is challenging since it is invisible. Indeed, Kramsch claims that teaching culture is possible, and teachers do it all the time since whenever teachers in language classrooms engage students in linguistic codes, words, sentences, and even in small talk or conversation, they are teaching culture. As members of a community, we encounter every object and experience as parts of our culture, and new culture emerges as we connect (Kramsch, 2012). In that sense, we need to consider the materials and interactions we have in the classroom because “language shapes who you are, and you become a subject throughout your life in contact with various symbolic systems, including language” (Kramsch, 2012, p. 75). Likewise, when teaching students grammar, vocabulary and words only, teachers turn students into grammar and vocabulary words. Therefore, we need to consider using multiple sources to position students as multilingual subject. In the classroom, the teacher is a culture broker. From an all-is-culture perspective, the classroom has all kinds of different cultures. In
that sense, teachers need to have good relationships with students to understand their cultures. With an understanding of individual cultures, teachers can sense different dynamics and provide support to L2 learners. Even more important, culture in language education adds to meaning-making in communication through language and shared understanding. Thus, in the L2 classroom, an understanding of transcultural phenomena should be integrated into pedagogical practices.

3.4.4 Integrative Model of Critical Biliteracies

Based on the considerations above, I synthesized an integrated framework to support understanding each pedagogical action in bilingual/L2 learning in practicing multiliteracies. This model (Figure 2) has four pedagogical dimensions: experiencing/semiotic, conceptualizing/contextual, analyzing/interpretive, and applying/transformative. In the following sections, I explain each dimension in detail, along with its possible applications, based on the model.

Figure 3.2. Integrative Model of Critical Biliteracies for Content-Based L2 Learning (Luke & Freebody, 1997; Cope & Kalantzis 2015)
3.4.4.1 Experiencing/Semiotic Dimension

The core of the experiencing/semiotic dimension is to contextualize new learning of an academic concept or knowledge by connecting it to what is known, e.g., concepts, examples, or knowledge sources from learners’ social world (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015). In other words, students’ funds of knowledge from personal experiences or interests are valued in the classroom, and learners are immersed in familiar multimodal experiences such as oral language, pictures, artifacts, reading texts, and written texts in transition to unfamiliar information. In the traditional classroom, new knowledge aligns with power and the teacher’s authority. This dimension breaks the teacher-student binary and makes students aware of their learning through authentic experiences.

Why semiotic? The intention of the semiotic in this dimension is to make sense of learning by considering all resources available to the learners, enabling them to connect their prior experiences to current experiences to learn new topics or content. In the second/foreign language classroom, multimodal practices might provide authentic experiences as a hook to activate prior knowledge such as a multimodal text (images, sound, voice, symbols, artifacts, text design and layout, words, and grammar). This dimension also works as a hybrid space for the known phonological, morphological and syntactic components and content knowledge of a specific topic as resources in transit to the academic content of the new learning. In terms of L2 and content, code-breaking exercises help students to learn sounds, forms and meanings. Teachers might need to pre-teach key vocabulary words to support comprehension of the essential elements of a new concept or new discourse. Examples of possible literacy practices include reading aloud,
thinking aloud, having discussions, decoding signs, listening, reading, as well as showing and telling.

3.4.4.2 Conceptualizing/Contextual Dimension

In this dimension, the pedagogical practices of conceptualizing and contextualizing support developing an understanding of new terms and concepts, then encouraging language learners to build their own conceptualizations, with exercises including initial strategies such as labeling, identifying, and categorizing (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015). For example, contrasting allows students to take an active role in literacy practices by doing, saying, and thinking (Gee, 2001). In this way, learners can instantiate abstract concepts into their own knowledge. The subsequent strategy is theorizing (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015) because it encourages learners to connect all different pieces of their learning or various concepts by building their own theories.

Why contextual? The purpose of including contextual in this dimension is to transform the abstract concepts of new learning into concrete thoughts or ideas. In L2 education, teachers need to be mindful that L2 learners might develop different theories. Some learners might make it explicit, but some might be tacit (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015). Therefore, this dimension will need teachers’ formal or informal observations to monitor students’ learning process. In that sense, teachers will need to adjust or change some literacy practices by giving explicit instruction or more challenging tasks in term of theorizing. These practices contextualize learning by building connections to different layers of examples of text-to-text, text-to-self and text-to-word. This dimension is crucial for L2 learners in terms of linguistic understanding because they need to build new theories based on their new understanding of using L2 in context. Such understanding is
influenced by transculturalism and translingualism, which can be a benefit or an obstacle to building a new theory.

3.4.4.2.1 Examples to Contextualize Learning

Situated teaching is crucial for L2 learning because it bridges the abstract linguistic concepts to concrete concepts leading to building learners’ own conceptualization. The examples of contextualized learning are situated in meaning-making. Multiple of modes such as written text, images, sound, voice, symbols, L1 and L2, reading, writing, verbalizing can serve as meaning-making resources. Engaging the practice in specific linguistic components (words, grammar concepts) with/within targeted content sources (genre, topic) might support students to articulate their conceptualization. The examples of literacy practice include defining, naming, close reading, semantic analysis, making literacy videos, writing, verbalizing, modeling. In this dimension, L2 learners might recursively use code breaking, text participating, and text using in linguistic, cultural and cognitive aspects to solidify new concepts for the next two dimensions.

3.4.4.3 Analyzing/Interpretive Dimension

The purpose of this dimension is to think beyond the textual level and/or take alternative perspectives. In that sense, learners will need to examine their own position and take alternative perspectives by questioning some assumptions. By doing so, learners could examine the texts or analyze a specific sociocultural or sociopolitical situation critically to make logical, meaningful ethical connections to shift their perspective in understanding. One common strategy is questioning because different levels of questions can be used to examine hidden perspectives, analyze an author’s intention, or evaluate
how a text affects people in the present and past. Concurrently, these critical questions may motivate students to generate other questions or challenge taken-for-granted assumptions. Connecting to important topics or issues from students’ everyday life or social world to the classroom curriculum has been advocated to engage students in learning (Comber 2016, 2011; Kubota, 2014; Vasquez, 1998, 2017).

Why interpretive? The intention of being interpretive is to understand that texts are never neutral by examining them from different perspectives. This practice expands learning from linguistic to social aspects by bringing different positions to thinking about how texts work across audience, purpose, time and space. The critical part of this dimension is taking multiple perspectives (historical, cultural, sociological) to explore hidden agendas in texts by questioning them and the ways they represent the status quo. In that sense, learners’ interpretations play an important role in their literacy practice. The learning process should be reflective, critical, and analytical through various multimodal experiences.

3.4.4.3.1 Examples to Interpret Understanding

Several examples of literacy practice can be used to interpret understanding including examining and understanding a writer’s position, discovering one’s own values, understanding ideology and power relationships, evaluating other people’s perspectives and interests (multiple perspectives), using different levels of questioning, e.g., evaluative and interpretive questions such as “if you are …,” “what would you do if …,” and “why did the author use….” In addition, using the resources from learners’ social worlds might support the interpretation. These resources can be everyday events, design, pop culture, stories, images, social issues, and L2 textual sources.
All the above practices are framed in L2 contexts and embrace translingualism and transculturalism. In the L2/bilingual classroom, building critical language awareness is one aspect of learning a L2 for language users. For example, while learning two languages, learners need to understand the text content because it provides them an opportunity to think over the texts critically. An issues approach to content serves as a springboard to facilitate dialogue, question, justify thinking, and evaluate different positions (Kubota, 2014). In addition, teachers of L2 learners might need to model uses of L2 in context by analyzing linguistic features together or independently before producing texts.

3.4.4.4 Applying/Transformative Dimension

For the applying/transformative dimension, apply means to use the concepts of available designs, design and redesign to produce texts that might impact one’s world by integrating the previous three pedagogical dimensions with the resources around designers (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015). Rather than reproducing existing paradigms, the pursuit of producing text is creative and transformative, constructing knowledge through different layers. Indeed, learners “make an intervention in the world which is innovative and creative” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015, p. 22) and distinctly express their own voice or transfer their knowledge to a different context. Another way to look at critical literacy is that it is “about imagining thoughtful ways of thinking about reconstructing and resigning texts and images to convey different and more socially just and equitable messages that have real-life effects” (Vasquez, 2017, p. 5). In this way, deconstructing and reconstructing text helps learners to make sense of their learning and locate themselves in a new perspective while designing their texts or projects. Multimodal text production
offers possibilities to produce texts because many students’ diverse identities are valued and allow them to express their voices and apply the target language in a different context.

Why transformative? The intention of this aspect is to transform learning by creating different types of multimodal projects. The transformative dimension is to demonstrate and share what learners know, with producing texts as a creative instead of a replication process. Learners as designers take other designs as part of their semiotic resources and their work simultaneously contributes to the world. Transformation could be social or/and textual or/and personal, and text production should be based on learners’ interests and choices. Transformation is also an integrative process because learners can transfer their L1 literacy knowledge to L2 and integrate all dimensions of knowledge, thus moving from local to global to have a broader impact. Some possible literacy practices include modeling, writing in different genres, video projects, research, social action projects, and multi-genre projects. For students in an L2 classroom, pre-writing and modelling are necessary to guide students’ practice. During the design process, teachers can also reflect on their own practice to see if different styles of activities were used.

These pedagogical practices are alternative and mutually interactive because learning and teaching are always an ongoing process. All these dimensions (semiotic, contextual, interpretive and transformative) are through and across all pedagogical practices. Students’ learning experiences are constructed through authentic world examples, and these interconnections will lead them to form a kind of analytical competence and criticality to interrogate the intentions behind texts and examine the truth
with multiple understandings (Foucault, 1980). In addition, transformative practice allows learners to apply knowledge in the real world or to discover interventions and solutions for issues or problems in their bi/multilingual world. The flexibility of transformative practice allows teachers to take teaching initiatives depending on the teaching purpose, cultural context, or any unexpected situation. Taking these pedagogical perspectives as a mapping exercise for teaching, reflecting, or planning on curriculum will promote teachers’ curiosity, expand their resources for pedagogical practices, and meet not only their teaching purpose but also students’ needs. My view is that these perspectives serve as the foundation for teaching.

To conclude, design is always perceived as a creative, original invention because designers devote their subjectivities, histories, experiences and creativities to the process. In that sense, learning is diverse and not a linear process. Learners have opportunities to shift multiple identities to make sense of knowledge instead of replicating and reproducing knowledge that is presented to them. Every work is considered unique. As Cope and Kalantzis (2009) claim, “the moment of design is a moment of transformation, of remaking the world by representing the world afresh” (p. 177). Created meanings are situated not only in linguistic elements, but also in social and cultural contexts, i.e., both learning and meanings are multidimensional. Such repertoires will serve learners to interact in diverse, changing environments and build connections across communities.

3.5 Translanguaging

3.5.1 Notions of Translanguaging

Translanguaging is a recently invented term from bilingualism to explain how individuals possessing or using two or more languages make sense of their multilingual
world (Wei & Garcia, 2014) in schools or social settings. The majority of bilinguals or multi-linguals maybe not be conscious of the effect of translanguaging but actually experience it all the time in real life. For example, I sometimes use fewer or simpler words in my home language Chinese and mix them with my L2 English to converse or explain situations/phenomena to Chinese-English bilingual speakers. This is an ordinary example of creating meaning communication in two languages, but it is one way of showing how bi/multilinguals naturally take advantage of their dual-language repertoires to convey holistic meanings when communicating.

Traditionally, the above scenario was considered code-switching, referring to changing languages alternatively and purposefully depending on different situations or interlocutors (Green & Li, 2016). Code-switching situations happen when bilinguals cannot speak a new language fluently and replace a single word or a grammar structure with another language. Examples are the phenomena of Chinglish, Singlish or Spanglish, in which bilingual speakers mix L1 and L2 to make themselves understood in conversation. Although translanguaging is somewhat like code-switching with similar features, code-switching possesses a binary view of languages, which focuses more on a specific language. Historically, the assumption about code-switching was an error and not considered helping the development of biliteracies because the language use is not standard or accurate. Based on these stereotypes, code-switching has been considered a deficit or an obstacle for learning a new language. Conventional bilingualism emphasizes the pedagogical view on learning two languages separately to enhance bilingual competence. However, in that sense, learners are adversely affected by either maintaining one language or losing two languages (Cummins, 2000; Garcia & Wei, 2014).
How is translanguaging different from code-switching? The term translanguaging originated from the pedagogical practice of bilingual education in Welsh bilingual schools (Williams, 1994, 1996). The purpose was to polish L1 and L2 simultaneously in an effective way by receiving information in one language but producing in another language. However, this sense of translanguaging requires a similar linguistic competence in two languages and enough language resources to perform biliteracy tasks. Since then, translanguaging have been discussed and expanded in a paradigm shift that acknowledges how learners benefit from all linguistic repertoires they have to promote bilingualism and multilingualism. The definition of translanguaging and its pedagogical practices have been modified from cognitive, psycholinguistic, sociocultural, and sociopolitical aspects (Baker, 2011; Canagarajah, 2009; Creese & Blacklege, 2010; Cummins, 2008; Garcia, 2009/2010; Hornberger & Links, 2012; Wei, 2013). For example, by expanding on Williams’ prior work, Baker (2011) claims that two languages could facilitate each other to process learner’s full understanding of subject areas and knowledge. Baker argues that translanguaging has potential to improve the competence of the new language under the premise of sociocultural theory, through the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) by negotiating the meaning from known to unknown knowledge. The reason is that bilingual learners can borrow familiar knowledge from L1 (their home language) to build a metalanguage of L2 while acquiring a new language (L2). The integration of L1 and L2 shapes learners’ experiences and aligns with cognitive, content and bilingual development. In Baker’s view (2011), translanguaging in the classroom provides the possibility of enhancing students’ potential and language
capacities when teachers consistently design and implement strategies in pedagogical practice with two languages.

From the perspective of language ecology, Creese and Blackledge (2010) challenge the existing monolingual ideology and argue for flexible bilingualism and flexible pedagogical practices. In other words, when employing two languages simultaneously in pedagogy, students can engage and participate in learning with other learners and teachers. Creese and Blackledge focus on interactions among bilingual learners and the concept of a learning community, which connects learners’ lives through social aspects of language learning. Their research findings indicate that translanguaging engages heritage-language learners in learning their mother tongue when teachers and students employed translanguaging strategically, such as bilingual pedagogical practices located in translating and annotating. Furthermore, another study found that translating is closely related to translanguaging with benefits because it activates L1 and L2 linguistic repertoires with transformative effects (Creese, Blackledge, & Hu, 2016). Negotiating meanings develops new knowledge to make equivalent meanings between the original and new languages (Creese et al., 2016). In that sense, bilingual learners can construct hybrid identities while negotiating meanings through languages and other classroom members.

3.5.2 Translanguaging as a Critical Space

More recently, translanguaging has been widely credited for meaning making and comprehension as a benefit of using two languages (Baker, 2012; Cummins, 2009; Williams, 2002). Theorists of contemporary bilingualism, dynamic bilingualism (Garcia, 2011), and flexible bilingualism (Creese & Blackledge, 2011) advocate to break the
monolingual assumption and argue that translanguaging is an asset (Cummins, 2014; Garcia 2009) for developing bilingualism and biliteracies in bilingual schools. They contend that using a stronger language will facilitate use of a weaker language (Cummins, 2007) and that significantly integrating two languages (L1 and L2) into one whole meaning unit is just like a bicycle with two powerful wheels that can go further in any direction and to more places (García, 2009). Rather than seeing language in one system, translanguaging connects all necessary language resources and repertoires to consume and produce one whole language system (Wei & García, 2014). By extension, translanguaging incorporates code-switching of two languages, meaning-making processes, and complex discursive practices and allows bilingual learners to interact in multiple ways during classroom activities and practices, academic contexts and contents and their worlds (Hornberger, 2009). Therefore, the definition of translanguaging goes beyond code-switching in two languages. From my perspective, I consider translanguaging to be an active verb that is fluid, active and continuous, which shows that the process of learning a second or additional language(s) is a dynamic and complicated process and that language learners are actors performing interactive communicative tasks among recipients or interactants. In addition, bilingual language users build interconnections and associate all knowledge resources to communicate for purposes in becoming bilingual and biliterate.

An alternative perspective of translanguaging is that using two languages naturally for cultural and local contextual needs might lead to a creation, production or performance (Canagarajah, 2011, 2013). The concept of “code-meshing” is proposed, i.e., that translanguaging is “shuttling between the languages brought by the others to co-
construction meaning” (Canagarajah, 2009, p. 5). Canagarajah’s view centers interest in process-oriented but not product-oriented curriculum research, which contributes to teachable moments through dialogic engagement in scaffolding academic writing. Canagarajah’s goal is to advocate for critical pedagogy and maintain teacher-student power relationships in the bilingual classroom (Canagarajah, 2011). Indeed, translanguaging frequently requests drawing all language repertoires from an individual. What is more important, a “translanguaging space” (García & Wei, 2014) should be set aside in bi/multilingual classrooms, where L1 and L2 language, culture, and values conflate and impact on bilingual language users’ ideology and identity construction. Such a translanguaging space is crucial for developing hybrid cultures (Bhabha, 1994), new identities, language awareness and cultural sensitivity leading to criticality and creativity. The crucial point, then, is that bilingual language users can go beyond linguistic norms and become agentive in meaningful and purposeful communications in their social worlds by manipulating two languages freely (García & Wei, 2014).

[My] understanding of conceptualizing translanguaging in bi/multilingual writing is based on the work of Leonard and Nowacek (2016). They argue that “language deviation in writing can be considered not always a failure to transfer standard writing knowledge, but instead a norm of language in practice, one of its meaning-making functions” (Leonard & Nowacek, 2016, p. 261). In other words, the essence of their argument is that a writer’s idiosyncrasies or deviations in writing should be valued rather considered a deficit while making sense of their writing in a new language. The reality is that writing is not just about the linguistic codes and grammatical structure but also constructs the content and the personhood of a writer contributing to their history and
identities. When producing texts, bi/multilinguals make the best possible choices to create meaningful texts and to negotiate their writer’s identity through a mixture of prior and current resources such as linguistic repertoires, writing skills, and content knowledge in L1 and L2. Often, the produced text might be messy and unreadable and not meet the writing standard, reminding us that “sometimes what looks like a messy text—riddled with errors, seeming to ignore the assignment—might be a textual manifestation of the intellectually adventurous, rhetorically challenging work of negotiating the overlap of knowledges, identities, and languages” (Leonard & Nowacek, 2016, p. 261). Therefore, this analysis of translanguaging in relation to writing provides a view that writers move across the languages, learning, and knowledges. Meanwhile, learners’ efforts should be acknowledged when they move beyond the boundaries of the two languages to create meanings in their texts because they are textually exploring and adventuring.

3.5.3 Limitations of Translanguaging

Bilingual learners have different reasons, purposes and learning positions to acquire a new language. Although translanguaging appears to be favorable in developing bilingualism in different contexts, e.g., ELL, ESL classrooms, and other bilingual programs, L2/bilingual classrooms aim to achieve communicative competence in the target language. Educators and researchers practicing translanguaging in the classroom should avoid reproducing its disadvantages and be aware of its limitations (Lin, 2008; 2013). The urgent issue is that teachers and educators need to understand that two languages can be developed together; thinking otherwise is a misconception. It will be more advantageous to understand truly how to use translanguaging strategically to bring together the rich and varied cultural and linguistic resources from students’ home
language and a new language across different modalities and facilitate a new understanding. In their central role for students’ classroom learning, teachers not only support students’ cognitive and linguistic development but also facilitate their understanding about their local society and the world.

To develop future bi/multilingual global citizens, learners need to move across different modalities, which might deepen their critical understanding of language (García & Wei, 2014; Wei, 2011). Bilingual competence and confidence are constructed with different language modes, modalities, contexts and practices (Hornberger & Link, 2012). If learners depend only on a single mode, either oral or written communication, they cannot extend their learning and interact with others. Once the cross-linguistic connections are enlisted, learning in two languages becomes an ongoing process and permits the facilitates of two languages encoded in one system.

The above theories are interrelated and rooted in critical sociocultural perspective of L2 learning, central to learners’ diverse identities, power and agency, and negotiated through situated practices and interactions with others and their environment. In the next chapter, Chapter 4 (Methodology), the understanding of these theories to L2 classroom guides this study’s methodology and methods to examine how this critical sociocultural view illuminates pedagogical practice, learning processes and students’ texts.
CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Overview

In this chapter, I discuss the methodology employed in this study. First, I describe the research design and explain the rationale of choosing ethnographic methods for a classroom-based study. Second, I present the data sources. Next, I introduce the research context, the focal participants, and my position as the researcher. Then, I elaborate on my procedures of analyzing ethnographic data. In the last section, I reflect on the study and discuss methodological concerns and limitations.

4.2 Critical Ethnographic Case Study

The theoretical lens of this study is underpinned by a critical sociocultural view of L2 language and literacy because it prioritizes the social turn and critical aspects of L2 learning. This lens could attend to the social dynamics of language use, the negotiations and formation of language ideology, and students’ funds of knowledge and social relationships. The design for this one school-year study is a critical ethnographic case study (Bloome, 2012; Bloome et al., 2010; Carspecken, 1996; Dyson & Genishi, 2005; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw 2011), a combination of critical ethnography and ethnographic case study.

4.2.1 The Rationale for Critical Ethnographic Case Study

A case can be a social unit identified as a person, place, event, activity, or some kind of combination. Research on a case is constructed with the perspective to investigate not the phenomenon itself but the official or unofficial social phenomena around a social unit (Dyson & Genishi, 2005). The vision of the case aligns with classroom ethnography,
which provides not only a full view of the process of knowledge construction, e.g., interactions, knowledge, contexts, literacy practices, literacy events, and relationships (Bloome et al., 2010), but also the microperformances in literacy practices. Classroom ethnography questions/problematizes the taken-for-granted assumptions about classrooms, teachers and students we have been accustomed to for years with questions such as “What is a classroom? Who and what are in the classroom? What happens in the classroom? What does it mean to be in the classroom?” (Bloome, 2012, p. 14). Understanding such a crucial part of learning literacy could disrupt the binary view of students’ competence by perceiving knowledge construction as a process instead of a product.

In this study, the case refers to a fifth-grade Chinese-English bilingual classroom. In contrast to the previous K-4 grades, the fifth-grade school curriculum and literacy practices in both languages are a dramatic change. Many JBS teachers find the fifth grader to be a challenging transition for some students to participate in literacy practices or to advance their academic literacy, particularly in learning two languages. For these bilingual learners, literacies play an essential part in everyday life inside and outside school. Focusing on this case allowed an in-depth examination of a particular bi/multilingual context and offered insights into the cultures or factors shaping the process of L2 literacy learning. With the support of the research lens, I could use a theoretical framework to construct meaningful interpretations and explore how the school curriculum and particular literacy practices position teachers and students in the classroom.
To investigate the culture of the fifth-grade classroom, I centered my methods in ethnography. Choosing an ethnographic research design was a delight for several reasons. First, ethnography is a qualitative research approach used to pursue insights on the meaning of the things and incidents that people make within a specific context or to answer questions. Second, culture is the center of ethnographic interest. Culture is interpreted as how people do things and pursue their own meaning within their community (Galman, 2013). The value of qualitative research is to provide an in-depth understanding of phenomena in the social world (Creswell 2009; Horvat, 2013). Third, ethnography has several attractive features: 1) participant observation to understand an unfamiliar world, 2) insider’s perspective to learn participants’ experience with deep immersion, 3) the natural exploration of social and cultural practices of a certain group of people, community, or institution, and 4) thick descriptions of everything that happens in the research site as the basis for the ethnographer’s reflexive work (Emerson et al., 2005). Fourth, ethnographic study requires a holistic perspective of the research data by interpreting rich descriptions into a story instead of segments. Fifth, the current trend in ethnography, poststructurally informed, allows researchers to interpret and represent their inquiries with multi-faceted perspectives, drawing on various inquiry strategies (Davis, 2013).

However, ethnography has its critiques: a prolonged analytic process with a great deal of data, and lengthy story writing with too much trivia (Hammersley, 2006). Another drawback of ethnography, despite its strength of an emic perspective with thick description, is that complex fieldwork and descriptive writing might lead to researchers losing insight. Thus, as an ethnographer, I incorporated other research strategies to build
a more analytical perspective during study processes, which will be further elaborated in the data analysis section (section 4.7).

As for the “critical” part, I was informed by critical ethnography. One feature of ethnography is to leave the story undisturbed. The ethical dilemma that ethnographers usually have is whether to intervene in the site and to what degree. Critical ethnography offers some insights to dialogue with the participants and generate new data (Carspecken, 1996) to continue the ethnographic story with some interventions. Therefore, in considering my research agenda to understand and practice critical aspects of L2 literacy, I negotiated my role as an active observer and presented myself to student participants’ learning process, tensions, and identity formation. After immersing myself in the field, I was able to participate in curriculum planning with the classroom teacher and co-construct the research story with participants.

The above characteristics connect ethnography, the classroom, as well as literacy and language studies to make this design the best choice for an in-depth investigation of classroom literacy practices and student participants’ learning and meaning-making processes to become bilingual and biliterate.

4.2.2 The Research Phases

The research process involved five phases: exploration of the research contexts and participant recruitment, ethnographic data collection, preliminary data analysis, new data collection as participant observer, and data analysis. In Phase 1, I explored the research contexts, i.e., background information about how students learn two languages. Then I identified the social unit classroom as a case. Next, I followed a research protocol approved by my dissertation committee and the University of Massachusetts Amherst
Institutional Review Board (IRB) to recruit teacher, student, and parent participants and to obtain their informed consent. In Phase 2, I collected data using ethnographic methods. I observed bilingual classes and wrote field notes, collected artifacts (e.g., students’ work, lesson plans and curriculum materials), interviewed participants (teachers, students, and parents), and found patterns guided by my research questions.

In Phase 3, I analyzed preliminary data. Ethnography has the practice of participant observation in a natural setting, drawing on an emic perspective to understand the culture and how student participants make sense of their learning in two languages (L1 and L2). The goal of this phase was to discover cultural phenomena such as interaction patterns, participants’ meanings, particular power relations or systems, and cultural themes (Carspecken, 1996; Dennis, 2009; Madison, 2011) that inform Phase 4 and to identify how these preliminary findings could be used to inform teaching.

In Phase 4, I negotiated the role of participant observer and collected additional new data. I collaborated with teachers by using my positionality and experience to participate in teaching and curriculum design. I observed the fifth-grade classrooms and conducted follow-up interviews with teacher and student participants. In Phase 5, I open-coded the whole data set and reduced the data by focusing on data sources from Phase 4. I refined the research questions and analyzed data. I discussed findings by connecting to my conceptual framework.

4.3 Research Contexts

4.3.1 The School

The Jumpstart Bilingual School (JBS) is situated in a small agricultural town in Mountain State, United States. The area is surrounded by several universities, which
contribute to a formally educated population. JBS is a charter school with a philosophy of educating students to become bilingual and biliterate in Chinese and English from kindergarten to high school. The bilingual model that JBS adopts is called a one-way immersion bilingual model, commonly known as an additive bilingual model. Beyond their first language, students not only learn basic interpersonal communication but also academic content such as math, science, and other subjects in the Chinese language. The goal is eventually to develop two languages but in separate ways.

The charter school system is one type of public education which receives government funding but operates like a private organization. Since the financial resources come from the government, charter schools are required to follow the logic of the public school system but have some freedom for educational innovation. The original intention of the charter school is to provide an alternative choice for K-12 school education, which is open to all students based on the lottery system. Charter schools provide specialized programs such as performing arts, languages, science, math and the like. Meanwhile, they are required to maintain a higher quality of education than traditional public schools. Another intention is to include diverse study body and make schools more accountable for students’ learning outcomes. Therefore, students in charter schools are required meet the state standards of academic performance.

My research context, JBS, is a school with a particular focus on students learning Chinese as a second language in an immersive language environment. According to enrollment data on race and ethnicity, over 50% of students identified as white European, and the rest of 50% including African American, Asian, Hispanic and multi-race (Enrollment Data, DOE 2018). The students come from neighboring communities and
urban centers. Their socioeconomic and education statuses encompass both middle class and underrepresented groups.

The school is only nine years old but has been growing exponentially. In 2007, JBS started with 42 students in one kindergarten (K) class and one first-grade class. As of this writing (2017), the school serves grades K-11, with about 400 students as well as 90 teachers and staff members. In 2018, the school expanded to 584 students, grades K-12. Generally, students enter kindergarten, sixth and ninth grade to start learning Chinese as a L2. At JBS, the bilingual program starts in kindergarten. Students in kindergarten and first grade spend 75% of their time in Chinese and 25% in English; from second to fourth grade, students spend 50% of their time learning two academic subjects in Chinese; and after sixth grade, students spend 25% of their time in Chinese. In 11th and 12th grades, students are offered an international baccalaureate diploma program, which is an intensive academic college-preparation program.

Parents are interested in this bilingual school for different reasons. Some parents are interested in their children attending JBS since a Chinese-immersion school is a new idea introduced to the area. Some parents are interested in the school because of its students’ high performance in state-assessment scores. In the state’s comprehensive assessment, JBS is ranked as a level-one school, meaning that students’ scores are above average. Many parents also send their children here for the name of the school. Most important, according to state educational policy, charter schools belong to the public-school system and receive state funding depending on how many students they have. Like all fifth-grade students statewide, JBS students do not pay tuition. In addition, JBS is a full-day school from 8:15 am to 4:15 pm, which benefits parents who work full time. In
Mountain State, students have the freedom to choose a school district beyond their neighborhoods. Thus, the student population is quite diverse.

However, students can enter at any grade level. When students transfer to schools, the school must accept new students to replace the students who have left. In that case, even students with no Chinese language background can join the mainstream bilingual class, which can cause learning issues, particularly with academic subjects. Since students with no Chinese background need more time to immerse themselves in the target-language environment to reach the same level of proficiency as the students who entered in kindergarten, some graduate-student volunteers from the nearby universities who specialize in education support JBS with push-in (in-class help) or pull-out (outside class) support.

4.3.2 The Fifth-Grade Classroom

I first visited a classroom at JBS when my focal student participants were in the fourth grade. I focused on fourth graders because that grade marks a transition for both Chinese and English literacy due to the greater amount of reading and writing for students. Since it took me a while to get to know the fourth graders and the Chinese literacy teacher, I decided to follow these fourth graders into the fifth grade. Thus, I could gain more insights about their learning.

The fifth graders comprise two groups: fifth grade Classes A and B. They have two homerooms, English and Chinese classrooms. In the English classroom, they learn English literacy (primarily reading and writing) and social studies with two English teachers; in the Chinese classroom, they learn Chinese literacy, math and science with two Chinese teachers. The two class schedules rotate, which means that one class is in the
English classroom and another class is in Chinese classroom. The two classes swap classrooms after lunch.

The Chinese curriculum is organized by theme, and each thematic unit lasts 4 to 6 weeks. Other subjects follow the Common Core standards. As for cross-linguistic and cross-curriculum courses, math and science are connected. Every day English teachers hold a regular class session called Content Support, which bridges the curriculum connection for the math and science subjects to meet the requirements of the Common Core standards and the state comprehensive assessment. The Chinese and English teachers also meet once a week to coordinate their teaching plans, students’ progress, and/or learning issues. However, Chinese and English literacy are not related because no national Chinese literacy standards exist. Instead, the school assesses students’ Chinese learning outcomes with a Chinese teacher-administrated Chinese Proficiency Test from private institutions. In addition, physical education, music, and arts are taught in Chinese by subject teachers.

4.4 Research Participants and the Researcher

4.4.1 Chinese Literacy Teacher

My focal teacher participant was the Chinese literacy teacher Ms. Hu (pseudonym). During this study, I documented her course materials, pedagogical practices, and interactions with students. We also collaborated on the design of the second content-based unit, History of Massachusetts, in the L2 curriculum with a critical perspective. Throughout the year we had numerous conversations about teaching, the curriculum, and the students’ learning. In this study, I will call her Hu Laoshi (Hu is her last name, and Laoshi (teacher) is how her students address her.
Hu Laoshi is a woman in her 30s, who us originally from Taiwan. Hu Laoshi’s first language is Chinese, and she is fully bilingual, speaking English fluently without an accent. She has university-level linguistic training from both Taiwan and the United States. In Taiwan she majored in English at Taiwan’s top university. She also holds an MA in Applied Linguistics from an ivy league university in the northeastern United States. Although she went to a teaching university, she did not aim for a teaching career until the last year of her graduate studies. After graduation, she received a position in teaching Chinese as a foreign/second language at JBS. As for teaching credentials, she has an initial teaching licensure for Mountain State. This is her fifth year teaching at Jumpstart. She previously taught third and fourth grades at JBS. She looped with the same group of children from fourth to fifth grade.

Her belief about teaching and learning a L2 is that language learners should be immersed in the target language for a sufficiently long time to provide opportunities to use and practice the target language, which would support meaningful reading and writing. She prioritizes reading and writing in her class. This priority is evident from the goal she set for the 2016 school year and her action statement:

With tools and practice strategies, 75% of the students will be able to read unfamiliar text with Pinyin and score 80% on designed reading comprehension questions; 65% will be able to read texts without Pinyin and score 70% (2016, JBS School Goal Setting and Action Statement).

Her expectation is that the fifth graders should read independently at the end of the school year, which means reading Chinese characters without Pinyin, the Chinese phonetic system. To accomplish this goal, she implemented two major pedagogical
actions, small-group instruction and rotation center activities, to meet students’ diverse needs, e.g., repertoires of practice, personal interests, and levels of readiness in terms of L2. For example, she wanted to provide students opportunities to chat in Chinese on topics of their own interest and choice at least three times during the school year. More notably, she wanted students to move beyond traditional ways of learning and assessment. That is, students could share their learning outcomes by using their preferred ways of demonstrating their learning.

Through my observations and our dialogues, I also found that Hu Laoshi was sensitive to students’ needs and reflective about her own pedagogical practices. When things did not work in class, she would pinpoint the issues and adjust her teaching plan or possible solutions for better learning outcomes. Most important of all, she was open to new practices, used new resources, and welcomed any additional support for her class. Not only did she like to challenge students’ thinking, but also cared about her teaching efficiency and students’ work. High quality teaching was her goal.

In terms of L2 experience, she highlighted her experience in learning English. She mentioned that she had been crazy about learning English since she was little. Reading was key to her success in learning a L2. For example, she loves anything related to English and reads widely in English. In class, she often told students that her English competence was strengthened and rooted in the Harry Potter series. When she first started reading the series, she looked up every single word, but she credits that practice with learning so much. Her previous L2 learning experience informed her teaching. In addition, her language-learning experience influenced her language-teaching ideology. Due to the language policy at JBS, she never speaks English or writes in English in front
of students. When she met with students and parents together, she would have students translate what she said in Chinese to English, so students never knew her English level. In reality, she speaks and writes effectively in English when communicating with parents either face to face or through email. I noticed that built a good rapport with her students by her extensive interests such as watching popular American TV shows, movies, and sports matches, as well as playing board games, traveling and reading.

**4.4.2 English Literacy Teacher**

The secondary teacher participant was the fifth-grade English teacher Ms. Watson (pseudonym). During the study, I observed her class occasionally to get a sense of an English classroom and students’ learning. I interviewed Ms. Watson at the end of the 2016 school year.

Ms. Watson is a woman in her 40s, with a professional teaching licensure for elementary school and 14 years of teaching experience. This was her fifth year of teaching fifth grade. She chose to teach in a bilingual school because she enjoys being in an international setting. Her experience teaching in the Korean public schools contributed to her interest in multiculturalism and belief in bilingualism. She used multicultural literature in her class library. Her son also studied in this bilingual school because she wanted him to become bilingual or trilingual. She acknowledged the importance of being bi/multilingual in the global era. Since she only speaks limited Korean, she is proud of her son who is the first bilingual in her family.

As for Ms. Watson’s philosophy of teaching literacy, she believed that reading plays a crucial role in shaping writing. According to her, good readers can become good writers a lot of more easily because reading good writing means having many examples
of good writing. She emphasized that children will read more if they love to read. As an English teacher, she made sure to provide her students a rich reading environment with a variety of genres and levels that they could read whatever they liked. Her biggest satisfaction of the semester was seeing every student move up at least one reading level. In terms of writing, her goals were very specific for each genre. She mentioned that JBS adopted a well-established writing curriculum (Calkins, 2013), which provides a good foundation for students, and that she could modify it for a bilingual school setting due to time constraints.

However, her pressures came from preparing her students to meet the demands of attaining a higher writing level across different genres for middle-school students. With that goal in mind, she had to make sure that students developed a solid comprehension of the writing conventions and features of each genre. By the end of the 2016 school year, her major goal was for the fifth graders to become mature and independent in reading and writing.

Ms. Watson was in charge of English language arts, literacy, social studies and bilingual content support for math and science. She shared her teaching load with Ms. King, another fifth-grade English teacher.

4.4.3 Other Teacher Participants

The Chinese science teacher, Wang Laoshi, and another fifth-grade teacher Ms. King were not directly connected to the research project, but are worthy of mention because they are part of the fifth-grade teaching team. Wang Laoshi, a woman in her early 30s, is from Taiwan. She received a MA in teaching Chinese as second/foreign language in the United States. This is her first year teaching. She teaches science and
math in Chinese. Ms. King joined the fifth-grade team in November. A White American 
in her 40s, she has 10 years of teaching experience in US public schools.

4.4.4 Student Participants

Each of the two classes of fifth graders had about 20 students. My student 
participants were from Class A. I chose Class A because its students were Chinese- and 
English-language learners at various levels and their Chinese literacy class had a longer 
section scheduled in the morning of the Fall 2016 semester.

These students were recruited according to the IRB-approved protocol outlined in 
section 4.2.2. After I sent the consent forms to students’ parents, 12 parents agreed to let 
their child participate in the study. In class, I presented the main activities of my study 
and explained the consent form to the Class A students. Twelve students agreed to 
participate. Two students wanted to participate in the study, but I could not recruit them 
because their parents did not agree. Therefore, the decision on student participants relied 
on both parents’ approval of their children’s participation and students’ agreement to 
participate.

During the study, my field observations and data collection focused on these 12 
student participants. At the beginning of the semester, I conducted an initial interview 
(Appendix E) to understand student participants’ experience learning in two languages. 
After that, I interviewed four parent participants about their perspectives and experiences 
of having their children learn a new language. At the end of the 2016 School Year, I 
interviewed these students again about their experience of learning Unit 2 and the rest of 
fifth-grade curriculum. However, due to the large amount of data, I only analyzed data 
from the six student participants, who have robust data sets to offer insights for my
inquiry. In this class, the student population is dominant white European and their socioeconomic background are from middle class families.

For the purpose of this study, I focus on the data of the six student participants including one male student and five female students. Mo, An-an, and Xiao-yu are white Europeans; Ai-lan is African American; Mei-mei is Asian European American; Na-na is Asian American. All of them chose to study in the bilingual school because of the positive bilingual schooling experience of their siblings, which means that they have either older or younger sibling(s) studying in the same school. Furthermore, all these six student participants have been studying Chinese since they were in kindergarten except for Ai-lan, who came to the bilingual school when she was in second grade. Ai-lan is confident in communicating in second language Chinese after studying Chinese for three years at school.

As for students’ language level, as I mentioned earlier in Chapter 1, students are comfortable in speaking, and still in the process of developing their reading and writing. In this context, L2 literacy relies on teacher’s effort and class time. Hu Laoshi features L2 literacy and aims to create a rich environment for Chinese reading and writing practices in her class. This is students’ second school year with Hu Laoshi. Thus, they have some fundamental knowledge for reading and writing, but they not quite confident. The table below shows their comfort zone in communicating in L2. All of their Chinese and English names are pseudo names.

The six students’ demographic characteristics are included in Table 4.1.
### Table 4.1. Student Participants’ Demographic Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender &amp; Family Socioeconomic Status</th>
<th>Years of studying Chinese, and comfort zone of L2</th>
<th>Siblings at JBS</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Home Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mo 小莫</td>
<td>Male Middle Class</td>
<td>5 Speaking</td>
<td>One brother in seventh grade</td>
<td>White European American</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ai-lan 艾蓝</td>
<td>Female Unknown</td>
<td>3 Speaking</td>
<td>One brother in second grade One brother in fourth grade</td>
<td>African American and European American</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An-an 安安</td>
<td>Female Middle Class</td>
<td>5 Speaking</td>
<td>One sister in tenth grade; one sister in eighth grade</td>
<td>White European American</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xiao-yu 小玉</td>
<td>Female Middle Class</td>
<td>5 Speaking</td>
<td>Two sisters, one in seventh grade and one in first grade</td>
<td>White European American</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me-mei 美美</td>
<td>Female Middle Class</td>
<td>5 Speaking, Reading, and Writing</td>
<td>One sister in second grade</td>
<td>Asian and European American</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Na-na 娜娜</td>
<td>Female Middle Class</td>
<td>5 Speaking, Reading, and Writing</td>
<td>One sister in 10th grade</td>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>Chinese heritage-language learner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The individual student profiles with detailed information will be presented in Chapters 5 and 6 to support readers’ understanding of students’ writing samples and multimodal projects.

4.4.5 The Researcher

I am a Taiwanese woman in my 40s pursuing a doctorate degree with a concentration in Language, Literacy and Culture in the department of Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies in the United States. I am fully bilingual in English and Chinese. My work experience in Taiwan was related to English (L2)-curriculum planning and English-language teaching in a K-6 Chinese-English bilingual school. During my doctoral studies in the United States, I taught college-level Chinese and some education courses. For this dissertation research, I am researching a fifth-grade Chinese (L2) class in a bilingual school in the US.

This statement shows that I have comparable school and academic experience in both languages. In Taiwan, I led the English program as an administrator and planned the curriculum for 16 years. However, the context of this study is in the US and quite different in terms of participants, language, and bilingual model. I positioned myself as a researcher in this study. Thus, I could explore the JBS school culture from the participants’ perspective and learn how its members perceive meanings in this bilingual context.

My racial, linguistic, and institutional identities helped me gain access to this research site. My relationship with JBS was initiated in 2013 when I conducted a pilot study for the final paper in EDUC 792T: Seminar in Writing at University of Massachusetts Amherst. Since then, I kept in touch with the school and coordinated a
pen-pal project, a biliteracy project between my former school in Taiwan and JBS. The sixth and seventh graders at each school have been writing to each other for 2 years. I periodically visited the JBS academic director of education to get updates about the school for my dissertation research. The teacher participants, student participants, administrators, and principal at JBS were willing to share their precious first-hand information, which allowed me to understand their perspectives better. In addition, for this dissertation project, JBS added technology equipment by purchasing 24 iPads for the fifth graders to use in the Chinese literacy class.

4.5 Data Collection

In this critical ethnographic case study, I had access from the end of August 2016 to the end of April 2017. I collected multiple data sources and prepared and generated participant-observation field notes, research memos, audio recordings, video clips of interactions, interviews, to document artifacts (i.e., curriculum research meeting notes, lesson plans, students’ sample work).

When I went to JBS, I had three tentative research questions in mind: 1) How does writing in a bilingual classroom contribute to students’ identity construction, biliteracies and criticality? 2) What happens when elementary students practice critical literacies in the bilingual classroom? and 3) How do young elementary become biliterate and bilingual in a bilingual immersion school?

To answer these questions, I had to observe and attend to literacy practices comprehensively. However, entering a case, someone’s world, is not easy. Although I had spent time in the fourth-grade classroom in Spring 2016, I was aware that I needed to become familiar with students again in a new school year. When I approached the field, I
started with the concept “casing the joint” (Dyson & Genishi, 2005). For the first month, I immersed myself in the field to gather information and to configure the place, people, and class activities. During this time, I studied the class schedule, the classroom layout, and how Hu Laoshi enriched her classroom. I also attended both Chinese and English literacy classes to learn the basics of their learning activities and their everyday life. I observed these activities for the full school day on 4 to 5 days a week in major academic subjects (English, Chinese, math, science and social studies). I stayed in both classrooms to observe two classes, took notes, and interacted informally with the teachers. As Dyson and Genishi (2005) suggested, such information helped me to locate a particular interest for observation and data collection relating to my research questions. In mid-September 2016, I chose Class A as the case to study because the students in that class were more outgoing and some appeared to show an interest in my research.

Once I obtained all parental permissions in late September, I held one session in class to explain my research to Class A students. I invited every student to consider participation through an assent form, even if their parents had already decided to participate. After collecting consent forms from both parents and children, I stayed mainly in Class A where I began to attend to the focal participants and collected IRB-approved classroom data. My routine included three morning visits per week. I observed intently for 45 minutes per section in the Chinese literacy class or 90 minutes per day based on the class schedule. While observing, I jotted down observation notes in class and expanded these notes into field notes after class. I also videotaped interactive class sessions and watched how students socialized during break time. Across the school year, I collected data on about 60 class visits, 30 one-hour video clips, 40 to 45 well-developed
field notes, as well as 100 writing samples, 300 classroom photos, and 30 document artifacts in digital format. In addition, I completed 12 student interviews (six initial and six final), three teacher interviews (two with the Chinese teacher and one with the English teacher) and four interviews of focal participants’ parents. My data collection methods and procedures are summarized in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2. Data Collection Procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Duration and Frequency</th>
<th>Focus Location/Event/Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant observation</td>
<td>Focal teacher participants; focal student participants; English-literacy teacher</td>
<td>August 2016 to April 2016 (two semesters)</td>
<td>Classroom; Chinese-literacy activities; recess; student socialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2-3 times a week</td>
<td>Some English-literacy activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Teacher participants (n=2), Focal student participants (n=6), and their parents (n=4)</td>
<td>Twice from August 2016 to April 2016, at the beginning and end of the study; informal conversations after specific literacy events</td>
<td>Student focus-group interviews: at school but outside the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Individual teach interviews: at a café and in the classroom;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum meetings</td>
<td>Focal teacher participants</td>
<td>Many informal chats about curriculum in fall 2016 for</td>
<td>The curriculum meeting was usually an informal chat due to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5.1 Participant Observation, Field Notes and Video/Audio Recordings

My field observations started in the Fall 2016 semester and continued through the Spring 2017. Ethnographic research is different from evaluation. I was there to understand the insiders’ perspectives moment by moment and day by day instead of judging their learning products, results or competence. Ethnography is characterized by participating long term in a study, a process that is unlike hypothesis testing. All my observations turned into data capturing how and what was happening in the classroom. Thus, the major data source for this study came from observational field notes.

I created a template on a Word document with several columns to record what happened in the classroom. I labeled the columns with 1) the time and date, 2) jotting of key events, 3) what was said and what I saw, 4) write-up full field notes, and 5) additional notes or memos (Dyson & Genishi, 2005; Emerson et al., 1995; Galman 2007). My jotting itemized the significant features of incidents or participants. My notes used a mix of three suggested strategies (Van Maanen, 1998): realistic talks, confessional tales, and impressionist tales. Realistic talks offer more descriptive details, confessional tales refer to reflections or descriptions reflecting my feelings and perspectives, and
impressionist tales unfolds the experience for readers (Van Maanen, 1998). My earlier notes were composed of descriptions, reflections, reminders, and questions. In my later notes, if the audio or video contained information relevant to my research questions or aspects of my conceptual framework, I transcribed it in detail and added to the column to prepare for data analysis. I noted cross-language and cross-curriculum connections, in-class dialogical interactions, social interactions, students’ questions, students’ activities and events, and pedagogical practices. As for writing up my full field notes, I tried to type my thoughts right after the observations when my memory was still fresh. If I could not manage it on the same day, I finished writing these notes before my next visit based on my jottings, video recordings, and audio recordings to retrieve as much information as possible.

As an ethnographer, I understand that my sensitivity and presence are important. I jotted as many notes as possible about the significance of what happened in the classroom during observations. Field notes are selective because, like other texts, they cannot be full descriptions (Emerson et al., 1995). Therefore, I also audiotaped and videotaped in-class interactions or dialogue sessions. These video and audio recordings overlapped, but allowed me to go back for more detailed information, particularly for subtle interactions needed to answer my research questions.

Besides a laptop computer, other devices I used to document classroom life including two iPhones, one tripod, one audio recorder, and two small microphones. One iPhone was for taking pictures. When I sat in the back of the class taking notes, I set up another iPhone on a tripod in the back of classroom and hid the audio recorder near the teacher to record conversations. This set-up also allowed me to move around to help the
teacher or when students asked me questions or for help. I waited until the class session was over to remove the devices. In that sense, I avoided interrupting the class and respected the students who did not participate in the research. When videotaping, I captured those students’ backs instead of their faces. If I took a picture or videotaped focal student participants’ face, I asked for their permission. These video clips are archived in my iPhone by date and synced to my iCloud.

4.5.2 Interviews

I conducted three types of interviews: teacher interviews (n=2), student interviews (n=12), and parent interviews (n=4). These interviews were held outside the classroom to avoid interrupting learning or teaching.

Students were interviewed twice, at the beginning and end of the study, using an interview protocol (Appendix E) with open-ended interview questions that connected with the research questions. In the initial interview, I attended to each student’s language-learning experience in both L1 and L2, their beliefs about learning a L2 and cross-linguistic experience, and their perspective as a bilingual. The initial interview was conducted in Chinese, and I used a summary strategy to confirm their thoughts. In the final interview, I centered my questions on Unit 2 and students’ overall reflections for the whole school year using an interview protocol (Appendix E). The final interview was conducted in English. One method I employed for both interviews allowed students to choose one or two friends to accompany them in interviews. I found that students were more comfortable and elaborated more when they were with their friends. These gathering became dialogic.
For teacher interviews at the end of the fourth-grade year, I informally interviewed Hu Laoshi to recruit her as my teacher participant. In that interview, I learned about her background, the basic sense of the classroom, course materials, curriculum goals and students. Although I had informational conversations before and during and after the study, I held a two-hour interview at the end of school in April 2016 about the following topics: her reflections on the school year, language-teaching beliefs, observations about her students’ learning, her perspective on curriculum planning and teaching strategies, and her future plans. The interview was conducted at a local café. I listed categories of possible questions as a reference (Appendix F). I did not follow the sequence of questions. Instead, the conversation flowed from her thoughts and contributions. The interview was conducted in Chinese. I also interviewed the English teacher, Ms. Watson, at the end of 2016 School Year. We talked about her background, prior and current teaching experiences, her perceptions and plans in teaching literacies. The interview lasted 45 minutes to 1 hour in English. The interview protocol was similar to that for Hu Laoshi (Appendix F).

For parent interviews, I first asked about parents’ interest in being interviewed on the consent form. After I became familiar with the focal student participants, I emailed their parents who had expressed an interest in being interviewed. Four parents (two mothers, one father, one father and mother together) agreed to be interviewed. I adopted a similar interview method as for the teachers’ interviews (Appendix G). The interview questions covered their elementary school learning experience, understanding of bilingualism and the JBS school curriculum, purpose and reason for sending their
children to a bilingual school, and feelings about the school. Additional questions emerged from our conversations.

4.5.3 Document Artifacts

The teacher participants were willing to share their classroom schedule, lesson plans, curriculum goals, and teaching materials. I had consent forms from parents of student participants to copy their child’s writing samples and homework assignments. The artifacts from student participants serve as an important source to learn about different ways of knowing and how they constructed their meaning making in literacy learning and teaching.

4.6 Data Transcription and Translation

My first step in the data analysis was to sort and organize the collected data in a filing system (Galman, 2007). I created folders in my computer and labeled all files with dates, method, and major event or participant. Using Microsoft Excel, I also created a data matrix as a directory to keep a track of collected data. Although data collection was used to show my research process, ethnographic data collection should also be called data construction (Erickson, 2004). Since I walked into the classroom, I began to create my data. I made choices about what to document in my field notes and which interactional scenarios to film or photograph. After jotting notes, I wrote and edited field notes and research memos. Even collecting photos, audio-video recordings, and writing samples involved reading, transcribing, and translating to transform these raw data into texts. Then, I could proceed to the initial phase of analysis.
4.6.1 Transcribing

Transcribing data is labor-intensive work. I transcribed all the interviews, audio recordings, classroom video/audio recordings, and visual images (screen shots) of the video project. Qualitative researchers undertake two types of transcription: naturalized and denaturalized transcription (Davidson, 2009). For audio recordings of interviews, I chose to use denaturalized transcription (Davidson, 2009); for classroom data, I chose to use naturalized transcription. Denaturalized transcription captures meanings and perceptions constructed within the interviews and can be used for grounded theory and critical discourse analysis. Naturalized transcription is more detailed in that it includes pauses and nonverbal communications; it can be used for conversational or discourse analysis (Davidson, 2009). In my transcripts, video/audio recordings of all the interviews were transcribed into outlines and key ideas. In that way, I, as the researcher, could use them to organize them into categories. As for video/audio recordings of classroom interactions, I transcribed them verbatim, including nonverbal communication markers and Jefferson’s transcription notation (Jefferson, 2004) for discourse analysis because I could examine textual and content aspects that might be closely related to emerging themes I identified. My choices of section for transcription are related to my theoretical position (Davidson, 2009). I found that selecting the appropriate type of transcription benefitted the data-analysis process because too much information made it difficult to focus on specific ideas (Davidson, 2009). These decisions were made relative to the research purpose, research questions, and methodological considerations (Davidson, 2009).
All the interview data in English were transcribed by a professional transcriber. For ethical concerns, while interviewing participants, I skipped their names to make them unidentifiable. I transcribed the interview data in Chinese and all the classroom video clips. In most classroom visits, I recorded one or two small clips of class interactions to ensure that I would have enough data to examine these interactions. However, I encountered an issue of what and how much to transcribe. While I was organizing and editing the field notes, I transcribed all video clips from Unit 2 data because I wanted to concentrate on the teacher-researcher collaboration for my research purposes. For cross-linguistic data, the L2 (Chinese) in the videos or audio recordings had to be translated into English. I first transcribed in Chinese and then translated into English. In terms of study trustworthiness, I selected reliable transcribers and clarified transcripts if some confusion arose. In addition, I revised the transcripts by repeatedly going over video/audio clips.

As for students’ video projects, I took screen shots of images and transcribed audio recordings. To transcribe visual images, I used visual analysis (Rose, 2016; Thompson Writing Program, Duke University Writing Program, n.d.) to generate texts by analyzing image features (color, layout, arrangement, composition). To transcribe recordings, I adopted similar techniques as I for classroom videos. I translated all the Chinese transcripts to English. After that, I organized images and texts on Keynote (an Apple presentation software) where I could insert screenshots, images, students’ written texts, and their video recordings. Keynote has the flexibility and capacity to tolerate both images and texts, which benefitted the data analysis process. Last, during the phase of theoretical coding, I revised images using concepts from Kress and Leeuwen (2006).
4.6.2 Translation

Translating from Chinese to English was needed for this L2 research since the collected data included classroom sessions, students’ assignments, and writing samples in Chinese, but the findings need to be represented in English. In cross-linguistic/cultural research, translation quality has been a concern if the researcher does not speak the language. Birbili (2000) mentions that the quality of translation might be affected by the researcher’s linguistic competence in two languages, biography, and position. The translator should not only have linguistic knowledge of the target language, but also the “individual situation and overall cultural context” (Esposito, 2001, p. 570). Since I am bilingual and biliterate in two languages and have spent time in the field, I have knowledge of the context and participants. Acting as translator, I translated all the data presented in Chinese. Since the essence of translation is to produce “insightful and meaningful data” (Marshall & Grossman, 2011, p. 165), I adopted the approach of translating the meaning of the texts instead of translating word by word. In Chapters 5 and 6, I paralleled the texts in two languages, with parentheses for translated texts of direct quotes or dialogues. When Chinese was present, I featured it first over English in the data to maintain “the integrity of [my] participants’ [interactions and work], and cause “minimal interruption” in the data (Delgado-Gaitan, 1996/2017).

However, I encountered two issues while translating: First, in the immersion classroom, bilinguals used their all linguistic repertoire in L2 to communicate. I did my best to voice and clarify their intentions. However, it was challenging to ensure that I captured “subtle matters of connotation and meaning” (Marshall & Grossman, 2011, p. 166). Second, for some phrases or syntactic structures, particularly in Chinese, it was
difficult to transfer the direct meaning. I chose the closet meaning to connect to the contextual situations.

4.7 Data Analysis

4.7.1 Procedure

The analysis of study data drew from the overarching and foundational aspects of grounded theory. The grounded-theory analytic process consists of opening coding, theme building, focus coding, comparative analysis, and theoretical coding (Charmaz, 2014; Emerson et al. 2005; Galman 2013). I added insights to the foundational aspects of grounded-theory analysis by incorporating complementary methodological approaches suitable for my research. For instance, I used discourse analysis, multimodal analysis and writing to further analyze the nuances of critical-literacy practices in the bilingual classroom.

Grounded theory analysis refers to the “intent to be open to everything unknown” (Atkinson, Coffey, Delamont, Lofland, & Lofland, 2001, p. 161) and to generating theory grounded in the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In contemporary grounded theory, grounded-theory analysis refers to open coding, focused coding, and theoretical coding (Charmaz, 2006). Through focused coding and theoretical coding with the deductive method, grounded theory emphasizes the constant comparative method, leading ethnographers to 1) develop analytical insights by writing memos from the beginning of the research rather than after all the data are in, 2) compare data with emerging categories, and 3) demonstrate relations between concepts and categories. Significantly, the uniqueness of contemporary grounded theory analysis is that it incorporates research questions, the researcher’s reflexivity, theoretical framing, and research questions into the
coding process to build theoretical concepts or assertive interpretation through inductive and deductive phases (Charmaz, 2006). This amalgamated approach, which was used to answer the research question, is summarized in Table 4.3 and followed by elaborations on the three phases of data analysis.

Table 4.3. Data Analysis Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>How does multimodal text production contribute to students’ identities, criticality and biliteracies?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Journal entries: From multimodal experience to text production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data sources</td>
<td>• Artifacts: lesson plan and curriculum meeting notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Classroom interaction video transcripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Interview transcripts (teachers and students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Six writing samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data analysis tools</td>
<td>• Grounded theory approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Discourse analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Writing as analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of theoretical framework</td>
<td>• Social semiotic theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Integrative critical biliteracies model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Translanguaging</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.7.2 Stage 1: Preliminary Data Analysis for Open Coding

Open coding is a way to get to know the data. Every researcher needs to have a system to open inquiries, organize the data, build categories, and make sense of the data. A helpful metaphor to explain the relationship between coding and research questions is that of cleaning and sorting a messy room: “When we ‘code’ data we are using a system to make sense of our data by finding patterns, questions, connections and links to our research questions” (Galman, 2013, p. 33).

In fact, I began data analysis using NVivo software for basic coding, i.e., classifying, sorting and arranging information due to the large amount of data. However, NVivo did not allow me to think about horizontal aspects of the data, so I switched to manual coding. I printed the transcripts and organized them in a binder, which allowed me to explore the data line by line, write down initial codes, pay attention to standout themes, and note my thinking next to the text. I read and reread through all the data sources (i.e., interview data, students’ videos, field notes, and research memos as a whole data set). Meanwhile, writing memos was also beneficial to record some outstanding thoughts or emerging codes while reading the data set.

After reading the whole data set, I focused on coding 25 field notes and recording the codes in the computer. Coding is a time-consuming but important process to find patterns and raise questions. In this first cycle of coding, I used descriptive coding, process coding, and themeing data (Saldana, 2013). Descriptive coding usually involves nouns or one aspect of the data; process coding involves more actions or activities; and themeing data captures the meaning on one aspect of the data (Saldana, 2013). The code names I produced consisted of phrases, short sentences or one aspect from the data.
I chose proper code names or symbols that represented groups of similar items, ideas, or phenomena in the data and determined their frequency or occurrence for patterns (LeCompte & Schensul, 2013).

In Stages 2 and 3, I revised and modified these initial codes to make them consistent. Then I organized and complied these initial codes from field notes into a matrix. The matrix categorized the observation dates, topics, notes of major literacy events, memos, and codes. In that sense I reduced the data, sorted and arranged information, and built the emerging themes without losing essential aspects of the data.

Table 4.4. Sample Codes from Field Notes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data source</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Main Literacy Event/Practice</th>
<th>Code Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation 36</td>
<td>11/30/16</td>
<td>• Material: story book (<em>Little Ant</em>)</td>
<td>English story book in Chinese (translation of English book), predicting the story, register usage, thinking aloud, unpack the word angle [角度], sharing opinions, reading aloud, questioning author’s position, text-to-self, think-pair-share, thinking from another perspective, contrasting images, reflecting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Literacy activities: 1) read book aloud and open up discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Define the word [角度]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Purpose: taking an alternative perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcript (video)</td>
<td>11/30/16</td>
<td>Content: Teacher-centered talk and some brief students’ responses</td>
<td>Defining, rephrasing, explaining, previewing the lesson, thinking about history, unpacking (deconstructing) the word, Massachusetts history, US history, history of basketball, Dr. Seuss, snack time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>closing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Purpose: 1) Define the word history [ 历史], 2) Explain why we need to learn the history unit in Chinese.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Memos:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Unpack/Deconstruct knowledge of history – not from the text book, but from</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
students’ daily life
• Use students’ funds of knowledge and personal experience
• Use examples from students’ lives (places, events, people, language)

| Observation 37 | 12/02/16 | Materials: Teacher-generated reading texts (TGRT), iPads, Chromebook
• Literacy events:
  a) Differentiated instruction (homogeneous grouping): i) small group learning approach; ii) small-group instruction – learn TGRT with teacher; iii) Chinese character and word cards; group practice vocabulary; iv) listening center – listen to designated stories online and write learning log (online dictionary and Google classroom are accessible); v) whole-group discussion
  b) Chinese-literacy video projects – modelling & sampling
  c) Assessment - dictation
• Literacy practice – vocabulary phrases and reading passages from TGRT | Small groups, overviewing, reviewing the definition of history, making sentences with history silent reading, discussion, decoding, guess the meaning in English, practice vocabulary, sentence making, go over performance on board, Chinese-literacy project, introducing the project, required elements of literacy video, giving examples, brainstorming, your own name (character), video put ideas into practice, excitement about history unit, checklist and rubrics, perimeter Cross-linguistic connection or code-switching (meaning-making from L1 to L2) |

However, the messiness of the codes that emerged from field notes could not readily be integrated into themes or used to answer my research questions. I was interested in micro-interactions in the classroom and wanted to pay attention to micro-moments in which teacher and students constructed writing through classroom
conversations. Besides, I discovered that students’ perspectives were missing among these initial codes.

Since I had multiple data sources, I decided to explore students’ thoughts in their initial and final interview data by narrowing down to a particular data set as a unit of analysis. Switching to interview data allowed me to focus and identify some emerging themes such as different types of identities. These themes were constructive in building several connections to my research question. Examples of themes included multimodality, technology, criticality (and reflected practice), community (teacher and small groups) and perseverance, translation, cross-curriculum work, interest, socialization (community), and reflection on the project.

Conversely, I wanted to see if I heard students correctly in their interview data. I went back to field notes to look for instances and examples. Simultaneously I conducted a second cycle of coding in the second stage of data analysis.

4.7.3 Stage 2: Focused Coding

In this phase of data analysis, I conducted the second/third cycles of coding, identified themes, and looked for instances in preparation for writing excerpt commentary units (ECUs; Emerson et al., 2005). ECU is an analytical unit integrating the context of the assertion, the assertion and examples of data sources supporting this assertion (Emerson et al., 2005).

4.7.3.1 Recoding Field Note Data

In the second cycle of coding, I recoded the data I recoded earlier in the field notes by changing the code names. I also adopted the codes from interview data to recode
the field notes. When I noticed a pattern or identified an emerging theme, I recorded in
the analytical memos in word document.

4.7.3.2 Noting Repetitions, Patterns, and Examples

In focused coding, the strategies I used to generate themes were to note
repetitions, patterns, relevancies and examples from the data. I cut out exemplar quotes or
expressions and arranged them into piles that went together. I also named the piles to
generate themes or use the emerging themes from interview data. I recorded them in a
Word document. Building themes allowed me to explore the relationships between code
categories and discover the significance of such relationships for developing theoretical
concept or statements (Charmaz, 2014; Gibson & Brown, 2009).

4.7.3.3 Finding Data to Support Excerpt Commentary Units

While writing ECUs, I created thematic connections based on the relationships
among a set of conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences (Charmaz, 2014;
Saldana, 2009). Then I went to field notes and videos to look for some examples to
support these themes for ECUs. I developed statements for each ECU based on what I
found in my data and wrote small assertions for each theme.

4.7.4 Stage 3: Comparative Analysis and Theoretical Coding

In this phase, I attended to the methods of constant comparative analysis and
theoretical coding. During constant comparative analysis, I listed codes, themes, and
categories on a Word table and on paper because I could move them around to construct
statements or assertions. My purpose in making comparisons was to build sensitivity and
find logical relationships (Bazeley, 2013).
After some recursive exercises, I aligned these statements/assertions with the theoretical framework to review and refine conceptions. Comparing these statements with theories increased my sensitivity as a researcher to the data (Bazeley, 2013, p. 273; Chamarz, 2014), which created some surprises because it promoted changes in statement/assertions and clarified the theoretical framework. The major theoretical framework I used to assist my comparative analysis was the integrative critical biliteracies model (Figure 3-2), but I also draw on social semiotic theory and translanguaging. At the macro level, the findings pertain to the four dimensions of the integrative critical biliteracies model as a framework, which I clarified by integrating it with discourse analysis, multimodal analysis and writing as analysis.

In Chapter 5, I adapt discourse analysis into grounded theory. Discourse analysis has been used to examine micro patterns through written or verbal interactions (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005), in contrast to the inductive feature of grounded theory analysis to discover macro themes or concepts. Discourse analysis is a way to understand how people use different modes of communication (i.e., written, spoken, visual, symbols) to achieve certain social goals (Gee, 2011). D/discourse can be considered at the local and/or global level. The lowercase “d” refers to examining language use at the linguistic level with words, clauses, sentences, phrases, grammar, genre and more, whereas the capital “D” refers to how language is a social practice or process. Different approaches to discourse analysis have been used to analyze conversations, texts, images, and symbols in various disciplines. In linguistics, discourse analysis focuses on textual elements by analyzing their linguistic uses, i.e., phonology, words, semantics, and grammar. A broader use of discourse analysis is to critically examine the power or ideology in relation
to larger social structures embedded in the discourse (Gee, 2011). Discourse analysis can also be considered an identity kit for analyzing participants’ way of thinking and making sense of the world in terms of identity negotiation (Gee, 2011).

In Chapter 6, I analyze multimodal data using multimodal analysis and writing as analysis. Using writing as analysis, I employed several visual analysis tools to describe, explain, analyze and write about each representation (textual, visual, oral). After I finished transcribing six videos into visual, textual and oral representations, I discovered no analytical insights to make assertions. Returning to my theoretical framework in Chapter 3, I discovered new analytical insights I did not seen earlier. These initial analyses aligned with the integrative critical biliteracies model. I first rewrote my initial analysis using the grammar of multiliteracies (Kalantzis et al., 2016) and the grammar of design (Kress & Leeuwen, 2014) to unpack different layers of the videos. Then I reorganized the whole analysis by employing the approaches and conceptualizations underlying several theoretical tools: social semiotic theory (Bezemer & Kress 2016; Kress, 2010; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2004; Van Leeuwen 2006), the integrative critical biliteracies model (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015; Kalantzis et al., 2016; Luke & Freebody, 1999), and writing as analysis (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). Simultaneously, I moved between and across theoretical tools, recorded interviews, and interview transcripts. This cycle added more details to each representation with an emphasis on modes of meanings. The procedures for this multimodal analysis have been a considerable number of recursive analytical practices, writing and rewriting, assembling and disassembling.
4.8 Writing as Analysis and Researcher’s Reflexivity

The vital part of analyzing my data and interpreting the findings is writing as analysis (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005; Gribbs, 2010). The key strategy of grounded theory is writing ongoing research memos and integrating memos throughout the whole data analytic process. My writing started when I stepped into the field and throughout the process of collecting data. I produced field notes, research memos, ECUs, theoretical conceptualizations, and multimodal analysis integrated memo and interpreted findings. Writing is analysis. The ongoing writing process constructs analytical ideas. Writing also provides a hybrid space for analysis, thinking, and reflection to explain patterns and themes, make or change decisions, or interpret findings. For example, while writing, I also identified gaps or new concepts that needed to be redefined to build key linkages under the focused themes (Emerson et al., 2011).

Reading my own writing critically is also a type of analysis because the instruction of research methodologies and methods can teach coding but cannot teach thinking (St. Pierre, 2011; St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014). Even when I was transcribing, I was analyzing the data through writing even though I was not yet aware of interpreting/explaining data. Therefore, researchers’ thoughts are valuable [resources] to develop the reflexivity and intuition needed for great possibilities while conducting research. In that sense, whatever qualities the researcher has such as interests, positions, and assumptions can influence the perception and interpretation of data (Charmaz, 2006, 2014). Indeed, “a reflexive stance informs how a researcher conducts his or her research, relates to the research participants, and represents them in written reports” (Charmaz 2014, p. 344). Such reflexivity is related to researcher’s experience and how she/he
herself represents, positions herself and the participants as well as has a hold on how she approaches the issue.

I conclude this chapter with a final thought on how researchers should not make a distinction between data and analysis. This thought is based on St. Pierre’s (2011) critique of the common assumption that data analysis separates the two worlds of data and analysis. What she meant is that data includes not only the visible data, but also the researcher (St. Pierre, 2013). Maybe researchers, particularly qualitative researchers, should not make a distinction between data and their own thoughts or perceptions of the data because these insights are data, too.

4.9. Limitations: The Challenges of Conducting This Study

Although the ethnographic approach provided flexibility for the research design, data collection and data analysis, it generated some study limitations.

a. The collaborative work between researcher and practitioners engaged me in unit planning, lesson planning, and the teacher’s pedagogical practices, and I visited the classroom regularly. However, I found my role between researcher and practitioner was sometimes ambiguous and separated by a fine line while reading data, analyzing data, and writing up my research. I had to maintain my researcher’s role by reading the theoretical framework, data and research question recursively.

b. I went into the field with three broad questions. The advantage was that I collected a variety of data sources. However, the disadvantage was that analyzing the data and addressing three research questions was too intensive since each question could serve as an independent dissertation project. The
process of reducing the data has been a long and laborious process. I had to narrow down the data and constantly revise the research questions. The research questions did not get finalized into one question until the stage of data analysis and writing, which required moving constantly between my data, research questions, and writing.

c. Doing research with young students was very interesting but challenging. All the interviews were conducted during break time in groups of two or three. Fifth-grade students liked to be interviewed with their social group, and it benefited the quality and amount of dialogue because the students elaborated more in answering open-ended and recursive interview questions. However, it was challenging to consistently keep the same social group. Due to changes in the social group members and time constraints of the break time, I had to split one interview over different days and sometimes I could not keep my questions consistent. This happened more in the initial interviews. Besides, students sometimes missed school for unexpected reasons. When they returned to the classroom, they wanted to play with their friends during break. For that reason, I did not get a chance to interview one focal participant a second time.

d. Another concern was data transcription. The quality of the sound recordings of classroom interactions was not good. Sometimes I had to skip some lines when transcribing. In addition, it took time and labor to transcribe and translate the cross-linguistic data. Sometimes I was concerned about my interpretation of a participant’s voice or intentions.
e. The research questions were anchored in classroom literacy practice. One limitation is that I could not include parents’ and institutional perspectives. Although I invited all six parents of focal students to be interviewed, only four of them agreed. I conducted interviews of the focal parents in my research, but did not include these data in the dissertation.
CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS I: MULTIMODAL EXPERIENCE EMBODIES WRITING

5.1 Overview

The findings of this study are represented in Chapters 5 and 6. This chapter focuses on the process and product of the first writing assignment, a journal entry, and Chapter 6 focuses on the process and product of the second writing assignment, a video project using multimodal text production. In this chapter, I first explain my collaboration as a researcher with the Chinese teacher, Hu Laoshi in planning the Unit 2 curriculum in line with the integrative critical biliteracies model. Then I discuss how the multimodal approach to language teaching supports students in learning how to interpret, critique, and produce writing through speech, visual, and tactile representations in both languages.

5.2 Unit 2 Curriculum

In terms of the annual plan for the L2 curriculum, the fifth-grade Chinese-literacy curriculum is organized by three main themes: All About Me, Community, and Natural Phenomena and the Environment. The themes comprise five units across the year: 1) All About Me (my hopes and dreams), 2) Massachusetts: History, 3) Poetry, 4) Natural Phenomena and the Environment, and 5) Review: Year-End Project.

Theoretically, the goal is to master the target language through content subjects. The L2 curriculum is therefore fundamental to interdisciplinary subjects because it integrates L2 with science, social studies, math, art, music, and the like because it is beneficial to advance language practices and deeper understanding of the language. With this in mind, the content component of the fifth-grade Chinese curriculum is central to reading and reading. According to the school’s L2 writing standard, the fifth-grade
Chinese-writing curriculum prepares students to become familiar with 1) narration (describing scenery and objects), 2) poetry and lyrics, and 3) practical writing (summary and book review). To this end, writing is assigned in every unit and across genres corresponding to the three themes. Students’ writing assignments or projects across genres and accomplished by the end of each unit across the school year, are shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1. L2 Writing Assignments by Unit from September 2015 to June 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Writing Assignment</th>
<th>Text Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Unit 1 | • 伙伴诗 (Partner / friend poem)  
         • 给未来的自己的一封信(A letter to my future self)  
         • 我多想 (My dream: I want to be…)  
         • 我多想(Presentation slides for in class presentation-My dream: I want to be…)  
         • 环保：保护地球 (Poster: Environmental protection: protecting our plant - Group Poster presentation in lower grades K-4) | Fill in blanks  
Letter  
Paragraph writing |
| Unit 2 | • 我的日记：十八世纪的一天（A diary: My life in the 18th century）  
         • 历史影片制作 (History video project) | Narrative                       |
| Unit 3 | • 我的岛 (My island)  
         • A place in the world I want to visit | Informational writing          |
| Unit 4 | • 诗：冰淇淋 (A poem about ice-cream)  
         • 我的诗集 (An anthology of my poems) | Poetry                         |
| Final  | • 旅游展 (Travel Expo)  
         * Presentation Slides and Poster | Brochure                       |

The above table summarizes the text types that the fifth graders were engaged in.

The collaborative project is Unit 2, which attends to content-based L2 learning.

This study concentrates on my data from the second unit, which focused on the history of Massachusetts. It is a collaborative work, relating to the perspective of critical
literacies pedagogy and L2. However, students had learned Massachusetts history in English in the third grade and were learning US history in fifth grade. How could this unit be different from the third-grade L1 history class? One student questioned Hu Laoshi when she announced the Unit 2 plan. Here is the reaction from fifth-grader, Jie:

Jie: 可是我們已經（學過）麻州的歷史。(But…we have already learned the history of Massachusetts.)

Hu Laoshi: 對啊，所以你覺得你沒有這個知識我直接教你中文你不覺得太難嗎？(Right, so don't you think it is comprehensive if I teach you all the knowledge of history in Chinese?)

Jie: 但是，不會（•）不一樣，只是一個，只是在不一樣的language。(But, not really, not the same, just one, one in a different language.)

Jie means that they had already learned about Massachusetts history in English, which is why it seemed bothersome to have to learn it again in Chinese. Like Jie, the teacher participant and I had some doubts while deciding which perspective to adopt in designing this unit. True, in L1 English, social studies encompass US history from an earlier era to the present. Students develop a deeper understanding of history through higher-order thinking activities such as making dioramas of Aztec, Mayan, and Inca native communities; putting Christopher Columbus on trial; writing a persuasive letter home from a settlement or colony to persuade loved ones to come (or not to come) to the New World; and researching the qualities that make a good president. Certainly, we had to come up with something different from L1 social studies. However, when it comes to L2, having a limited vocabulary related to historical concepts and having limited time, limits our content choices.

After researching history and literacy practices, I found six historical thinking concepts (Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness, n.d.). These six concepts are part of what is called “The Historical Thinking Project,” and their purpose is to promote
critical historical literacy for the 21st century. Their philosophy is closely related to the practices of a critical literacies perspective because they emphasize multiple viewpoints, alternative identity positions, dismantling assumptions, and social change. To plan our L2 history unit, we leaned heavily on six big ideas and questions: 1) Historical Significance: How do we decide what’s important to learn about the past? 2) Evidence: How do we know what we know about the past? 3) Continuity and Change: How do we understand the complexity of the past? 4) Cause and Consequence: How do we explain the effects of decisions and actions taken in the past? 5) Taking a Historical Perspective: How can we better understand people in the past? and 6) The Ethical Dimension: What can we learn from the past to help us better understand the present? Another aspect of incorporating these historical thinking concepts was that we could take advantage of students’ existing stores of knowledge, life experience, and other things that students might be familiar with through a multimodal approach. We created a mind map and an outline for the Unit 2 curriculum (Figure 5-1). We adopted four historical thinking aspects as a stance and incorporated a variety of L2 learning materials into the unit, e.g., English-language picture books translated into Chinese, teacher-generated reading texts, historical artifacts, and a visit to a historic museum.

In this study, I employed two concepts in discussing L2 and literacy learning in the fifth-grade classroom: literacy practice and literacy event. I unitize the definition of literacy practice as “general cultural ways of utilizing written language which people draw upon in their lives” (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 7), which is a social aspect on second language learning. In that sense, literacy practices are defined as what students do in learning L2 literacy by recursive learning process. Such definition is different from
learning a word, phrases and a task (Barton & Hamilton, 2000). Another concept is literacy event, which refers to “activities where literacy has a role. Usually there is a written text, or texts. Central to the activities and there maybe talk around the text” (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 8), which expands the understanding of literacy through multiple ways of literacy practices. The relationship of these two concepts is that “events are observable episodes which arise from practices and are shaped by them” (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 8). As an illustrated example, Figure 5-1 includes several Unit 2 literacy practices. In this chapter, three literacy events are discussed: show and tell, the field trip, and writing a diary from the perspective of the 18th century. All three events are connected to the first writing assignment.

Figure 5.1 Unit 2 Curriculum Plan

5.2.1 Teacher-Researcher Collaboration

The teacher-researcher collaboration did not begin until we co-planned the Unit 2 curriculum on history. In Summer 2016, when Hu Laoshi consented to participate in this
study, we started to discuss beliefs and ideas related to teaching a L2 in an immersion classroom. The topics of our conversation ranged over her L2 teaching and learning experience, my L2 learning and teaching experience, and my academic research in L2 after entering the doctoral program, which employs a sociocultural perspective and a critical literacies approach to language learning and teaching. After the start of the fall semester, Hu *Laoshi* frequently shared her teaching ideas and lesson plans with me. Hu *Laoshi* sometimes asked for my feedback or maybe just wanted to confirm her teaching ideas or decisions. Most of the time, Hu *Laoshi* knew what to do but just wanted a second opinion. This earlier collaboration was initiated casually. Slowly, we built a good rapport, which benefited our formal collaboration.

During this dissertation project, Hu *Laoshi* had been an asset for this collaborative work. She has several important features as a bilingual teacher. First, she is fluent in both languages and exceptionally expressive both in writing and speaking. Given her English competence, she is familiar with the English curriculum at JBS. She is aware of what happens in the English classroom and is in constant communication with the two fifth-grade English teachers. Moreover, she has a wealth of knowledge about children’s literature and other texts so she can draw on a variety of resources for her class and our collaborative work. She also happens to have a wide range of interests such as reading, travel, Legos, board games, TV shows, movies, American culture, and sports. These disparate hobbies allow her to share common interests with her students. She knows her students very well and is a dedicated and thoughtful teacher. These characteristics suggest that she would be willing take a positive and active role in both planning the curriculum and contributing to this study. During the collaborative process, we had many
rich conversations and negotiations while brainstorming literacy events and practices for the Unit 2 curriculum. As a researcher, I have learned a multitude of theories and studies from my doctoral program but have not applied any of them in a practice site. My hope for this collaboration was to connect theory and practice with her support. Therefore, this teacher-researcher collaboration was reciprocal, and together we tried to make sense what we were doing.

When I embarked on this dissertation research, this collaboration was uncertain. The opportune moment came when Hu Laoshi expressed concern about the course materials. During my field observations, when she and I were discussing last year’s Unit 2 reading, we considered that the current fifth graders might be uninterested because the content was too dense to unpack and it had no context. I immediately suggested the idea of collaborating to revamp the course materials. While Hu Laoshi was willing to make changes, she had some concerns about JBS’s ideologies and her institutional responsibilities. Primarily, she had high standards for her own teaching performance and students’ learning outcomes. After consulting with her supervisor, she accepted my initial curriculum outline plan. However, she was still concerned that it might be chaotic or would include too much English. In the meantime, I consulted one of my dissertation committee members, Professor Sunny Lau, about this critical literacy unit, since she has conducted several critical literacy projects successfully in the L2 setting. Professor Lau helped me rethink JBS students’ L2 linguistic needs and confirmed the value of conducting a critical literacy project for L2 learners. I revised my curriculum outline accordingly and shared it with Hu Laoshi, who finally agreed to undertake the curriculum. However, unlike a prescriptive curriculum plan, we had to keep our plans
nimble as Hu Laoshi proceeded with her teaching since we did not yet know the students’ responses to the literacy events and practices.

Our first collaborative task was to write a new reading text, *A brief Introduction of Massachusetts History*, to serve as a foundation for L2 resources, which students could use to design their writing and multimodal projects. Hu Laoshi took charge of writing, and I researched and collected information. After she wrote the first draft, I provided feedback as a second reader. This teacher-generated reading text took plenty of discussions and negotiations as we considered the words and grammatical structure in teaching history in L2. The following reflection note on our curriculum meeting explains our process (November 28, 2016):

We didn’t meet until tonight. When I arrived at her classroom, it was around 7 pm. Hu Laoshi has completed writing 90 percent of the text. I read her writing, and we discussed the main idea of each paragraph to make it more coherent. We also simplified difficult words. In that sense, students will be able to use the language. We read and re-read to make sure this reading was not too challenging. We tried to not choose dense vocabulary words, but ones at a level between written and oral categories. Besides, we predicted some possible language that students might use for this writing and project. Well, working with young L2 learners always requires negotiating and deciding “what language” to use or teach in terms of linguistic perspective because we want to support students’ meaning making.

Hu Laoshi was very clear about which words did and did not work in her class. For example, she was aware of which words and phrases students could learn, and which were too challenging. During our discussion, she made the text straightforward, but also ensured that every paragraph had some cultural themes she could use to invite students to discuss. Mainly, our negotiations occurred in the following areas: 1) include vocabulary words that suited the students’ age and level, 2) replace vocabulary words (i.e., favoring concrete over abstract words and commonly used words over those rarer ones; use words
already learned for review), 3) build connections between cultural themes and historical concepts, and 4) keep space to invite students to present ideas and to think differently.

At the beginning, our ideas on planning this unit were vague, but Hu Laoshi was willing to keep trying. During her writing process, she constantly worried that this unit would fail. Ultimately, she issued the reading text. Since history has been a challenging topic for young L2 learners, other teachers have been reluctant to teach it because it seemed to require specific words and abstract concepts beyond elementary school L2 students’ level. Instead, most teachers have preferred to focus on science and environmental ecology. For this reason, I think Hu Laoshi was excited about this reading text she made for her class. On top of that, we had a follow-up plan to continue this topic. For example, we booked a field trip to a historic museum and planned a final video project with a target audience, such as future school visitors or students in other grades, to learn about the history of Massachusetts.

5.3 Historic Museum and Historical Perspective

The field trip to a local historic museum was intended to connect students to the purpose of learning this history unit. One issue about learning L2 Chinese in the US is that students have limited resources and few authentic environments in which to practice the target language. As a researcher, I hold that historical thinking can be integrated into students’ L2 literacy practice through a trans-linguistic curriculum connection, which serves as a semiotic resource to support students’ L2 writing. In other words, students have an opportunity to move away from textbooks and immerse themselves in a multimodal experience, in this case, the museum trip.
Hu Laoshi was initially slightly hesitant about the field trip idea. Due to the JBS language policy, she mentioned that students might not speak Chinese the whole time. I explained that an alternative approach with a multimodal perspective might offer some possibilities to support students’ L2 writing. It was worth trying. Unofficially, I put some deep thought into the search for a potential field trip in relation to the local history unit. I considered several local historic places, e.g., a well-known museum featuring a children’s author, a reservoir, a university-based botanical garden with a rich history of plants, and a mural art area based on some social justice projects. For all that, it was challenging to coordinate any field trip with weather, distance, students’ interest, and educational purposes. Finally, I thought of a local historic museum. I invited Hu Laoshi to visit this museum with me to see how we might integrate the trip into our unit. Thus, we made a visit and experienced the old historic district together.

The visit was a refreshing and rich experience because a museum tour guide led us with a critical lens to examine the museum’s 18th century objects and consider how they were in line with representations of power. Afterward, we agreed that the field trip would create an opportunity for students to learn the history of Massachusetts from a historical perspective. Still, we worried that we might fail in teaching Chinese literacy and history in an interdisciplinary fashion. After all, neither Hu Laoshi or I are from the United States, and we have limited knowledge about US history. In addition, because the students had learned Massachusetts history in the third grade, we would need to differentiate the L2 history unit from their L1 history class. Our teacher-researcher collaboration on constructing a new curriculum and course materials was new to both of us. We used the strategies of discussing and adjusting the unit curriculum as it unfolded.
5.3.1. Curriculum Discussion: Writing for a Historic Museum

What approach should teacher and researcher take for this trip since all the museum events were conducted in L1 English instead of target L2? Our curriculum meetings were mostly held in unofficial ways during Hu Laoshi’s break time, lunch time or time off because she was constantly surrounded by students and school work. Two days before the field trip, we initiated a pre-field trip curriculum discussion with one question: What could we do to link a field trip to a historical perspective? Our first idea was an exit-slip assignment that would be certain to evoke thoughts before students left the field trip site. However, in what ways? First, I proposed that students could bring some guiding questions with them on the field trip and could look for answers or bring back photos or notes for later in-class discussions. Hu Laoshi said that the students would not remember anything about the assigned tasks when they were having fun on the field trip, so asking them to take notes or photos was not a viable option.

After that, she asked me, “How are the students going to share their understanding? Do they write?” She preferred having some written work to demonstrate what the students had learned. I immediately concurred. Then I proposed that students could choose an identity of someone from the 18th century and could write a diary from that person’s perspective about his/her life. However, Hu Laoshi said, “I’m afraid that writing could be a challenging task because some student might not be able to produce written texts.” I offered some other possibilities, such as modes of drawing or oral sharing. However, we could not agree on an assignment. Hu Laoshi was more concerned about the students’ L2 output. While considering students’ L2 output, time, and interests,
we became disoriented. Our brainstorming took countless back-and-forth turns and negotiations.

Finally, we settled on one entry of diary writing, in which students would assume one social identity from the 18th century and write a diary to share this person’s life to show a historical perspective. Even with the essential assignment plan, we had to modify our original teaching plan and brainstorm more on what literacy activities should be implemented in class to scaffold this piece of writing. The following dialogue shows the process of how one teacher-researcher pair developed a teaching and writing curriculum through recursive discussion:

1. **Hu Laoshi**: 就是我覺得很滿好的，可是如果沒有寫，就沒有意義在 (I think the idea is pretty good, but it would not be as meaningful if learning does not involve writing)
2. **Researcher**: 那就讓他們寫幾句話，他們能夠寫多少就寫多少 (Then we can let them write a couple of sentences. They can write as much as they are able to.)
3. **Hu Laoshi**: 你是說，假裝是個日記嗎？ (You mean, we pretend it’s a diary.)
4. **Researcher**: 對呀！就讓他寫個日記 (Right! Let them do a diary.)
5. **Hu Laoshi**: 然後你要給自己一個身份 (Then you give yourself an identity.
6. **Researcher**: 就是 (18… It’s the 18th century…)
7. **Hu Laoshi**: 然後他會跟我說，可是我又不會說中文。如果那個人他太入戲，他會跟我說，可是我又不會說中文。真的 (Then they [students] will tell me, but I do not speak Chinese. If that student is quite into the story/situation, they will tell me they don't speak Chinese. Really.)
8. **Researcher**: (大笑) 太入戲。我了解。所以用那個 17 幾年，他可以自己假定一個時間，然後他回來之後，他還可以在網路上找一個那天歷史上有沒有重大事，就是在美國那時候有沒有重大的事件 (Laughing…into the story. I see, I understand. So we use the 18th century as the time period. They can assume a time or day. After they return from the trip. Maybe they can also research if any significant historic event happened on that day.)
9. **Hu Laoshi**: 等於說你把自己放在歷史的某一天的感覺。 (You mean that you position yourself in one of these days in history.)
10. **Researcher**: 對，你覺得好不好？ (Right, what do you think?)
11. **Hu Laoshi**: 好呀！那不能寫的人就算了吧！就要打分數了嗎？ (Ok! How about people who cannot write? Should we forget about them if they cannot write? Should we still grade them?)
This dialogue reveals that a teacher-research collaboration is a complex process requiring extensive time and effort. As a teacher, Hu Laoshi had her own institutional responsibilities to fulfill, which contributed to the pressures she felt regarding time restrictions and concerns about learning outcomes. With some writing assignments/worksheets, she (like most teachers) would feel more secure about the need to indicate what students had learned. In addition, she did not have a lot of confidence that students would be able to write independently and effectively in L2. She had to
consider whether the new assignment was worth trying, especially if the amount of time and effort that students and teacher invested only produced a small writing product.

As a researcher, I was trying to understand what method would support students to write with a more critical perspective and would also be in line with a “Goldilocks strategy”, i.e., not too hard and not too easy. Hu Laoshi and I brainstormed all different possible formats—fill-in-the-blank writing, drawing, speaking—and thought about integrating grading to motivate the majority of students who were not too concerned about their L2 grades. Initially, fill-in-the-blank writing seemed more feasible than writing a long paragraph in L2. However, by the end of our conversation, our thoughts had shifted from our preliminary fill-in-the-blank idea to the more creative historical diary writing assignment. The purpose of showing this dialogue is to offer a glimpse of our curriculum planning process. It did take time to think, revise and adjust to make it work, and we had to consider students’ needs and their responses. Ultimately, we were satisfied with this decision. However, the success of our curriculum work required more planning with relevant literacy events to prepare students to be ready to write.

5.3.2. Before Walking into History: Taking a Historical Perspective through Artifactual Literacies

“你要想那個走到歷史的感覺 (You need to think about that feeling of walking into history)” Hu Laoshi, December 15, 2017)

With the writing assignment in mind, we needed to create pre-trip literacy practices to prepare students to situate themselves in the historical past, and then they could immerse themselves in the field trip activities and write about them. Given the concept of artifactual literacy (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010), one literacy event we used to engage students in the history unit was thinking about historical significance through
show and tell. Show and tell would provide students an opportunity to share a story from their home using L2 oracy, their ability to express themselves fluently and grammatically in speech. Artifactual literacy refers to writing or telling through the use of artifacts, any object from our daily lives that “embodies people, stories, thoughts, communities, identities, and experience and is valued or made by a meaning maker in a particular context” (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010, p.2). Artifactual literacy is situated in the social semiotic theory. Any text that students produce about a meaningful artifact from their own home, place or community will reveal layered or sedimented identities (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010). In other words, such a literacy product engages students in a sensory literacy practice, allowing them to reveal their identities and bring different cultures into the classroom. Correspondingly, sharing these identities and artifacts also serves as a bridge to scaffold students’ learning experience from the known to the new.

We invited students to bring one old object from home with meaning to them or their family. They were free to make their own decision about what was important or significant to learn about the past from their experience. Hu Laoshi informed the students’ parents via an email, in which she explained the details and purpose of the assignment. She also offered examples of artifacts, such as photos, family tree books, or any small object that would be convenient to bring to school.

On the day of show and tell, the small whiteboard in the class showed a message that placed students with a new identity position as a historian, which meant that students would be empowered to tell their family stories using their own knowledge. My field notes below describe student’s excitement and interest in the show and tell exercise:

In the morning, I heard the presenters keep asking Hu Laoshi when they could take out their object to show the class. Hu Laoshi told them to wait a bit because
they had some class routines to finish first, including discussion of one reading text from the take-home assignment and some reading strategies worthy of attention for their weekly assignment. After that, Hu Laoshi had the class read the shared message together. The message was about the day’s agenda: “Show and Tell.”

The message board and translated message are shown in Figure 5.2.

![Message Board and Translated Message](image)

The message on the left shows how fifth graders started their day. The teacher usually writes the agenda, plus any important reminders or issues to discuss with students. This message also provides students with reading practice.

The translated message:

Dear little historians,

Today we will invite your peers to show and tell about one object with historical significance that you brought from home. After that, we will discuss some questions.

From the teachers who are planning the field trip

As usual, Hu Laoshi and the class unpacked the new words together to decipher the whole message. Right before presenters started, she checked with them to see if there were any words that they did not know how to say. The students were confident and said they were ready. Even though this session was improvised, it was rewarding to see that some students prepared notes or labeled the content they wanted to share. Each one sat in the teacher’s chair and talked proudly while showing the object brought from home. They tried their best to express themselves in L2 and used some key words in L1 when they did not know what to say. The student audience was engaged. They showed curiosity about the objects—listening, quietly, asking questions and asking to touch the objects (Field notes, December 14, 2017).

These field notes show how Hu Laoshi shifted students’ identity positions by giving them the power to take an active role. Meanwhile, when students wove in their resources and presented something representing their identity and their known history, they became “authorities,” sparking both their confidence and their interest in learning.
more about history. It was powerful to see that these fifth graders naturally became interested in learning from each other. Such meaningful experiences open students to new concepts they are learning. Examples from the students’ show and tell are shown in Figure 5-3.

Xiao-Yu shows two objects from home, a very old scale owned by her great-great grandfather. The scale still functions well, and one of the students was able to weigh a water bottle. The old recipe book was written by her great-great grandmother in 1885. The photographs in the book were antique, but the recipe book was remade with a modern look. Her family has been in Massachusetts since 1885.

Mo shares his ancestry genealogy book and explains how his family came to Massachusetts on the second ship after the Mayflower in 1673. He said confidently, “我是小莫，这是家人书…””. He flips the pages and points out some important names of his ancestors and explains how his last name changed over time. “Are females included in the book?” the teacher asks. She explains that, in Chinese genealogy books, females are usually excluded from records.
Apart from that, right before the field-trip day, Hu *Laoshi* gave students an in-class experience of the past by sharing technological objects from her childhood. These fifth graders are digital natives who have experienced advanced technology such as smartphones, the internet, the cloud, and social media. *Laoshi* brought in pictures of technological objects that students would not likely recognize, such as old computer disks, video tape rewinders, and a Tamgotchi, a digital toy pet that children pretended to
feed. First, she let students guess what the objects were for. When she showed the picture of a square computer disk to class, she said,

This is something I used when I was at your age. Nowadays you still can see it as a round disk. However, in 10 years, I’m sure it will disappear. At that time, it will be you turn to tell your students, “This is something I used when I was a child.” When you reflect on the past and its objects, you feel nostalgia. (Hu Laoshi, December 15, 2016).

Three students reacted to the picture and spoke in Chinese about its functions. The students quickly came up with the right answer. Next, Hu Laoshi showed a second object, which looked like a toy car. Students put up their hands and said, “I know, I know!” They were pondering. One student asserted, “It’s a toy car.” Hu Laoshi then offered a hint, “…but it has plug.” More and more students chimed in with different answers. They mixed one or two words in English when they needed vocabulary words beyond their word bank. In excitement, one or two students accidently burst out in English. Teng said, “It can rewind,” and Hu Laoshi demonstrated how to use the machine. The students were surprised and began blurting different answers in English. Hu Laoshi gently reminded them to use the target language. Teng, who is a big fan of videography and photography, suggested that the “car” was really a video tape rewinder, because he had one in his house.

Hu Laoshi then continued with the third object, a Tamagotchi, an electronic pet. Students could not hide their excitements, and this time they tried to speak more in Chinese. Hu Laoshi called on Xiao-yu. During her turn, several students interrupted her. Hu Laoshi pointed out the words on the photograph of this third object and asked students to read the words. Many of these fifth graders love pets, and a couple of students responded that they played with it when they were little, but they had no vocabulary word for it. One student raised her hand and said, “Electronic pet machine.” Hu Laoshi was
surprised at the students’ answer. She ended this session with a note, “我小时候的玩具，好，大家所有人太兴奋了，我要疯了，5,4,3,2,1, shh shh 停。(My childhood toy, everyone is too excited, I’m going crazy, 5,4,3,2,1, shh shh, stop).” As expected, the fifth graders could walk into history and explore the lives and activities of people from the past.

In short, this sharing session revealed a mixture of different cultures, and the class was transculturated. The objects brought by the teacher and students into the classroom represented different cultures because each was attached to a human history and living experience across time and place. Indeed, the L2 classroom is a natural site for transculturalism, and teaching culture is possible when students bring multiple resources to the classroom (Kramsch, 2012). The teacher became a liaison to help L2 learners communicate across cultures and reach shared understandings.

5.3.3. Walking into History: Multimodal Literacy Experience

Friday, December 16, was an extremely cold day, with the temperature dipping as low as 12 degrees Fahrenheit. However, Hu Laoshi and I were quite excited about this freezing cold weather because students would experience the same harsh weather as people living in the 18th century. Even so, a couple of parents questioned the feasibility of going ahead with the field trip on such a bitterly cold day. The students, however, had no such reservations. As soon as I walked into the class that morning, I saw that all the students were in merry spirits and excited about the field trip, because it meant they could meet and spend time with their friends from the other class.

Before departing, Hu Laoshi had students finish their regular Friday dictation. After that, she asked students if they were dressed warmly enough for the cold weather
outside. Students held up their scarves, hats, and mittens and replied, “有 (Yes, I do)” with loudness and excitement. By 9:10 am, students had gathered in the front hallway, where they were organized into four groups, each led by one teacher and one parent chaperone. In my role as chaperone, I was paired with Hu Laoshi and my focal student participants. Before getting on the school bus, Hu Laoshi distributed name tags to everyone. Each tag showed the student’s name and the group number to which he or she belonged. The groupings were arranged by Hu Laoshi the night before, a time-consuming exercise that had required her to consider all aspects to make the trip advantageous to all. For example, some students who preferred to speak L1 would be better chaperoned by parents and English teachers. On the other hand, students willing to speak Chinese would better to be paired with Chinese teachers. On top of that, students loved to hang out within their own social circles, and Hu Laoshi made that happen, too. Mainly, she wanted students to have an opportunity to meet their friends from the other class so they could socialize. On the school bus, students talked, laughed, and played while heading toward the historic site.

At the historic site, the students were engaged in four museum-organized educational activities: weaving, cooking, learning in a one-room schoolhouse, and visiting a historic house. Four groups rotated among the four activities, which took students back to life in the 18th century. Cross-linguistic connections of these experiences were drawn to L2 writing. Below are brief overviews of each activity, for which the students built intertextualities into their writing.
5.3.3.1 Weaving: A Hands-On Textile Experience

Students learned about the process of turning raw wool into yarn/thread and operated a loom to weave patterned cloth. This workshop was all about weaving. Although turning wool into yarn is not so much about critical thinking, it involves a great deal of hands-on experience. For example, students used two hand-held boards to card the wool/fleece before spinning. Students also had an opportunity to use the loom to weave the cloth. Later, in their writing, some students reflected on the laborious work and the role of females in the 19th century.

| Museum educator demonstrates turning fleece into yarn. | Students use two hand-held boards to card the wool. The purpose was to turn raw wool into fluffy fleece before spinning it into yarn. | Two students share a weaving machine to weave a patterned cloth. They maneuvered parts of the machine up and down to weave different colored yarns. |

Figure 5.4. Hands-On Fiber Workshop

5.3.3.2 An Open-Hearth Cooking Lesson

The historic site had an authentic old-time kitchen, constructed with a low ceiling, a real red brick fireplace/stove, and a single shelf with traditional containers. The baking and cooking were done in the fireplace, an open-hearth stove. Students participated in baking ginger bread cookies with 18th-century kitchen tools. They learned how to preserve food and survive daily without a refrigerator and even made butter by hand. The
museum interpreter shared the story of sugar. In the 18th century, most people in Massachusetts would have used maple syrup instead of sugar. Sugar was an imported product and came in a loaf. Since it was rare and expensive, it was saved for special occasions.

The museum educator prompted the students to compare the functions of the 18th-century kitchen to a modern one. During this process, students were eager to respond and to demonstrate their knowledge of food and cooking. Since students were familiar with the foods from their own culture and living experience, students became “experts” by translating from English to Chinese for Hu Laoshi and me. In school, they never hear us speak English, so they assumed we might have trouble understanding the museum educator.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students sit and learn about cooking in the 18th century.</th>
<th>Students take turns participating in the baking process.</th>
<th>In one room, you can see commonly used herbs drying on the wall.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Figure 5.5. Baking in an Old-Time Kitchen

5.3.3.3 Learning in a One-Room School House

This learning activity was the most exciting and impressive for students, because they experienced being taught in a traditional authoritative style. The museum educator’s presentation demonstrated a style of pedagogy that was authentic to the period and shifted between past and present pedagogies to break students’ assumptions about the
present. The classroom setting was an old-fashioned one-room school house. The single classroom featured a large centrally located stove to heat the space, long classroom tables and chairs, quills (feathered pens) and inkpots, 18th century textbooks, and a raised platform on which the teacher stood. The entrance was but a corridor to the main classroom. On the left wall of the classroom was a big blackboard filled with beautiful English writing in cursive. In the current age of technology and smartphones, such a writing style is no longer common and is not practiced at school. In front of the whiteboard, a platform was raised about 2 feet above the floor, a symbol of the teacher’s power and authority. The giant, square teacher’s desk sat atop the platform. From this perch, the teacher could oversee the whole room and manage every student in the class. In front of the teacher’s desk were two rows, each row with four or five student desks. On each desk a textbook, inkpot, and quill were displayed neatly.

One-room school houses usually had only one teacher. The teacher who our guide used to be a historian, and she opted to engage the students as if they were students from the 18th century. When our group of students arrived at the school house, they immediately received their first lesson of 18th-century school life. While waiting outside the school house, they acted like 21st-century students, joking, chatting, and generally being noisy. The 18th-century teacher addressed them in a loud and firm voice and scolded them for not obeying the rules. When she taught students reading, writing, and arithmetic lessons as they would have been taught in the 18th century, students soon learned that they had to follow the teacher’s instructions exactly or they would be punished by being sent to stand in the corner.
Besides being a serious and strict teacher, she acted as a thoughtful historian. She explained 18th-century gender roles and the didactic ideology prescribing what was then considered appropriate behavior in the children’s textbook. During our visit, she juxtaposed past and present by playing two different roles and comparing different perspectives of the two educational systems. The past emphasized rote memorization and the teacher’s authoritative power, whereas modern schools tend to value critical thinking and a balance of power between teacher and students. On this field trip, students not only experienced what it was like to be students in the late 18th century, but their thinking and assumptions were also challenged.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students enter one-room school house. The teacher welcomes the students, but also reprimands them for their noisiness.</th>
<th>The setting of the one-room school house. Note the raised platform, blackboard, and all-important stove with pipe.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The traditional learning style relied on recitation and rote memorization. In addition, textbooks were didactic. The school house teacher asks students, “What’s wrong with that? What’s the problem?”</td>
<td>In the one-room school, boys and girls sits separately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In response to the teacher’s questions, the only acceptable answer is the one in the textbook. Students are expected to follow whatever the teacher said, with no second thoughts. Manners and respect are</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
important too. The teacher uses dialogues to help understand expectations. For example,
“Is he correct?
“No.”
“Stand up!”
(to the class) “What was he forgetting to do? Stand up when speaking to me.”
“Are you ready now to be good scholars?”
“Sure.”
“I don’t know this word ‘sure’.”

Figure 5.6. Learning in a One-Room Schoolhouse

5.3.3.4 Visit to a Historic House

This two-story house was built in the 1780s, with one parlor, four bedrooms, and two studios with a kitchen. On the table were displayed the types of food (watermelon, cucumber, beef) that people usually ate in late fall. These rooms were protected by a glass fence, which kept visitors at a distance from the furniture. Photography was not allowed. When we first entered, Claire, the museum coordinator, announced some rules of the house. As the students observed the rooms, they guessed how things and objects would have functioned, what activities people usually did, and their various assumptions about the past.

For about 20 minutes, students moved back and forth through the rooms and whispered their guesses. Our curiosity was piqued by the presence, in one of the two first-floor studio rooms, of an oversized cradle that was too big for babies and too small for adults. Later, Claire informed us that it was designed for a sick patient. The students were also attracted to a chamber pot (夜壶), a portable toilet that was kept indoors. Dumping the waste from the chamber pot was usually a job reserved for children, we learned. On the second floor were three bedrooms, one large and two small ones.
Grandparents usually took the bigger room, parents took one small room, and the children would all squeeze together in one small bedroom. During the guided tour, Claire engaged students in thinking critically about family structure, international trade (especially between China and the US), and restrictions of 18th-century social classes.

| Students are entering the historic house. | A parlor is the first room visited by students. On that day, the dining table was laden with foods that New Englanders would have consumed in late autumn. - Photo from museum website | One-bedroom studio in the historic house includes one dining table, some chairs, a cradle, a spinner and an open fire place. - Photo from museum website |

Figure 5.7. Visiting a Historic House

Reactions to the field trip were overwhelmingly positive. “This is the best trip ever!” Hu Laoshi said, adding, “We should make this trip be our fifth-grade graduation trip!” The other fifth-grade teachers agreed. Coincidentally, the museum education program met the needs of the history unit by allowing students to practice the process of inquiry, including asking questions, observing, predicting (guessing), reflecting, and thinking critically. Indeed, the museum website says, “Field trip activities can support critical pedagogy by engaging students in reflection and evaluation using authentic resources.” On the day after the trip, students could not stop talking about it. Next, they
needed to write a diary entry from the perspective of an imagined 19th-century character. The teacher’s dilemma was how to help the students transfer their field trip experience into actual writing.

5.4 Students’ Knowledge Processes and Translinguistic Writing Approach

The field trip gave students a chance to be playful in a historic space. They joyfully participated in the activities and experienced reenacting, thinking about, talking about, seeing, feeling, and touching elements of the past. However, writing would still be a challenging task, because it requires mode shifts from L1 English to L2 Chinese and from spoken language to written texts. Hu Laoshi therefore adopted some approaches to facilitate the writing process and to make the L2 writing demands manageable. These approaches are described in the following section to explain how the multimodal/sharing experiences connected to students’ writing process and their writing product, which included a reflective discussion through L2 oral language experience, brainstorming, writing ideas with graphic organizers, writing with technology, publishing, and revising.

5.4.1 Reflections on the Trip to a Historic Museum: Mode-crossing and L2 Oracy

“这个讨论很重要，因为我们可以重温一下那个感觉。This discussion [reflection] is very important because together we can review those thoughts and feelings we experienced on that trip” (Hu Laoshi, Dec. 19, 2017).

On the first school day after the field trip, Hu Laoshi organized a reflective discussion for students to share their field-trip experiences in oral L2. Before beginning the writing process, students had to recall memories and highlight impressive moments from their field-trip experience. The trip was unique because the students were immersed in an environment full of a variety of modes, such as spatial, oral, aural, visual and tactile. Such a literacy practice is distinct from the literacy practices most valued in
school (i.e., reading and writing), and school children have limited access to practice literacy in other modes due to the increasing focus on preparing students for standardized tests. Indeed, students learn differently in other modes, which provide them alternative opportunities for learning (Bezemer & Kress, 2016). These modes not only serve as meaning-making resources, especially in a L2 classroom, but also stimulate students’ senses and emotions, which helps them remember the information they are learning as they are trying to negotiate between two languages. Furthermore, in situated learning, an additional learning experience springs from the students’ own cultures and familiar life experiences. Their known experience and sensory memory turn into available resources to support their participation in developing L2 literacy.

During the in-class discussion, students described their experiences by exercising all their linguistic L1 and L2 repertoires to communicate their thoughts with the teacher and the whole class. The rigorous and engaging learning experiences were co-constructed by the students and Hu Laoshi, who is a classroom story maker. In other words, she usually raises questions in classroom discussions from her observations about students’ personal interests, student questions, or her own inquiries or curiosities. Sometimes she might start with a minor question, and one student will respond and then another student until a conversational thread emerges. This interactive pattern is similar to a “popcorn” dialogic engagement in which students improvise in conversation, and the teacher takes the opportunity to teach new content or linguistic elements. This pattern differs from the interactional initiation-response-evaluation pattern, in which a teacher asks a closed-end question, expects a brief (often one word) response, and briefly evaluates the response (Gibbons, 2015). In the post-trip discussion, Hu Laoshi listened to students’ answers and
followed up to elicit more conversation. In Hu Laoshi’s interview, she mentioned that she knows her students and their individual interests well enough that she is never at a loss to find a way to engage them in conversation. As a L2 teacher, she also shows her own personality and interests as a way of inviting students to share their thoughts.

Habitually, in a L2 classroom, students first learn key patterns, grammar points, or vocabulary words before being allowed to practice these linguistic elements when discussing an assigned topic. In that situation, students have a hard time contextualizing their learning. However, in Hu Laoshi’s class, small dialogues are woven together to create one part of the classroom story, which in turn, showcases a student’s wisdom and the collaborative work required to construct a L2 learning experience. This process is shown in the excerpt below from the in-class discussion of the fiber workshop.

1. Hu Laoshi: 羊毛，我们在说羊毛，好， 别的人，爱兰（Wool, we are talking about wool. Good. Someone else, Ai-lan!)
2. Student (Ai-lan): 我喜欢我们在那个布的东西 (I like that we were on that fabric thing, i.e., I like what we did on that fabric thing)
3. Hu Laoshi: 织（写织在白板上）(Weave [Hu writes the Chinese character 織 (zhi, weave) on the whiteboard])
4. Student (Ai-lan): 我想那个时候我就知道那样做了。我会做那个像所有的天， 如果我有一个 (I think I already knew how to do it at that time, I would do that like all the days if I have one.)
5. Hu Laoshi: 真的，我上次跟廖老师去的时候，她就让我做，我也有做那个。(Very true, last time I went with Liaw Laoshi, the lady let me do it. I also did that on the weaving machine.)
6. Students (a couple of voices together): 很好玩！(It’s fun!)
7. Hu Laoshi: 然後我就说，(倒吸一大口气), 超级好玩。那时候我就说，我觉得我可以做一整天，真的。然後我就说，我觉得教室需要有一个这个，就你不要去休息了，你就可以去织布。(Then I said, [a deep breath], it’s super fun. I said that time, I think I can do it all day long, seriously. Then I said, I think we need one in the classroom, you [students] don't need to take a time out as a break. You can weave.)
8. Students (a couple of voices together): 对 (Right!)
9. Hu Laoshi: 就这样织。呵呵呵 (Just weave like that, hahaha!)
10. Students: (学生说话的声音) (a couple of voices together) (noises)
Initially, I thought that weaving was the least critical activity among the four field-trip activities. However, when I heard the students’ conversation, I was surprised at their responses and questions. They enjoyed the weaving and had fun. Before moving onto other aspects of the topic, Hu Laoshi first complimented the students, saying that they had much more knowledge about wool than she did. During the weaving activity she discovered a lot of new information. In her initial question, she intentionally used three new key words related to the process of making fiber “誰要針對這個組，要跟我們分享，把羊毛變成線，然後去織布的那個組? (Who would like to share thoughts about turning wool into yarn, and then turning it into textiles?)” (post-trip discussion transcript). Hu Laoshi first told the students that she had not realized that raw wool is oily. She asked students if they knew why it was oily. One student (Teng) responded, “因為它有這個從他的 skin (Because it has oil from its skin)” (Teng, post-trip discussion transcript). Hu Laoshi added to Teng’s comment by drawing a connection to people’s oily hair. At the same time, the class erupted in talk, with students eager to discuss the activity. Hu had to
quiet the class down and resume the discussion. Afterward, she prompted students to share more.

One student, An-xiu, who had been raising her hand, got the chance to share. She said “那个时候你们有羊毛，做在那个像书一样的东西上。我觉得非常酷，可以在一个可是你还再有两个这样 (I thought it was a cool thing because the carding tool was like a book, and you could put the wool on it, and you have two to alternate” (post-trip discussion transcript). Her friend Xiao-xi agreed with her and added, “然后你可以翻过来做这个, 都会在一个 ([inaudible] Then you can flip it over and turn it into one.”)

Another friend Ai-na said, “然后他做这样一个还可以拿下来 (Then she did this and then you could take it down.”) Frequently, when students participate in conversation in class, it is common for them to go off topic, and the teacher sometimes goes off topic, too, depending on the rigor of the conversation or whenever off-topic thoughts are stimulated by other people’s talk. The class conversation was redirected when one student complained that their group was the last to visit the [historic site? weaving activity?], and they were too rushed to have sufficient time to try out the weaving activity. Hu Laoshi wanted to bring the conversation back and give other students with raised hands a chance to talk.

The above excerpt looks like a simple discussion, but it is quite complex. This scenario was about the loom. First, the teacher reiterated the subject, and invited Ai-li to share because she had been raising her hand. Ai-li expressed her excitement about the fabric. She said, “我喜欢那个布的东西 (I like that fabric thing.”), which Hu Laoshi correctly sensed she meant the weaving tool or loom. Right after that, she sounded out the word 纭 (weave) and wrote it on the whiteboard. She let Ai-lan continue her thought,
hoping she would use the new word to say more. Ai-lan said, “我想那个时候我就知道那样做了。我会做那个像所有的天，如果我有一个” (“I think that time I learned how to do it. I would do it like all day, if I had one”) (line 7). [Note that Ai-lan did not incorporate the new word into her response. However, when she wrote in her journal, she described her job as 織布 (weaving).]

Next, Hu Laoshi shared her experience of working on the loom on the day that she and I visited the museum. A couple of students (girls) responded, saying “It was so much fun!” Then Hu Laoshi joked about placing a loom in the classroom for students who needed a time out. She was suggesting that weaving is like therapy and it promotes good concentration. Multiple students shouted “Yes!” in support of her idea. Hu Laoshi then called on another student who had been raising a hand, while also reminding the whole class to quiet down. Fei suggested that Hu Laoshi buy a loom (line 25). Hu Laoshi laughed hard and said, “I can’t buy one.” At this time, the students’ talking continued, and the teacher had to again remind the class to quiet down again and listen to the speaker. Student Ai-lan added another point for Hu Laoshi, “If you are doing that [weaving], and you cannot stop. Then you go to school, the teacher said you must finish class, then you say, you cannot, then he/she will say you need to go to the corner. Then you say ‘No, Ma’am’” (lines 34 and 35). Ai-lan connected this scenario to the context of the one-room schoolhouse with the historian teacher. Hu Laoshi was mindful that students might divert the conversation to the subject of the schoolhouse due to excitement. She asked the class to remain on the weaving topic for now, that they would move to the subject of schoolhouse later. Their conversation about the weaving experience continued for another 5 minutes, focusing mainly on the process of turning
raw wool to textile. Then the class proceeded to the subject of the one-room schoolhouse, their favorite subject.

In the following sections, I will discuss two salient themes in the above-described interactions: noises and the teacher-student relationship.

5.4.1.1. Rethinking Classroom Noise

While I was transcribing this excerpt, it was challenging to extract words from the students’ speech because so many different voices were overlapping. I had to play the recording countless times to transcribe a small stretch of dialogue. I started to wonder what those noises meant. The connection between noises, signs, and learning has been suggested to complicate the signs of engagement in learning (Bezemer & Kress, 2016). Indeed, these scholars state that every sign and sign complex “tells something about how a sign-maker knows and sees the world” when the sign is produced. Such signs show “what the sign-maker (as a learner or otherwise) has attended to or noticed,” and what effects such discernments have on the sign-maker’s/learner’s resources (Bezemer & Kress, 2016, p. 41)

| 1. Eye contact between students and the teacher. | 2. Students raising hands. | 3. Small talk between teacher and students |

Figure 5.8. Signs of Learning in the Classroom

The essential concept of their argument urges educators to reconsider classroom noise as a sign of engagement rather than distraction, because learners not only make meanings through different modes, but also use environmental cues, such as their gaze,
nodding, sitting posture, and space to communicate their response. They use different modes to indicate that something interests them.

In the above dialogue, I discovered that students’ signs of learning were not limited to one style when the teacher called on them to talk. Instead, the signs involved several different patterns, including raising hands, cutting off someone else’s talk, listening quietly, laughing, joking, making noises, code-switching to L1, and mixing L1 and L2 in their speech. For example, in this dialogue, Hu Laoshi provided a funny idea for the classroom (making students weave for a time out), which attracted some students’ attention (lines 13/14), and activated the teacher’s interaction with Fei-wen and Ai-li (lines 25/26 & 34/35). Two students teased their teacher with hearty suggestions that she buy a loom. These interactions were playful. Simultaneously, other students wanted to participate. They tried to cut into the conversation or engaged in small talk with friends next to them. Whenever Hu Laoshi prompted students’ questions, the noises and fuss started because the students were eager to share their experiences and how they felt about the field trip. Students show signs of learning differently. Their signs let us know what is and is not meaningful to them.

On other side, the side utterances could be disturbing when an individual was trying to express his or her thoughts to class. During the discussion, Hu Laoshi had to ask the students to quiet down at least three times. She said, “你们太兴奋了，冷静! 我知道这个题目你们很有兴趣，这是一件好事，可是你真的太兴奋了! (You are overexcited, calm down. I know you are very into this topic. This is a good thing, but you are too excited!” Field note, Dec. 19, 2017). Although gazing at the teacher is commonly considered a standard mode of classroom engagement because it indicates that students
are paying attention and absorbing knowledge, in this excerpt at least, noises could be considered another mechanism of engagement because students were eager to participate. In that sense, any sign means something. As educators, practitioners, or school authorities, expanding our understanding of students’ sign-making can build our awareness and help us be mindful while designing the learning environment. This awareness might help us provide alternative learning opportunities.

5.4.1.2. Teacher-Student Relationship

With respect to the teacher-student relationship, collaborative knowledge processes show a balance of power between teacher and students. Even though Hu Laoshi has the authority to maintain discipline and keep the class in order for learning, she has an openness that shows she values the students’ resources and encourages them to contribute their knowledge and to the ongoing conversation. The following field note provides some details to explain this collaborative process:

When Hu Laoshi engages students in discussion, her questioning strategies heightens students’ awareness about an event or incident. She also remembers students’ questions and calls for the whole class to pay attention when necessary, which generates interesting conversations. For example, the cooking teacher on the field trip was quite serious because she did not let students do anything unless they were told. One student, Wei, asks why the kitchen educator did not allow us to touch everything. Hu Laoshi is puzzled about it too and said, “I don’t really know either.” Then she brings that question to the whole class, asking them, “Do you know why?” One student, Teng, shares his opinion but not everyone hears him. Hu Laoshi recaps what Teng said: “应腾说他可能要很严格，因为他有一个最危险的工作，就是他有一个火在旁边，如果小朋友乱走可能会有危险。(Teng says that she [the kitchen eductor] needed to be strict because she had a dangerous job with the fire next to her. If kids walked around her, something dangerous might happen. She has to be careful.)” Field note, December 19, 2016

As I see it, L2 teachers also need to have the capacity to understand students’ expressions. In many situations, when students wanted to share ideas and comments in L2, some teachers might dismiss them because their speech could be loaded with a
mixture of two languages, incorrect/confusing grammatical structures, or word choices with different meanings. Hu Laoshi understood the students’ talk and would either paraphrase or recap students’ comments to the class, which can be one way of modeling language use in L2. For this fifth-grade classroom, Hu Laoshi has built good rapport with her students, which contributed to their sense of mutual understanding. One example was when Fei and Ai-lan proposed two ideas for their teacher, since Hu Laoshi said she liked the loom so much. The style of the discussion reflected the classroom dynamics, which allows casual and friendly exchanges. According to the language choices, the register used by students was akin to the one they would use with friends. Their attitude toward their teacher was one of “you are my friend and I have something to share with you.” The student-teacher rapport constructs a relaxing learning environment, which reduces student’s affective filter (Krashen, 1998). In other words, L2 learners have fewer anxieties or stress and more self-confidence to produce or speak L2.

The crucial role played by the teacher in inspiring students to engage in longer and deeper conversation is illustrated by this next example. In the discussion about the one-room schoolhouse, one student, Tong-tong, who used to be reserved about speaking L2 in class, described her experience in the one-room school as the most exciting part of the field trip. She used all her linguistic resources to speak about her experience for about one minute without stopping. Her passion was revealed in her voice as she talked.

While the field trip helped extend the class discussion and created more interactions, students also deepened their talk beyond the textual level. In the discussion about the historic house, students asked questions about historic objects they saw. The
following excerpt from that discussion demonstrates how students immersed themselves in the historical perspective and showed a sense of social concern about that era.

1. Hu Laoshi: 好，这个房子你还有看到甚麽有趣的吗？一些东西，我有看到一个他放在楼上的房间，很漂亮的一间，绿色的一个木头他可以放在床上的，那个很酷，你知道我在说吗？好，文彬。（Ok, anything interesting you saw about the house? Some objects, I saw one thing in the bedroom upstairs, a beautiful room. It’s green and it can be placed in bed. That’s very cool. Do you know what I’m saying? (3) Ok, Wen-bing [student’s name].)

2. Student: 那个小的(. .)(很难听懂) (That small [inaudible])

3. Student: Chamber pot!

4. Hu Laoshi: 喔对！小夜壶。我们叫他夜壶，因为他像一个壶一样，晚上会用，就是你会在上面用厕所。我没有用过这个，这太可怕了。Oh, right! A night pot. We called it a chamber pot because it looks like a pot and you used it at night. Then you can use it as a substitute bathroom. I have never used this. This is horrible [laughing and joking tone].)

5. Student: 我会(很难听懂) (I will [inaudible])

6. Hu Laoshi: 而且他说你有听到吗？他说把这东西倒掉都是谁的工作？(And she [the museum educator] said… Did you hear what she said? She said, “Whose job is it to dump the waste?”)

7. Student: 小朋友！[students are laughing] (Kids! [students are laughing])

8. Hu Laoshi: [点头]小朋友的工作[大笑]！恩，娜娜 ([nodding] Kids’ job [laughing]! (3) Hm, Na-Na)

   Student (Na-Na): 为什麽那个爷爷有那么大的房子 [很难听懂] (Why did that grandfather have such a big room [inaudible])

9. Students: [talking noises from different students]

10. Hu Laoshi: 他们是最老的人，他们已经老了，已经过了很久了，他们值得过一个好的生活。（They were the oldest in the family. They were already old, they had gone through a lot, they deserved a good life.）

11. Student (Mo): 那是个他们的 [time] [很难听懂] That’s their time! ([inaudible])

12. Hu Laoshi: 好，安安 (ok, An-an)

13. Student (An-an): 所以那个人有说那个爷爷奶奶有那个比较棒的地方住，因为他们已经帮忙了 [很难听懂] (So that person said that grandfather and grandmother have a better place to live because they have helped a lot [inaudible])

14. Hu Laoshi: 对，他们已经帮忙做了很多事，好，有没有最後的问题或关於这个房子有没有要说的吗？我们讨论了有点久，可是我觉得很值得，因为大家一起听。（Right, they had helped a lot and did a lot of things. Good, one last question, do you have any other questions regarding to this house you want to share? We have spent a lot of time talking, but I think it’s noteworthy because we listened to this together.)
This episode happened when one student wondered about the chamber pot they saw in the historic house, but did not have a vocabulary word for it. He said, “what is that small something”? Hu Laoshi pronounces the word “pot” (lines 7 and 8) and explained the literal meaning of the word. When she inserted her personal feelings about the pot, she asked, “Do you know whose job it was to dump the waste?” The whole class reacted and said, “kids!” Everyone laughed at that together. After having the conversation about children’s work in dumping out the waste, one student, Na-na, asked seriously why the largest room in the house had been given to the grandfather. Hu Laoshi offered a comment that maybe the grandparents were seen as deserving a good life due to their advanced age. Mo added his comment, “那个是他们的 time (that this is their time). He mixed one word of English to his sentence very naturally. An-an drew from the museum educator’s perspective, “所以那个人有说那个爷爷奶奶有那个比较棒的地方住,因为他们已经帮忙了(So that person said that grandpa and grandpa lived in a bigger room because they helped already).” Hu Laoshi confirmed her comment, saying, “对，他们已经帮忙做了很多事 Yes, they had helped and done a lot of things.” On the other hand, Hu Laoshi compressed An-an’s long sentence into a short one because it made the sentence more effective in terms of meaning by using a target linguistic structure of L2. The pattern of their dialogue flowed interestingly, because everyone shared a little of their thoughts about Na-na’s question.

Frequently, the teacher brought up the topic of the size of the house and the owner’s social status in that era. Students made several guesses. One student deduced that that house’s owner was not that wealthy because the size of his house was similar to that of the house the student lived in. The teacher wanted the class to think about the past and
present. Student Teng explained the principle of devaluation. He said, “他的钱是
downgraded 从这里到那里, 是像他们如果有五十, 5000 块钱，那这个会是像是一万
块钱 (His money was downgraded from here to there; it seems like if they have 50, 5
thousand dollars, then this would be like 10,000 dollars).” Hu Laoshi acknowledged his
opinion and responded, “Hmm, the 货币 [currency value] is different.” She used a term
in L2 for Teng’s conceptualization, which offers an opportunity for students to hear the
key vocabulary word. Immediately, something important occurred to her, and she asked,
“Do you remember the one precious and valuable thing that symbolized people’s wealth
around that time?” Her question aroused fifth graders’ curiosity. Again, they made
guesses, pondered the teacher’s hints, and guessed again. One student shouted out
“embroidery” in English, prompting the teacher to share more information and say, “接
近! 就是那些所有的布类，只要你看我们做过的那个布，它是多麽难拿到 (Very
close! All those textiles, you can imagine the textiles we made. It’s hard to get them)”
(transcript). The threaded dialogues created another opportunity for the teacher to
encourage students to consider the historic era. She also shared a memory from that day
about what she had learned about gender difference in 18th century compared to the
present day. When the museum educator reminded the fifth graders that females only
wore skirts at that time, one student, Ting, had strongly rejected this idea. “我不要穿裙
子 (I don't want to wear skirts),” she said. The museum educator told her firmly, “Yes,
women and girls only wore skirts at that time”. Hu Laoshi asked Ting to share what she
said on that day. Ting told the class, “我不会穿裙子，我会…I wouldn't wear skirts, I
will…” Hu Laoshi, who remembered everything, rephrased her words and shared exactly
what Ting said on that day: “我会把我那个裙子做成一件裤子。(I would make my skirts into pants.)”

In the bilingual classroom, a dynamic perspective can be used to understand students’ bilingual performance or what they can do to communicate for content-specific purposes with all their linguistic resources and to connect specific L2 language tasks to them (García, Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017). The unique aspect of this reflective discussion was that students could use all their L1 and L2 linguistic repertoires to participate in the dialogue and conceptualize their ideas in L2. These fifth graders clearly live in two languages and naturally alternate between languages when they are not certain what to say or how to say something specifically in L2. When they mode shift from L1 to L2 or from L2 to L1, they compared these two languages and further expanded their thinking. Such dialogical processes inform us that an interesting and interactive discussion in the L2 classroom depends on how the teacher facilitates the talking subjects and allows students to participate in the discussion. Once students’ interest and curiosity are stimulated, they use all their linguistic repertoires to communicate their thoughts.

In addition, for such an improvised discussion when the teachers cannot supply all words or phrases ahead, this provides a learning space for L2 learners to conceptualize their use of L2 language, and the teacher can support them with more specific words and phrase to allow them to articulate their thoughts because all the information they share is precious and they collaborate to construct their knowledge. Originally, Hu Laoshi had intended to prepare the students to speak, listen and think about the trip in L2 language before actual writing. The necessary content words were beyond students’ vocabulary bank, but these fifth graders were yet able to use up all their linguistic resources to
communicate about their trip experience. To teach new vocabulary words in the context, Hu *Laoshi* incorporated new content words in her questions, so students would hear the new words. Since students have been learning Chinese since the age of five, they have good Chinese ears, which helps them to remember the sounds and how to pronounce new vocabulary. Once they have the sound, they can look up words in the dictionary. Hu *Laoshi* would also write the Chinese characters on the whiteboards when an important keyword might support students in creating their sentences. To students whose primary language relies on an alphabetic language system, Chinese characters are signs. Seeing the word form and listening to the sound of the words provides another mode for students to create meaning for new vocabulary. When the whole class listened to this post-trip discussions, this definitely benefit them in constructing L2 resources for writing.

This is one way to contextualize students’ learning and create the opportunity for learning. Teaching L2 in interdisciplinary areas can be daunting because it involves abstract academic words or phrases that make teaching and learning L2 challenging. Teaching all the needed vocabulary takes time and runs the risk that students might lose interest or patience, or may stop paying attention, especially if those abstract or dense words are learned out of context and terms that students probably seldom use in their everyday lives. Retelling the story of their museum trip in Chinese allowed Hu *Laoshi* to contextualize the content words into discussion by using students’ momentum. The discussion provided an opportunity for learning vocabulary by putting the language learning in context, which is the opposite of drilling vocabulary words.

Thus, the role of this sharing experience is an opportunity for students to makes sense of their learning all together. Students engaged in dialogue, so the learning was not
just unidirectional from teacher talk. This practice demonstrates that students are able to think and flexibly transfer the language mode from their L1 to L2 flexibly with their bilingual competence.

5.4.2 Digital Technology and L2 Chinese Writing

Digital technology provides tremendous support for the students’ writing work. The fifth-grade Chinese classroom received iPads in late November. iPads offer one unique function, which is the ability to use handwriting. As an alternative to typing, students can write Chinese characters on iPads. Before having iPads, the fifth graders used Chromebook computers, an online Chinese-English dictionary, and Google Classroom to support their literacy practices, so students were quite familiar with some parts of technology in language learning. Since this was the students’ first writing project on iPads, Hu Laoshi had to model the iPad’s functions. For example, Hu Laoshi handwrote a journal entry to show how to use iPads and the Explain Everything app, an interactive whiteboard that we used for the rest of school year. In order to establish a nostalgic mood, Hu Laoshi designed an old-style notebook template for students to use on iPad. With excitement, students tackled the adventure of writing their journals on the iPad. Even though iPads are an efficient tool, writing still takes time.

As I mentioned earlier, Chinese characters are composed of different strokes, drawn in a precise order and arrangement. A lot of the characters are very similar, which is why learning Chinese characters requires a lot of memorization. The most challenging part for young Chinese language learners for both L1 and L2 is to memorize and write all these characters with automaticity and fluency. A common problem for Chinese-language learners is that they study these characters, but then forget all about them due to
insufficient exposure, repetition, and opportunities to use them. For L1 Chinese learners, the traditional method of learning new characters is to handwrite and copy those characters over and over. Without mastering the transcriptions of Chinese characters at a basic level, learners feel frustrated when proceeding to writing. Meanwhile, Chinese orthography is the top concern for language learners from alphabetic languages. On a less optimistic note, much research tends to target Chinese character writing instead of essay writing or creative writing. Thanks to technology, smartphones, computer and iPads are all equipped with Chinese language system writing systems to support Chinese literacy learning and inspire student to write in Chinese. The fifth graders in my study have the advantage of the oral language. That is, as long as they can speak or say the words, and they know how to use Pinyin system, they have a better chance at getting to paragraph writing or creative writing than other Chinese language learners. Their Chinese language acquisition has better chance to continue.

5.4.3 Mind Mapping and Drafting

A graphic organizer helped map out the initial ideas, and Hu Laoshi used the end of the first discussion to explain how to use it. The fifth graders brainstormed ideas and used Hu Laoshi’s graphic organizer created by to launch their writing process. The idea for the Hu Laoshi’s graphic organizer came from Chinese ways of thinking about all aspects of life, including food, clothing, residence (living), transportation, education, and recreation (entertainment), which allowed the students drafted their six categories in writing rather than orally. Hu Laoshi explained some words and had students to draw connections from other words they already knew to make meanings of unfamiliar words. For example, xíng [行] means walk or transportation. Hu Laoshi first prompted students
to think about the connection. Students came up a series of categories, including “you and your family,” “where you came from,” “shape” (xíngzhuàng 型状) and “heart” (xīn 心).

By pointing out the word travel (lǚxíng 旅行), Hu Laoshi prompted the students to think about travel by asking how people move from one place to another place. As soon as she said it, the student Shin, said “transportation” out loud. In this way, all of the students gradually picked up on the meanings, and Hu Laoshi continued with the rest of the explanations. Mapping ideas by writing down some key words in L2 provided a space for students to transcribe the characters based on the oral sounds they know from the dictionary, which then served as a resource for their writing as well. The figure below shows the content and structure of the graphic organizer:

![Mind-mapping graphic organizer](image)

On the graphic organizer handout, six categories (food, clothing, living, transportation, education and recreation) are mapped, and these covers the multiple dimensions of our daily life. They also support students in recalling what they remembered and outlining ideas for their own writing. The location, date, weather, time, age and job are listed with blanks to help students understand the purpose of the historic journal assignment and to help them generate preliminary ideas as well. The organizer also listed ten must know key words and ten optional transitional phrases for students to consider.

Figure 5.2. Mind-Mapping Graphic

Another support Hu Laoshi provided was a model text. But does offering a writing model limit students’ creativity? This was one question we raised while co-planning. At a later date, we realized that most of the students do prefer listening mode rather than reading on their own. Generally, students engaged in listening and speaking
more than reading and writing. Listening is one of the effective ways that students make sense the L2. At the time in question, we came to a conclusion that reading aloud the sample writing in class might benefit students to get as sense of the writing without interfering much with their thoughts and writing. A sample diary showed students what the diary should be like. In the sample text the narrative relates the story of a 10-year-old protagonist’s typical day back in 1755. The child described her life at home and at school in New England. The story was about poverty, school life and family life, with a focus on house chores and the cold weather. The idea was to model how students could reflect on the activities of the field trip and connect via writing with their field trip experience. It seemed that students took in the listening. The students were attentive when Hu Laoshi read aloud her sample text. For the students’ reference, she archived the sample text in the fifth-grade Google Drive.

Writing in L2 was not much fun for most of the fifth graders since it involved several elements—thoughts and ideas, and L2 language (for both reading comprehension and text production) and technology (iPads). Students whined for about five seconds when Hu Laoshi took out the mind mapping graphic organizer. It was likely they wanted to continue the field trip discussion and that, for them, writing is not as fun as talking. For students, writing does induce stress because it requires them to use L2 literacy.

Interestingly, students did enjoy working on writing after returning to their seats. They sat in groups and socialized. They had iPads, with access to Google and an online Chinese dictionary. They liked having personal time with Hu Laoshi. Hu Laoshi was by their side whenever a student raised his or her hand, and you could hear many voices calling “Hu Laoshi!, Hu Laoshi!”. Students called on her when they had even minor
questions because they received special attention from the teacher, who could confirm the phrases or characters they had chosen. Sometimes, the students would also chat with Hu Laoshi about details from their lives, or would complain about their favorite friend for fun. Their writing time was one of the most beautiful moments because these dialogues and interactions become part of their literacy practice. The fifth graders worked independently and focused on their writing, with their brains working hard. They enjoyed their writing time and were in good spirits, because they could freely take charge of their own learning.

5.5 Writing Across Time and Space

The writing approach that these fifth graders completed is considered creative writing because young L2 writers choose the topics that interest them and write original compositions, (Ivanic, 2004), which is far different from fill-in-the-blank exercises. Creative writing offers more possibilities, because writers can draw on different resources around them. The fifth graders produced texts that were similar to personal narratives instead of a conventional diary entry, because their stories necessarily featured such elements as text organization (orientation, complication, resolution), descriptive language, use of literary devices (simile, metaphor, hyperbole, imagery among other) and transitional devices (Derewianka, 1999). Their texts also discussed some cultural themes such as social class, gender and power.

When readers first read the students’ texts, they may be confused and doubtful as to why these student writers’ texts contain the certain topics such as harsh weather, chamber pots, sugar, baking, a strict schooling environment, and weaving textiles, which are not common in our modern daily life. The reason lies in the trip to the historic
museum and layered intertextualities that allowed these writers to draw ideas for their writing from their prior knowledge, personal experience, in-class discussion and all the resources from the field trip. Every text is so different because its particular content and style favors the author’s own or preferred experience. In the following section, six participants’ layered intertextualities are discussed. After each discussion, the writers’ texts and their translations are also shown, to display the intertextual details. (The full texts also appear in the appendices.)

5.5.1 Six Journal Entries

5.5.1.1 Mo

Table 5.2 presents the layered intertextualities from Mo’s text. Mo wrote more about the realistic aspect of his life, which was evident to those who know him well. For content, Mo’s text contains several themes: school life, social circle, family and gender dynamics at school. For textual and target language, he employed several features of narrative. In his narrative, he also complicates the concepts of time and space by situating present realities in the past.

Table 5.2. Layered Intertextualities from Mo’s Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intertextual content resources</th>
<th>Intertextual textual resources and target language focus</th>
<th>Beyond text perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Reflects on the historic era and cold weather</td>
<td>• Uses first person pronoun</td>
<td>• Mix past and present time and space by placing the present reality in the past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A strict teacher punishing students [school life in one-room school house]</td>
<td>• Orientation-introduces readers a particular scene to the story (dark ocean), complications (bored at school, tension with his father) and Resolution (compromised to return to school)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Family lunch in the historic house at dinner table]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• friendship/social circles [Real-life experience]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At first, I thought Mo might have missed the purpose of doing this assignment because he mixed up time and space. However, when I read closer, I realized he placed the present reality in the past. Actually, his writing reflected his daily school life and social circles and placed his bilingual school in the past, which he might connect to the one-room school house. For example, he tried to tease his best friend in the story, who was scolded by the teacher in a funny way. He wrote,

在我进去我听到老师骂周凯。他是我的朋友，但是他是一个捣蛋鬼。我听老师单身[大声]的说，“没一天你会很不好”！我想这个对。(As soon as I entered the door, my teacher was scolding Zhou Kai. He is a rascal. I heard the teacher’s loud voice, “Every day you are not good”! I thought this was true.)

Mo and Zhou Kai are buddies in class. This scenario of teasing each other happened in often in reality as I observed in class. When Mo related how students were punished by the one-room schoolhouse teacher, he purposefully put his friend in his story because he wanted to embarrass Zhou Kai. He continued:

我看到在外面一个大人走和船[ 穿]一个很棒的外套。我想 ohh，我很像要这个外套会很暖暖。 (I saw one adult walking outside with a good quality jacket. I wanted this jacket and thought about how it would keep me warm.)

In the above text, he took in an imagined person to the classroom window with a warm jacket, which connects to post-trip L2 discussion about the textiles from the past: Hu Laoshi asked students to talk about valuable fabrics, and mentioned that 18th and 19th century people rarely had a lot of clothes, and so they might wear all the clothes they owned in the winter. Mo imagined himself as an 18th-century school boy, for whom
clothing resources would be limited, so he inserted a detail about his strong desire for a warm jacket. In the story, Mo describes how Hu Laoshi wakes him up from his daydream. The story continues as if the incident were happening at his present-day school. As Mo wrote:

“小莫”！胡老师。我的学校是第一个中文和英文的学校在蒙特州！胡老师是非常酷的老师。（“Mo!” Hu Laoshi. My school is the first Chinese and English school in Mountain State! Hu Laoshi is a very cool teacher.)

In these sentences, he places the current reality in the past. Then he comments about his current school and described his positive feelings about his dear teacher Hu Laoshi. The style is similar to a cinematic montage, in that he describes certain fragments of events, like fragments of images, and laces them together to create his story of the 18th-century school boy.

Subsequently, Mo writes about his family. This scenario matches the details relayed by the teacher/interpreter at the one-room school house. In the 18th century, schools had no formal system due to the demands of farming, so children did not go to school regularly. Mo imagines himself returning home from school for lunch with one-year-old brother, mother, and father, whom he imagines as a farmer. Mo describes his family’s dinner table, which is also identical to the image of the food display on the dinner table in the parlor room of the historic house. In his description of his lunch time meeting. Mo describes his father as serious and silent because he had done a lot of hard work on the farm. All his father did was sit and eat with him without saying a word. That silence might mean something. As Mo wrote:

我们没有说很多话。我是一点累，但是我还是要去。（We did not talk a lot. After finishing lunch, I needed to go back to school one more time. I was a little tired, but I still had to go.)
School was boring to him, and he was reluctant going to school. However, maybe that silence (on his father’s part) or maybe his responsibility as a student forced him to go back to school.

When Mo positions himself as an 18th-century school boy, he also positions himself as naughty child, a good student, and a well-behaved son. He did understand the assignment because he used all his repertoires and resources to communicate with his readers (Appendix I).

5.5.1.2 Xiao-yu

Xiao-yu developed a lengthy story. Her text included the following themes: a historical setting, a strict school teacher, school learning, sugar, baking, family life, and house chores. In terms of textual resources and target language, she employed several features of narrative genre, such as text organization, similes and use of the senses. Specifically, she took advantage of teacher’s mind-mapping handout, which provided transitional phrases such as although, but, not only, but also, then, afterward, and because. These cohesive devices make her text more coherent.

Table 5.2. Layered Intertextualities from Xiao-yu’s Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intertextual content resources</th>
<th>Intertextual textual resources and target language focus</th>
<th>Beyond text perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Reflects on the historic time era and cold weather, school life | • Uses first person pronoun  
• Orientation, Complication, Resolution  
• Similes  
• Descriptive writing by incorporating five senses- 1) reveal her emotional response (nervous) about | • Describes how her warm blanket almost prevented her from getting up to go to school in a cold weather.  
• Explains that sugar is only used in a meaningful time in terms of expanding |
In her writing, Xiao-yu created an engaging beginning, which caught my attention when I read it. Her text begins:

Today it was freezing, but I still needed to get up to go to school. My bed and blanket held me and did not want me to get up.

First, she created a context of a cold weather. Next, she described how her warm blanket nearly prevented her from getting up to go to school in a cold weather by utilizing personification. Then she wrote about school life at the one-room school house. In her story, she was a nervous and serious student. She missed a lot of school because she had to stay home to help mother with house chores. Her strict teacher asks her to answer questions in the reading class. She embedded question-answer dialogues to show the interactions between her and the teacher, which made the scene come alive. She is greatly relieved when her answer is correct. In the 21st-century classroom, she is an enthusiastic and serious learner and takes every opportunity to practice her Chinese language. She clearly conveyed this part of her identity in the text.

Ivanic (1997) mentions the concept “self-representation” (p. 142), which refers to the way that authors’ consciously or subconsciously communicate with readers by creating
an impression of self in the text. According to Ivanić, such self-representation demonstrates one aspect of the writer’s identity work).

In her story, Xiao-yu’s tone shifts from nervousness to happiness due to an important event in her life. She is happy because it is her birthday. One interesting intertextual resource that Xiao-yu drew on was sugar. Sugar is ordinary in our current moment, but because the valuable sugar loaves of the 18th century were imported from overseas, and people had to use sugar sparsely. Xiao-yu borrowed one idea from the open-hearth kitchen and attributed a new meaning to sugar because it could be used only for a special occasion. She wrote:

这个蛋糕很独特，因为有糖在里面，我们很少用糖，我们只会在很有意义的时间用糖。(I would have a cake, and this cake was very special because it had sugar in it. We seldom used sugar. We only used it during a meaningful occasion.)

In her sense, sugar symbolizes some power, which Xiao-yu associates with her birthday. Implicitly, she touched on the cultural theme on poverty, or deprivation, to show her life in 18th century was not as affluent as most people’s lives in the current time.

Earlier in her text, when discussing her absences from school (see Xiao-yu’s text), she also reflected on gender inequity. She mentioned her role as a girl in 18th century required her to stay home to help her mother with house chores. The consequence was that learning was more challenging because she could only attend school irregularly. Despite these tensions at school, she ended her story on a calm, peaceful note. Grandpa reads the bible to her and her brother, and then they fall asleep. She employed a simile in a very cute way to end her story with this sentence: 我们都像宝宝一样睡着了。(We went to bed and slept like contented babies.)

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5.5.1.3 Mei-mei

Mei-mei organized her text in a chronological order, and covered these themes: family life, school and baking, hosting guests. Mei-mei is an experienced English writer. I noticed that she transferred some English writing techniques in her writing. For example, in every paragraph, she began with a topic sentence and then elaborates on it with more details. The first sentence of the story is: 今天和平常的一天不一样。(Today is unusual from regular days.)

She went on to explain why it was unusual. Through her explanations, readers learned that it was a beautiful day with sunshine and blooming flowers. However, why was this unusual? Mei-mei set up the tone of her story to be playful and mysterious, offering more details and surprises in each paragraph. She provides a little hint to make readers want to keep reading to find out the secret: who will be coming to visit the family. Readers can discover unexpected surprises all the way along her text. (According to our interview, she mentioned she enjoy read magic tree house series and similar genres in English.).

Table 5.4 Layered Intertextualities from Mei-mei’s Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intertextual context resources</th>
<th>Intertextual textual resources and target language focus</th>
<th>Beyond text perspective reflected in writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Time (but not clear)</td>
<td>• Use first person pronoun</td>
<td>• Reveal a sense of the culture themes—poverty and gender issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Family life and visitor— [Sheldon house]</td>
<td>• A unique beginning hook and a reflective ending</td>
<td>• Reflective ending—create a positive emotional response—peaceful and happy moving life forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A strict teacher—describe her school—literacy learning and teacher hit one of the students [one-room school house]</td>
<td>• Orientation, Complication, Resolution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use of dialogues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Similes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sugar and baking [An open-hearth cooking lesson]
- Home garden and sun [personal experience]
- Gender issue—she could go to market with father instead of her brother [one-room school house]

Uses suspense in the story
- Descriptive writing by incorporating five senses—1) seeing beautiful gardens, taste the green yucky cake, 2) use different emotional response—sad, shocked and happy, angry

In another example, Mei-mei highlighted sugar in her story with a mysterious tone:

(We bought some sugar for my mother to make cookies because we would have some guests in the house. I did not know who our guests were, but I knew it was a surprise. In her text, sugar resembles power, which is associated with the surprise and mysterious guests. She implied that these guests are very important people. However, readers had to continue reading. The mystery had been consistent throughout the whole text until the last section.

Mei-mei is very aware about the audience and the central thesis. In fact, Mei-mei had written two versions of this journal: one was an iPad draft, and the second was a final draft for a school composition competition. The draft she did earlier on the iPad communicated her historical perspective from the field trip with more themes, including literacy and poverty. The final version communicated in a more mischievous way, and included a scene in which a strict teacher hits a student. It described her small house and many siblings, and how both smelled bad. She describes having to help her mother make quilts due to harsh cold weather.)
In this final version, she tried to present her story with a happy mood. In the concluding paragraph, she added a sentimental resolution:

我认为这是一个好棒的一天。外面有微风。有一个望月。我确定今天是完美的。我一直想，一直想，然后…. (This was a wonderful day. As I lay in bed remembering the details of this perfect day, the gentle breeze and the moon lull me to sleep.)

She creates happy and positive emotional responses to end her story. It looks like Mei-mei has a joyful experience writing the story. It is also significant to discover that L2 writer can transfer their writing from L1 to L2.

5.5.1.4 An-an

The style of An-an’s journal is different from that of other writers. She organized her text into three days, each narrated from the perspective of her imagined family life. Her content theme also included some reflections on school. Her setting was mostly at home and in wartime.

Table 5.5. Layered Intertextualities from An-an’s Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intertextual context resources</th>
<th>Intertextual textual resources and target language focus</th>
<th>Beyond text perspective reflected in writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Reflects on the historic time era and wartime atmosphere of</td>
<td>• Use first-person pronoun</td>
<td>• Three-day journal: she organized her diary to describe three different days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School-important aspect of her life [one-room school house]</td>
<td>• Orientation, complication and Resolution</td>
<td>• War makes life difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Family life (sick twin sister and her relationship with siblings) [real life experience and the cradle from the historic house]</td>
<td>• Descriptive writing by incorporating five senses- 1) reveal her emotional response – thrilled because war is over</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Baking and bread [An open-hearth cooking lesson]</td>
<td>• Use new vocabulary words and connecting phrases from handout</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
She wrote about her relationship with her siblings, mother and father, and her enthusiasm about school. She also added a new element to her text, which is the Revolutionary War. Why did she write about it? An-an has a great interest in theater and drama. While learning the history unit, Hu Laoshi and fifth graders were obsessed with the musical *Hamilton*. The class reading text also contained a short history of Massachusetts during the war. During breaks, the fifth graders sang and discussed the musical *Hamilton*. An-an’s text therefore contains a scene in which her family reacts to the war. The episode she created was vaguely theatrical. As the whole family sits in a family room, her mother asks her sister if the war was still going on. Below is the dialogue:

“妈妈听”姐姐开始读报纸：
“......昨天晚上华盛顿跟他的军队没有开战....“他们投降吗？”妈妈问。没说到。”姐姐回答。（“Listen, mother!” My sister started to read the newspaper, “Yesterday Washington and his army stopped fighting....,” “Did they surrender?” mother asked. “They did not say,” my sister replied.）

The above dialogue between sister and mother embedded in her text made the scene authentic. She made readers sense the characters’ apprehension about the war and their hope for peace. An-an certainly drew from the field trip details that matched her interests.

5.5.1.5 Ai-lan

In Ai-lan’s text, she writes consistently about the cultural themes of poverty and gender. For example, at beginning of the text, she identifies herself as age 19, female, and
a weaver who lives at home, where she helps her mother. As befits the backdrop of the 1800s, she is a female who plays a supporting role in the family. Her weaving makes it possible for her brother to go to school, but she possesses the power to boss her brother around. For example, she orders him to dump the waste of chamber pot. Ai-lan incorporated the power-balance and child labor into their story. The following dialogues in her texts reveal her power as a big sister:

1716 年 6 月 7 日星期日早上，我 19 岁，我的工作是织布。
“艾明！（那是我的弟弟）你没洗夜壶！”我说
“对不起，我忘记了。”韩艾明说。
“这是你第三次忘记，不要再做一次！”
“艾兰，不要那么大声。”我妈妈说。

(I am 19 years old. My job is weaving.
“Ai-ming!” I called to my brother, “You didn’t wash the chamber pot!”
“I am sorry, I forgot it”. Han Ai-ming said.
“This is your third time forgetting about this, don’t forget it again.”
“Ai-lan, don’t shout at your brother,” my mom said.)

The use of vivid dialogue created a tension and dramatic interaction among the characters. The chamber pot conflict hints at Ai-lan’s unhappiness about the gender inequity of the day. Although she is not the one allowed to attend school, for the time, she has some power at home over her brother.

Ai-lan also talks about her brother’s school and learning activities. In the 1800s, people had to travel far to go to school, so her fictional brother has to walk for 14 miles to his school. Ai-lan also reveals her dream of going to school. She always wanted to attend, but she never got the chance due to her family’s low social economic status. Without enough financial support, only her brother would receive an education. The only income
her family had was derived from the sale of her mother’s bread. Ai-lan’s story explained two cultural themes: social class and gender in 18th century, which she drew from the field trip, in-class discussion, and her imagination.

Table 5.6. Layered Intertextualities from Ai-lan’s Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intertextual context resources</th>
<th>Intertextual textual resources and target language focus</th>
<th>Beyond text perspective reflected in writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Reflects on the historic time era</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A gender issue and school -She is a 19-year-old girl. She stayed at home working as a weaver, but her brother went to school [one-room school house]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School life [one-room school house]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Helping with house chores [one-room school house]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Power and the chamber pot [the historic house]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Baking and bread [An open-hearth cooking lesson]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Identity-her job as a weaver [A fiber’s workshop]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Issue of the war [reading text]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Poverty-selling bread to afford to go to school; limited number of bedrooms [Sheldon House and one-room school house]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use first person pronoun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Orientation, compilation and resolution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use of dialogues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use new vocabulary words and phrases from handout</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Descriptive writing by incorporating five senses- emotional response-sad, bossy, angry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make story characters alive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Creativity-writing about her missing father</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Touch on issue of social class: poverty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Touch on the gender issue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shows power in the story by bossing her brother around</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ai-lan used similes and descriptive language beautifully when she described how she had no father and how much she missed him. She wrote,
Even in L2, she could describe her true emotions about her missing father.

In the last paragraph, she reflected on the historical times about the war. When I first read this passage, it seemed not connected to topic or the cultural themes. However, I also noticed that she wanted to reflect on the time era, the war, and that she had also tried to draw on the new vocabulary from the handout.

Throughout Ai-lan’s text, even though she drew the intertextuality, that is, from the trip, class dialogues and her life, she demonstrated her creativity and imagination and placed herself in the time era and reflect on the social issues with her own experience as well. As a young L2 writer, she adjusted her positions a lot to construct her story. Ai-lan is good at describing her feelings in dramatic and creative ways.

5.5.1.6 Na-na

Na-na’s text is quite long and well developed. She also used her imagination and creativity to weave all the resources together. The themes emerging from her text include home, baking, wool, a different childhood, house chores and power. Power dynamics are especially salient throughout her text. Her style has narrative features such as dialogues, similes, and unusual beginning and ending.
In her first paragraph, Na-na begins with descriptive language to show the feelings associated with cold weather. She writes,

今天冷到我都感觉不到我的手指头。我特别幸运可以留在家里工作。妈妈早上已经起来开始烤香香的姜饼。爸爸在外面检查我们的羊。这个工作很重要，因为如果没有羊，那么我们不会有衣服，或所有用绵羊的毛做作品。 (Today was so cold that I couldn’t even feel my fingers. I was exceptionally lucky because I could stay and work at home. This morning my mother got up early and baked the ginger bread cookies. My father was outside checking our sheep. This task is extremely important. The reason is that we would not get any clothes or products made from the sheep’s wool if we don’t have sheep.)

In the above dialogue, she creates a thesis about her privilege before moving on to writing about her family situation: Mother is baking, and father is checking the sheep.

She here identifies the sheep and wool here as the family’s major source of income. And

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intertextual context resources</th>
<th>Intertextual textual resources and target language focus</th>
<th>Beyond text perspective reflected in writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Reflects on the historic time era and atmosphere of cold weather</td>
<td>• Use first person pronoun</td>
<td>• Questioning power relations: why do adults have more power than children? Why does grandpa have a bigger room? She talked about the chamber pot, the house chores she was not willing to do which is against adult’s will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Baking ginger bread cookies [An open-hearth cooking lesson]</td>
<td>• An unusual hook</td>
<td>• Touching on the issue of social class: father raised sheep for living; appreciating what she has</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wool and sheep [A fiber’s workshop]</td>
<td>• A reflective ending</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• chamber pot [Sheldon house]</td>
<td>• Orientation, Compilation and Resolution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A different childhood-problematicizing child’s labor [the historic house]</td>
<td>• Use of Dialogues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Power of grandpa and family bedroom [Sheldon house]</td>
<td>• Use Similes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Help house chores [one-room school house]</td>
<td>• Use connecting phrases and appropriate word choices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Descriptive writing by incorporating five senses- 1) emotional response-angry about parents 2) feel appreciative about what she has 3) smell of the food</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Table 5.7. Layered Intertextualities from Na-na’s Text |
she reasoned that her father’s job is important because sheep were vital to their economic source: without sheep, they would have no clothes.

Na-na also uses the dialogues in a dramatic way to show her resistance to helping her mother to dump the waste of chamber pot. She has something like a tug-of-war as she her heart struggled with her conscience. “Why should I do it?” she wants to know. She wonders why adults have more power than kids and believes that adults and parents should respect children and treat them equitably. She finally concedes she will empty the chamber pot because she does not want to see her mother’s angry face. Even as she laments the time spent on helping mother with chores, she appreciates her mother’s cooking, and then points out that she is in a comfortable position compared to many other people:

“不要！”
“要！”
“不要！”我心烦的告诉妈妈，因为他非要我将夜盆儿里的内容物倒掉。虽然那工作特别容易，然而没有大人想要做那件工作，所以他们会让小朋友做。有的时候，我会想为什么大人有更多的权力。我觉得小孩子应该和大人有一样多的权力。
“No!!”
“Yes!!”
“No!!” I told my mother annoyingly because she assuredly wants me to empty the chamber pot. Although it is an easy task, none of the adults want to do it, so they have kids do it. Sometimes it makes me think about how adults have a lot of power. I feel that children should have the same rights as adults.

Nana is an advocate for children’s rights. She talks about equity for children throughout the essay and is interested in the question of power. Before she goes to bed, she comments on the size of the bedrooms. Her youngest sister had the smallest bedroom, hers was the second smallest, and grandpa had the largest. Why does grandpa have a larger room than the children? The chamber pot becomes a symbol of inequality, as do
the household chores. She resists commands, but is ultimately afraid of going against adults’ will.

As a fifth grader, she touched on the issue of social class. But the questioning made her appreciate what she has. She was able to reflect on her privilege and question the power. This is one part of critical literacy. However, all the troubles would go away. For the closing, she wrote:

今天一天过了，我知道明天也会。(Today has gone by, and I know tomorrow will go by, too.

It seems that all her frustration and the inequality remain, but her life will continue.

5.5.2 Intertextuality Ensembles as Literacy Practices

All six written texts above reflect on the life style of the historical era by drawing on the field trip events, in-class discussion, real life situations, prior knowledge, areas of personal interest, and L1 and L2 literacy practices. In terms of content and context, the emerging themes from students’ texts include harsh weather, a strict and angry teacher, fixed learning style, a labor childhood, family life, poverty, and gender equity. With intertextual resources, students were able to visualize and create snapshots (Davies, 2000).) of scenes from across the time. Based on the topical themes of the field trip and in classroom discussions, the writers wove different pieces of information together and into a story told from their imagined perspective.

As for textual resources, writers used various literary strategies in their writing. Their narratives included text organization, literary devices, and the L2 target language focus, which they might have learned in both their L1 English and L2 literacy classes. Hu Laoshi also provided explicit instruction to make sure students were familiar with generic
features of narrative and could apply it to L2 writing, such as a beginning hook, similes, engagement of the reader’s five senses, and use of target language focus. Unexpectedly, Hu Laoshi decided to have students revise and edit their journal entries for the school-wide composition contest, which is held three times a semester. After students finished their iPad drafts, they had two class sessions in which they could revise their drafts and rewrite them on paper as part of the “publishing” process.

The students submitted their texts to the school’s reviewers, teachers from other grades who provided feedback and points. Seven grading criteria were used for each 记叙文 (narrative) (Figure 5.6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>一月（记叙文-日记/故事）</th>
<th>英文翻译：</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>项目</td>
<td>记叙文六要素描述清楚完整，故事叙述精彩，有原创性 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>有一个有吸引力的开头 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>选定事件时间，提供至少两种感官描述 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>扩充词汇，能形容情景和细节，加入比喻或拟人手法描述等等 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>应用过渡词或各种句型，准确地使用标点符号 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>了解标点符号功能，正确地使用标点符号 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>使自我要求写工整的字 (10%)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.3. Grading Criteria for Composition Contest and English Translation

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The above guidelines cover a wide range of writing aspects. Students were aware of the criteria and the need to draw on all their textual intertextual resources. In six student authors’ texts, we can see the writers’ five textual patterns: 1) use of the first-person perspective due to the purpose of this writing assignment, 2) texts organized with a clear sense of narrative, 3) five senses or dramatic emotional responses for vivid and detailed stories, 4) writing strategies from L1 (literary devices, similes, exaggeration, personification, uses of dialogue) flowed to L2 literacy practice, and 5) use of L2 from in-class history reading and mind-mapping handout. They oriented their readers with a specific scene or setting. All incorporated problems, issues or conflicts. By way of resolution writers ended their stories with personal reflections or some insights.

Clearly, building intertextualities is helpful to contextualize students’ writing practice in L2 because student writers draw from a variety of resources and select their foci to write about. Writing also serves to help students make sense of the language they are learning, apply the target language focus, and critically use the language (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015; Luke & Freebody, 1997). The field trip offered activities such as one-room school house, a fiber workshop, an open-hearth kitchen, the historic house supported writers with content and context, and many other sources such as in class discussion, L2 literacy practices and mind mapping handout facilitate the textual design, which allows writers to move from textual and social practice. Writers can move beyond texts by questioning power with a sense of sociological imagination (Mill, 1959). Mills used sociological imagination to describe a phenomenon in which people analyze on their own individual life experiences within the wider social context.
CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS II: HISTORICAL VIDEOS: DYNAMIC IDENTITIES, MULTIMODALITY, AND CRITICAL BILITERACIES

“...because it was not like you got to use electronics...it was not just pencil and paper (Mo, April 2017)”

6.1 Overview

This chapter discusses how multimodality is used to support L2 learners in designing and producing a historical video. With the support of digital technology and multimodality, students incorporated text, sounds and images into their video. This multimodal analysis is informed by social semiotic theory and the integrated critical biliteracies model, which explores and examines theoretical connections among different layers of students’ video projects, including their multimodal representations (textual, visual and oral), meaning-making process, and diverse identities. For instance, how students’ interest in the topic and attention to different modes created meaning for their language learning and contextualized their L2 writing to become bilingual and critical in two language systems. The findings are organized into four dimensions of knowledge processes: experiencing, conceptualizing, analyzing and applying. The multimodal text-making as process and product provided learning opportunities in the L2 classroom. This chapter closes with a brief discussion of the limitations of conducting this multimodal project from students’, teacher’s and researcher’s perspectives.

6.2 Designing a Historical Video Project

Multimodal text production refers to the use of various modes such as written text (typed texts, handwritten texts, linguistic codes), spoken language, audio (music, sounds, voices, noises), visual images (symbols, photos, pictures, animation, punctuations) and
spatial (layout, spacing, typography) to communicate one’s intention for social purposes. For that reason, it is common to use “texts” to refer not only to written text, but also to other modes of communication. In Chapter 2, “identity texts”, which has been practiced and researched intensively in the field of L2 education in Canada in the past decade, is highlighted because it is the one form of literacy practice that values dynamic identities in the classroom by using all modes mentioned in Chapter 2; that is, students take advantage of their linguistic and cultural resources to generate texts in multimodal forms such as written, spoken, visual, musical, dramatic or integrations of mixed modes and share their texts with the community. According to Cummins and Early (2011), identity texts “hold a mirror up to students in which their identities are reflected back in a positive light” (Cummins & Early, 2011, p.3). Thus, identity texts create an affirm learning space for bilingual students.

In this chapter, I shall explore a multimodal project, which is the final project of Unit Two discussed in the previous chapter. At the end of the unit, the fifth graders produced a historical video project targeting an audience who is interested in learning an alternative perspective about Massachusetts history. Students have flexibility to choose their own topics relating to Massachusetts such as people, place, object, thing, events, and sports. This unit aimed to have the fifth graders use historical linguistic expressions in L2 as practiced in class to express their opinions and stances on specific historical events. Students researched and read in English but wrote and narrated in Chinese. They used their own interpretations to express as much as possible in Chinese. In addition, this video has to be multimodal including text, images, signs, symbols, voice, and the like, which means that students incorporate the text, sounds and images to create an historical
video. Students who chose the same topics were encouraged to work together, but the video represented an individual effort instead of group work.

With the support of technology and multimodality, the video project was designed in Explaining Everything, an app that allows one to combine media, image, text and voice recording to create digital stories. The completed product is similar to a video. One of its prominent features is the function of interactive whiteboard, in which students can record live voice simultaneously while interacting with the objects on the whiteboard when they express or explain their ideas. Like other presentation programs, this app is also accompanied with several essential presentation tools, which supports language learning in many aspects because students can use it to read, speak, write, draw, highlight, annotate, internet search, create animation, take photos, and collaborate. Before teaching this history unit, Hu Laoshi and I conducted one training session together for the basics. Strikingly, the fifth graders became the experts of the app and invented many more effects and functions to use in their projects.

The concept of designing this historical video project originates from multiliteracies (New London group, 1996; Cope & Kalantzis 2015), which include three design features; the available design, designing and redesigned. Available designs refer to “meaning making work-reconstructing available resources for meaning for the purpose of representation and communication” (Kalantzis et al., Literacies, 2016, p. 222). That is, the accessible resources in the designer’s social environment in support of their meaning making process to produce something new for others. Designing indicates reconstructing available resources to represent and communicate meaning (Kalantzis et al., 2016), i.e., using deconstructed elements to design for particular communicative purpose. The
redesigned means “new available design-traces of meaning that leave the designer and the world transformed” (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 222); that is, the recreated meaning making by the designer is turned into new resources for others. In this multimodal project, available design resources accessible in the classroom include L2 target language (the reading text, and sentence frames), digital technology (iPad, Explain Everything App, MDBG online dictionary) and web resources (research for their topic, images). A snapshot is shown in Figure 6-1 of the design process, during which students “deconstructed” and “reconstructed” knowledge with multimodal affordances.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ai-lan uses a touch pen to select the word from MDBG (On-line English Chinese dictionary). Her project was about the women’s gymnastics team in Mountain State.</th>
<th>An-an and Xiao-yu work together on the same topic: the Boston Opera House. They created their project on iPads. Usually, they kept the sentence frames next to them as a helpful reference.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mei-mei types using a Chinese keyboard. The keyboard also shows the tone associated with each character. The challenging part is to choose a proper</td>
<td>A writing scene: Ai-lan and Mei-mei work using digital technology. On the table is a small character card showing that students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
character or word phrase that matches the meaning. | use traditional technology too to practice writing Chinese characters.  

| An-an works on a visual representation. In this picture, she is thinking about how to manage the image she chose. | A writing scene: Students are encouraged to find a comfortable place to write with their friends. Na-na works with her friends on the multimodal project. Hu Laoshi’s handout was a principal resource. |

Figure 6.1. Designing with Digital Technology: Students Work on their Historical Digital Projects

This multimodal project was assessed using five grading criteria created by Hu Laoshi: 1) use of five sections based on a historical perspective (introduction, historical significance, timeline and ethnicity; Figure 6-2); 2) spontaneity, effort and independence (before asking the teacher, student looks up words in the dictionary), 3) originality and creativity (images are related to content); 4) content and details (appropriate use of sentence structure, effectively teach something about Massachusetts history); and 5) flow: images and text follow each other proceed smoothly and readily, with articulated voice, proper volume and accurate Chinese. These criteria aimed to encourage students to work independently, multimodally and creatively in L2 instead of imposing the traditional four-skill language assessment.
Another resource is a handout (Figure 6-2) with several sentence frames provided by Hu Laoshi. Based on Hu Laoshi’s understanding of historical thinking concepts in English, Hu Laoshi created these frames in Chinese, which includes sentence structures to write about the introduction, historical significance, timeline, cause and consequence, and ethical dimensions.

**Figure 6.2. Handout on Sentence Frames for Writing**

These sentences support students’ writing by providing frames for their writing as they make their meanings.

**6.3 Available Textual Design Resources: L2 Target Language**

For L2 linguistic resources, Hu Laoshi employs some strategies to draw students’ attention to target language. First, she planned a differentiated instruction for fifth graders
this school year, which is similar to literacy learning centers. These L2 literacy centers (Figure 6-3) offer meaningful activities to build language learner’s L2 linguistic repertoire, which includes:

1) _Mini-lesson_ with the teacher: Fifth graders practice target language with Hu _Laoshi_.

2) Chinese _character/word_ Center: Fifth graders practice Chinese characters or words by writing, playing card game, or creating Chinese character videos on iPad.

3) _Listening_ Center: Fifth graders listen to the on-line story selected by Hu _Laoshi_ and complete a mini listening log.

4) _Library_ center: Fifth graders read story books and complete a reading log.

![L2 Literacy Centers](image)

Figure 6.3. L2 Literacy Centers

Students were divided into groups of five and rotated centers. For Centers 2-4, fifth graders work independently and collaboratively. For Center 1, fifth graders practice the L2 target language with Hu _Laoshi_ in the mini-lesson. Each small group cycle lasts
for 15 minutes. Five minutes before proceeding to the next session, she would remind the whole class that they should start to wrap up their reading or writing. Every unit has a reading text, and Hu Laoshi usually practices new characters, words, and syntactic structures with students.

The small group mini-lesson usually happens at the half-donut table. Hu Laoshi sits in the center and a group of five students sit right in front of the teacher around the outer semi-circle. Within such a short distance, Hu Laoshi can be more accessible to her students, and such a setting also allows closer teacher-student interactions and communication in terms of asking questions or facilitating students’ comprehension and learning progress. Specifically, when certain fifth graders begin to lose focus, she can easily grab their attention back to the lesson. In addition, her teaching position located at the end of the rectangular shaped classroom which provides her a panoramic view of the whole classroom. Notably, Hu Laoshi, had all kinds of tools around her: the mini white board, markers, microphone, two hourglasses(timers), the Chinese clock, the chime and the course materials. These objects helped her teach the mini-lesson and meanwhile manage other groups. For example, while reading aloud the texts, it is common that students did need Pinyin to read new or unfamiliar characters. When students hesitate to read aloud new vocabulary words, the mini whiteboard comes in handy because she writes Pinyin or difficult characters on the board to help them sound out the words and meanwhile increase students’ comprehension by further explaining to them on the whiteboard. Besides having her attention on teaching this small group, she manages to manage other groups simultaneously. The spatial arrangement allows her to glance at the activities that other groups are engaged in. For example, she will give a time reminder to
change the corners, encourage students to speak the target language or ask students do a particular task. In that sense, she facilitates the whole class and makes sure the other three groups of students are engaged in their learning task and maintain a low-voice agreement instead of interrupting other groups.

Second, Hu Laoshi incorporates effective sentences and phrases to empower students to express their opinions with the language of history. The purpose is to support students to incorporate historical language into their writing since this is the new genre. The five sentence frames in Chinese created by Hu Laoshi consist of the syntactic structures in support of writing about the introduction, historical significance, timeline, cause and result and historical perspective, which originates from the six historical thinking perspectives (see Chapter 5). Giving a handout with sentence frames as reference for writing, students can bring their own perspectives and ideas with the effective use of the L2. Hu Laoshi also scaffolds their uses of these sentences frames by practicing with the whole class or using real examples from students’ drafts. Students shares their writing draft in the circle time. In that way, the whole class can make sense of these sentences together. Sometimes it might be necessary to deliver a small instruction to work on the logic of sentences or clarity of the word usages or the syntactic structures after observing student’s writing. These sentence frames are the skeletons of students’ videos. Based on their own comprehension, students need to create or interpret their own meaning in writing.
6.4 Six Historical Videos

6.4.1 Mo’s Video

Mo’s video is about the New England Patriots, a regional football team. Mo loves playing football and is a big fan of the New England Patriots. Due to his interest, he owns a lot of knowledge and socializes with his friends about the Patriots in and out of school. Choosing this topic for school work is a gift for Mo because he could immerse himself in reading and writing about the team in class and simultaneously fulfill a classroom requirement. Opportunely, during the time of making this video, it was the football season and the New England Patriots had just won the Super Bowl. In one of the circle time discussions right after the game, Hu Laoshi created an opportunity to talk about the game. The fifth graders were keenly discussing the game and their favorite football player, which situates Mo in the context of his topic as well. Mo demonstrated his passion for football by his eagerness in producing this video.

Mo’s video on New England Patriots Football Team (Appendix P) provides the content information including the images, original text, and translation of Mo’s video, which shows an overview of his video before the analysis. His video contains four major slides, and every slide is full of the pictures of the football player.

6.4.2 Ai-lan’s video

Ai-lan made a six-slide video about the Mountain State Women’s Gymnastics team in the Olympics, and she examined the history of the Olympics from her own perspective (Appendix Q). She chose this topic because she loves and does gymnastics.

In class, I consider Ai-lan to be an active language learner. Although she came to the immersion school when she was in the second grade, her Chinese is quite solid, which
means that she communicates both in speaking and writing in class with all her linguistic repertoires. One reason might be that she is always engaged in learning. For example, she raised good questions in circle time and was eager to answer the teacher’s questions or clarify her inquiries (see Chapter 5, In-class interaction). Another reason might be that Ai-lan indeed is an enthusiastic student. In writing sessions, Ai-lan took advantage of independent work time. I observed that she invested a lot time thinking and moving back and forth among her iPad, the sentence template handout, dictionary and writing (see photos above and field observation note).

6.4.3 Xiao-yu’s Video

At the beginning of creating her video project, Xiao-yu googled and explored many topics on the internet but did not discover any ideas which appealed to her. It took her a while to decide on her topic. Finally, she chose the topic of theater and musicals so that she could research and deepen her understanding of this area of interest. She decided to focus on the Boston Opera House because she thinks it is very interesting (Final interview, 2017). Although it took her some time to decide on her topic, Xiao-yu followed Hu Laoshi’s instructions consistently both in the small group and the circle time, which allowed her to develop her writing gradually and complete in a timely manner. Writing and brainstorming between two languages, modes, digital technology, online dictionary and web media did help her process of producing multimodal texts. The most challenging thing in doing this video project was translating the names of people or objects because they do not have names in Chinese, and you’ve got to invent them in Chinese!
Xiao-yu’s video is about the Boston Opera House. She approached her topic from the aspect of management. Xiao-yu’s video includes five slides. The images, original text and translation of the content are organized in Appendix R.

6.4.4 An-an’s Video

An-an is an active learner who loves to engage in learning language and sharing ideas in class (see class interactions in Chapter 5). She is also very committed to Chinese language learning. At the beginning of my field work, the fifth-grade class had a Chinese clock which we used as a timer. Whenever the fifth graders spoke Chinese continuously for 10 minutes, the class receive a merit. The merits could be used to go out play or for a special activity such as a science party or an ice-cream day. This encouraged them to speak Chinese. An-an and her best friend would stay in the classroom and ask me to interview them in Chinese. Then they could continue speaking Chinese during the break time to earn the credits. In our interview, she told me that she considers Chinese to be more challenging than English because it requires more brain work. However, if we speak Chinese, our brain says, “speaking Chinese.” Then we can speak more Chinese and then we learn the language (An-an’s initial interview, 2016 September). I assume what she meant is that language learners can learn more of that language if they can speak or use it often. I observed that Aa-an is a conscious learner, and she valued every learning opportunity and consistently put effort into her work.

An-an’s video includes four slides. Her text, images and translation are shown in Appendix S.
6.4.5 Mei-mei’s Video

Mei-mei’s desire to learn a L2 is affiliated with her grandmother, who originally came from Taiwan. She wants to master the language to communicate with her grandmother. As a student learning a critical language, Mei-mei is an active learner with her own philosophy about learning Chinese. She commented, “如果你 try your best 可是你不要 push yourself 太多你可以做非常多的事情 (If you try your best, you can do many more things without pushing yourself too much)”. In class, I observed her efforts to complete class assignments and asked for more. I assume that she is suggesting a positive learning attitude for a L2. Although the language is different and challenging, what she meant maybe is that you can accomplish more than you expect if you make efforts consistently. This is also what I saw in Mei-mei in the classroom: Mei-mei always put full efforts into her work, then she has extra time to enjoy some fun assignments that Hu lassi prepares for the fifth graders with her friend. Mei-mei identifies herself as a confident language user. Her video included six slides. The images, original text and translation of the video are organized in Appendix S.

6.4.6 Na-na’s Video

Na-na is a Chinese-heritage learner. Her family speaks this language at home. According to Na-na, her father usually speaks to her in Chinese, but she always replies in English. However, if the word or phrase is only specific to Chinese, she will speak Chinese. For her, listening or speaking Chinese is not that difficult because she hears it at home and she knows most of the meaning. As for L2 school literacy, she did consider the reading and writing challenging due to her previous Chinese language learning experience (Na-na’s interview).
Na-na’s video is about the Salem witch trials. Her video is like a book containing a title page, author page, content pages, and thank-you page. Her video includes six slides. Its design also contains special visual effects, and she includes rich textual information in slides four and five. The images, text and translation of the video are in Appendix U.

6.5 Findings and Discussion

The findings below align with the four dimensions of the integrative critical biliteracies model with conceptualizations from social semiotic theory. The four dimensions of the integrative critical biliteracies model include: 1) experiencing the new and the known, which attends to how bilinguals draw on semiotic resources to connect known and new learning; 2) conceptualizing by naming and with theory, which refers to how bilinguals contextualize their learning by building their conceptualization; 3) analyzing functionally and critically mean that bilinguals utilize their prior conceptualization to interpret their learning; and 4) applying appropriately and creatively focus on how the learning process or product become personal or/and social transformations.

Even though the findings are discussed individually by the dimension, readers should be aware of that some of the findings overlap or move across these four dimensions because the interactions between identities and multimodalities create synergies for critical biliteracies. For the purpose of interpretation, the dimensions are organized separately to foreground their unique features in the multimodal data and key findings. Accordingly, each dimension is discussed thoroughly and further theorized.
6.5.1 Experiencing: Dynamic Identities, Interest and Knowledge as Semiotic Resources

During the process of producing their history videos, the fifth graders liked to take selfies with their iPads. Then, they used a photo editing tool to crop their headshots and place them on one of their admired famous idols. That is, it seems that they wanted to transform themselves into that football player, equestrian, gymnast or singer. The idea might have started from one student, then spread to another student and eventually became popular among the fifth graders. It seems that they visualize particular or certain aspects of their future identities, or desire to participate in future discourse communities. This might also suggest that their dynamic identities are informed by the process of socialization, which is their interactions with the people and environment around them. Although what students did with their headshots is an unofficial phenomenon found in the classroom literacy practice, this prompts me to attend to the importance of students’ multiple identity positions relating to teaching and learning a L2 that might offer different possibilities for learning and provide a site for their negotiating of other identities.

6.5.1.1 Identity and Interest as Meaning-Making Resources for Learning and the Writing Process

As a fan of American football, Mo was inspired to engage in L2 literacy. Since Hu Laoshi announced the project, Mo revealed his passion about this project during the process of making the history video project. In one occasion, I spotted that he concentrated on an iPad screen and appeared to read pictures, research or write with his fingers moving around during work time. I turned my attention to him because I was
impressed with his concentration and curious about his writing process. In the field note below, a small part of Mo’s text-making process is illustrated;

Mo caught my attention. He checked with Hu Laoshi again if she would give class time to work on the project. He asked, “我们今天会做那个历史的東西嗎? (Are we doing the history video today?)”. Hu Laoshi replied, “Yes”. Then, he shouted “hooray” and walked away, Mo has been really excited because he got the chance to do something about his favorite sport team, the New England Patriots. During writing time, I noticed him sitting on his own quietly focused on the iPad. He did not chat or joke with his buddies. I saw him thinking hard and browsing a lot of pictures about the football team. Several times, I wondered if he had writer’s block or questions that I could help him with. I was hoping to provide him some writing support. So I went over to him and asked, “Are you doing well with your writing?” He nodded his head and then continued his work. I wonder whether those photos he browsed might be an inspiration for his writing. (Field note, Feb, 2017)

In a similar manner, another participant Ai-lan, also chose a topic arising from her personal interest and aspiration for the future. Her approach to this video centers on female character and empowerment (Slide One, Ai-lan’s video). Meticulously, she chose the photos of all gymnasts wearing medals, which might signal that women can be successful. At the end of the paragraph on her first slide, she mentioned Simone Biles, who made a significant contribution as an outstanding African American female gymnast. As a young African American, Ai-lan might desire to be Simone Biles. Although she was not explicit writing about her desire to become a successful gymnast in the Olympics like Simone or other professional gymnasts, the process of exploring and researching the history of women’s participation in the Olympics contributes to the process of her becoming. Certainly, she creates herself a future imagined community (Norton, 2001, 2013) to participate through talking, thinking, writing in creating her video project. Norton’s imagined community is based on the concept of community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). That is, when language learners who are aware of the social relationship
to the world, they can be inspired to capitalize on learning both the language and knowledge to participate in the discourse of communities they desire to participate. The classroom can serve as a space to breed hybrid identities. Lave and Wenger called this space “Legitimate peripheral participation” which provides learners to engage “between newcomers and old timers, and about activities, identities, artifacts and communities of knowledge and practice” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29).

In Ai-lan’s case, her interest in gymnastics and identity as a gymnast contribute to her writing. Through the writing, she negotiates her other social and cultural identities through her life experience as L2 writer, video producer, African American gymnast, Olympics gymnast and among others. Her writing allows her to move from the personal to social dimension in creating new knowledge which stems from the engagement and interactions between and across other meaning resource such as dynamic identities, past and present experiences, language variation, online dictionary, digital technology, writing, thinking and speaking activities. In that sense, identity is not only a product but also a process of her knowledge creating. As Kress argues, “knowledge and meaning, as much as the texts and objects which are their material realizations, are seen as the outcomes of processes of design motivated by individual interest” (Kress, 2010, p. 134). Kress’ argument provides an understanding that “interest” in learning plays a role to support meaning process and knowledge creation to the text production process and product as well which might contribute to the dynamic identity construction.
6.5.1.2 Knowledge as a Meaning-Making Resource for Learning and the Writing Process

An-an’s video was about the Boston Opera house. The rationale behind her choice is that she is fascinated to learn about acting and enthusiastic about musicals and theater performances (see Chapter 5), which turns into an asset for her writing. An-an’s design of the video production (Appendix R) is rooted in her interest for knowledge of theater work, as demonstrated in her writing. One example is the style of her writing, which is characterized by using the third-person perspective. The Boston Opera House showed up 14 times, and the subjects of her sentences included they, it (the Opera House) or people, which suggests that she takes a distant stance about reading and writing about the place. The high frequency of focusing on the Boston Opera House might also indicate that she knows the place well and very much enjoys writing about it since her energy comes from her enthusiasm about drama and theater performance. On her Slide Two, she specifies some essential aspects of the Boston Opera House from the perspective of a theater enthusiast. She draws two major points to attract readers; that the Opera House is famous for performances, and that it is historically significant to Bostonians. Since she does not live in Boston, she probably considers Bostonians to be fortunate to be able to attend performances at the Boston Opera House. In expressing her opinions, “I’ was used twice when shifting from an objective position to a personal position in taking readers closer to the Opera House. She asserts the historical importance of the Boston Opera House because it has been in Boston for a long time. She encourages people to continue their support of this historical place. Then, on her Slide Three, she shifts the subject of the
sentence to “I” and assumes a personal view of the history of the Boston Opera House. If she lived in 1928, she would attend the performance in 1928.

For this video project, An-an was thrilled that she could work on an area she knows very well and have the opportunity to speak out loud in another language (Final interview, April 26, 2017). She said:

I did the Boston opera house. And … at first, I picked it because I’m into acting and they do the shows there. But after I start researching, I thought this is more interesting topic than just that. I didn't realize they do other things too.” (An-an’s final interview)

In her comment above, An-an expresses her opinion that researching for this video project was an interesting process because she discovered something new. On the other hand, she found researching to be challenging because she has to make decisions about whether or not to keep information in order to stay focused on her topic (An-an’s final interview). The internet has an overabundance of resources and information. During work time, I observed that she played with her ideas on the design to be as creative as possible, and she took time to think and write (Observational field note, 2017). An-an’s example shows that knowledge is both process and product (Kress, 2010) since she utilizes her prior knowledge to expand her writing and learning.

Similarly, two other participants Mei-mei and Na-na also take advantage of their prior knowledge in expanding their writing and learning, and adding reflective, critical and creative dimension (see discussion in the dimension of analyzing). Mei-mei’s video is about the Salem witch trials. She chose this topic because she had some prior knowledge as she did a similar project in English when she was in second grade. She could translate the part she has already knew into Chinese, then add new information as she researched (Mei-mei’s final interview, 2017). She stated,
Yeah, I did learn something new. Repeating the project actually helped because I can see what I liked that I did before and what I need to improve on so this could be a lot better. Though she repeated the same topic, she was able to identify areas she wanted to improve and make the final product better.

Na-na’s topic was also about the Salem witch trials. Her decision to make this video originated from her prior knowledge as well since she did a similar project when she was in second grade. In her interview, I asked why she wanted to repeat the same topic again. She shared her insights: “It was good because in second grade we didn't really work on it really hard, we didn't know how to do it. But now we have to make a timeline and order them, we look deeper into learning it.”

Na-na’s comment reconfirms the value of conceptualizing knowledge as both process and product. Significantly, the dynamic identities, interest and knowledge can be semiotic resources to guide the process of writing and lead to a product. The video production project also shapes our understanding about students’ learning and their capacity, their attention to and realization of the world as they perceive it in that moment (including their L2). Such a view is contrasted with the knowledge and identity because they are commonly seen as the outcomes of learning instead of meaning making process due to the power and authority that regulate learning capacity (Kress, 2010). As Kress (2010) argued, “The augmentation-in the processes of learning-of the individual’s capacity is at the same time a change in identity of the person” (p. 176). What Kress refers to is that when students’ identities are taken into consideration in the classroom, and teachers are constructing all their other identities as well. Kress’s quote is extremely useful because it sheds light on how identities should be valued in the classroom. Using Mo’s word to conclude this discussion, Mo said that, “Because you try a little bit more
“getting it in Chinese ... during that process, you might get more information” (Interview with Mo, 2017, April).

6.5.2 Conceptualizing: Multimodality as a Contextual Resource and Meaning-Making Process

In the above discussion, we learned the advantages of learning when students’ social world and agency are valued in the classroom. The fifth graders have freedom to choose a topic of their interest, which is a part of their identity and is used in making meaning while producing the video assignment. Although learning the target culture and language typically has been the main pursuit in the majority of L2 programs, it is apparent that language learners can benefit in learning a new language by exploring multiple identities and learning about their place and social culture through a variety of cultural tools (e.g., reading, writing, speaking, thinking).

Particularly, such a meaning-making process is also linked with a number of semiotic resources recognized in the classroom beyond the written text. That is, multimodality, a practical and theoretical approach, expands human communication through multiple modes, across modes or combinations of modes in motivating meanings (New London group, 1996; Kress 2010, 2016; MODE, Cope & Kalantzis 2016).

Particularly, Kress urges us to attend to the significance of representation and communication. He states,

Representation—the meaning that I wish to realize to make material – is not communication: the two are quite differently focused. Representation focuses on my interest, communication focuses on the assumed interest of the recipient of the sign. My sign needs to be shaped for the person or group for whom I have intended it to be a sign. That leads to the demand for transparency in communication” (Kress 2010, p. 71).
To theorize multimodality, Kress emphasizes that shaping a sign or a sign complex (i.e., the video project or any multimodal projects) requires to ensemble of different modes to communicate intentions and create meanings for the interest of the audience or to reach the purpose of communication. Additionally, based on Halliday’s three metafunctions, Cope and Kalantzis theorize a grammar of multiliteracies to examine how meanings are made through modes including reference (what), dialogue (how), structure (text type), situation (context) and intent (purpose). As a researcher rather than an artist, both of their approaches shaped my reading of students’ data.

In the fifth-grade classroom, students are entitled to use digital technology and all different modes to contextualize their writing, which is oral, visual and written. In the video projects, my analysis shows that students were able transfer the meanings from one mode to another, assemble all the modes together to create a new meaning and even reflect on their learning across modes for language learning (Bezemer & Kress 2016; Kalantzis et al. 2016). In the following discussion, I shall explore: 1) how digital technology plays a role in this literacy practice, 2) oral as contextual, 3) visual as contextual, and 4) the affordance of mode continuum.

6.5.2.1 Digital Technology Plays a Role in Students’ Historical Video Project

In this project, digital technology played an important role in student’s language learning and advancing students’ L2 literacy practice (i.e., iPads, Explain Everything, Chrome book, internet search, online dictionary, typing in L2). In this video project, we privilege oral, visual and textual modes due to affordance of the Video-making App. At the end of the semester, Hu Laoshi and I conducted a survey as a classroom activity to understand how the use of digital technology informs the fifth graders’ L2 literacy
practice. One question in the survey asked students to evaluate how the digital technology influenced their Chinese-language learning. We made it rhetorical by asking one question with two contrastive aspects (negative and positive) so that we could validate their answers. Student responses (opinions) were rated on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Figure 6.4. How Digital Technology Positively Influenced Students’ Chinese Learning

Figure 6.5. How Digital Technology Negatively Influenced Students’ Chinese Learning.

The above results show that the students’ perceived that digital technology supported their L2 literacy practice. Although the above data are accurate, the sample was too small to tell the whole story. It would be more convincing to learn through actual students’ empirical experiences and work. Moreover, digital technologies are not a panacea.
Language learners might need a wider range of resources and practices to inform their literacy practices. Let us take lexical and syntactic structures in Chinese as an example, for Chinese literacy, the most crucial aspect to be literate is knowledge of Chinese characters. This poses a problem as learners need to memorize 300 symbols to just get the literal meaning of the character. The technologies available with an iPad solves a small part of issue with complexity of characters by alleviating the need for learners to immediately memorize every character. As Mei-mei said,

I think the traditional writing helped us on the technology because sometimes if you didn’t know the Pinyin of the word it would help … you can do the handwriting … on the iPad you can do the handwriting …. the technology helps us because if you don’t know a word. You would.. you can get the handwriting… on the iPad you can do the handwriting … then, oh, do you mean this character and you will know.

Mei-mei’s words illustrate one aspect of using technology in literacy practice in class. However, using technology is just one way to support writing, and learners need to know much more than the literal meaning of words. They must know how to apply those words in context and be able to move between or across various uses of text, such as interpreting meaning, synthesizing, or critiquing. Notably, the involvement of multimodal resources in writing allow students to draw on different modes of meaning to contextualize their language learning. In that sense, students can experience the language in use or situate the language practice in context with different types of learning opportunities. What the fifth graders did to contextualize their learning through modes is explained below.

6.5.2.2 Visual Mode as Contextual: Inspiration for Writing or Writing More

A strong message comes from Mo’s final interview: “because it was not like, you got to use electronics… it was not just pencil and paper.” Mo’s sentence is brief, but
needs to be unpacked. First of all, he made a strong point that writing needs both inspiration and semiotic resources because, particularly when writing in a L2, it is hard to write with only pen and paper, and this might happen in many classrooms. As a long time L2 writer and international scholar, I can associate with his feelings. While writing, my ideas are always limited if I sit with only pen and paper. When I’m trying to express an idea with only pen and paper, nothing seems to come out right with word choice, structure, style or logic. I often sense that my writing is too simple, flat or is not making sense.

In social semiotic theory, Kress (2010, p. 54) argues,

Social-semiotic theory is interested in meaning, in all its forms. Meaning arises in social environment and in social interactions. That makes the social into the source, the origin and the generator of meaning. In the theory here, “the social” is generative of meaning, of semiotic processes and forms, hence the theory is a social-semiotic one.

Meaning is important. Meaning is also not fixed. Instead, meaning is generated from the interactions in the social environment, and multimodality offer learners more to say. In this dimension, two examples of visual representation from Mo and Ai-lan will be discussed because they allow us to see visual mode as contextual resources.

6.5.2.2.1 An-an’s Meaning-Making through Visual Representation

An-an reveals her artistic and aesthetic sensibility in designing this video project. Her design ideas might come from her interest in and involvement with theater work. For example, there is a strong emphasis on the spatial arrangement of the subject matter and on photo processing.

On Slide One, the background shows sparkling blue light, which appears to me as a backdrop and lights on a stage. This page is divided into three section: on top is the title in two languages; on the left bottom corner is an old photograph of the old Boston Opera
House; on the right of the photograph are two lines of texts in white on a dark background, which projects clearly for readability. The first thing that comes into view on the video is the Chinese title “the Boston Opera House” which occupies one-third of the page, which catches your attention immediately. Although the English title is right below the Chinese, it is not very visible. I assume she was attempting to prioritize the L2 she is learning.

In the background of Slide Two, you see a black and white photograph of the Boston opera House. On the foreground is text in orange dispersed on the page, which is similar to theater effects. Particularly, I realized that An-an resized this photograph to present a better angle to the reader to make a stronger impression. After I read historical photographs of the Boston Opera House, I realize that many photographs found online were aged or not clear but An-an recreated the image to showcase the external features of the Opera House. On Slide Three, the same photo from Slide One shows up again, the Boston opera house. One line of text in orange hides on top of the page, so is not quite visible. The image and the text have a tenuous connection and does not explain the sentence well.

Slide Four is spectacular. In the background sits the performance hall. It gives you the sense of entering the magnificent and ornate performance hall where you can explore the stage, audience seats, the ceiling and chandelier. I do not know how she did it because I could not find such a fine photo online. It seems to me that she wants to create a real experience for the audience as if they were visiting the place. Interestingly and beautifully, she allocates all the historical events and years in different locations of the
performance hall. The audience has to look for it carefully. Clearly, her design and approach came from her understanding of the theater and performance.

6.5.2.2 Mo’s Meaning-Making through Visual Representation

In a previous field note, I pondered if browsing the photos on the internet could be an inspiration for Mo’s writing. The following is an example from Mo’s visual representations (including content, composition, layout color and image-text relations) from his video project (Appendix O).

On the background of Slides One and Two, Mo used the blue flag of New England Patriots, a symbol emblematic of the team’s identity, which adds meaning to the title and identifies the setting for the audience. On Slide One the page displays four large pictures of players and three lines of text in red and black are positioned on the top right and middle left of the template. He reveals the important information that he wants the audience to pay attention to with text color and a larger font size. A prominent arrow with a big red Chinese character identifies his favorite player. Another element employed is red text on the top right which says the New England Patriots Team had won 5 Super Bowls. On Slide Two, four pictures are positioned with the similar manner to the previous slide. These pictures show the players and the stadium in which players regularly practice. The difference is that the images on the left side are more visible than the text on the right sides. As an audience, it appears to me that Mo wants the visual images add meanings to his written text since these images are important to him. On the bottom part are five trophies. Again, Mo might want to communicate about the team’s significant achievements as the winners of five Super Bowls. Without question, both images and text convey similar information, but the images are more salient. Mo takes
advantages of arrows, red-colored text and a big-sized font to point out what he considers to be important. Moreover, the image and the last line of the text are not related in terms of meaning. In this situation, text provides weightier information related to his identity as a football fan, specifically that he watched the game since he was little.

On Slide Three, the timeline was illustrated in black, and he intentionally left the rest of the space as a blank white background. This allows the audience to understand and absorb the timeline more clearly. The timeline focuses on the team’s achievement in the Super Bowl. On the timeline labeled “the team lost in Super Bowl”, he employed one funny picture: a man who is watching TV uses hand gestures to show his frustration because he is upset about losing the game. I assume that he used humor to more effectively communicate his intention.

Last, Slide Four is divided into a small picture grid. The whole page is occupied by the pictures of players, which demonstrate the cool actions of the players. Overall, the meanings of the images are parallel to the text, however, the images do indeed draw more attention from the audience.

The above analysis shows that Mo’s interest in and attention to these photos of football games and players becomes the semiotic resource for the writing. Through the uses of font, layout and images, he did try to grab audience’s attention in many ways (Appendix O). In the interview below, Mo compares his writing strategies in the past and now. He mentions that he tends to finish writing roughly and hastily in the fourth grade. In the message below, he confirms the photos helps him develop better strategies for writing, he said,

I tried to do … I tried to take it slowly, I didn’t write the whole part of my essay for one day and stopped for like two days. Just look at photos for my project. I
would write a little bit each and every day. So that helped me not having to feel pressured to do a lot of work in a short amount of time.

Mo’s quote explores how the meaning potentials and resources in multimodality create language learning possibilities for language learners. Given the two examples of Mo and An-an’s visual representations, we could confirm that visual mode could function for meaning-making and supports L2 writing process as a contextualization for more ideas and strategies to write more.

6.5.2.3 Oral Mode as Situated Meaning

6.5.2.3.1 Xiao-yu’s Oral Narration

One of Xiao-yu’s features is her oral narration. Her narrating voice enriches meaning of the written text. The approach that Xiao-xu takes is to narrate what she wrote with a little bit her own explanation. She did not simply pronounce the words literally. Since her text is well-structured, audience can make sense of her text by reading it. Obviously, her oral narration of text has features of voice work involving voice quality, linguistic tones, intonational variations, phrasing and expressions. This means her L2 literacy is matured enough to transfer written meaning to oral language. To illustrate an example, reading along the text orally requires not only to crack Chinese linguistic codes but also to chunk the text into meaningful units. If she reads something is not quite right, she adjusted some minor changes. Occasionally, when her comprehension affected by a specific Chinese character or her own writing does not make sense, she added proper words to the text which creates better syntactic structures. Besides, she punctuated the sentences orally with pauses when she missed punctuations. Particularly, she added Pinyin (phonetic sounds) next to the new characters, which allows her oral narration to flow and go smoothly. Her oral narration is explained below.
To begin with the First Slide, Xiao-yu announces her topic casually just like having audience in front of her. She spontaneously says, “I am doing a report about the Boston Opera House. (我现在在做一个报告(um)在波士顿歌剧院)”. At the beginning of her oral narration, her voice is loud and vibrant. However, her narration appears a little bit rush because her talking speed seems to be affected by the recording device. She selected a pointer red dot as a signpost to signal the character/words she is reading. Since recording is timely process, some of the words makes her pause for one or two seconds or use “ums” and “uhs” in between her read aloud, which I consider it as a thinking times to recall her memory of the words.

She still follows her text on the Second Slide with a pointer to point the characters she is reading. Her text has two musical names in English. Her voice seems more relaxed while reading in English. On the Third Slide, she catches a good rhythm in reading: maintain a fair speed, stress the words, and the break the sentence with pause in the right place. With a notation of Pinyin on the new words, reading is smooth because it supports her reading of the new words to covey the meaning.

The Fourth Slide has four sections. For clarity, she adds number orally to each section. A short pause was made because she wasn’t sure about the first few words. After reading section one, she continues reading the rest of sections without any difficulties. The Pinyin helps the rhythm. Maybe she was not sure if audience would be confused about which part she reads. She justifies and adds a talking note to tell the audience that this is the first picture. In the fourth section, he follows the text exactly because she got stuck with one sentence. Strategically, she uses her own language to justify something she could not say properly earlier. The last sentence needs some punctuation for writing,
and she punctuates the last long sentence orally. She manages this paragraph of timeline astutely. One the Slide Five, she read three sentences, which shares similar syntactic structure with good rhythm and energy.

It is evident that she focuses more on the text than images. She manages to read all her written text. Her voices offer a lot of resources since she engages the audience with the variation of her energy. The red dot arrow also contributes to her knowledge building as well. She must have practiced enough to complete this voice recording in terms of the amount of words and automaticity. Being able to read all the Chinese characters is challenging. I see her developing herself into a fluent L2 writer and reader because she could take care of the linguistic codes, linguistic tones and other oral expressions which attributes the meanings of the text. Yet, recording can be stressful.

Reading along with iconic red dot create rhythmic movement. The iconic red dot used serves as a signal to indicate whether she can read the characters or not. In this oral narration, voice plays an important role as semiotic resources. She is absolutely committed to make sense of her own textual practice through oral mode, which might raise an awareness to the texts she produced to further L2 literacy practice. To conclude, the oral mode covers a wider affordance since it involves written texts, images and variations of oral mode per se. The audience also senses the created meanings based on her verbal expressions.

6.5.2.3.2 Ai-lan’s Oral Narration

One of the frustrations the fifth graders have is that they could not express their thoughts fully and show creativity in L2 writing. The use of various modes supported them to produce texts as much as possible and reflect on their writing through
“intersemiotic relations” (Bourne & Jewitt, 2003). The discussion below will elaborate on oral modes provide opportunity for writing in L2.

Ai-lan’s oral narration also contains a unique style as well because it turns into a kernel to bring all other modes of meaning all together. In other words, the oral narration covers the meanings that could not be realized in other mode. She added meanings to text or images. The use of the oral mode allows Ai-lan to add interpretations to the images and Chinese linguistic codes (Chinese characters and writing) as metarepresentations, which means using one mode to explain another mode. Metarepresentation refers to “meanings about meaning, symbols that describe symbol systems, such as grammar, visual keys and musical notation” (Kalantzis, Cope, Chan & Dalley-Trim, 2016, p. 443).

According to the previous concept, Ai-lan’s oral language serves as metarepresentation in support of unpacking the text and images. She did not use grammar structure or certain rules to analyze these representations. Instead, what she was trying to do is to explain as much as possible with her linguistic repertoires during limited time. With the support of modes, language learners actually say more to enrich their content. Such interactions turn her video into a new design.

Oral narration or audio recording has much to afford. In L2 writing pedagogy, application of the oral model is one of the strategies to brainstorm for the drafting. Significantly, one strategy I observe from Ai-lan’s work is that she revised and reflected on her own writing while she did oral narration, which serve as a beneficial tool that students can self-assess their writing. When I listened Ai-lan’s recording, her voice demonstrates her reaction to her writing by using pauses, repeating, breathing, slowing-
down, which signals her catch about her writing. I guess that she thinks, “Oh no, how do I pronounce this character? What do these sentences really mean?”

As mentioned earlier, audio recording is a timely process because speakers have to react and grab the moment to express themselves in time. By comparison, writing allows time to think or look up dictionary for the new words while writing. However, speaking lacks that mechanism for readiness. It means that it requires fluency, reading comprehension (of their own writing) and repeated practices. Then students can dramatize their voices for the recoding. To me, she is building up awareness for her own writing when she did oral recording. It is compelling to see that she revised her own writing and made changes through oral language.

Another addition, oral mode provides a transitional opportunity to bridge between oral language to writing. That is synesthesia, which allowed L2 learners to bring or transfer meaning from oral to writing. Such mode shift has hybrid spaces, and the possibilities includes “speech-like writing”, which means speech can be similar to writing or “writing-like speech”, which means that writing can be similar to speech (Kalantzis et al., 2016). One of the examples is Ai-lan’s oral and written representation. What she is trying to is build relations between oral and writing. I would consider Ai-lan writing approach as an oral approach writing, which means she mixes oral language with the written language in her writing. Her strategy did not abide by the rule of writing down oral sentences verbatim. Rather, she turned oral language into writing. In her video, she mixes two parts. The written language part is composed of the essential sentences/syntactic structures required by the teacher, and the oral language is composed of the more commonly used everyday sentences, words and phrases. That also means, the
main lexical resources and grammatical structures come from everyday interactions with teachers and fellow classmates in the classroom.

Notably, the oral language serves as the semiotic resources that she used to understand and apply those syntactic structures. I assume she tried to catch her thought and to express what she has in mind as much as possible through her own personal experience, Meanwhile, she wanted to relate to the required language structures practiced in the class. For example, she said, “I do and I like gymnastics, and gymnastics is my favorite since I was little and I am going to do gymnastics later”. When I first read these sentences, I debated and questioned why she included them. Further, I recognize that she was trying to contextualize her writing by providing more information to make viewer or readers understand why such topic interests her and significant to her.

In my perspective, I consider such oral approach writing is beneficial to transit from oral language to writing and even further to a more formal writing style. In classroom, writing is not usually taught with more similar practice for their writing. Young writers can expand their meaning-making process across modes to get familiar with L2 writing.

6.5.3 Analyzing: Writing Through Translanguaging as Analysis and Criticality

This dimension of analyzing requires the text designer to conceptualize in two languages, to think beyond the textual level and take different perspectives. The discussion below aims to explain how participants interpret their understanding of two languages functionally, with multiple perspectives and beyond the text.
6.5.3.1 Writing across Two Languages Functionally (Xiao-yu)

In Xiao-yu’s writing, she demonstrates that she is a very conscientious writer because is aware of audience from her writer’s position. The discussion below aims to understand how she interprets content through two languages and build a logic connection among her ideas in considering the target language (syntactic structures) with her own style of writing. The analysis below comes from the written representation of her video Boston Opera House (Appendix Q):

On the first slide, she listed the video title in both languages. Beyond the title, you can find three lines of texts, which says about the Boston Opera House, its feature (opera) and, the ownership (Once nobody wanted to buy it). From my perspective, she introduces the topic with rhythmic moves because the second sentence explains and extends the previous sentence which makes readers to get the immediate sense about what she says. In a rhetorical sense, the sentence “Once nobody wanted to buy it” contrasts the historical value of the Boston Opera House. As an audience, I would say she delivered the conciseness to the audience smoothly. These two syntactic structures are linked logically to say highlight thesis that the Boston Opera House once almost vanished because nobody wanted to buy it. Then, on the second slide, a specific time and date are given to help the audience to know the history of the Opera house better. A time word “currently” is added as a transition to navigate to next sentence, which says, “it’s a place for you to watch Mamma Mia and Wicked”. With a transitional time phrase, she probably wants to contrast the past history of the Opera House with the current interest. Here, the contrast of these two time periods might a writing strategy that she prefers the audience to do little bit math to crack the number of the years of the Opera House instead of providing the
exact number. Again, while reading these sentences aloud, we can sense their smooth flow.

On the third slide, Xiao-yu writes the first sentence from a personal dimension. She states that this place significant to her is accredited to her interest in musicals. After that, similarly, the “contrast” appears and slightly expands the second sentence to a social dimension that the Opera House had its historical significance in view of a memorial and tribute. The pronouns are implicit in the second sentence, so it could refer to anyone in that social environment could feel meaningful because the building was a memory. The word choice “紀念 (a memorial and tribute)” evokes a sense of nostalgia and sentimental feelings when people think of an old object, building or place. I assume her endeavor is to use pathos to appeal audience’s emotion.

On the fourth slide, four major historical events and one summary paragraph were written out. The content concentrates on the ownership and the restoration plan of the building, which includes the very first opening or use of the Opera House, its transition, restoration, uncertain future and its outcome. The last sentence is a summary that she recaps the historical events into one long sentences with the use of time sequence words “first, then and last”. She wrote, “First, it was an opera house; then it was a tribute; last, one person finally bought it and continue operating it for more performances. “This final sentence reveals a tone of relief that the Opera House still survives.

The fifth slide is more about Xiao-yu’s perspectives applying “if” syntactic structure, which requires a logic link between two parts of the sentence. Throughout her texts, she shows audience her positions in rethinking the Boston Opera House across time. She mentions, “If she lived in 1928, she would attend a musical performance”; “If
nobody bought opera house in the past, people would not have had the wonderful plays”; “If no one buys the Boston Opera house now, she would buy it”. By contrast, three sentences are presented with alternative patterns, which is coherent with a good rhythm just like her previous texts while moving across different textual positons.

Overall, from the above analysis, we might notice that the text designer, Xiao-yu, might be aware of the audience for her writing. The analysis discussed might explain how her writing supports reader’s reading her text. The summarized examples include: First, she writes with clarity by specifying key ideas; Second, the title is rendered in two languages which can address to a wider audience for both Chinese and English speakers; Third, when she was not certain about the new words or how to translate the musical names, she used original English names to make her ideas flow. Particularly, she manages one small detail effectively: adding Pinyin for the new words. Adding Pinyin for the new words to help her own comprehension and also audience. However, she commented that she had done a horrible job for this video in the final interview. After reading her text, we learn that she is very into text design in composing her text meaningfully to facilitate reader’s comprehension of the text.

6.5.3.2 Writing across Two Languages with Multiple Perspectives (Na-Na)

Na-na values her authorship. She employed a mystery story genre to her video. Her video was designed like a story book. Her text design is based on her examination of social situation of the Salem witch trials. Interestingly, she used different pronouns to switch various positions in her writing. The discussion and analysis below show her written representation (Appendix T).
Slide Two is the title page. It says in Chinese: The Salem Witch Trials. Slide Two is the author page. It says Author: XXX (In Chinese), which is Na-na’s Chinese name. It appears to me that Na-na is taking up her authorship on this video. Slide Three is a unique beginning to introduce the topic. From a sociopolitical perspective, she states a brutal fact that in witch trials 19 people were hanged. This sentence is brief but powerful because it leaves the audience wanting to know more facts and anticipate a follow-up story.

On Slide Four, four aspects of historical writing (introduction, historical significance, cause and effect and Ethical dimension) are organized into a long paragraph. At first, she provides a historical background about time period and the location of the historical event. She is also very good at using quantitative data in her writing. She describes the specific year, length of time and number of people were killed in the trials. Afterward, she establishes a plot that how these events have impacts on people. Then, she places the event in the modern time society, which expands the understanding of such historical event from an alternative perspective. Next, she positions herself in the past and describes her personal emotion and reaction if she had lived in the 16th century. In her writing, I could feel her actual fear. Her switched position as a young girl who lived at that time and space probably provided her no other choices but anxiety and fright due the certain power dominant situation. It appears to me that she can move between past and now through textual practices.

Slide Five is the timeline. Time and incidents are written and listed in chronological order. She frames these incidents in well-structured sentences. Here are two examples from her timeline (Na-na’s video, Appendix U, Slide Five):
1) 1692年一月
Abigail和Betty开始有神秘的症状:像大哭和发出动物的声音
(January, 1692—Abigail and Betty started to have weird symptoms like crying out loud and making animal sounds.)

2) 1692年2月26日
Tituba, Sarah Good和Sarah Osborne被捕因为人们觉得他们知道怎么做巫术
(February 26, 1692—Tituba, Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne were arrested because people feel they know how to do witch craft.)

Timelines could be generated into a couple of simple facts with key words.

However, Na-na takes time to produce these sentences to present the facts. While reading these sentences closely, these incidents written by Na-na can be weaved into a story because it has a beginning orientation (first and second sentences), middle complication (third and fourth sentences) and ending resolution (Appendix T). She wrote with the third person perspective, where she might hold a neutral position to tell the story. Last, Slide Six and Slide Seven includes fun cartoon animation and Chinese character Good bye. This change of the style transfers the serious tone of the story into a light-hearted atmosphere.

The example of Na-na’s written representation illustrates several writing strategies in making sense of this historical event with vivid details. First, she alternates different pronouns including “they, people, you, witches, history, and I” (Appendix T) to describe this historical event with multiple perspectives. The use of different kinds of subjects also varies sentences and shows a dramatic effect, which makes readers interested in reading a long paragraph. To give one example of what I mean, in the middle part of her paragraph, she changed the pronouns into you. She wrote,

“人们那时认为如果你有一个奇怪的印记，那你就是一个女巫。还有，如果他们觉得你是一个女巫，那你会被杀死. (People at that time thought, if you...
had a mark, then you would have been a witch. Furthermore, if they thought you were a witch, then, you would be killed)” (Appendix U).

When I read the second person pronoun “you” in the sentence, as a reader, I had a feeling that the author is having a live dialogue with the readers. The use of “you” also makes the distance between the author and reader closer.

Second, as for the textual linking, the sentence structures in this paragraph are logically connected with the flow of ideas with a rhythmic effect. It is noteworthy that she did not overuse the cohesive phrases. Besides the sentence frames from Hu Laoshi’s handout, two cohesive devices are found, which 那 (then) (+ a suggested situation) and 还有 (in addition). My take on this textual cohesion is that she made the best use of sentence frames on her own way. In that sense, she was able to create meanings to these sentence frames. It also explains that these sentence frames were able to support L2 writer’s writing process in a positive way.

Third, through translanguaging, when Na-na made word choices, she was able to design her text with the second-tier words used in the written language such as 1) 知名时期 (well-known period); 2) 差不多 (almost); 3) 持续了 (persisting); 4) 延续 (to continue); 5) 抗议 (protest); 6) 症状 (symptom). Through her oral representation, readers probably are surprised at her using advanced words. Although it might be difficult to learn her process, Na-na mentions how using two languages supports her meaning-making and writing in a new language. She said:

Nana: it’s sometimes confusing … because you are thinking in English and talking in Chinese by accident… and you are thinking in Chinese but you have to translate it… but I think it’s good because when you are writing an essay … you can know that word in English and get a better vocabulary in Chinese…. (Na-na’s final interview, 2017)
Indeed, as Na-na said, when writing in one language, our expressions and lexicon are limited. By taking advantages of two languages, more possibilities and resources could support our writing.

To conclude, Na-na’s writing demonstrates her understanding of this topic in two languages. Through her interpretation, it appears to me that she alternates different roles in telling a mystery story as if she were a storyteller,

6.5.3.3 Writing across Two Languages Beyond the Text (Mei-Mei): Examining the Power Relations

Mei-mei’s video features a storytelling style genre, multimodal cohesion and examination of power. Multimodal cohesion means that all the semiotic modes orchestrated together in her design creates a new meaning for communication (see dimension of applying). A story genre refers to her video conveying a dramatic effect which is the tension or climax in the story or place. Her examination of power involves sociopolitical approach relevant to the issue of power. In particular, in her written representation, she used “numbers” and passive “syntactic structure” to heighten the awareness of unbalanced power. In her writing, it is evident that Mei-mei employs two distinctive styles in her writing relevant to power. First she utilizes numbers strategically to state the facts and involve reader’s perception about “fairness”. Second, the use of passive voice in Chinese creates a condition indicating a negative power that someone or an object is affected negatively by a doer. Commonly, L2 learners find this syntactic structure is challenging to use in an appropriate situation. Mei-mei’s text perfectly communicate the meaning and her intention in the context through the structure. The
analysis and discussion below shall explain her meaning-making in the written representation with illustrated examples.

The first slide is an introduction, which provides a snapshot about the historical incident of the witch trials in Salem. First Mei-meI began her story with numbers by illustrating a shocking fact, which served as a hook to arouse the curiosity and interest of viewers who would want to continue viewing the video or ponder what happens next. Mei-meI lets the number speak to the fact by relating the number to disclose that 20 witches were killed in the Salem witch trials, and more than 200 people were accused. She utilizes one Chinese idiomatic expression (惡名招展【昭彰】notorious). Using Chinese idiomatic expressions in writing or speaking can be tricky and intimidating for many Chinese-language learners since these idioms can be misused in context. Just like when I use English idiomatic expressions, I need to unpack the literal meaning to use the figurative meaning properly. The idiom she used fits in the context to describe the trial, which harmed many people. With the passive structure (被 bei), she implies that the participants in this trial were badly treated due to unequal power relations (Appendix T).

On the second slide, she points out that these trials were historically significant because many people felt negative about Salem, and she also judge these trials from a wider future perspective that these trials would not be that important in the future because it is only meaningful to people who live in Mountain State. In this section, she manipulates Hu Laoshi’s sentence frames strategically, in which she develops a paragraph with logic arrangement of events and a sense of rhythm for reading.

The third slide is timeline. She arranged the events in time order and labelled the beginning year of the events and the ending year of the events and itemized times and
events in chronological order. Strikingly, she explained these events with details and
organized them in paragraphs. Again, several unique features make this part of writing
appealing. First, the use of time sequence phrases (five of them-first, next, then,
subsequently …) creates a rhythmic effect, which turns into a semiotic resource for
people who read the text or watch the video to understand the sequence of the events
happened. Second, the historical events are linked with facts containing cause and effect.
One sentence covers one incident. Third, she advocated for the animal right by
mentioning even two dogs were accused. Fourth, it contains the story feature-orientation,
complication and resolution (Appendix T, Slide three).

One Slide Four, she wrote the cause and effect with an atmosphere of fear and
injustice. She states that the incident began with two girls who wanted to seek for
attention and it turned out that many innocent people were killed or arrested. The word
“innocent” and passive voice also imply some kind of unbalanced power relations.
Overall, the use of specific adjectives and high-level words makes her writing formal. As
for the fifth slide, Mei-mei needs to take an alternative perspective and reexamine the
trials across time based on her own perception. She used pathos in the first sentence to
pursuit an emotional claim and then justify the power relations satiated in the past with
contemporary realization, which exists in our liberal area or the current social world she
lives in. She said,

If I lived in Salem in1692-1693, I would be very frightened because many
innocent people were accused. If same incident happens at present, many people
would not believe this is true and stop everything. If people in the past knew
witches were not real, the witch trials would have had happened. (Mei-mei’s
video, 2017)

After reading her text, we could sense her world view on this historical event, and
her textual practice moves beyond the text. As for the last slide is a thank you page,
where, she ended this serious and topic with a humorous and cartoonish style with
Halloween characters with animation techniques.

The above section shows that Mei-mei could analyze and interpret the source of
information critically. Her text builds an inquiry about human intention in the past, the
social consequence relating to the power dynamics. Certainly, this text production might
be also inspired by all her other identities or knowledge surrounded in her social
environment. Although she did not straightforwardly explain how she moved across
different textual positons, her saying below emphasized the effect of using two
languages. She said,

Especially when writing in Chinese, thinking in 2 languages can be helpful
because I can … especially for the history project, if would read something in
English and I would change it to be more kid friendly in English and then I would
translate to Chinese. That way, I’d be writing something down that I actually
understood rather than something I read somewhere else. (Mei-mei’s final
interview, 2017)

Obviously, she acknowledges that two languages make her learning deeper. More
important, writing contributes to critical biliteracies because her L2 writing is not simply
translating. Strikingly, while writing through translanguaging, she writes, argues and,
synthesizes and adapt her writing to different purposes and audience.

To summarize, in this project, students are able to analyze the language and
critically and expanding their understanding of topic beyond the text because they were
able to use the fluidity of all language resources in their thinking and communications.
Although translanguaging is not materially observable with our human eyes in the
classroom, the discussion and analysis above allow us to gain insights from text making
process across two languages. Indeed, bilinguals shall be entitled to fully understand the
subject matters, and translanguaging can contextualize learning to gain deeper
comprehension of knowledge. Moreover, significantly, writing through translanguaging is all about building conceptualizations, thinking and communicating in two languages, which is beyond translating. It is apparent that conceptualizing in L2 requires four dimensions: semiotic, contextual, interpretive, and transformative. The approach of the integrated critical biliteracy model explains that translanguaging can be semiotic, contextual, interpretive, and even transformative. With regard to the semiotic aspect, Nana mentioned,

I did a little research … and I think it was easier to understand when it was in English. It was easier to translate it when you already knew what it was about. It was easier because we already knew what happened.

I agree with Na-na. L2 Writing can be more manageable if you have prior knowledge. Borrowing the language and content from L1 supports our meaning-making process. As for the contextual aspect, Mo mentioned,

I think it’s interesting process. Translating… Because you can find new words and it’s almost like learning new words from translating … sometimes you can find something helpful that you can use in daily life, you can use just in the talking.

Mo explained that switching across two languages provided him more new or high-level word choices to use in writing because students might be more familiar with everyday use of words and phrases. In regard to the interpretive aspect, we have discussed several examples earlier. Then again, Mei-mei indicates,

I was doing a lot of research in English and then translate it into Chinese from English… and that was a little difficult because sometimes there are things that you have to change a little bit (Mei-mei’ Final interview, 2017)

As explained by Mei-mei, her writing did not come quickly from direct translations. Writing in two languages requires her to engage in recursive practice. In the same way, Nana echoes Mei-mei’s argument; she said,
I think….Kind of what she did… When you translate it, but you have to change it…because of grammarwise…you have to change it a little and Chinese when you translate you get to learn more because the languages are different and they have different meanings…and you might learn something else…(Na-na’s Final interview, 2017)

Another essential point above is that writing in two languages necessitates the writer to juxtapose two languages in considering the linguistic structures or the context. While doing that, Nana refers to the possibilities of learning new information. Hence, interpreting is to change in meeting purpose of writing and change in meeting syntactic or linguistic conventions of the target language. Regarding the transformative aspect, there are many potential and possibilities. However, translating/translanguaging has limitations. Mei-mei’s reflection on the restrictions of translating/translanguaging could provide experience to bilingual writers and educators. She said,

I do think in English in most projects… sometimes I’ll think in English what my ideas … sometimes it’s easier to come up with an idea in English because you don’t feel as limited as in Chinese… I feel a little limited in Chinese because I don’t know as much Chinese as English… so sometimes when I have ideas in English and when I want to write in Chinese, I feel I have more I can do it because I have an idea in English….but I think it was different in this one because….I had to…instead of thinking from my ideas, I had to write something down… it’s more difficult than in others because when I have my own ideas it’s probably more advanced… so it’s definitely to think of a kid friendly idea when I have my own ideas…but it’s hard to translate into Chinese because some of the words I don’t know in English…

As Mei-mei said, even though translanguaging helps develop ideas, she conveys that she was over thinking in L2. When she wanted to develop these advanced ideas in L2, she felt restricted as a second language writer. In the classroom, Hu Laoshi and I did find the project takes longer than we expected because students have too many good ideas. Mei-mei’s suggestion is very constructive, “a kind friendly idea might be good. I think her comment is transformative personally and socially since it helps her and us (educators and researcher) as well to have something to help our students in the class.
6.5.4 Applying: Video Production as Creative Applications and Transformative Learning

In this dimension, the historical videos designed and created by these fifth graders (designers) demonstrate their learning outcomes as a creative and original invention when applying their knowledge to assemble all the modes together to communicate in L2. Designing such a multimodal project provides L2 learners opportunities to expand their learning potentials in and across both languages. They applied all their knowledge and semiotic resources from previous dimensions to complete their videos (Cope and Kalantzis, 2015). Through translanguaging, the video designers were able to deconstruct the knowledge in L1 and reconstruct in L2 with all other modes of meanings (i.e., visual and oral), which helps them to make meaning to their learning and contextualize their L2 writing. Since the fifth graders devoted their diverse identities, experience, prior experience, it is evident that they tried to apply every piece of their intelligence to research, identity, compare, synthesize, write to represent their alternative perspectives in previous dimensions. Such literacy practice values different ways of learning to foster student’s creativity instead of a replication or repetition. The semiosis they created become another semiosis for the world. The reason I said world because it could be for other L2 learners or anyone who is interested in learning about Massachusetts and people who only speak Chinese. In addition, the process of creating semiosis also turn into a textual and personal transformative experience while students reflected on their work.

In the following, I shall explore some examples of designer’s creativities and their transformative experience. First, different layers of their created work are presented (e.g., design creativity (Ai-lan); approaching same topic but approach differently (Xiaoyu and
An-an; Mei-mei and Nana; timeline, everyone). Then, the discussion aims at their changes at the end of semester.

6.5.4.1 Video Making as a Way to Creativity Instead of Replication

6.5.4.1.1 An Innovative Way of Meaning-Making

In the six videos, each designer demonstrates the innovative way of creating representations. They took advantage of images, font, layout, symbols, arrows, oral language, written text to communicate their identity, interest and the meaning-making and the importance of the information. In the following, I will explore one notable example of demonstrating an innovative way of meaning-making.

The design of Ai-lan’s video contains several particular stylistic features. One of the features is that the texts and images are placed in the center of the page and the rest of the page was left in black blank margins. She also placed the caption above the pictures. Obviously, this might be the designer’s personal preference or choice to communicate her purpose and intention. However, such spatial arrangement could deliver a certain meaning to the audience. In Reading Images, Kress & Van Leeuwen (1996, 2004) mention that centering the design elements (i.e., pictures or text) on the page could be one way of signaling the value of information. In terms of composition seen in most media or publications, customarily, the arrangement of text and images has a consistent pattern, which the text is commonly placed below the picture as captions. However, An-an’s intention of her visual design might be related to sequence of designing the text-image relations. She might also consider the value of information because she wanted her text to communicate important messages with audience. Relatively, she used the style of
centering the object on the page because she could attract audience’s attention and make readers to follow her easily.

Based on Ai-lan’s video, I found Another eye-catching feature, the use of color. Consistently, a black background is adopted throughout her video except for the timeline page. Among all class projects, I observed that students prefer to use bright colors, or fill with the page with many images. I consider it is unusual that a student at the age of eleven chose black for her entire design. Considering the meaning of the color in our world, black color has many connotations and interpretations across cultures. The most common ones found could be mystery, formality, power and authority. It appears that the application of the black background presents her work not only with a sense of authority but also with an artistic professional manner. For that reason, her design seems to positions herself as a mature thinker or a professional designer. Additionally, Van Leeuwen argues that “Colors can provide overall cohesion. If, in a PowerPoint presentation, a background color is chosen, this color is usually remains constant across all slides, thus creating as sense of unity, while at the same time expressing “identity”, whether the identity of the speaker or that genre of presentation” (Van Leeuwen, 2011, p. 93). Certainly, I opt for Van Leeuwen’s concept that color indeed provides an impression for a harmonious sensation as a whole, and allows audience to perceive the identity of the designer. Van Leeuwen’s two key points, unity and identity, could be observed in Ai-lan’s video. In contrast, when all different colors are used in one design, it could present a busy and chaotic sensation, which might distract audience’s attention from the information.
In this regard, many scholars of the social semiotic theory relate the color tone to the modality and probability like the modal verbs (Van Leeuwen, 2010, Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006). A good point emerged from their argument is that the lightness and darkness reveal the levels of modality and probability. Van Leeuwen asserts: “It rests on the idea that the more a visual representation resembles what we would see if we saw the representation things in reality. The truer people will think it is…” (Van Leeuwen, 2011, p. 22). In that sense, the darker shade might ascribe a vigorous, secure and real sense to the idea or a concept. The effect is Ai-lan’s choice of black make her information salient to impress audience. The aforementioned discussion above contributes to my perception of Ai-lan’s identity, her intention of applying black to her design could position her as a confident designer and her seriousness in pursuit of her dream.

### 6.5.4.1.2 Creativity and Originality Instead of Replication

Doing this multimodal project has a lot of affordances in providing designers opportunities to explore a range of possibilities to create a sign/complex (video) with new meanings. In this multimodal project, it is powerful to see that students used limited and similar available resources to create a project with their own style and features. That is, language learners might do the same topic but present different approaches or present the same genre with different organization, design and interpretations. This is in contrast to a fill-in-blank worksheet pertaining to only one answer or one perspective, which might affect learners’ interest, potentials and creativity.

One example of creative invention is the video of the Boston Opera House. While Xiao-yu and An-an did the same topic, each of their video contains the individual style with their own stances in terms of approach, perspective, content and design. To
illustrate, An-an considered the Boston Opera house from the aspect of theater performances; Xiao-yu discussed the aspect of ownership and management. Their writing are different due to their own interest and experiences. In terms of designing timeline, although both of them selected similar events, images and structure, their representations (Tables 6-3 and 6-4) indeed provide different semiotic resources for the audience.

Another example of creativity is the Salem witch trials. Na-na and Mei-mei worked on the same topic with similar amounts of information. Due to their own preferences, Na-na’s video revealed a mysterious atmosphere, and Mei-mei’s video established a dramatic effect. When an audience views their videos, they definitely can approach the same topic with a new sense of meaning.

In light of Mei-mei’s and Na-na’s videos, the timelines take my attention due to their diverse thinking and creativity. According to students' interviews, several of them claimed that doing timeline was the most difficult. When I questioned the participants “what would they do if you go back to revise their video?”, interestingly, Mei-mei, Na-na and An-an told me that they would like to go back and change the timeline if possible because they are awful. However, from my points of view, I consider their timelines creative in many aspects: 1) student participants applied different semiotic resources to construct their timeline based on their choice of content, images, composition and design; 2) their timelines involve all different challenging analytical actions such integrating, summarizing, identifying, reducing, and composing; 3) student participants adopted their preferred mode to convey the meaning or showcase the important information by building relationship among all the representations cohesively; 4) the student participants’ approaches to the timeline connect to their topical theme and 5) the
ensembles of different modes in the timelines created a new meaning. These said features also make multimodal text valuable to expand student’s potentials.

All the above examples demonstrate that doing multimodal projects leads to different learning outcomes. Given the evidence of the textual design, these sentence frames provided by Hu Laoshi were essential to support these designers to move among different textual practices as one design element. At the beginning of the chapter, in every picture (Figure 6-1), students kept one handout next to them all the time while writing. These sentence frames are actually one form of fill-in-blanks but become a support for their textual design as a reference instead of one answer worksheet. These sentence frames allow language learners to draw on different notions of constructing their ideas in writing with a logic relationship, which could be open for alternative answers. L2 learners need some scaffolding or additional literacy practice to be able to write. In class, Hu Laoshi made sure students practice the language in the context as well. Student participants were supported during their writing process with teacher’s scaffolding. Then, they could create meanings during learning process. To summarize, in my opinion, when two languages are extremely different, such sentence frames could support L2 learners using target syntactic structures in meaningful situations.

6.5.4.2 Video Making as Transformative Learning

The historical video is an outcome how student participants made sense of their learning and applied all their knowledge by deconstructing and reconstructing texts. The video, a newly made sign, combines all the modes of meaning together, and will be likely transformed into another sign for others as a social transformation. The discussion below will examine how student participant transform designing their texts and projects
As Kress (2010) mentions, “Multimodal Social Semiotics deals with entities in which meaning and form appear as an integrated whole, a sign. As signs are always newly made according to the interest of sign of sign-makers in specific social environment” (p. 61). What Kress meant is that all these videos created by designers could be considered as “sign complex” because designers have to choose the “form” of expressions accessible to them in their environment and make it clear and material to the audience (Chapter 3). In that sense, the created video is a new sign for other as well since all these modes could be integrated together to produce new meanings (Kress, 2010; Van Leeuwen 2005). Potentially, these videos might be served as semiotic resources for people who want to design a project for Massachusetts or for Chinese speakers who want to learn about Massachusetts.

This is the first time that the fifth graders were given an opportunity to produce videos in L2. Although students have done many in-class presentations, these videos have the potential to be global and local with the support of internet if they could be uploaded to the internet. Table 6-7 summarized the highlights of each video.

Table 6.1. Summary of the Six Student Videos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designer and Title</th>
<th>Design Approach and Summary</th>
<th>Design Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Mo New England Patriots: The Football Team | • Identity, interest and knowledge as an American football fan in support of design process.  
• Introduce New England Patriot team and discuss its history and achievements. Additionally, taking a personal perspective to examine the team’s status. | • Blissful tone  
• Use image, layout, font and voice to show the informational value  
• Mix oral and written language  
• Images supports writing |
| Ai-ian Mountain State Women’s Gymnastics Team | • Identity, interest and future aspirations in support of design process design process.  
• Introduce Massachusetts (USA) women’s gymnastics team and its history. Expand the discussion to the origins of the Olympic games. Last, she takes a personal and social perspective to examine the status of Olympic games. | • Feminist tone  
• Simple design. Use layout, color and voice to show the information value. In particular, her oral representation contextualizes textual and visual representations.  
• Mix oral and written language |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Xiao-yu: Boston Opera House | • Interest and attention to language learning in support of design process design process.  
• Introduce the Boston Opera House and discuss the shifts of the ownership. Taking a personal and social perspective to examine the status of the Boston Opera House across times. | • Nostalgic tone  
• Textual and oral representation deliver the same message. Her voice enhances the textual meaning.  
• Use summarizing/recapping strategies to make ideas clear. |
| An-an Boston Opera House | • Interest and experience of theater and performance in support of design process  
• Introduce the Boston Opera House and its history. Taking personal and social perspective examine the status of the place across time. | • Theatrical tone  
• Visual and textual representations are based on her sense of theater work.  
• Selected images and layout are salient to attract viewer’s attention |
| Mei-mei Salem Witch Trials | • Prior knowledge in support of design process  
• Introduce Salem witch trials and discuss its historical significance. The timeline is explained based on cause and consequence relationship. Taking from personal and social perspective to examine the trials across time. | • Dramatic and serious tone  
• Three modes of meanings are connected coherently to present viewers a new experience  
• Unequal power relations are presented  
• A storytelling writing style. |
| Na-na Salem Witch Trials | • Prior knowledge in support of design process  
• The title page has special effect to go with the title and also include author’s page.  
• Introduce Salem witch trials | • Mysterious tone (Both visual and textual reveal the mysterious atmosphere.)  
• Textual representation is logic and coherent without using too many cohesive devices. |
Table 6.1 summarizes how student participants utilized their knowledge to produce a video by applying the design guidelines of a video including the sound, images and suchlike. In the previous three dimensions, the discussions weighed more on the “synesthesia” (Kalantzis et al., 2016) or “transduction” (Bezemer & Kress, 2016) that how meanings are made between and across the modes. In this dimension, examining the final videos is to view the “collective and interrelated meaning” (National Centre for Research Methods, 2012, Newfield, 2016, 2014, in handbook of multimodal analysis) because all three modes (oral, written and visual), designer’s interest and approach play together as “multimodal orchestration” (Kress, 2010). Given an example of the Salem witch trials from Table 6-7, viewers will certainly gain different meanings after watching Na-na’s or Mei-mei’s video. Na-na’s video can be considered a mystery with details showing how you could be considered as a witch and what might happen to a witch; Mei-mei’s video uses a serious manner to describe a social issue. Moreover, if we concentrate only on one mode, the perceived meaning might be limited. The hybrid meanings maximize communication which could create a new experience audience or serve as another sign for others as resources. Therefore, these video projects have potential to turns into a social transformation.
6.5.4.2.1 Personal Transformation: Navigating and Reflecting Across Learning Boundaries

At the beginning of school year, my focal student participants shared their challenges of learning two languages in their first interview. The discussion below will explore how student participants have grown over this school year.

While Na-na discussed two issues of reading and writing she encountered across two languages earlier, she analyzed and compared two linguistic systems while reflecting on her language learning for this project. The first issue is pronunciation. She opinioned that even though Pinyin is a great tool to decode and sound out Chinese character, it is confusing while distinguishing some sounds between Chinese and English pronunciation. For example, C, in English “C” can be pronounced as /k/ /s/ but in Pinyin “C” is pronounced as /ts/, so you have to remember it right. Moreover, the sound “C” in Chinese does not exist in English. Their pronunciations are very different. She also mentioned that when they were in lower grades, most of vocabulary words are tangible because that she can see these words physically in life. However, in the fifth grade, these words are replaced by higher-level abstract words that you do not often see, creating fewer opportunities to sound out them. Additionally, her sister, who also studies in the bilingual high school, told her that students at higher grade levels did was to write worksheets or do assignments. The higher level you are in, the fewer opportunities you have to use the language.

The second issue is writing. Writing is her least favorite L2 literacy practice. At school, she prefers reading to writing. She believes that reading does not require writing
down everything, but writing might need rich details to make sense what she wants to say. Na-Na illustrates an example to support her point:

五年级更难我觉得, 像我们写东西跟 () 像 () 写诗他会要你叫你做更多像 () 不只要像什么 () 的声音要你可能要像你可能 他就是()我不知道，像是更顺就是像写的东西要细节

I think it's easy because like sound sometimes English and Pinyin they have the same sounds. Sometimes they have different sounds; that’s kind of hard. Like um….If for c in Chinese it’s tz and in Chinese it’s kuh. So it’s kind of different but like same way () it’s a little easier () some letters are like same sound like k () the same. And I think it’s also like a good experience () it helps you kind of () together and try to learn like learn something or learn something that you didn't before.

In this excerpt, Na-na mentioned issues she encountered in writing Chinese. What she meant above is that learning in the fifth grade requires advanced writing strategies that make it more challenging in L2. She drew attention to poetry. According to her, it is essential to incorporate figurative language, e.g., metaphors, similes, personifications, when writing poem because writers describe not only what it looks like but also what it sounds like. She has to make it smooth with rich information

The evidence in Na-na’s video unquestionably demonstrates that she is a creative and confident writer from the analysis of her writing samples in chapter five and her video in this chapter. As explained by Na-na, she made a good point that writing in higher grade level certainly needs more strategies. I certainly agree with her that literacy practice requires varieties to tailor to the different need of students as they proceed toward advanced literacy. Additionally, the contrastive linguistic analysis Na-na did for her own learning also implicates the benefit of being bilingual and biliterate. As a bilingual, living and learning in two languages allow her to negotiate her learning with insights which might be a critical lens that she can build an awareness for her learning.
Along the same lines, other student participants discussed the challenge of learning L2 Chinese. A great difference between earlier grades and the fifth grade. One illustrated example is that three participants: Xiao-yu, Mei-mei, and Ai-lan shared their experience and thinking about learning two languages. Our conversation occurred at the beginning of the fifth-grade school year, three participants compared the differences of learning Chinese between lower grades and upper grades. When they were in kindergarten, the fun part of learning L2 is through singing, playing and everyday words and phrases, but upper-level L2 literacy has more content and is getting more abstract with complex syntactic structures, which is more challenging. As Ai-lan mentioned, “In the fifth grade, it is very difficult because there are many more things and you will not know a thing” (Ai-lan’s initial interview). In spite of all the said challenges, three of them did mentioned the changes made by Hu Laoshi in the fifth grade. For instance, the fifth graders used more technology in learning. Additionally, Hu Laoshi adopted different teaching approaches, which includes small group learning corners, and many kinds of fun educational activities that they can play after completing their assignments. Since they have more opportunities with digital technology, they are keen on designing presentations or doing their multimodal assignments.

Later in the school year, I did perceive the fifth graders’ confidence growing, which was unlike the uncertainty at the beginning of the semester. In the final interview, I asked students to reflect on the process of designing their multimodal project and how they felt about their completed video projects. Their answers surprised me. An-an said:

I think it proves to you what you can do… because we have never done anything like this. I think we didn’t realize how much we knew…. We didn’t realize anything until you put it out there. And this project allows us to do that (An-an’s final’s interview, 2017)
The essence of An-an’s response confirms the contribution of multimodality and translanguaging to their L2 literacy. In this project, with all the multimodal resources and moving between two languages, she could explore more to make their creative ideas and L2 target language weave together, which is a big achievement. Then, she added,

An-an: I feel like… I accomplished something… We’ve done other things before but I feel like this is a bigger accomplishment. Because you take something that’s real … and turn it into Chinese. And you don’t realize that … we do this in English all the time. But in Chinese, we don't know enough Chinese and we get to do it. I think my finished project was pretty good… it’s not the best thing in the world, but it was cool because you get to see it developing. You get to hear yourself…. You get to do it yourself and it’s more yourself, not the teacher.

An-an considers this project a rewarding achievement. Not only did she build a sense of independence and ownership about her work, but also perceived her own growth and was proud of her work through this experience. Moreover, she looked at the components that she could have improved. When I posed a question about the adaption or change for her future work, she mentioned her recursive writing process and frustration and she encountered. She said,

I think… I would … do something, listen to it, and be like this is horrible. And I would delete it. So then … I was like this is going to take me so long. So for the timeline was my worst thing…. It was horrible. It was like … write a bunch and I had to make it shorter.

This reflection underscores and explains the recursive writing process of the timeline in their videos. In the classroom, it is common to value a learning product more than the process. However, like any writers, student participants had struggles to write down what was in their mind, and such writing process is commonly hidden in the classroom. An-an’s comment could urge us as educators to consider the production process as part of learning outcome. Furthermore, An-an added more to her future design plan, and said:
I would probably... stay ahead of time. I would like .... If we were doing the same things, I would already know what is going to happen, and do it faster.... You already have a strategy in research and writing. I probably would be faster in researching and I would know what to research...

She identified time management as her issue. She anticipates refining her process since she would manage time better after having this experience. In my opinion, the above reflections are powerful because An-an examined her designed work critically and was transparent about her learning and designing processes. All these reflections could be taken as personal transformation.

Other participants Mo, Xiao yu, Mei-mei and Nana also demonstrated such personal transformations. Mo also acknowledged his efforts and explained his biggest takeaway from this project, as follows:

I would try to go a little faster, so I could have time to say what I wanted … and I would also try to put more detail into my sentences... I tried to, but I don’t think I put enough at the very end. I think I could have put more. And I also could’ve … there’s more room for something I could’ve written something about .... I could have written something different from timeline. I could have made...I don’t know a history or something…I could have made visual things…that was not just writing

I would consider this is a personal transformation for Mo because he could critically examine his design process. He is proud of his efforts but certainly could do more.

Due to restricted time, Mei-mei considered the timeline was not quite satisfactory to her standards. Mei-mei reflected on the timeline in her video:

Mei-mei: I would keep some of the beginning and change the timeline a little because the timeline was very difficult because you just had to choose the key events and I didn’t have a lot of time. So, my timeline was a little bit rushed. So next time I would make my timeline better

As she said, deciding on the key events takes time and careful thinking because she needed to analyze different layers of information and keep the major or important
events. Thus, timeline is something that she will develop further. I observed that she has been a consistent learner. As for her completed video, she said,

I think it was pretty good … each time I read through it, I still learn things that I didn't know before. Because sometimes you immediately translate some things… so I’m pretty impressed with it (Mei-mei’s final interview, 2017)

Her comment reveals her recursive writing process. She is optimistic and pleased with the outcome, and more importantly, her reflection shows that writing allowed her to discover insights.

Na-na remarked on her timeline:

The beginning was pretty good… I would make my middle longer and more specific. And .. like she said, the timeline, the timeline was the last thing I did so I didn’t have a lot of time on it. So I picked up the very important ones…I probably could’ve add more (Na-na’s final interview, 2017)

Her process of making a timeline was challenging as well, she could visualize her issues clearly. The complexities of the timeline indeed required to analyze the list events and placed them in chronological order, which is an exercise for critical work. In Na-na’s reflection, she points out this project allows her to engage in deep learning. She reflected,

Na-na: I think it’s my second-best project. I did better on photosynthesis because we had a partner. But this one is good too because … you got to do it … you got to work deeper. It could be better if you got to have a partner because I think it would be more fun. And you get to look deeper and you both learn more

Her argument adds an important insight to text production. That is, writing creates deep learning. Na-na learned deeply by doing and writing.

As for Xiao-yu, we discussed various ideas she used in designing her video. However, she voiced a different perspective:

I didn’t do a good job because … I didn’t like the video things… I think it’d be better if we did it on paper…
She holds a diffidence about her work. She claimed that her preference is to do it on paper. Her comment encourages an alternative thinking about classroom assignments that digital technology is not the only method. Incorporating various technologies or method might support the needs of diverse learning styles.

To summarize, the reflections and discussion above show that student participants are navigating across learning boundaries through reflective practices. Learning a critical language makes them aware of their efforts and perseverance. Most noteworthy, learning a critical language through writing provides them critical and analytical exercises for deep learning.
CHAPTER 7
DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

7.1 Overview

My research addressed two major issues: 1) the dominant ideology embedded in
the research literature, policies and pedagogical practice in L2 education focus on distinct
language skills instead of learners’ interests and agency, which decontextualizes language
learning; and 2) since Chinese is a critical language, young L2 Chinese learners lose
interest in learning or advancing L2 Chinese literacy. My guiding research question was
“How does multimodal text production contribute to identities, criticality and
biliteracies?” I approached this question using two student projects to capture the nuances
in how elementary school students become critical language learners in a bilingual
classroom. On the one hand, L2 learners used various multimodal experiences (i.e.,
speech, visual, tactile, spatial L1 and L2) in L2 and literacy practices to become engaged
in writing a historical journal entry. On the other hand, students incorporated different
modes (textual, images, oral) to support their meaning-making process in producing a
historical video. As the current study illustrates, both projects manifested writing and
criticality. This research was designed as a critical ethnographic case study, which
allowed teacher and researcher to collaborate in designing a critical content-based
curriculum unit (Kubota, 2016; Sato, Hasegawa, Kumagai & Kamiyoshi, 2017) on the
history of Massachusetts. As such, the data analysis examined the teacher’s pedagogical
practices, students’ writing process, and their writing products. In the following chapter, I
discuss highlights of the findings, their contributions to L2 education, questions that
remain, and challenges for future research and practice. In the last section, I reflect on the
critical ethnographic case study and the micro-negotiations in the teacher-researcher collaboration.

7.2 Discussion: Critical Work and Criticality in the L2 Classroom

7.2.1 Contextualized Language Learning through Transmediation, Intertextuality and Identity

The finding of this study indicates that students could do more than just fill-in-the-blanks and produce a journal entry reflecting on their field trip with rich content in support of multimodal literacy practices. The unique feature of this journal entry assignment integrates multimodality, two languages and teacher’s approach on writing. The kinesthetic and spatial experience of participating in museum activities built students’ inquiries about the history of the local area. The classroom discussion in the target language (L2) engages students in reflecting on their trip through dialogues, which provides students an opportunity to rehearse their writing in L2. Students were able to engage in writing processes and produce texts that recontextualize the intertextual resources. After examining the six written texts and, in the process, rich content and multiple intertextualities emerged from each writer’s texts. All these sensory experiences embody in their writings. Therefore, this ethnographer is convinced that that the multimodal experience of visiting a historic museum (L1) and interactive classroom dialogues (L2) contextualize students’ L2 and literacy practices.

However, one might question: Do these texts lose originality and creativity? Bakhtin’s examination and analysis of discourse in the novel might provide a theoretical tool conceptualization to respond to the above question. Bakhtin theorizes the concept of “heteroglossia” (Bakhtin, 1981 p. 12) referring to the coexistence of two or more voices
in the novel (literacy work). In other words, it means that literary work never comes with one single source (Bakhtin, 1981). Bakhtin, then, argues that the novel (the literary work) is a mixture of the author’s thoughtful elaboration from other work with an artistic sense (Bakhtin, 1981). Bakhtin calls this “the artistic image of a language” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 366). Even though it is a borrowed work, it requires author’s endeavors to deeply understand all the subtleties in the language and subject content to create such an artistic image. Another scholar Kristeva echoes Bakhtin’s theory and argues that writers borrow or draw information from different places, and one text can be seen in another text as if all the texts were patchwork quilts (Kristeva, 1966). Empirically, in this study, such patching is salient in the texts because students draw on a variety of resources from their experience through recursive practices. The fifth graders created their texts by incorporating the different pieces of information with their own interest and linguistic resources. Their texts mirror the episodes (weaving, baking, sugar loaf, didactic classroom among others) of the museum activities, conversations about the museum trip in the classroom, and their life experience from students’ social worlds. Each journal has its particular focus and features, which manifest that students were able to recontextualize their writing to meet the purposes of the project. Such multimodal literacy practices contextualize and recontextualize.

One implication of this study is that writing is a space of struggle for L2 writers. As Mo said in his final interview, “This writing practice moved beyond just a pen and paper,” which reduced his struggles in writing because the multimodal literacy practices allowed him to say more and encouraged him to write more. In addition, the finding also indicates that L2 writers can move their thinking along with L2 literacy practice and
demonstrate individual stylistic features with creativity in writing when their literacy practices are contextualized. Therefore, it confirms that Bakhtin’s concept that multiple discourses (languages) can help with each other to draw out new insights. That means, one language could facilitate another to flourish when dialogical engagement of two or more languages occurs. Bakhtin’s argument illuminates and provides alternative opportunities for writing practice in the L2 classroom.

Besides intertextualities, from the perspective of social semiotic theory, the student participants moved their intertextual resources across different modes. According to Bezemer and Kress (2016), text designers (writers) are able to make meanings in one mode and transfer them into another mode of representation or/and re/creating new interpretations across modes. When learners transfer one mode of the meaning to another mode, such meaning-making process is called synesthesia or transmediation (Bezemer & Kress, 2016; Kress, 1997; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2005; Newfield, 2017). In this study, the six journal entries also demonstrate that students’ writing could move beyond textual aspect and reveals a sense of cultural and social themes, which is a reflection of the tensions and power relationship emerging from the museum activities. From my view, the examples of six journal entries demonstrate that multimodal experience and transmediation contribute to writing, imagination and creativity.

With regard to limitations, Kress (1997) argues that such recreated meaning is connected to “imagination, cognition and affect” (Kress, 1997, p. 108). In his publication about children’s early writing, he defines imagination as “one aspect of processes of sign-making” and “a boundary of sign-making, the chains of signs” (p. 108). He asserts that imagination could occur in any media without limitations because children could move
ideas freely across medium; as for cognition, the mental activity could show the “articulation of units” (p. 109) by relating the meaning to one mode; affect refers to the medium that interest children to use (Kress, 1997). These three concepts enhance each other for text production and inform creativity. Kress’s argument emphasizes the value of the transmediation confirms that children have imagination and creativity when they are able to move freely across different modes.

Of particular relevance, the finding also indicates that the student participants show an interest in writing and were confident to express their thoughts freely, which construct their identities as an L2 writer because of their ‘authorial voice’ (Ivanic, 2004). The writing approach teacher adopted is a creative writing approach rooted in the sociocultural view of L2 and literacy learning with an emphasis on the interactions and dynamic process of learning. Ivanic defines creative writing as “the product of the author’s creativity [which] also focuses on the written text, but is concerned with its content and style rather than linguistic form” (Ivanic, 2004, p. 229). For L2 writers, creative writing can be encouraging because the writer’s ability is not overly confined due to anxieties about being accurate in the L2 with regards to vocabulary or grammar. In my opinion, writers learn to write by writing. As such, writers should be encouraged to express their thoughts and ideas as much as possible. Clark and Ivanic (2013) urge us to consider that “writing not only conveys a message about content but also conveys a message about the writer” (p. 142). The rationale behind Ivanic’s argument is to shift the focus to learner/writer, which can be transferred into resources to fuel students’ learning.

It can be argued that following L2 students to actively incorporate their multimodal experience would proper their meaning making practice. However, such
practice does not happen in every classroom. Kress points out that the particular privileged forms of literacy practiced in the contemporary school system discourages imagination and creativity (Kress, 1997). Kress has problematized the literacy practice dominant in schools for more than two decades. Despite the affordances of technologies and multiple mode of literacy practice in the current era, children are still confined to written modes in school literacy which obstructs the expansion of creativity and imagination. The challenge of practicing multimodal literacy practices in the classroom relates to the dominant and fixed definition of literacy located in reading and writing, which is considered as the key to academic success in the standardized tests. School educators, parents and some scholars probably are more concerned about failing in reading and writing instead of spending more time practicing other ‘fun’ literacies. Similarly, in L2 classroom, same challenges exist. Language teachers are required to use limited time to demonstrate the most effective outcome of language learning, and high scores for the L2 proficiency test. That is, the written mode indicates a learning result. Therefore, although this study attempts to provide an alternative view on L2 and literacy learning, it still remains questionable if this study can persuade institutions, parents and L2 teachers to adopt these multiple literacy practices.

7.2.2 Writing in Critical Literacies: Building Analytical Insights through Translanguaging

The student participants often talked about their writing process by referring to translation. In this study, I argue that they not only use strategies from translating, but also do translanguaging in their writing. The recursive practices and the integration of all the linguistic repertoires and multimodal resources entitle them to develop deep thinking
and analytical insights. The section below further discusses the finding on how translation and translanguaging inform students’ L2 writing and criticality.

During writing, what students did was to conduct research in one language and write in another language. To reiterate, the students’ experience in the above approach may be similar to translanguaging practiced in Cen William’s Welsh context (William 1994, 1996) that bilingual students alternate the languages to learn the both subject content and the target language as I extensively illustrate in Chapter 3. William’s pedagogical trajectory of translanguaging is attributed to Baker’s definition of translanguaging. In Baker’s term, translanguaging is “the process of making meaning, shaping experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages’’ (Baker, 2011, p. 288). This definition highlights the cognitive effect of using two languages in writing process to understand the subject matter, which supports the comprehension and articulating ideas.

While students alternated the language to gain meanings, the analysis of students’ written texts in the video projects indicates that the student participants move across the language border and think and write in between/across two languages. In the video project, since the student participants are “translating” to meet the purpose of their project, their writing process is filled with the flow of two languages. In the final interview, Mei-mei refers such bilingual writing to translation. She says, “…this one was … it helped me more with my translating than other projects because usually other projects were writing in Chinese and not translating…” (Mei-mei’s final interview).
In her words, for this project, she had to deal with two languages, but this process of bilingual writing is identical to other writings. That means, even though students have data sources from L1, the L2 writing involves a process of writing, which could be brainstorming, planning, drafting focusing ideas, organizing, and generating ideas. For bilinguals, their writing is based on the comprehension of two languages, which requires them to locate meanings “in one language into the ‘other’ language” (Velasco & Garcia, 2014, p. 10) during writing process. While writing, they negotiate meanings across and between two languages to build interpretations in the context. Such “shifting” requires integrating two linguistic systems into one system and constantly revising interpretations, which might involve analytical exercises. As Gracia mention, “bilinguals have one linguistic repertoire from which they select features strategically to communicate effectively” (Garcia & Wei, 2014, p. 22). Therefore, when text designers flexibly use two languages to create L2 writing to meet the communication purposes, it should be recognized as writing through translanguaging instead of translating. However, since translation is also involved as one part of translanguaging process, and a term that is also widely acknowledged, there is a need to clarify the difference between translanguaging and translation.

As for translation, it has a broad and variety of beneficial uses in our digital and global world. Translating can refer to the direct literal meaning without being aware of the audience. For example, Google Translate can translate one language into approximately over 50 languages in one second. In the language classroom, translation is also widely adopted for different purposes. In L2 academic context or discipline specific subject, it is effective to understand the terminology or important ideas with literal or
direct translation. Translation can be a teaching strategy bridging meanings from L1 to L2 for new language learners. In the language proficiency test, translation can be a question type. All these functions position translation in a fundamental space.

Lewis, Jones and Baker (2012) highlight a distinction between translanguaging and translation from the multilingual perspective. They indicate, “while translanguaging is the concurrent use of two languages, translation is more about language separation, scaffolding, and working mainly in the stronger language” (Lewis et al., 2012, p. 659). Obviously, according to their quote, a dichotomy exists in translation, which means that translators have a tendency of using two languages separately for different purposes. That is, more experienced language can support a less experienced language to comprehend the subject matter. When changing from one language to another, the endeavor of borrowing and producing and translated results can be noticed. Besides, translation is involved in more complex processes because translators may be expected to interpret the meanings and content of the two languages as closely as possible, which might require the full knowledge of two languages.

In contrast, translanguaging is a subtle experience. The notion of translanguaging is to incorporate all the linguistic repertoires simultaneously to maximize meaning-making and learning because their ideas flow in two languages. It seems that two languages team work together for the same purpose. Both approaches make sense for learning in a bilingual classroom because bilinguals possess two languages and are entitled to have translingual effects to their practice leading to analytical and critical insights.
In this study, students moved beyond fundamental translation. In Chapter 6, I illustrate that students’ written representations demonstrate they can make textual moves from the code-breaking aspect to critical or analytical aspect. For example, Xiao-yu built logical connections to make information flow and made readers comprehend her writing better. Na-na adopts the interconnection of Chinese and English writing featuring multiple perspectives based on her analysis of the historical event of the Salem witch trials. Mei-mei write from a sociopolitical approach, in which she interrogates the power relations in the historical event of the Salem witch trials. In Mei-mei’s final interview, she acknowledges the “translation approach” positively because translating from English into Chinese makes her understand Chinese better. In comparison, since she had been writing solely in one language in the L2 classroom, for this project, she found researching and writing through two languages an interesting experience. More importantly, she discovered some new information that she had not even realized before as she read in L1 English (Mei-mei’s final interview). Their examples demonstrate that writing through translanguaging and translating provides a critical space for bilinguals.

Certainly, dealing with two languages helps such analytical exercises because language learners have to go through recursive writing process and shifting between two languages. While the student participants called their writing process translating, I believe this translating process was translanguaging because students did more than just translate literal meaning. They actually are writing with their own creativity.

7.2.3 Identity Positioning: Multimodality and Diverse Identities

One question I have been asked frequently is “why do identities matter in the language classroom?” Should a language classroom focus only on language skills?
Another common assumption is that identity refers to cultural or ethnic identity. The discussion below will provide some insights for these two questions.

The findings from this study indicate that students’ interest, knowledge and identity of their social world become meaning-making resources and inspire their video production as part of their literacy practices. Through the poststructuralist standpoint, their identity is viewed as shifting and dynamic (Davies & Harré, 1990; Lewis et al., 2007; Moje et al., 2009). When students’ diverse identities are enacted through different ways of participating in the multimodal literacy practices, learners negotiate in different identity positions, which turn into an opportunity for learning (Kramsch 2009; Norton 2013).

For language learners, L2 classroom is commonly a site of struggle because what students can do is confined by their own linguistic competence. Thus, the teacher and researcher wanted to be conscious of the possibilities of inviting in students’ many voices. This video project allowed students to explore different possibilities to practice and advance L2 literacy by writing, reading, designing, synthesizing and reflecting. Kramsch relates one analogy to multimodality by saying “language learners apprehend the foreign language with all their senses: the sounds, the shapes, the taste of words and other symbolic forms, and the meanings that each mode makes available” (Kramsch, 2009, p. 203). I totally resonate with her viewpoint since multimodal text production entitles language learning with our senses. In my study, through the process of production in particular, the student participants realize the language with their senses as well. They visualize the shapes of the Chinese characters, hear the sound of the Pinyin (the phonetic system to transliterate Chinese), touch the keyboard and type characters, and taste
(experience) and feel the word meanings and concepts between two languages and through multimodal experience.

One vivid example is the use of oral mode in the multimodal text production. Student participants commented on how the oral mode created meanings for their writing, and allowed them to pay attention to writing conventions while narrating their text. One student, An-an, pointed out the essence of oral mode in her production process.

Yeah… having .. we speak and we know more words. Speaking we know more words than we do than writing. So if we speak a word that we don’t know how to write … and we might want to know how to write it .. write more words …(An-an’s final interview, April 2017)

In An-an’s words, speaking was their strength, and the use of the oral mode supported their writing practice. More significantly, she emphasizes that oral mode provided her an opportunity to write more and use the language. She says, “…and in class there is one topic and you are limited to the amount you can say. In this, you can say more; you could say as much as you want” (An-an’s final interview, April 2017). I agree with An-an. In the language classroom, in one 45-minute lesson, not every student can respond to the teacher’s question at one time. With the video-making, they can speak as much as possible when practicing, recording and rerecording their voices.

Another participant, Mo, emphasizes that the oral mode offers him alternative learning possibilities when moving from oral to his writing:

My opinion is also that speaking is easier than writing… which might help someone like me because it’s more like … you don’t really have to … translate and you know words that you wouldn’t know how to write just from hearing from conversation… so that saves a little more time… to speak

Mo acknowledges that the speaking mode helps his language learning as well. Sometimes he knows how to say the words instead of writing them. Without the oral mode, he has to look up all the unknown words in the dictionary to be able to write,
which slows down his writing or makes him discontinue writing. When learning is not limited to one learning outcome only, Mo became agentive. Mo’s example also confirms that multimodalities provide alternative opportunities for learning, and his identities are ongoing and continuous process through participating. Such shifting identities acknowledge learners’ own power and make sense of self and literacy in multiple social positions (Moje et al., 2011).

The following quote inspires considering learning, self and identities in one picture: “Identities—if they are alive, if they are being lived—are unfinished and in process” (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 429). An implication of this argument is that the pedagogical methods could inform dynamic identities of different learners can provide alternative educational opportunities. When students’ multiple identities are considered, there are all kinds of potentials to be explored. The understanding of identity and educational possibilities suggest that classroom teachers should not limit students to static or fixed identity. Instead, we, educators, can offer a range of learning experiences that position students differently by engaging them in different dimensions of literacy or language practices, and even offer them a wider perspective by applying their learning in a community or society. Such positioning identities value “doing” and “performing” (Butler, 1998) and identities are constructed across time, space or place, community, etc., (Davies & Harré, 1990). The shifting nature of these positions enacts the subjectivity not only from oneself but also from others as an ongoing and continuous process to next positions (Davies & Harré, 1990). That is, the personhood is shaped by the interactions with people and/ or the environment. Under these circumstances, multiple ways of learning will likely enact positioning identities.
To relate identity positioning to the empirical studies, more and more literacy and language studies are advocating for a social turn in L2 acquisition and place interest in learners’ identities and agency because the critical sociocultural view of learning breaks the traditional view of discrete skills of competence. As illustrated in Chapter 2, identity texts is an L2 writing pedagogy that values students’ cultural and linguistic resources while composing multimodal texts. It reconfirms learners’ cultural and linguistic identities in a positive way (Cummins 2005; Early & Yeung, 2009; Cohen, 2011; Giampapa, 2010). Recently, identities and language teaching have been widely expanded on identity investment (Norton 2000, 2013); and positioning identities by many scholars in recent years (Lau et al., 2017; Stille, 2001). However, the construction of dynamic identities relating to students’ different learning process might be still under explored. It follows that this study could be added to the empirical literature.

7.2.4 Conceptualizing Integrative Critical Biliteracies Model: Critical Work in a Fifth-Grade Bilingual Classroom

One part of this ethnographic case study offers an example of a critical literacies curriculum unit plan on Chinese literacy and content of Massachusetts history. The unit aims to deliver both Chinese literacy and history content to advance L2 and literacy. Four knowledge processes of pedagogy of multiliteracies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015) contribute to my concepts of designing the unit curriculum and examine both pedagogical practices and learning process. Significantly, however, this study provides insights to conceptualize the integrated critical biliteracies model for multimodal text production in the L2 and literacy classroom. In Chapter 5 and 6, the finding suggests that teacher’s pedagogical practices and students’ text production moves across or overlap among four
pedagogical actions in developing students’ analytical and critical aspect of language learning. Such theory into practice could provide L2 researchers, curriculum specialists and educators insights to critical literacies practices in L2 education. In the next section, the discussion epitomizes the process of integrating critical literacies practices and L2 linguistic resource through text making, multiple modes and two languages.

About two months after I entered the classroom, Hu Laoshi agreed to collaborate to design this history unit. Our initial goals were similar. Hu Laoshi set up a goal to advance the student participants’ reading and writing in her initial goal and yearlong statement and curriculum goal required by the school. As for me as a researcher, I wanted to support Hu Laoshi in promoting students’ language development and pilot a critical practices unit to understand what happens when students practice critical literacy in a L2 context. Due to the school’s immersion model, only L2 is preferred in class. While planning, I was concerned about the limitation of using one language for meaning-making in learning content. I then referred to A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Learning by Design (2015) as a starting design frame. I also revised the definition of criticality for this study based on our initial goal to aim for L2 literacy practice:

Criticality means that L2 learners can not only use their target language but also multiple modes of literacy to and make sense of the world in thinking about the language, text and power. Students can move beyond decoding and understanding the text and engaging in learning the target language and content analytically and critically by putting their L2 in action to interpret, analyze, critique and produce texts.

This definition reflects my perspective designing this unit in consideration of technology, writing, multimodality and criticality and expectation on developing L2 literacy. Then, I moved on to observe if anything I should consider for this plan.
After/during immersing in the field and conducting preliminary data analysis, I have discovered that the translangualism, transculturalism and multimodality permeate the whole learning process and socialization in the L2 classroom. When multiliteracies scholars constructed the framework, their prepositions were rooted in more general conditions of L1 classroom without considering the role of L2 and critical aspect on language learning. Moreover, the critical orientation was not clear for L2 classroom. After observing and interacting with teachers and students, I established the new purposes of the four knowledge processes for L2 learners: semiotic, contextual, interpretive and transformative because these goals create the continuities of shaping critical aspect of language learning. The integrative critical biliteracies model adopted the Four Resources model (four textual positions) and considerations of translangualism, transculturalism and multimodality. In that sense, such multiliteracies perspective could support students moving beyond decoding and literal meaning making and forward to diverse textual practices and positions (Luke & Freebody, 1999).

There are different ways of practicing critical literacies in the classroom. Taking L2 as a consideration, many scholars advocated that multiliteracies informs critical aspect of language learning (Cummins & Early, 2011; Giampapa, 2010; Harste, 2003; Janks, 2014, 2010; Kumagai, Konoeda, Nishimata (Fukai), & Satao, 2016; Luke, 1999; Vasquez, 2017; Wu, 2016) and should support learners to move different textual positions though decoding, making meaning, using, analyzing and applying. My conceptualizations of critical literacies also underlie on the core value of Freire’s literacy program “read the word and the world” (Freire, 1970), which is the reading the world as a text (Vasquez, 2016, 2014). The world could be the learner’s social world. I also
considered the crucial aspect of teaching history is to gain new understanding about past with diverse perspectives through six thinking perspectives (Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness, n.d.), which could support students to approach history language by questioning and communicating for analytical standpoint (Roberge, 2013). Then, the history unit curriculum is outlined with the critical literacy practice around historical thinking aspects.

For critical literacies practice, a variety of Chinese picture books relating to social issues were adopted to engage students’ interest. These books were originally in English but translated into Chinese. Students were familiar with them because they read them in earlier grades in English, and the content is also connected to students’ life context. These books also attend to social issue topics and help to generate conversation in examining the power structure in class (Kubota, 2016; Vasquez 2017). However, the critical questions for discussion need to be modified for the classroom use. The excerpt below from my field notes presents a snapshot of the negotiation process between researcher and teacher collaborating on creating critical questions.

…. Since the power positions are tensioned in the story, I asked the teacher if I could provide some sample critical literacy questions to see if she could include them in the discussion in the story. Due to time constraints, she modified them by focusing on prediction and the author’s position. Hu Laoshi asked students to predict the front cover image and share their opinions. To our surprise, one student who seldom participated shared his thinking. We were happy about it. During the read-aloud, Hu Laoshi stopped on one page, with a picture of a giant boy and tiny ant, and asked “why is the author doing that?” Then, students were silent and started to raise hand to share their thoughts…. (Field note, November 20, 2016)

Hu Laoshi modified the critical literacy questions I proposed and adjusted them in fulfilling her needs such as time constraints, context of the lesson and student’ interest in
the discussion. These modifications served as an important work for all critical literacies practices in the L2 context.

The critical aspect of literacy practices engaged students in predicting, author’s intention, missing perspectives, and alternative endings. Teacher’s questions allowed students to think and contrast the difference of the story in two languages, which is significant for language learners to build sensitivity of two languages. Juxtaposing two languages is neglected in the L2 classroom due to fact that the energy and effort should be attentive merely to the target language. The excerpt of the following field note could provide a snapshot of the classroom talk.

When the teacher read the page of the cemetery, the image shows that children have picnic in the cemetery. Students shows surprises. One of the students questioned, “Are they having a picnic in the cemetery?” At first, teacher took it for granted and said, “Why not?” It’s like a park”. In a second, she questioned, “You didn’t notice it when you read the story in English? It’s the same thing”. She probably wanted to tell students the contents in English and in Chinese should be the same. At this time, one students Teng responded, “Yes, I know. Now the story is in Chinese, I feel it’s a little bit…. (Field note, Jan 11, 2017)

The above except is from the second read-aloud book *Letting Swift River Go* (譯滿河流走) (Yolen, 1995, 2005), which relates to local history. One student (Ting, pseudonym) spotted something on one page and said she did not find/remember this information in the English version. After Ting posed question, the class had a small discussion about the difference they observe, which shows that using Chinese and English versions of the books engage students in contrasting two languages.

Aside from the read aloud, the class did an extended activity, a role card activity. First, students could match the dialogue with four roles (i.e., children, Bostonians, residents of the Swift River Valley, politician). Then, Hu *Laoshi* held a discussion in which students could express their opinions in the position of a particular role in the
story. Hu Laoshi deliberately arranged that sequence because she wanted students to have some L2 as prior knowledge to think about the topic before they expressed opinions. In this discussion, students engaged in thinking about the issue of power and the positions of different roles. This section is a rigorous discussion because it has children’s voice in the story, politicians’ power (page of town meeting) and stances of Bostonians and residents of Swift River Valley, elderly people, engineers.

As for the second-language resources, teacher provided guidance and assistance in studying the language components and used her metalinguistic awareness to support students’ understanding and uses of L2. The small-group learning also created closeness to engage students in learning. In the interview data, students confirmed the benefit of small-group learning (student participants’ interview data) because they could focus better than in a big class. On top of that, L2 literacy corners, students could build independent L2 learning strategies by focusing on individual linguistic competence such as Chinese characters, reading and listening. During writing process, sentence writing frame handout (written frame) also contributes to students’ writing (For L2 resources, see details in Chapters 5 and 6). Based on Hu Laoshi’s effort, I see the need to incorporate L2 resources into critical literacy practices in support of meaning construction and communicating analytical thoughts in L2.

As a concluding point, L2 linguistic resources are necessary to marry critical literacies. Therefore, the integrative critical biliteracies model could support not only pedagogical practice but also the various textual positions.
7.3 Study Contributions

Despite its methodological limitations (see Chapter 4), this study has several contributions to the field of L2 education as elaborated in this section. First, for the immediate contribution, since the research context was in complex social situations, the findings of this study would inform parents in the local area about their children learning two languages in a bilingual school and provide insights on learning L2 Chinese which is different from European languages. In addition, the findings would provide the institution an alternative view of L2 education; that is, a critical sociocultural view of language and literacy learning could break assumptions of traditional views about discrete skills of competence and position learners as active agents.

Second, this study fills a gap in research on critical literacies in L2 education, L2 education, and L2 Chinese language education in the K-12 school setting. In this study, I explored writing in critical literacies. The findings suggest writing indeed supports deep learning of the target language and leads to criticality, which allows L2 learners to move in different textual positions and make sense of their writing, from use to critical application. Writing is also a reflective practice. From a social perspective, using both L1 and L2 in writing can contribute to critical literacies. As Janks argues, writing is “the ability to produce text is a form of agency that enables [the author] to choose what meanings to make” (Janks 2010, p. 156). Thus, writers can not only construct a sense of self and agency but also move beyond the texts.

In the research literature of critical literacies, writing is less researched than reading in critical literacy within L2 contexts (Janks & Vasquez, 2014). For example, in Chapter 2, the review of literature shows that the studies on critical literacies within
second language context appear to pay less attention to second language or writing practice. In the recent journal articles on critical literacies in K-12 within L2 context, Roy (2016) studies critical literacies practices by discussing the social issue of race with refugee children, and Kim (2016) used critical discussion with kindergartens on gender-themed picture books. Both studies confirm that young children can engage in important issues. However, the use of oral mode is adopted in the critical literacy practices instead of writing. Writing requires more time commitment and complex layers of literacy practices. From my view, critical writing has not common seen in K-12 context because writing requires practice and scaffolding. Further, although studies (e.g., Hammond & Macken-Horarak, 1999; Lau, 2012, 2013) focus on critical writing, the context is usually located in English as second language programs. Therefore, this study represents the experience of learning L2 as an additive/foreign/new language.

As for L2 Chinese and L2 education, this study could also provide alternative insights for L2 and literacy instruction, or curriculum design for bilingual contexts. The dominant view for Chinese literacy learning is rooted in memorization and repetition to build the foundation of the literacy. Chinese is also a critical language. When I explored the research literature in the library database, the keyword “Chinese literacy” yielded mostly cognitive aspect of the language on tones, stroke order, and Chinese character writings (Lo-Philip, 2014; McBride-Chang & Wat, 2003; Shen, 2013; Yeung, Chan & Chung, 2017; Zhang & Yang, 2017), which theorizes Chinese language learning through psycholinguistic and cognitive perspectives. This study moves beyond these two theories and shows that students can compose and benefit from textual practices and multimodal practice. In addition, these psycholinguistic and cognitive studies use quantitative
building epistemologies. Ethnographic methods provide rich description of the study with analytical insights which examine the situated view of the data. Thus, this study shows the educators, curriculum specialists and researchers in the field L2 Chinese and literacy education in terms of the possibilities of adopting ethnographic research practice to understand critical language learning.

Third, significantly, this study has one theoretical contribution, which supports the conversation of the integrative critical biliteracies model. The findings and conceptualizations are connected. In Chapter 5, the findings suggest that the teacher’s pedagogical practice aligns with the integrative critical biliteracies model, which values students’ individual cultural and collaborative knowledge processes. The compatible teacher-student relationship and questioning strategies are essential to encourage students to reflect, argue, critique and produce in both L2 oral and written languages. In particular, writing a journal entry could be considered as an analytical exercise for students to move from textual to social practice by drawing from multiple intertextual resources. In Chapter 6, the findings conceptualize four dimensions of knowledge processes: experiencing, conceptualizing, analyzing. I argue that students’ interest in the topic and attention to different modes create meaning and contextualize their L2 writing to become bilingual and critical in two language systems. The components in both chapters reflect the core value of this research project on writing: multimodality, dynamic identities and critical biliteracies and further theorize the Integrative critical biliteracies model.

7.4 Revisiting Critical Work in the Classroom: Questions and Challenges

Kubota and Miller (2017) maintain “…using a certain theoretical foundation does not necessarily make a scholarly work critical. It is also important to note that critical
research and practice in our field do not always have to draw on grand theories” (p. 133).

This notion moves me away from my theoretical framing and allows me to revisit the critical work in the classroom. In April 2017, I interviewed Hu Laoshi and asked her to reflect on her teaching this year. At that time, Hu Laoshi completed a couple of more writing projects with the students: poetry, an ice-cream poem, an island I created, and a brochure for travel expo. She adopted more multimodal practices to enhance students’ literacy practice. She said,

现在我觉得他们进步的很多，默默的，写作上最多的进步，然后独立性也进步很多 (I think they make a lot of progress, silently (tacitly), in particular, writing has been demonstrated the most progress, and their independence in learning).

She confirmed that she was quite satisfied with the students’ overall literacy progress this school year. In particular, students have made a lot of progress in writing, and students are much more independent in learning the language. Then, I asked her to reflect on our work for this project, and she said,

很 vague的想法，我觉得他们的语言还是没办法 support他们做 critical的那一段时间， even我们这样 scaffold之后，还是不过，就是思想的 level到了但语言不够，因为英文他们绝对可以说这个，他们都可以谈 Columbus，Native Americans. (I have very vague thoughts about this project, I think their L2 still cannot support them to do critical work in L2, even though we had done a lot of scaffolding and building up their L2 linguistic resources. It means that they have reached critical level for their thinking but lack L2. In English, they definitely can say these things, they can talk about Columbus and native Americans.)

In the above reflection, Hu Laoshi showed some uncertainties and concerns about critical literacies in the L2 classroom. One point she made is that students can be critical in their first language. However, they did not have enough L2 to support their criticality. What they lack might be L2. In other words, the L2 did not reach the level she expected. I certainly value and agree with her opinions. It seems logical that L2 programs should aim
at the linguistic competence and effectiveness of learning the target language. However, from a researcher’s perspective, I have a couple of insights in response to her comment.

This collaboration about critical literacies was a 10-week unit. Then I asked myself “Does critical literacy really work in L2 classroom?” What is surprising about critical literacies is that teachers are not in control of them because learners do all kinds of thinking to present their perspective. Probably the critical thoughts come from the teacher’s previous practice, or it could be they hear someone from somewhere. As such, the challenge of practicing critical literacies in L2 is that we have no control of the children’s language use. We can plan sentence frames or give syntactic structure and word phrases, however, we cannot control what students.

One thing we need to acknowledge is that children are critically engaged with the world. We do not need to teach critical literacies for a child to be critically engaged, nor can the teacher control whether students do critical work, so students’ criticality is ongoing. Deliberating teaching critical literacies does formalize what children already do. It gives them the language, the practice and deepens what they do. Even though children might have critical literacy in L1, teachers have no control over whether students are doing critical work. Whenever students bring in two experiences or any time that we bring in two experiences, they are bringing languages together, and they are comparing and contrasting, an important critical literacy practice because they are juxtaposing two languages.

After analyzing all the students’ work, I was excited about their process. The integration of “critical” and “literacy” allowed me to see engaging and pedagogical possibilities and active agent. However, I have to say that doing critical literacy in one
language is challenging with the expectation of using proper syntactic structures and word choices in a short time. Critical literacy is an everyday practice, not a one-time or one-unit only practice. It requires being embedded in everyday practice and a long-term goal.

Critical literacy has been practiced mainly for culturally diverse learners in the ESL or English language program to empower students use social inquiry for language learning. In my study, the purpose of learning the L2 is different from ELL or ESL. It is an additive L2 Chinese language, Chinese recently replaced the European languages and became popular for privileged students in the United States. In this social context, parents assign the social value to their children with one identity to be elite in academic performance. Many people also consider elite students need critical thinking to maintain their cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Critical thinking refers to higher order thinking based on cognition. In this global era, privileged and elite students need to do critical literacies more than ever because these practices provide opportunities to engage critically in various social and cultural contexts, which can foster their multiple identities toward global citizenship.

However, every student has different experience and interests, and various identities, which means every student learns differently. In language classrooms, there is a reason that learners often lose interest in learning the additional language because learners are often positioned as knowledge recipients instead of the knowledge creators or collaborators. Interest matters. In this study we found that students’ interest propels them into their learning like Mo’s excitement about American football and New England Patriots, An-an’s passion about theater performance, and the like. When they asked,
“How do you say this in Chinese?” they were positioned as active learners, and teachers create a purpose of learning a language. With the benefit of using two languages, multimodality and critical literacies practices, they actively participated in creating knowledge. When they were allowed to translanguage or transmediate, they are invited to critically engage in their learning. Teachers’ concern for doing critical work should not be whether students have enough language to be critical. As Comber (1990) and Vasquez (2014, 2004) argue, children are not invited enough to be critical.

The Curriculum Unit 2 on history still has room from improvement. This is a bigger project than their regular assignment. As Mei-mei said, “We were too ambitious.” True, we tried to accomplish too many tasks in 10 weeks which increased the students’ frustration. Writing demands time commitment and scaffolding particularly in L2 classroom. I would consider the time consumption or use a flexible curriculum for a similar critical literacy project. However, the main issue might be institutional ideologies and teachers’ beliefs to conduct critical literacies project.

7.5 Implications

In this study, I have argued the benefit of multimodal practices. That is, using two languages and multiple literacy practice can lead to critical language learning. However, I visualize that we still many questions to answer, issues to solve and challenges to overcome to practice language and critical literacies teaching. Then, I have following thoughts for future consideration:

Critical literacies have a long tradition as a philosophical epistemology and are a one-size-fits-all program that teachers can apply. Wooldridge (2001) maintains that “Critical literacy is not a technique or set of strategies, but rather, part of a pedagogy
underpinning a whole approach or classroom practice” (p. 259). Luke (2012, 2013) also mentions that no critical literacy model exists because critical literacies varies from context to context. Teachers or practitioners might lose essence of critical literacies without fully understanding critical literacies.

The underlying challenges for practicing critical literacy in the school curriculum might be that every school privileges particular teaching practices and content knowledge aligned with its political commitments. Importantly, school curricula require to meet the educational standards from the state rather than focus only on critical literacies. In addition, classrooms vary depending on context, students, students’ interest, teachers’ pedagogical beliefs, training or preference of certain knowledge, and time constrains. To overcome these challenges, the possibilities can be incorporating critical practices into everyday curriculum. By doing so, we need more experience and empirical data as resources to demonstrate and support critical literacy practice in the classrooms.

My study is just an initial step to explore the possibilities of practicing critical literacies in the L2 classroom. Since critical literacy is more theory oriented but not explicit for teaching, it requires teachers and researchers to continue to inquire together into its possibilities. Ethnographic research practices can explore in-depth aspect of literacy practice. Many studies tend to focus on the language use instead of the language user, and product instead of process. To understand both process and product, language and language use teachers and researchers should rely on ethnographically informed work such as the critical ethnography, participatory action research or youth participatory action research, for example, to put theory into practice.
However, the alternative views of literacy education and learning outcomes should be acknowledged by institutions, society and educational policies. For example, institutions should acknowledge multiple literacies and multiple competences to assess students’ learning outcomes. The L2 classroom reflects institutional ideology (Gebhard, 1999) and language teachers can be influenced by the institutional ideology as well. Besides, for bilingual and L2 programs, institutions should acknowledge and increase cross-linguistic curriculum connection and interdisciplinary teaching of integration of L1 and L2 to language education. Hence, institutions play an important role to implement critical aspect of language education.

Last, second language teacher education programs are rooted in psycholinguistic and cognitive theories of L2 acquisition. The reason that critical literacies have not been embedded in L2 classroom yet is because L2 teachers lack understanding of critical literacies. L2 teachers mainly graduate from a Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages program or a Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages programs. Thus, there is a need to incorporate critical literacies into second language teacher education.

7.6 Reflections

In this last section of my dissertation, I reflect on my study. One side of me is tangled with critical theories and eager to anchor my future research in line with a specific critical tradition. Another side of me has mixed feelings of the unresolved issues and challenges existing in the critical aspect of language education in contrast to the dominant ideology permeating L2/foreign-language education. In the following discussion I reflect on my ethnographic research design and teacher-research
collaboration because these practices played significant roles in my understanding critical literacies within the second-language context.

Critical ethnographic case study allowed me to be flexible and recontextualize a holistic view of a bilingual classroom. In this study, I have gained appreciation for ethnographic research because it reveals the multi-layered social context and “the nature of knowledge as multifaceted, locally situated, and time and context bound” (Davis, 2013, p. 6). I am glad that I conducted an ethnographic study so that I could understand the complexities of this classroom culture together. I was able to take notice of small moments/instances between teachers and students and among students that are often overlooked but significant for understanding critical work. In addition, writing is a complex social practice. If the audience read about these incidents in the students’ writing, they might consider their writing bizarre or question why these students talked about these things because they are not often seen in our modern life. However, I was present at the research site, and I was able to use my observations and participation to examine the students’ daily micro-interactions and micro-moments of their shifting identities and subject positions. Due to the capacity of ethnographic methods, I could be in the field investigating how children make sense of their writing in two languages and through multiple modes.

One feature of the ethnographic study foregrounds micro-negotiations for mutual perceptions, which is linked to my positionality. I understand my role as a researcher in this study is to observe and explore the school culture from the participants’ perspectives and learn how its members perceive meanings in this bilingual context. Although ethnographic study emphasizes participant observation, I did negotiate my role as an
active participant in the classroom by providing the teacher curriculum support, ideas, and resources with interventions. The flexibility of critical ethnographic case study allowed me to collaborate with the teacher. According to Hammersley (1990; cited in Bloome, 2013, p. 9), classroom collaboration includes three directions: putting progressive educational ideas into practice, making radical educational and social change, and documenting the classroom life but leave undisturbed. I tried to participate minimally. I stayed back and followed the teachers’ lead because she had her institutional responsibility to fulfill. She also cared about her teacher evaluation, which is based on students’ performance in Chinese.

Of note, at that time, the theoretical framing of this study was rooted in trans languaging. However, JBS has a one-language policy in the classroom to provide students more exposure in learning L2. I respect the school’s policy. Although I am a researcher, without understanding the context and teacher’s practice, I did not want walk in with the intent to change the teacher’s pedagogical practice.

Nevertheless, the teacher-researcher collaboration was not easy. Even though Hu Laoshi agreed to participate, it did not mean that teacher and researcher would go hand in hand at the beginning, and our collaboration would succeed until the end. There were many negotiating moments, micro-negotiations. For example, Hu Laoshi has rich experiences with the fifth graders. In her class, she adjusted our discussed ideas to meet the greatest needs of students. As a researcher, I wanted to put theory into practice by integrating critical literacies into the teachers’ classroom practices. We each had different thoughts. Perhaps she wanted to accept my ideas, but she had her concerns. In addition,
she knew her students very well, so she could say maybe they cannot do this piece, or we need to do it with more scaffolding. I think all these micro-negotiations were a good sign.

Even though I said, “I am not contaminating the site or changing the site,” my very presence changed the site. Being in the site and interacting with all the participants was much like all the fifth graders in the classroom getting up from their desks and having side conversations. When we have a certain knowledge or expertise, we bring it to this work place, which contributes to learning or knowledge creation there. What is happening there is the micro-negotiations that the teacher and I did on the daily basis, but also with this project/the unit. The collaboration has been a reciprocal process that both the researcher and the teacher participant learned from each other’s viewpoints because the research project created spaces for all kinds of short conversations.

I employed two methods for data analysis: writing as analysis and multimodal analysis. These two analytical methods are labor-intensive, time-consuming, and recursive and repetitive practices. Importantly, writing and multimodal analysis allows me to reread my data and discover insights through writing and transcribing multimodal data. I was able to discover dimensions and nuances that I did not predict when I coded my data.

Considering methodological implications, I will approach the research design and data analysis differently in the future. For example, the data analysis, when I did the fieldwork in the classroom, my theoretical framing was based on translanguaging. In this study, some parts of analysis originated from my interpretations. These additional insights originated from the fieldwork by documenting student learning processes and school life. Due to my participation, I was able to retrace student participants’ decision
making, and insights of using different modes. However, for the participants’ perceptions on the affordances and constraints of multimodality, I only can speculate based on the theories I have used. If I conduct a similar research again, I will incorporate interview questions relating to student participants’ uses of the multiple modes, their concept of design and their perceptions of the affordances and constraints of the modes they used. In addition, in terms of writing practices, particularly in the school setting, one of the challenges might be what counts as knowledge. I would incorporate more insights to future data analysis by disrupting the static view of knowledge because writing is a process engaging deep analytical exercise instead of expecting L2 writers immediately know how to write. It might be important to build connections between writing and knowledge production by engaging both prior knowledge and the new language. Therefore, I will need to reconsider what counts as knowledge in this context.

Another consideration might be the collaborative work relating to curriculum planning. I understand that one aspect of critical literacy is to familiarize students with the writing genres and conventions from the target language and culture. In this study, these two pieces of writing (journal entry and digital video) contain L2 writing conventions and generic features. One reason is that students were in transition from speaking to writing because the use of L1 to support L2 learning is the central aspect of multilingual writing because students used what they know for meaning-making and participating in learning. Certainly, the teacher encouraged them to write and represent their knowledge. Students were able to move from fill in blank to paragraph writing. For the journal entry, students employed the narrative genre. Although both Chinese and English share some similar narrative features, one possibility that I could have explored
was L2 rhetorical moves and text types further and engage students additional L2 writing practices. Thus, I will consider L2 rhetorical moves in L2 text types.

7.7 Researcher’s Positionality

In this study, my positionality was mixed between outsider and insider perspectives due to my fixed and shifting identities. I am a female Taiwanese doctoral student, who speaks Chinese and English, studies at a US university, and researches at a bilingual elementary school in the US. Both my fixed identities (Taiwanese, Chinese-English bilingual, female) and shifting identities (teacher, teacher educator, doctoral student, researcher) influenced my understanding of the research site, research process and interpretations of research findings (Merriam et al., 2001).

The mixture of fixed and shifting identities locate me as an insider which are beneficial to this research. For example, the advantages of speaking two languages make the communications smoother at the research site. As a Chinese speaker, I was aware of the verbal and nonverbal cues in my own language and the subtleties of my culture. I could engage my teacher participants in deeper conversations about my research and educational ideas. Moreover, my experience and prior knowledge as a bilingual educator allows me to understand the pedagogical practices in the classroom, ask questions or raise some issues to discuss with the teacher participant. These dynamic identities also authorize me to co-plan one unit with the teacher and participate in her curriculum planning based on the curriculum framework approved by school authorities. While in the research site, I worked as a mentor and friend, my focal teacher participant sometimes talked to me to confirm her thoughts about her teaching or curriculum changes and her frustrations and exciting moment in teaching the fifth graders as well.
As for student participants, they considered me a researcher, a teacher and their L2 conversation partner. In class, Hu Laoshi asked students to call me Liaw Laoshi, which might have prompted students to assume that I was just like one of their teachers. Although I was a researcher chronicling their classroom life, occasionally I served as a teacher assistant to answer students’ inquiries while they worked on their writing. In class, as a bilingual, I observed how students communicated cross-linguistically and understand the dynamics of learning two languages. As a researcher in the classroom, I have certain of privileges and authorities as well. Both Chinese teachers provided a free space in the classroom which allowed me to move freely during researcher duties. Whenever I sat in the back taking notes, and photos, or videotaped, students were aware of my observations and showed their best part of learning and writing. During break time, some students would stand in front of my camera and ask me to take a picture of them. In the interviews, due to my frequent presence and my position as a teacher and researcher, they were willing to share their perceptions on learning first and second languages and answer my questions with thoughtful details.

I also consider myself an outsider. In this study, the context is the United States. Although the bilingual model is similar to that of my previous school in Taiwan, the L1 and L2 were different. The JBS white American students know English as their L1 and learn Chinese as L2. Furthermore, even though I taught college-level Chinese as a foreign language, my teaching experience was not connected with young American students and Chinese-language teaching. In that sense, there are many differences in teaching young students and college students Chinese. The classroom is a multilayered social context. I had to explore and understand their L1 academic curriculum, their perceptions of L2,
repertoires of practice, students’ personal interests and cultures, and even the classroom rules for going to bathroom. As a Taiwanese facing young American students and a US bilingual school, I had to pay attention to their culture particularities and gain an insider’s perspective of the place and participants.

My dynamic identities of insider and outsider are constantly ongoing in and permeate my research. I take a poststructuralist perspective conducting this research which is located between interpretivist and critical paradigms. Such a worldview is different from a positivist’s view taking a dichotomy between good or bad or one answer only. Instead, poststructuralists view truth as multiple. I am not looking for good or bad or one truth because the findings contain many truths. My changing identities, as a sixth-year doctoral student in the Language, Literacy and Culture doctoral program at an American university, where I have been trying to understand and theorize knowledge production in L2 literacy, identities and critical literacies. I present and theorize the people and their culture from both insider’s and outsider’s perspective.

7.8 Final Thought

I would like to leave the reader’s company with a final thought. The work of transcending the boundary of one language and thriving in multiple languages and cultures cannot be done alone.
### APPENDIX A

#### FIFTH GRADE CLASS SCHEDULE (2016-2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:05-9:00</td>
<td>Practice Time/Class Meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:00-10:00</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Math 9:00-9:40</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PE 9:40-10:25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00-10:15</td>
<td>Snack Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Art 10:45-11:30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30-12:00</td>
<td>Lunch Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00-12:30</td>
<td>Break Session</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30-01:15</td>
<td>Practice Time/Class Meeting</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Practice Time/Class Meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01:15-02:15</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02:15-02:40</td>
<td>Snack Time/Free Time/Break Session</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02:40-04:00</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>PE 02:30-03:15</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese 03:15-04:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONSENT FORM (TEACHER AND PARENT PARTICIPANTS) TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Researcher(s): Marsha Jing-Ji Liaw

Study Title: “Exploring Critical Biliteracies: Rethinking Language and Literacy Learning in a Bilingual Elementary School”

1. WHAT IS THIS FORM?
This form is called a Consent Form. It will give you information about the study so you can make an informed decision about participation in this research.

2. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE?
Teacher participants must be Chinese and English classroom teachers of fifth-grade academic subjects: Chinese, English, math, science, and social studies in a bilingual school setting to participate in this research. I choose this grade to study because children’s literacy practices become intensive during/after this age.

3. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?
The primary goal of this study is to explore how students become bilingual and biliterate in a bilingual classroom. I am interested in knowing what kind of pedagogical practices the instructors adopt and how students find meanings in learning two languages.

4. WHERE WILL THE STUDY TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?
This study will be conducted in a grade 5 Chinese or English classroom over one semester in Fall 2016 from Aug 30, 2016 to December 24, 2016.

5. WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?

This is an ethnographic study in which multiple resources will be used to learn about students’ and teachers’ social and cultural practices in a bilingual school. With your consent, I would like to collect the following types of data:

• Classroom observations from August 30, 2016 to December 24, 2016.
• Samples of curricular units/lesson plans that you are using with your students, teaching materials, and students’ work.
• Teachers’ notes on classroom instruction.
• Audio/video recordings of some parts of your classroom teaching sessions (your interactions and dialogues) to understand how you teach students to become bilingual and biliterate.

If you agree to take part in this study, you will also be asked to let me interview you formally and informally. I would like to learn your perspective and philosophy in teaching a second language and literacy. You may skip any questions you feel uncomfortable answering.

Most of your participation will occur over the fall semester from August 30, 2016 to December 24, 2016. During this period, I will observe your classroom at your school. Interviews will be approximately 30–45 minutes long and will be arranged at a time and place of your convenience. However, I may also wish to conduct brief informal interviews over the course of the project.

6. WHAT ARE MY BENEFITS OF BEING IN THIS STUDY?

You may not directly benefit from this research or receive a payment or gifts; however, we hope that your participation in the study may provide some insight on teaching a second language and literacy. Moreover, this study might give you the opportunity to reflect critically on your practices in biliteracy education within an immersion school.

7. WHAT ARE MY RISKS OF BEING IN THIS STUDY?
I believe there are no known risks associated with this study; however, a possible inconvenience may be the time it takes to complete the study.

8. HOW WILL MY PERSONAL INFORMATION BE PROTECTED?

The following procedures will be used to protect the confidentiality of all collected data, e.g., field notes, audio and video digital files, audio and video transcripts, and artifacts.

I will keep all collected data, including any codes to your data, at home in a locked file cabinet. Research records will be labeled with a code. A master key that links names and codes will be maintained in a separate and secure location.

The master key and audiotapes will be destroyed three (3) years after the close of the study. All electronic files (including field notes, audio and video digital files and transcripts, and artifacts) containing identifiable information will be password protected. Any computer hosting such files will also have password protection to prevent access by unauthorized users. I am the only one who will have access to the passwords.

At the conclusion of this study, the researcher (I) may publish her findings. Information will be presented in summary format and you will not be identified in any publications or presentations.

The results from this research will be shared in the following ways: my dissertation report to the University of Massachusetts Amherst, presentations at national and international conferences, and academic journal articles and/or book chapters. I will not use your name or anything else that might identify you in my written work, oral presentations, or publications. Pseudonyms will be used. This information will remain confidential. I am the only person who will have access to my research.

9. WILL I RECEIVE ANY PAYMENT FOR TAKING PART IN THE STUDY?

You will not receive any payment for this research project.

10. WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

Take as long as you like before you make a decision. My advisor and I will be happy to answer any question you have about this study. If you have further questions about this
project or if you have a research-related problem, you may contact me, Marsha Jing-Ji Liaw, at 413-559-8058 or mliaw@educ.umass.edu. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Maria José Botelho, at mjbotelho@educ.umass.edu or 413-545-1110. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research subject, you may contact the University of Massachusetts Amherst Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) at (413) 545-3428 or humansubjects@ora.umass.edu.

11. CAN I STOP BEING IN THE STUDY?

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. If you agree to be in the study, but later change your mind, you may drop out at any time. There are no penalties or consequences of any kind if you decide that you do not want to participate.

12. SUBJECT STATEMENT OF VOLUNTARY CONSENT

When signing this form, I am agreeing to voluntarily enter this study. I have had a chance to read this consent form, and it was explained to me in a language which I use and understand. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers. I understand that I can withdraw at any time. A copy of this signed Informed Consent Form has been given to me.

_________________________  ______________________  __________
Participant Signature        Printed Name        Date

By signing below, I indicate that the participant has read and, to the best of my knowledge, understands the details contained in this document and has been given a copy.

_________________________  ______________________  __________
Signature of Person          Printed Name        Date

Obtaining Consent

If you agreed to participate in the research, you will find an area below where you can agree to these items.
II. By checking, “YES” I indicate that I allow Marsha Jing-Ji Liaw to do the following things for the research purpose described:

YES               NO

1. __________    _________ I allow Marsha Jing-Ji Liaw to use and make copies of my teaching documents (lesson plan, curriculum plan) for research purposes.

2. __________    _________ I allow Marsha Jing-Ji Liaw to audio-record class sessions for research purposes.

3. __________    _________ I allow Marsha Jing-Ji Liaw to videotape class sessions for research purposes.

4. __________    _________ I allow Marsha Jing-Ji Liaw to interview me at a mutually convenient time.

5. __________    _________ I allow Marsha Jing-Ji Liaw to interview me and audio-record our interview.

Consent to Publication and Presentation

YES               NO

1. __________    ___________ I allow Marsha Jing-Ji Liaw to use video/ audio clips of class sessions for presenting and publishing.

2. __________    _____________ I allow Marsha Jing-Ji Liaw to use video/ audio clips of class sessions for presenting and publishing if she can inform me about the section of clips she will be using and gain my consent before publishing or presenting.

3. __________    __________ I allow Marsha Jing-Ji Liaw to use audio clips of class sessions for presenting and publishing.
I want to tell you about a research study I am doing. A research study is a way to learn more about something. I would like to find out more about how students learn to speak, read and write in two languages like Chinese and English. You are being asked to join the study because you have many years of experience learning these two languages in a bilingual school.

If you agree to join this study, I will collect a variety of information and discover some interesting things about how you learn two languages at elementary school. I want you to know what I will be doing or what help I will need from you. These things include:

- I will visit your classroom each day and observe lessons (e.g., Chinese, English, math, science, and social studies)
- I would like to photocopy and use some of your Chinese and English school work (e.g., writing assignments, drawings, school projects) for my research.
- I would like to audio-record or video-record some class sessions about your classroom talks and interactions.
- I would like to have informal talks with you about this project for 10-15 minutes two times during school. I will ask about your learning experience and your thoughts about learning two languages. I would ask questions like these: Please talk about your experience learning Chinese. Do you have other language learning experiences? Please share some of your experience.

Your parent or guardian knows about this study and that I am asking if you would like to be part of it.

This has no dangers or worries for you. I believe you will not get hurt participating in this research study; however, a possible inconvenience is that I will ask you to share your school work with me, and it will also take you some time to answer my questions to complete the study. You can trust me because all I want is to understand how you learn.

You may not directly receive good things from this research like receiving money or gifts; however, I hope that your participation in the study will help other people who want to become bilingual and biliterate. This study might also give you the opportunity to think about your learning. Moreover, this study will also help teachers to learn more about students.
You do not have to join this study. It is up to you. You can say okay now and change your mind later. All you have to do is tell me you want to stop. No one will be mad at you if you don’t want to be in the study or if you join the study and change your mind later and ask to stop.

Before you say yes or no to being in this study, I will answer any questions you have. If you join the study, you can ask questions at any time. Just tell your parent or the researcher (me) that you have a question.

If you want to be in this study, please write your name below.

Participant Name_________________________ Date__________________

Name of Person obtaining consent _________________ Date__________________

If you agree to participate in the research, you should look in the area below where you can agree to these items.

By checking, “YES,” I indicate that I allow the researcher (Marsha Jing-Ji Liaw) to do the following things for the research purposes described:

YES NO

1. __________ _________ I allow Marsha Jing-Ji Liaw to use and make copies of my schoolwork (e.g., writing samples, art work) for research purposes.

2. __________ _________ I allow Marsha Jing-Ji Liaw to audio-record class sessions that I am in for research purposes.

3. __________ _________ I allow Marsha Jing-Ji Liaw to video-tape class sessions that I am in for research purposes.

4. __________ _________ I give permission to Marsha Jing-Ji Liaw to informally interview me at a mutually convenient time and place at school.

5. __________ _________ I give permission to Marsha Jing-Ji Liaw to audio-record our interview.

Consent to Publication and Presentation

YES NO

1. __________ _________ I allow Marsha Jing-Ji Liaw to use video/audio clips of class sessions that I am in for presenting and publishing.

2. __________ _________ I allow Marsha Jing-Ji Liaw to use video/audio clips
of class sessions that I am in for presenting and publishing, if she informs me about the section of clips she will use and gain my consent before publishing or presenting.

3. __________  __________ I allow Marsha Jing-Ji Liaw to use audio clips of class sessions that I am in for presenting and publishing.
My name is Marsha Jing-Ji Liaw. I am a doctoral student at College of Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst with an interest in conducting a research study about students’ learning experience in becoming bilingual and biliterate.

I am asking your permission to have your child participate in my research because your child is currently learning two languages (Chinese and English) in the fourth grade of a bilingual school. Your child’s participation in this research study is voluntary.

Why is this study being done?

The study is designed to understand the perspectives and lived experiences of people within a specific culture such as learning in a bilingual elementary school. Thus, it requires my immersion in the study and I will be collecting data and interacting with students and teachers in your child’s classroom from August 30 2016 to December 24, 2017.

What will happen if my child takes part in this research study?

If you agree to allow your child to participate in this study, your child will be involved in the following research activities:

• I will be visiting your child’s classroom each day to observe lessons.
• I would like to photocopy and use some of your child’s Chinese and English school work (e.g. writing assignments, drawings, school projects) for my research.
• I would like to audio-record or video-record some class sessions of teacher-student interactions and dialogues to understand reading and writing practices.
• I would like to conduct an informal interview to ask about his/her learning experience to understand his/her perspectives in learning two languages. I would ask him/her questions for about 10-15 minutes twice in this study (e.g. Please talk about your experience learning Chinese. Do you have other language learning experience? Please share some of your experience. How do you build connections between Chinese and
English? Can you give some examples? What is your biggest take away from this lesson/activity? Why did you choose to write about this topic? What do you usually like to write about? Why?

With your permission, I will be able to participate in your child’s class and collect relevant data (observation notes, video clips of class sessions, artifacts and interviews) about his/her biliteracy practices. Please note that these activities will be coordinated with your child’s teacher or you and will not disturb your child’s learning in the classroom.

How long will my child be in the research study?

This study will be conducted from August 30, 2016 to December 24, 2017. Participation will take a total of three semesters. The research activities happen mainly during the first two semesters. Some follow-ups might be conducted during the third semester.

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that my child might experience from participating in this study?

There are no anticipated risks or discomforts. I believe there are no known risks associated with this research study; however, a possible inconvenience may be your child needs to share his/her work with me and it will also take him/her some time (10-15 minutes) to answer my questions.

Are there any potential benefits to my child if he or she participates?

Your child may not directly benefit from this research or receive a payment or gifts; however, I think his/her participation in the study will help other second language learners to become bilingual and biliterate. Moreover, this study might give him/her the opportunity to reflect on his/her learning or help teachers to adjust class curriculum suitable for your child’s needs.

Will my child receive compensation for participating?

Your child will not receive any payment or gifts for this research project.

How will information about my child’s participation be kept confidential?

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify your child will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of:

I will keep all collected data (i.e. field notes, audio and video digital files and transcripts and artifacts), including any codes to your data, at home in a locked file cabinet. Research
records will be labeled with a code. A master key that links names and codes will be
maintained in a separate and secure location.

The master key and audiotapes will be destroyed (3) years after the close of the study. All
electronic files (i.e. field notes, audio and video digital files, transcripts and artifacts)
containing identifiable information will be password protected. Any computer hosting
such files will also have password protection to prevent access by unauthorized users.

At the conclusion of this study, I may publish their findings. Information will be
presented in summary format and your child will not be identified in any publications or
presentations.
APPENDIX E

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS (INITIAL AND FINAL INTERVIEWS)

INITIAL INTERVIEW

For L2 Experience (General):

1. Do you speak or have other language learning experiences? Please share some of your experience. If you don’t want to, it’s ok.
2. Please talk about your experience in learning Chinese.
3. Why are you learning Chinese?
4. What’s the most difficult part of learning two languages? Why?
5. What’s the easiest part of learning two languages? Why?
6. Do you see this experience of learning two languages as an advantage or disadvantage? Why?
7. How do you think learning two languages will help your future? (How will you use/what will you do with these two languages)?

Specific questions for L1 and L2 literacy practices:

1. What is your favorite thing/learning activity/event in English/Chinese class? (Follow up questions: Do you like books? What are your favorite books? Do you like writing? What do you usually like to write about? Why?)
2. What is your least favorite thing/learning activity/event in English/Chinese class? Why?
3. How do you like reading and writing in L2? Why?
4. How do you feel about speaking Chinese outside school/at school?
5. After years of learning Chinese, do you mix the two languages? Can you give some examples?
6. In Chinese class, in what situations do you feel like speaking English/Chinese?
7. Do you see yourself as a bilingual? Why?
8. What are some tips that you’d like to pass on to help other students who are learning a new language?

FINAL INTERVIEW

1. What do you remember about reading/writing lessons or tasks you have completed this year? What do you remember mostly about these lessons or tasks?
2. What did you notice that you were doing during the history of Massachusetts?
3. What was your favorite learning experience during your history project?
4. What reading and writing strategies did you notice yourself using during the unit on the history of Massachusetts? Which ones helped you to learn and/or write in Chinese?
5. Tell me about your video project. What made you decide to focus on this topic?
6. What do you think about your finished project? How do you feel about it?
7. If you could make this video again, what would you keep, adapt, or change?
8. What is your biggest takeaway from doing this video project?
9. (iPad) How did this video project play a role in your Chinese language learning?
10. If you go back to all your writing assignments, which one did you like the most? Why?
11. Closing questions: how can your teacher help you read and write better?
   Note: Ask students for their thoughts about use two languages in writing. (Please talk about your writing process for this historical video project.)

Additional questions if students screen their video clips:

1. When you watch your peers’ videos, whose story interested you the most? Why?
2. After viewing your friends’ videos, in terms of using Chinese language, whose video made the most sense to you? Why?
APPENDIX F

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS (CHINESE LITERACY AND ENGLISH TEACHERS)

1. How would tell the story of your fifth grade this year? (high and low, and successful year) 你可以谈谈你今年度的教学吗？有什么高点（低点）/成功或令人挫折的事？

2. (Literacy)
   a. What kind of literacy work went on in your classroom this year? (If I asked you to list all kinds of reading and writing that takes place in your classroom, what comes to your mind? 如果我要你回想你这学期所做的阅读和书写的练习和教学活动，你或想到什么？)
   b. Please describe some of your strategies that you used in teaching units 1 and 2? 请叙述一下你在教第一，第二单元，第三单元使用的教学策略和技巧？
   c. Please share your thoughts about teaching this history unit (Unit 2). 你可以分享一下你教第二单元的想法
   d. What did you do or try differently in the second unit? 你觉得你在教第二单元的时候，跟教别的单元或是以前有什么不一样的地方，
   e. What did you notice about the students when they were engaged in these new practices (Unit 2)? What were they saying/thinking/feeling? 你觉得你在教第二单元的时候，你注意到学生有什么反应，比如他们做了什么，说了什么，想了什么，感觉到什么？
   f. (unit 2) Tell me more about your experience with questioning strategies, What did you notice yourself doing, or not doing? What did you notice students doing, or not doing? What did you notice about children’s learning? (第二单元)请你分享你问问题的技巧？你做到了什么，没做到了什么？那学生呢？他们做到了什么，没做到了什么？
   g. What is your stance on error corrections in responding to student’s writing? 你可以说明你对纠错的看法？

3. (Curriculum and teaching)
   a. How did you make decisions about what to teach, what materials to use? 你怎么决定要教什么？要用什么教材？
b. For the history unit, how was the curriculum planning different from planning other units? 对于历史这个单元，你在设计课程方面跟别的单元有什么不同的地方？

c. Please describe your process of creating your Unit 2 materials. 请叙述一下你在准备第二单元教学材料的过程？

d. What were your challenges in teaching this unit? 教第二单元的挑战是什么？

e. (Translanguaging) In what ways would your school year be different if some English could be used in class? 在教第二单元（或是其他单元）的时候，课堂上，如果学生能用一些些的中文，你觉得他们的学习会不一样吗？

f. If you decide to do this unit again, what will you keep/adapt/change/add? 如果你要在教一次第二单元，你会做什么样的改边还是调整？会增加什么还是调整什么？

g. The historical thinking can be difficult in the second language classroom. How did you adjust to your own teaching and curriculum to meet students’ needs? 在第二外语的课堂中，要教历史的思考方式（historical thinking）是一个有挑战性的，你怎么调整你的教学来符合学生的需要？

4. (Language beliefs and language learning)

a. What are your beliefs about language and language learning? 你对语言和语言教学的信念（想法）是什么？

b. What have you noticed your students do in acquiring languages? 你的学生在学习（学习）语言的时候，你注意到什么？

c. What do you think helps? Is there anything that you think would help that is not happening right now? 你觉得什么样的教学方法有助于他们的学习？有没有什么方法你觉得有效但现在很多还没尝试的？

d. Teacher’s goal this year (Ask to share teacher teaching statement) * (Aim of students-what do you want your students to get out of this year, in grade 5? 你今年先要五年级达到的目标是什么？

f. What goals do you have for different students? (Trying to reframe yes/no question. 那你对不同的学生有设立不同标准的目标吗？

g. What kind of experiences, practices, materials ..do you notice helped the kids learn Chinese this year? 还有什么你觉得对学生的学习有帮助的？

h. Was there anything that you think got in the way of your children learning Chinese this year? 你认为有什么事情阻碍你的学生学习中文？
5. Closing
   a. Was there anything that you wanted to do this year but couldn’t do because of budget reasons, time constraints, demographics, or regulations? 有什么事你今年想在班上做，但由于经费时间学生的人数，组合或规定，让你无法进行的吗？
   b. If you could change anything for next year (magically), without causing a stir, making any upset, costing any money, or taking extra work, what would you change? 如果你明年（不多的金钱或是时间）你想改变什么？
   c. If a new teacher was coming to teach this class, what advice would you give them? 如果新老师要来接你的班，你会给他们什么样的建议？

   • Note: For teachers and students, maybe I will add questions to know about their viewpoints of mixing two languages (translanguaging), teacher’s metalinguistic awareness-phrase and rephrasing the content words.

   This will be important if you notice that the students and teacher are not considering the two linguistic systems they are accessing for classroom learning. It will be important for you to get a sense of what the children are noticing when they shuttle between two language systems. What does it do for their critical engagement with the material?

   English Language Arts Teacher:

1. What are your beliefs about language and language learning?)
2. What are your goals regarding reading and writing instruction this year?
   • Teacher’s goal this year: What do you want your students to get out of this year in grade 5?
3. How would tell the story of your fifth grade this year? (e.g., high and low, and successful year)
4. (Literacy) What kind of literacy work went on in your classroom this year? (If I asked you to list all kinds of reading and writing that takes place in your classroom, what comes to your mind? )
5. Social study (history) Please describe some of your strategies that you used in teaching history unit?
6. (Curriculum and teaching) How did you make decisions (criteria) about what to teach, what materials to use? 你怎么决定要教什么？要用什么教材？

7. (Language beliefs and language learning)
   a. What have you noticed your students do in reading and writing practices?
   b. What do you think helps? Is there anything that you think would help that is not happening right now?
   c. What goals do you have for different students? (Trying to reframe yes/no question.
   d. What kind of experiences, practices, materials do you notice helped the kids learn reading and writing this year?
   e. Was there anything that you think got in the way of your children learning Writing this year?

8. What is your stance on error corrections in responding to student’s writing?

Additional questions if time permits:

1) Do you think it is important to discuss sociocultural/ideological/political implications of language use? Why?

2) What is your view about cross-linguistic curriculum connection?
APPENDIX G

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

Warm up questions: Tell me a little about your family~

1. Does (student’s name) have any brothers and sisters?
2. How old are they? Do they go to the same school?
3. Where is your home country? How long have you lived in the area?
4. What language do you speak at home? Do you speak any other languages? Please share some of your language learning experience.

Reasons for going to bilingual schools

1. Tell me a little bit about the school (e.g. elementary school) you went to before? What did you learn most there?
2. What reasons made you send your child to a bilingual school?
3. How did you know about this bilingual school? Did you consult experts?
4. What did you hope your child will learn there?
5. What is the bilingual curriculum like?
6. Give me an example of your child’s regular evening after he/she finishes school or a regular day on the weekend during semester.
7. Please describe your experience with this bilingual school?
8. Do your friends have similar age children? What kind of school do their kids go to? How do they like their school?
9. Do you know any parents who *considered* sending their child to this bilingual school but decided not to? Do you know why they decided NOT to send their child to the bilingual school?
10. What do you think your child/children will be like if they go a K-12 regular school?
11. What do you think what are advantages/disadvantages of going to a bilingual school?
Feelings about your child’s bilingual school

1. Why bilingual is important to you/your child?
2. What are the pressures and the rewards in a bilingual school?
3. Is it stressful for the parent if the child is learning a language the parent does not know? What about learning math/science in another language? Stressful, rewarding?
4. Does being in bilingual school isolate your child from peers in regular schools?
5. How does your child enjoy school so far? What is your child’s excitement/frustration going to this bilingual school?
6. Is there a particular student in the class who you think is a very good student? What makes them a successful student?
7. What do you think it means for your child to be successful in school this year?
8. What do you think will be your child’s biggest take way attending a bilingual school?

Closing

1. What would you change about it if you were in charge of school?
2. Thinking back to when you were in school, do you think you would have wanted to go to a bilingual school? Why or why not?
APPENDIX H

TRANSRIPTION GUIDE

We will use transcription conventions from the Jefferson system. Here are the key features you should recognize and may want to use in your transcripts.

( ) Single parentheses around a blank space indicate stretches of talk that the transcriber is uncertain about because the words were hard to hear or understand (words) Single parentheses around words indicate that the transcriber is not certain that those were the words spoken, but is making an informed guess

(( )) Double parentheses indicate the transcriber's descriptions of talk or behavior, such as ((laughter)) or ((Cindy gets up and walks to the window))

[ Brackets indicate overlapping talk – two participants are speaking at the same time (You can find the symbols in Word by going to Insert – Symbol – Font: normal text, Subset: Box Drawing)

Boldface Indicates some form of emphasis, which may be signaled by increased loudness or changes in pitch

... Indicates that a few words – less than one line of text – have been removed from the transcript (does not indicate a pause in the conversation being transcribed!)

. Indicates that more than one line of text has been removed from the transcript. You may be able to find the symbol in Word by going to Insert – Symbol – Font: MT Extra; if you don’t have the MT Extra font, just use three periods arranged vertically.)

( ) Short pause

(3.0) Pause of 3.0 seconds in the talk being transcribed

= Latching together of two phrases or sentences

- Word or sound is cut off

::: Indicates that the preceding sound is lengthened; the more colons, the longer the sound is extended

. "Sentence-final" type of falling intonation at end of phrase

? Rising intonation at end of phrase

! Intonation of surprise or forcefulness at end of phrase
APPENDIX I
PHOTO RELEASE FORM AND LETTER TO PARENTS

College of Education
Furcolo Hall, 813 North Pleasant Street, Amherst MA 01003-9808
(413) 545-1551

Photo Release Form
I hereby grant Marsha Jing-Ji Liaw to use and publish photographs or videos of my child, or in which she may include for her oral dissertation defense and dissertation as well as conference presentations, journal and book publications.

Name__________________________________________________________

Signature of Student Participant
_______________________________________________________________

Signature of Parent/Guardian
_______________________________________________________

Contact Information
________________________________________________________

Date___________________________________________________________
Dear Parents/Guardians

My name is Jing-Ji Marsha Liaw. I am writing to this letter to request a photo release.

I conducted a research project in your child’s classroom when they were in the fifth grade, and your child is a focal participant in this study. Recently I have completed my dissertation writing and plan to defend in October. My dissertation title is “Exploring Critical Biliteracies: Rethinking Language and Literacy Learning in a Bilingual Elementary School”, which is closely connected to the children’s multimodal work and experiences. I videotaped and photographed your child during some classroom interactions and plan to use some images of your child in my dissertation, presentations, and publishing. I have your consent to use audio and video for publishing and presenting but do not have your consent to photos. Therefore, I need ask you for your consent to use these images.

Enclosed is a photo release form. I will need your and your child’s consent to use these images. Please sign the form and have your child bring it back to school on Monday, October 1. I will collect it from his/her teacher.

Thank you very much for your attention. Please feel free to contact if you should have any questions about the consent form or images that I might be using.

Thank you,
Marsha Jing Ji Liaw
### APPENDIX J

**MO’S JOURNAL ENTRY (小莫)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Text</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1763 年 8 月 17 日</td>
<td>Aug 17, 1763, iPad draft-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“。”我打哈欠。我起床了。海很是黑在我外面。我慢慢地传我的衣服去学校</td>
<td>“I yawned. I got up. Outside the ocean was very dark. I slowly put on my clothes and went to school. It was not too cold or too hot. While I was walking, I realized that I hadn’t eaten a snack. Soon I had to be at school. Forget about it! I walked to the door. As soon as I entered the door, my teacher was scolding Xiao Kai. He is a rascal. I heard the teacher’s loud voice, “Every day you are not good”! I thought this was true. I hung my jacket on the wall and walked into the classroom. I walked to my seat. In our classroom, girls sit on one side and boys sit on the other side. I saw one adult walking outside with a good quality jacket. I wanted this jacket and thought about how it would keep me warm. “Mo!” Hu laoshi. My school is the first Chinese and English school in Massachusetts! Hu laoshi is a very cool teacher. In our school, there are 14 boys and 8 girls. School is kind of boring and today is an uninteresting day. At 1:00, I went home for lunch with father, mother and my younger brother (he is one-year old!). At lunch, my father was sweaty from working. He is a farmer. We did not talk a lot. After finishing lunch, I needed to go back to school one more time. I was a little tired, but I still had to go.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“不是非常冷，但是不是很热。我在是然后我记得我没有吃点心！和我要到学校。算了吧！我走到学校的门和进去。在我进去我听到老师骂小凯。他是我的朋友，但是他是一个捣蛋鬼。我听老师单身的说，“没一天你会很不好”！我想这个对。我方我的外套在强悍走进去教室。我走到我的位。在我们的教室，男生坐在一起，和怒声坐在一遍。我看到在外面一个大人走和船一个很棒的外套。我想 ohh，我很像要这个外套会很暖暖。“小莫”！胡老师。我的学校是第一个中文和英文的学校在麻州！胡老师是非常酷的老师。我们的学校有 14 岁男生到 8 岁怒声。学校是非常没意思。和今天是最没意思的天。在 1:00 点，我去家吃晚餐。我吃跟妈妈。爸爸和弟弟（他是一岁）。啊。我的爸爸很汗津津。他是一个上农。我们没有说很多话。我是一点累，但是我还是要去。</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX K

**XIAO-YU’S JOURNAL ENTRY (小玉)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Text</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>我的一天</td>
<td>My One Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>一七六零年一月十八日星期三</td>
<td>Wednesday, January 18, 1760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>亲爱的日记：</td>
<td>Dear Diary,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>今天天气很冷，可是我还要起来去学校。我的床和毛毯抓住我，不要我起床。我在很长的时间没有去学校，因为我妈妈要我帮忙管我的妹妹和弟弟。我很紧张，因为我的老师李老师很严厉。虽然他很严厉，我还是要去学校。</td>
<td>Today it was freezing, but I still needed to get up to go to school. My bed and blanket held me and did not want me to get up. I have not been at school for a long time because my mother wants me at home to take care of my younger sister and brother. I was very nervous because Ms. Lee is a strict and harsh teacher. Even though she is strict and harsh, I still want to go to school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>我到学校了，李老师做他以前做的事情，他先让女生进来，然后男生可以进来。第一李老师说：“把书翻到第三页，小王你可以读。” 小王读完了，李老师问：“杜奕雯，请问王美又带了什么去学校？”我很紧张，因为我很长时间没有在学校，因为我的妈妈要我帮忙管我妹妹和弟弟，我回答书，答案对了。</td>
<td>I arrived at school just as Ms. Lee was, as usual, letting the girl students come in before the boys. After we settled, the first thing she said was, “Open your book to page 3, Xiao Wang, you can read.” After Xiao Wang finished reading, Ms Lee asked, “Du Yi-wen, can you tell me what Wang Mei brought to school today?” I was feeling nervous because I hadn’t been to school for a long time because my mother wanted me to leave school to look after my younger sister and brother at home.” I replied “books”. I answered the question correctly!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>虽然我很紧张，然雅我也很开心，因为是我的生日，我会有一个蛋糕。这个蛋糕很独特，因为有糖在里面，我们很少用糖，我们只会在很有意义的时间用糖。</td>
<td>Although I was very nervous, I was also very happy because it was my birthday. I would have a cake, and this cake was very special because it had sugar in it. We seldom used sugar. We only used it during a meaningful occasion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>我开始跟我的妹妹和弟弟走回家。我们到了家，我可以看到蛋糕在烤，我也可以闻到很棒的味道（香味）。可是我知道还要考三十分钟。</td>
<td>I started to walk back home with my younger sister and brother. When we were home, we could see the cake baking on the stove and smell the delicious aroma. I knew that it would take 30 minutes to bake.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>我的妈妈叫每一个人下来，他们像牛羊在去草原一样进来，每一个人都很开心。我们在吃饭，我的弟弟</td>
<td>My mom asked everyone to come downstairs. They came in just like cows and sheep going to the prairie to graze. Everyone was happy. While we were eating, my brother ate like a mouse. After that, my grandfather read to us from the Bible. Finally, we went to bed and slept like contented babies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
像一只老鼠在吃饭。然后我的爷爷读圣经给我们听。
最后，我们都像宝宝一样睡着了
### APPENDIX L

### MEI-MEI'S JOURNAL ENTRY (美美)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Text</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1777 年的一天</td>
<td>One day in 1777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>今天和平常的一天不一样。我起床的时候，悄悄地走到厨房。天还是黑黑的，所以我什么也看不到。日出的时候，我看到外面有非常多种花，比如郁金香、玫瑰、太阳花等等。我认为看起来像我姐姐的婚庆！我妹妹也看到了，他高兴地说：“到处都是花！”那，为什么比平常的一天不一样呢？继续读，你就会知道。</td>
<td>Today was a little bit out of the ordinary. When I got up, I walked to the kitchen quietly. The sky was still dark, so I could not see anything. When the sun rose, I saw there were many different kinds of flowers, such as tulips, roses, sun flowers and so on. It reminded me of my sister’s wedding. My sister saw them too. She said happily, “Flowers are everywhere!” Then, why was today unusual? Continue reading and you will find out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>我们天吃了鱼，那是我妹妹最不喜欢的早餐。他说：“我们在吃被杀死的鱼。你会吃被杀死的人吗？”</td>
<td>We ate fish today. That is my sister’s least favorite breakfast. She said, “we are eating the murdered fish. Would you eat murdered people?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>吃完饭的时候，爸爸请我跟他去市场！我非常兴奋，因为每一次我爸爸会问我哥哥跟他去，但现在他问了我！我也很伤心，因为今天早上我不可以去上学，需要在家里帮爸爸妈妈。我跟爸爸从一间店来到另外一间店。我们买了一点糖，给妈妈做饼干，因为会有客人来我们家。我不知道是谁，但我知道是一个惊喜。</td>
<td>After finishing dinner, my father asked me to go to market with him the next day! I was very excited because usually he asked my brother to go with him. However, this time he asked me. The following morning, my father and I went from one store to another store. We bought some sugar for my mother to make cookies because we would have some guests in the house. I did not know who our guests were, but I knew it was a surprise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>吃完午餐的时候，我去上学！我进教室的时候，赶快走到我的位子，开始仔细地读书。那时候，叶老师大喊了：“乔治，你在做什么？过来！”他打了乔治。</td>
<td>Although I was excited to go to town with my father, I was also sad to miss school, but after having lunch, I went to school! When I entered the classroom, I hurried to my seat and started to read carefully. I was careful because I remembered that once Ms. Yeh yelled, “George, what are you doing? Come here!” Then she hit George!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>我回家的时候，看到妈妈做的被子。摸起来毛绒绒的，我非常喜欢。我妈妈说是给“客人”做的。哼！</td>
<td>When I arrived home, I saw the blanket my mother made. I touched it and enjoyed the furry feel of it. My mother said it was made for guests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>我也帮妈妈做饼干。我在烤的时候，发现裙子着火了！妈妈也发现了！叫了起来！“哎呦！哎呦！”我心</td>
<td>I also helped my mother to make cookies. When I was baking, I saw my skirt had caught on fire! My mother also noticed it and started screaming, “Oh! Oh!” I put out the fire calmly. Mother said angrily, “Anna, be more careful!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the sunset came, I heard noises from outside. The guests were here! I heard a bang sound. Then the guests entered. Oh, they were my uncles and aunts! Later, we went to a restaurant for dinner. My uncle lives in Maryland, so we had not seen him for a long time. After dinner, we ate</td>
<td>When the sunset came, I heard noises from outside. The guests were here! I heard a bang sound. Then the guests entered. Oh, they were my uncles and aunts! Later, we went to a restaurant for dinner. My uncle lives in Maryland, so we had not seen him for a long time. After dinner, we ate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
cookies greedily. They tasted really delicious. My aunties also made a
dessert. It was a green cake which did not smell good. After a while, I'll
give it to our horse.
This was a wonderful day. As I lay in bed remembering the details of
this perfect day, the gentle breeze and the moon lull me to sleep.

平气和的灭火。妈妈就生气地说，“安娜，小心一点好不好？”
日落的时候，我听到外面有一个声音。客人来了！
我听到一个唆喇的一声，然后客人进来了。是我的阿姨跟叔叔！
过了一会儿，我去餐厅吃晚饭。叔叔住在马里兰州，
所以我们好久没见到他。我们贪心地吃饼干。吃起来
非常好吃。我阿姨也做了甜食。是绿色的蛋糕。闻起来
很不好。等一会儿，我会给我们的马吃。
我认为这是一个好棒的一天。外面有微风。有一个
望月。我确定今天是完美的。我一直想，一直想，然
后....
睡觉了。
### APPENDIX M

**AN-AN’S JOURNAL ENTRY (安安)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Text</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic: My Three Days</strong>&lt;br&gt;December 24, 1776&lt;br&gt;Today when I got up, I came downstairs to see what my mother made for us. My older sister had started eating the bread made by my mother. I sat next to her and started to eat. After we finished eating, we ran outside because we had to go to school. It was chilly outside, but I still needed to go to school because school is very important. I was a little sad because my twin sister had been sick, so my older sister and I had to go home to help my mother around noon.</td>
<td>Today when I got up, I came downstairs to see what my mother made for us. My older sister had started eating the bread made by my mother. I sat next to her and started to eat. After we finished eating, we ran outside because we had to go to school. It was chilly outside, but I still needed to go to school because school is very important. I was a little sad because my twin sister had been sick, so my older sister and I had to go home to help my mother around noon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 25, 1776&lt;br&gt;Today my mother, older sister and I stayed at home because my twin sister had been sick. An-ying usually showed off proudly and said, “I was born 30 seconds earlier than you.” But both of us are 6 years old. She is annoying.</td>
<td>Today my mother, older sister and I stayed at home because my twin sister had been sick. An-ying usually showed off proudly and said, “I was born 30 seconds earlier than you.” But both of us are 6 years old. She is annoying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 26, 1776&lt;br&gt;“Listen, mother!” My sister started to read the newspaper: “yesterday Washington and his army stopped fighting...,”&lt;br&gt;“Did they surrender?” mother asked. “&lt;br&gt;“They did not say”, my sister replied.&lt;br&gt;Today my father asked me to go outside, then said, “Go ask your mother if you could go to the city.” “Where is my brother?” I asked, wondering why he was not going to the city. “He went to school, go ask your mother.” When I asked my mother, she said ok. My father and I went to the city, and he bought me a postage stamp. I saw father came out from a store. Then he started to</td>
<td>“Listen, mother!” My sister started to read the newspaper: “yesterday Washington and his army stopped fighting...,”&lt;br&gt;“Did they surrender?” mother asked. “&lt;br&gt;“They did not say”, my sister replied.&lt;br&gt;Today my father asked me to go outside, then said, “Go ask your mother if you could go to the city.” “Where is my brother?” I asked, wondering why he was not going to the city. “He went to school, go ask your mother.” When I asked my mother, she said ok. My father and I went to the city, and he bought me a postage stamp. I saw father came out from a store. Then he started to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
whistle. My father came from England, so he said life would be getting more
difficult. But, I think it’s getting easier.
[Maybe she meant: My father came from England and often said life would be
getting more difficult, but when I saw father come out from a store whistling, I
thought “life is getting easier”.]
**APPENDIX N**

**AI-LAN’S JOURNAL ENTRY (艾兰)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Text</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 这就是我的生活！
1716 年 6 月 7 日星期日早上
我 19 岁，我的工作是织布。
“艾明！（那是我的弟弟）你没洗夜壶！”我说
“对不起，我忘记了。”艾明说。
“这是你第三次忘记，不要再做一次！”
“艾兰，不要那么大声。”我妈妈说。
我没有爸爸。他在我四岁的时候就死了。我每一天会看别人跟他们的爸爸，让我很伤心，是像一个人你的心撕裂你的胸部。
艾明每一天会去学校。他每一天会走 14 英里路，从我家到学校。在他的学校，他会读书、写字、和做数学。他也会做拼字比赛。我很小的时候的梦想是去学校，但是我没有机会去。
每一天，我妈妈会做面包，和我会醒悟的美味气味。在我住的地方，我妈妈会做最好吃的面包。人会买的面包，那是为什么我弟弟可以去学校。
在星期五，有三个人来。他们说他们来自美国，他们有很重要的事情要做。我认为他们有许多的东西，他们有五颜六色的衣服。但是他们不觉得他们有很多，因为他们有拿我们的。他们要让我是最生气的我。我快会一个头两个大。 | This is just my life!
Sunday, June 7th, 1716
I am 19 years old. My job is weaving.
“Ai-ling!” I called to my brother, “You didn’t wash the chamber pot!”
“I am sorry, I forgot it”. Han Ai-ling said.
“This is your third time forgetting about this, don’t forget it again.”
“Ai-lan, don’t shout at your brother”, my mom said.
I don’t have a father. My father died when I was four years old. Whenever I see someone with their father, it breaks my heart because I miss my father so much.
Ai-ling goes to school every day. He walks about 14 miles each day from home to school and back. In his school, he reads, writes and does math. He also does spelling contests. When I was little, my dream was to go to school, however, I did not have an opportunity.
Everyday my mom baked bread, and I woke up to the delicious aroma of fresh baked bread. My mom made the best bread in our area and people would come to buy her bread, which paid for my brother’s schooling.
On Friday, three people came who said they were from the United States and they had very important things to do. It seemed to me that they had many possessions including many articles of clothing in a variety of colors. Nevertheless, they took mine, which made me angry and gave me a headache. I lived in the Allen House which is a small brown house. [We don’t have many possessions.] We only have two beds-my mom has one, and my brother and I share one. This is just life!
## APPENDIX O

### NA-NA’S JOURNAL ENTRY (娜娜)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Text</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 我的一天 1755 年 12 月 25 日 亲爱日记  
今天冷到我都感觉不到我的手指头。我特别幸运可以留在家里工作。妈妈早上已经起来开始烤香香的姜饼。爸爸在外面检查我们的羊。这个工作很重要，因为如果没有羊，那么我们不会有衣服，或所有用绵羊的毛做的作品。 
“不要！”  
“要！”  
“不要！”我心烦的告诉妈妈，因为他非要我把夜里内容物倒掉。虽然那工作特别容易，然而没有大人想要做那件工作，所以他们会让孩子做。有的时候，我会想为什么大人有更多的权力。我觉得小孩子应该和大人有一样的权力。  
“好！”我终于无聊的回答。我答应他因为我最不喜欢看到妈妈对我不满意的脸。  
今天帮妈妈和爸爸的时间真长，就像过了一年一样。  
七小时后，妈妈跟我说可以准备吃饭了。我快饿死了。看到妈妈努力做的饭，闻到香香的味道，尝到好吃的口感。我发现我真的有好运气，每天都有食物吃，都有衣服穿。有很多小朋友可能没有那些东西。 | My Day December 25, 1755  
Dear Diary,  
Today was so cold that I couldn’t even feel my fingers. I was exceptionally lucky because I could stay and work at home. This morning my mother got up early and baked the ginger bread cookies. My father was outside checking our sheep. This task is extremely important. The reason is that we would not get any clothes or products made from the sheep’s wool if we don’t have sheep.  
“No!!”  
“Yes!!”  
“No!!” I told my mother annoyingly because she assuredly wants me to empty the chamber pot. Although it is an easy task, none of the adults want to do it, so they have kids do it. Sometimes it makes me think about how adults have a lot of power. I feel that children should have the same rights as adults.  
“Fine.” I answered dully. I agreed to do it because the last thing I wanted to see was my mother’s displeased face.  
The time dragged on helping my parents with house chores! It felt as if a year had gone by.  
After seven hours or so, mother told me that we could get ready for dinner. I was starving. As I watched my mother cooking and enjoyed the aroma of the food and the scrumptious taste, I realized that I am actually really lucky to have food to eat and clothes to wear every day. Many children might not have these things necessities. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>吃完饭时，妈妈让我的妹妹去楼上睡觉。他的卧室在我们家里最小。我的第二小。我爷爷的睡房最大。“美兰，快去睡觉吧！已经果了你的就寝时间了！”听到这个，我赶紧爬上楼睡觉了。今天一天过了，我知道明天也会。</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>After dinner, my mother asked my sister to go upstairs to sleep. Her bedroom is the smallest in the house, and mine is the second smallest. My grandfather’s bedroom is the biggest. Finally, my mother said “Mei-lan, go to bed! It’s time for you to go to bed!” I hurriedly went upstairs to go to bed. Today has gone by, and I know tomorrow will go by, too.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX P

**MO’S VIDEO: NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS FOOTBALL TEAM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Screenshot</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Slide 1** | *In the middle left:*
*Line 1:* 说到新英格兰，就要说到他们的橄榄球队
*Line 2:* 我最喜欢的玩家是Dont’a Hightower. 他是在防守
*Line 3:* 他
**On the right top:**
你知道他们赢了超级碗五次吗？ | *In the middle left:*
*Line 1:* Speaking about New England, you must mention their football team.
*Line 2:* My favorite player is Dont'a Hightower. He is a linebacker.
*Line 3:* HE (next to the white arrow)
**On the right top:**
Guess what? Do you know that they have won the super bowl five times? |
| Photo Credit: https://thegruelingtruth.net/football/nfl/new-england-patriots-free-agent-player-profile-donta-hightower/ | **On the top left:**
他们也有最棒的四分卫
**On the middle left:**
我认为，在未来他们的对会一样重要，因为他们有很多很棒的人！
**In the center:**
他们玩在Gillette

| **Slide 2** | **On the top left:**
They also have the best quarterback.
**On the middle left:**
In my opinion, in the future their team will be as important as it is now because they have wonderful players.
**In the center:**
They play football in Gillette Stadium. |
On the bottom left:
The New England Patriots are historically significant to me because I watched them play since I was very little.

On the bottom left:
新英格兰对我有历史意义，因为我从很小看他们！

Slide 3

Timeline (*The major events are in order from left to right.*)
They [the team] was built.
If I lived in England in 1970, I would not like the team because they were horrible at that time.
They played for their first game.
They played and lost in the Super Bowl.
They won their first Super Bowl.
They won the most valuable player in the Super Bowl. They have won Super Bowl many times.

On the bottom left:
他们也有最棒的四分卫。
我认为，在未来他们的球队会一样重要，因为他们有很多很棒的人。

Photo Credit:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gillette_Stadium

On the bottom left:
新英格兰对我有历史意义，因为我从很小看他们！

Timeline (*The major events are in order from left to right.*)
他们建立
如果我住在 1970 的新英格兰，我不会喜欢对，因为他们很不好
他们玩他们地一游戏
他们到超级碗和输
他们赢他们第一超级碗
他们赢最行的超级碗
他们有赢超级碗很多次
Their history started from one person, but its consequence was the best.

If same thing happens in our current era, they will still be the best.
Do you know that there was a gymnastics team in Mountain State from 1936 to 2016? From 1936 to 1952, there were eight people on the team. Do you also know that there were six people on the team from 1956 to 1972? Again, in 2008, there was one on the team. This topic has historical significance to me because I do gymnastics and I like gymnastics. Gymnastics has been my favorite since I was little. Today I am going to do gymnastics. I would like to join the Women’s gymnastics team in Massachusetts.

Speaking about the Olympic women's gymnastics team in Massachusetts, you must mention Simone Biles. I think, in the future, Simone will be equally important because she is excellent in gymnastics.

* Note (Photo credit)
Ai-lan probably read these two websites.
### Slide 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Medal</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Bronze</td>
<td>第一个铜牌</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Silver</td>
<td>第一个银牌</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Gold</td>
<td>第一个金牌</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1948 Won the first Bronze Medal  
1984 Won the first Silver Medal  
1996 Won the first Gold Medal

### Slide 3

This history (of Olympics Games) started because of ancient Greece. The outcome turns out that they have arts in their kingdom. (Not sure about this part)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slide 4</th>
<th>如果我生活在 776 BC 我不会喜欢奥林匹克。If I live in 776 BC, I would not like Olympics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="776 BC Olympic Games" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slide 5</th>
<th>如果当初(776BC) 没有奥林匹克就会有很多人死掉。If at that time (in 776BC) there were no Olympics, many people might have died.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slide 6</td>
<td>谢谢！Thank you!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Star Image]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

谢谢！Thank you!
## APPENDIX R

**XIAO-YU’S VIDEO: THE BOSTON OPERA HOUSE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Screenshot</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slide 1</td>
<td>波士顿歌剧院(Boston Opera house) 说到波士顿歌剧院就一定要提到他们的歌剧。你知道吗？波士顿歌剧院有一次没有人要卖[买]它</td>
<td>Slide 1  Speaking about Boston Opera House, we must mention their opera. Guess what? One time nobody ever wanted to buy Boston Opera House．</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slide 2</td>
<td>波士顿歌剧院开始在十月二十九日一九二八年。现在，在波士顿歌剧院你可以看 Mamma Mia 和 wicked。</td>
<td>Slide 2  Boston opera house was opened on October 29, 1928. Now, you can watch Mamma Mia and Wicked in the Boston Opera House．</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Slide 3

Boston Opera House is significant to me because I like opera very much. From my perspective, in the past, Boston Opera House was very meaningful because it was a memorial and tribute.
People constructed Boston Opera House in 1928. Nobody wanted to busy Boston Opera House. Boston opera house was renovated and then restored. This part of history started with B.F. Kieth. However, it didn’t have an end result.

First, Boston Opera house was an opera house, then it was a theater of a memorial and a tribute. Finally, one person bought it and continued operating it for performances there.

If I had lived in Boston in 1928, I would have attended an opera performance. If someone didn’t buy the opera house, we would not have the best opera. If no one wants to sell [buy] Boston Opera house, I would sell [buy] it.

*Note: In terms of orthography, two characters are similar, she meant to say buy.
### APPENDIX S

**AN-AN’S VIDEO: BOSTON OPERA HOUSE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Screenshot</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Slide 1</strong></td>
<td>波士顿歌剧院（Boston Opera House）&lt;br&gt;波士顿歌剧院打开在 10 月 29 日 1928 年&lt;br&gt;波士顿歌剧院是一个地方人会排演。</td>
<td>波士顿歌剧院（Boston Opera House）&lt;br&gt;The Boston Opera House was opened on October 10, 1928.&lt;br&gt;The Boston Opera House is a place where people do rehearsals there.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Slide 2** | 说到波士顿歌剧院就要提到演员。<br>你知道吗？Tomas W Lamb 创立波士顿歌剧院。<br>波士顿歌剧院对波士顿的人有历史意义，因为他们可以去看表演。<br>我认为在未来波士顿歌剧院会一样重要，因为一【已】经在波士顿这么长。<br>波士顿歌剧院打开在 1928 和人开始表演在 1929。 | Speaking about the Boston Opera House, we must mention the actors [performance].<br>Guess what? Tomas W. Lamb founded [built] the Boston Opera House.<br>The Boston Opera House is historically significant to the Bostonians because they can watch performances.<br>In my opinion, in the future, the Boston Opera House remain important because it has been in Boston for a long time. |

Photo Credit:
The Boston Opera House was opened in 1928 and people started to perform there in 1929.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slide 3</th>
<th>If I lived in 1928, I would perform in the Boston Opera House.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| 1979—There is a fire in the Boston Opera House and then the name was changed. |
| 1995—It was listed in the most endangered building list. |
| 2002—The mayor of Boston helped to restore the Boston Opera House. |
| 2004—The Boston Opera House reopened. |
First, a fire occurred in the Boston Opera House. Then, the name was changed. Afterward, the city mayor helped to restore the Boston Opera House. Lastly, the Boston Opera House reopened again.

(count: 14 Boston Opera House)
## APPENDIX T

### MEI-MEI’S VIDEO: SALEM WITCH TRIALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Screenshot</th>
<th>Text and Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Slide 1</strong></td>
<td>Speaking about Salem, we must mention the notorious Salem witch trial. Guess what? Twenty witches were killed in the Salem witch trials, and more than two hundred people were accused. Photo credit: <a href="http://historyofmassachusetts.org/category/colonial-era/page/2/?ak_action=reject_mobile">http://historyofmassachusetts.org/category/colonial-era/page/2/?ak_action=reject_mobile</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Slide 2</strong></td>
<td>Salem witch trials were historically significant to people in Salem. Why is that? After the incident happened, many people considered Salem was not a good place.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From my perspective, in the future, the witch will not be as important as before because it’s only meaningful to people in Massachusetts.
首先-阿比盖尔和贝蒂开始做起怪的事。他们说是因为她们在被着魔。
(1692) 再来-提图【图】芭(ti tu ba), 薩【萨】娜奥斯本(sa na ao si ben), 和薩娜古德(sa na gu de) 被控因为塞勒姆的人觉得她们是女巫，还有被捕。
薩娜古德和四个别人被杀死。
接下来-多罗西古德(她四岁)被控。
At first, Abigail and Betty started to do weird things. They said they were bewitched. (1692) Next, Tituba, Sarah Osborne and Sarah Good were accused of guilty because people in Salem surmised that they were witches and arrested. Sarah Good and four others were killed. Followed by that, Dorothy Good, only 4 years old, was accused.

Two dogs were accused. Subsequently, Giles Corey was accused, but he did not plead that he was a wizard. Therefore, people threw stones on his body (coerce him to plead?). He died after two days. (1693) Then, more than twelve people were accused, but the judges said that they were not guilty. Finally, the witch trials ended.

Slide 4

这段历史不知道是为什么开始的。但很多人觉得是因为阿比盖尔和贝蒂要有人注意她们。他的结果是很多无辜的人被杀死或被捕。We did not know why this history started, but many people considered the reason that Abgail and Betty wanted people to pay attention to them. The consequence was that many innocent people were killed or arrested.
Slide 5

If I lived in Salem in 1692-1693, I would be very frightened because many innocent people were accused. If same incident happens in the present, many people will not believe this is true and will stop everything. If people in the past knew witches were not real, the witch trial would haven’t happened.

Slide 6

谢谢！
Thank you
APPENDIX U

NA-NA’S VIDEO: SALEM WITCH TRIALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Screenshot 1</th>
<th>Screenshot 2</th>
<th>Screenshot 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>女巫审判</td>
<td>作者：娜娜</td>
<td>你知道吗？在女巫审判，19个人被吊死。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withes’ trials</td>
<td>Author: Na-na</td>
<td>Guess what? In the witch trials 19 people were hanged.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Original text:**
说到知名时期的麻州，就一定要提到女巫审判。女巫审判是 1692 年开始的，他持续了 1 年才停，差不多 200+ 个人死掉了。人们那时认为如果你有一个奇怪的印记，那你就是一个女巫。还有，如果他们觉得你是一个女巫，那你会被杀死，女巫审判，对人们很有历史意义。因为很多人被杀死，和现在的人会知道这件事情不对。我认为，如果女巫审判现在发生那么他不会那么重要因为很多人都会抗议和女巫审判不会延续很长，这段历史是因为有一天 Abigail 和 Betty 开始经验奇怪的症象。如果我生活在 1692 年我会很害怕，因为我会以为女巫回【会】是真的
Translation:
Speaking about famous time periods of Massachusetts, you must mention the witch trials.
Witch trials started in 1692.
They lasted for 1 year and then stopped.
Almost 200 people died.
People at that time thought that if you have mark you were a witch.
Furthermore, if they thought you were a witch you would be killed.
Witches’ trials are historically significant because many people were killed and now people realize it was wrong.
In my opinion, if the witch trials happened now people would protest, and they wouldn’t last long.
The trials started because Abigail and Betty experienced weird things.
If I lived in 1692, I would have been afraid because I would have believed the witches were real.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Text:</th>
<th>Translation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1691年12月</td>
<td>December, 1691—Tituba told Abigail and Betty about weird and taboo stories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tituba告诉 Abigail 和 Betty很奇怪和禁忌的故事</td>
<td>January, 1692—Abigail and Betty started to have weird symptoms like crying out loud and making animal sounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1692年1月</td>
<td>February, 1692—Dr. William Griggs summarized: Abigail and Betty were bewitched.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abigail和Betty开始有神秘的症状像大哭和发出动物的声音</td>
<td>February 26, 1692—Tituba, Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne were arrested because people felt they knew how to do witchcraft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1692年2月</td>
<td>March-April, 1692—One hundred forty-one “witches” were arrested.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. William Griggs总结了Abigail和Betty中邪了</td>
<td>April 1693—All the remaining prisoners were released.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1692年2月26日</td>
<td>141个“女巫”被捕</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1693 年 4 月

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Screenshot 6</th>
<th>Screenshot 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Screenshot 6" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Screenshot 7" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Screenshot 6**
Good bye! Good bye! Good Bye

**Screenshot 7**
Good bye!
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