Biography driven instruction for English language learners from China: A qualitative case study

by

Jinhua Wang

B.A., Nanning Normal University, 2006
M.A., Nanning Normal University, 2011

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Curriculum and Instruction
College of Education

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Manhattan, Kansas

2021

Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the English language learning experiences of three international students from China who studied or are currently studying at a Midwest state institution and have been exposed to GTM in China and BDI in the United States. This multiple case study was conducted with purposeful and criterion-based sampling. Symbolic interactionism was the methodological lens I chose for this study. Biography-Driven Instruction framework was the theoretical lens. The participants' narratives were organized using a first-person vignette to interpret their experiences with both GTM and BDI. A first-person view poem was also constructed to represent the data using the participants' own words of choice. Then I presented a detailed cross-case analysis to unpack the poem and gained some analytical insights by comparing and contrasting the similarities and differences across each participant.

Findings indicate that the three participants had to sacrifice their personal motivations, interests and needs to align with family, school and societal expectations, and they were forced to give up individuality to conform to family and school culture. In addition, teachers teaching in tension were revealed in order to accommodate to the societal needs and parents' pressure as well as push the participants through the rigid assessment system within a Chinese education context. The three participants had to use their sense of self and self-efficacy to navigate these tensions and struggles when they did not personally feel motivated to learn English.

The outcomes of this research suggest avenues for policy makers, administrators, EFL teacher educators and professional development organizers to support the integration of BDI approach into the current GTM-dominated EFL classrooms in China. It is necessary for all the involved stakeholders to understand the importance of mitigating the tensions and struggles caused by societal needs, parents' expectations and academic mandates so they can lead the

change process and leverage formal and informal avenues of integrating BDI approach into GTM teaching. These avenues will provide possibilities for Chinese EFL learners to approach new ways of English language learning and fulfill the purpose of real-life communication and meaningful learning, thus helping them foster stronger intercultural awareness and acquire better communicative competence.

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Approved by:

Major Professor
Dr. Socorro Herrera

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Dedication

I dedicated this dissertation to

my beloved family—

Qing Deng,

Kaylee Yarui Deng,

Frederick Wang Deng,

Bill Wang Deng,

Ellie Wang Deng (soon to be born).

Thank you for being with me from the start to the end,

For supporting my dream at every step of this journey,

For changing my life in so many positive ways,

For motivating me to push my limits,

For being the reason I live the life.

And above all, being honest to you all.

I could not have become who I am today.

Without you all,

Dream is just a dream.

With you all,

Dream comes true.

Love you all ALWAYS and FOREVER.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is a must in this fast-globalized world where information and communication technologies are pushing English as the universal language (Pomavilla, Villavicencio, &Soto, 2015). With this accelerating globalization, China, as the second largest economy in the world, has experienced rapid economic growth, significant social and cultural changes, and received a surge of returns. There has been a focused driving force to expand and improve EFL teaching since the mid-1980s, and this drive is likely to continue to flourish and thrive. Over the past decade, the world has witnessed China's increasing economic and cultural involvement in the global community, and its establishment of an active influence in the international society (You & Dornyei, 2016). This involvement has exemplified the significance of knowing English in the country. Therefore, it is not surprising to learn that China has for the past 30 years enthusiastically prioritized on EFL teaching as it has determined that knowing English is a powerful resource for China to be able to hold equal power as other developed countries.

In the era of rapid economic globalization, English proficiency in China has been considered a definite asset both at an individual and a societal level. Accordingly, English is taught as a core subject of the national curriculum from primary school until the senior year in high school. Most colleges offer English classes as electives for students to continue English language learning. The administrations of Education in some coastal and more developed provinces have made a commitment to start teaching English in Kindergarten. Continuous efforts have been made to develop English language teaching and learning in China, including upgrading the components of EFL teaching, such as curriculum, syllabuses, textbooks, tests, resources, assessments and EFL teacher development.

The linguistic term communicative competence was coined by sociolinguist Hymes in 1971 and was introduced to language learning and teaching context. Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) has become popular and greatly accepted as the major approach to improve EFL teaching in the United States, Canada and some European countries. However, China has not adopted CLT as the major teaching approach to improve students' communicative competence. Instead, teaching English grammar to students for passing the written tests is still the first priority. Although China has made efforts to strengthen the English language teaching at all levels, not all Chinese students have benefited equally from the invested efforts and resources. Presently, most urban and suburban public schools in China are still using the Grammar Translation Methods (GTM) in English classes, while only some international schools in the city require teachers to use the CLT approach in class with emphasis on students' interests and needs.

Meanwhile, diversity is increasingly becoming a global trend, and the demand for global competence with increasing diversity is prevalent throughout the world (Herrera, 2012). China has 55 ethnic groups and many diverse populations. Being diverse does not necessarily mean only being of differing ethnicities from other countries or speaking different languages (Pomavilla, Villavicencio, &Soto, 2015). Diversity can also refer to different learning styles, preferences, and personalities of students who come from the same place and share the same first language (L1). Wu (2001) argues that EFL teachers are facing great challenges and are calling for support to promote EFL teaching in China and to ensure the focus of EFL teaching is placed on students' interests and needs. In order to understand students' interests and needs, learning styles, preferences and personalities, their diverse backgrounds whether it be sociocultural, linguistic, cognitive and academic need to be taken into consideration.

When it comes to students' diverse interests and needs, Biography-Driven Instruction (BDI) is the teaching approach that clearly addresses culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students' needs and actively seeks to develop and account for the full potential of these students (MacDonald, Miller, Murry, Herrera, & Spears, 2013). The use of BDI strategies provides key evidence that new perspectives on teacher preparation and development for attaining global competence with diversity are calling for further attention and study (Perez, Holmes, Miller, & Fanning, 2012).

The BDI method provides educators with the guidance to differentiate their instructions in ways that help promote the success of all students—especially CLD students—in their classrooms (Herrera & Murry, 2016). BDI aims to place students at the center of teaching and learning, to explore the biographies of students, their family and the contexts where they live and learn, to raise teachers' awareness of each students' uniqueness and individuality that can factor into learning, and eventually to help teachers gain instructional ability to reach every CLD student in the classroom.

Biography-Driven Instruction has been widely used in many different countries with the goals (Herrera, 2010) to: (a) take each individual student's background knowledge into consideration, (b) create an instructional climate that promotes growth from the known to the unknown, and (c) provide a "space" for each student to individually demonstrate and celebrate his or her success at the end of each lesson. The teachers' successful delivery of BDI strategies to CLD students is a good indicator of increasing global competence with diversity and such strategies incorporate what we know about CLD student assets and needs (Herrera, 2012). More than 20 different BDI strategies (Herrera, 2010; Herrera, Kavimandan, & Holmes, 2011) have been put into practice to create a low-risk class environment; encourage students' recurrent use

of their L1 to help understanding; leverage the sociocultural skills and knowledge; promote interaction for comprehensibility; and integrate different learning strategies into student learning.

There is, however, a gap in the literature about applying BDI into EFL teaching. Under the unique EFL context in China, limited research has been found on the use of BDI. For the past few decades, China has been investing efforts in pushing EFL teaching to a higher level, but the EFL teaching has not demonstrated promising and productive results as expected. Wu (2001) asserts that EFL teachers in China are appealing for support and efforts to promote English language teaching and learning in a specific EFL environment. This research will help fill the gap in the literature of BDI researches in EFL teaching in China through exploring the experiences of students' English language learning after both GTM and BDI were introduced to them. Addressing this gap in the literature, this research will also help practitioners better understand the essence of BDI and ascertain how BDI could promote second language acquisition (SLA) under different social-cultural contexts.

Meanwhile, it is necessary to understand the current EFL teaching and learning context in China through reflective and critical thinking. There are many different types of language teaching approaches on EFL setting. Two of them are primarily utilized for EFL teaching in China, the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) and the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). GTM is a traditional second language teaching method which mainly requires learners to translate whole texts word for word from target language into their first language and memorize enormous vocabulary words, as well as numerous grammatical rules and exceptions (Elmayantie, 2015). While CLT advocates language should be taught in a communicative way in order for learners to achieve a "communicative competence" (Hymes, 1972). BDI belongs to the same category as CLT, aiming to promote language learners' communicative competence.

In China, GTM currently dominates regular EFL classrooms, while CLT is limited to international EFL classrooms. The teaching outcomes associated with these two teaching approaches are controversial. Nagaratnam and Al-Mekhlafi (2012) examined pre-service teacher trainees' attitudes towards GTM and discovered they had positive attitudes towards GTM and preferred implicit grammar teaching. On the contrary, Chang (2011) argues that, although the GTM helps improve students' mastery of grammatical rules and usages, students cannot flexibly and appropriately apply these grammatical rules into real-life communication, so GTM actually prevents students from developing their communicative competence. In other words, mastering the grammar is one thing but knowing how to communicate with others is another thing.

Grammar does not always contribute to communication, and on most occasions limits the learners' thinking to grammatical rules. Natsir and Dedi (2014) also argue that GTM is outdated and teachers ignore students' feelings and emotions because the method lacks principles relating to those students' feelings and emotions. Elmayantie (2015) identifies a downside of GTM as being that, "it teaches the students about language but does not really help the students to communicate effectively with it" (p. 127). This downside indicates GTM only focuses on the language itself, with no emphasis on using the language in a communicative way. With GTM in use, teachers are having a difficult time cultivating and developing students' communicative competence in contrast with CLT. In a result, the researcher wanted to compare students' responses on GTM and BDI to address the gap and reveal the possible truths.

Another factor inspiring this research was what motivates students to learn, known as the Language Learning Motivation Theory (LLM). Motivation is widely acknowledged as a significant contributor in second language learning (Gardner, 1985; Gardner & Lambert, 1972) and has been extensively researched in second language/foreign language (SL/FL) learning

(Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 2005; Liu & Zhang, 2013; Wesely, 2009; Yamashita, 2015). As Dörnyei (2005) has emphasized, "without sufficient motivation, even students with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals, and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching enough to ensure student achievement" (p. 65). In addition to the appropriate curricula and good teaching, motivation is also closely associated with student achievement.

Motivation can be classified into two types: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to our desire to perform activities to meet our own satisfaction or pleasure (Brown, 2007). The contributors that can be identified as increasing intrinsic motivation are: challenge, curiosity, control, cooperation and competition, recognition (Zhao, 2015). Extrinsic motivation is the opposite of intrinsic motivation. Brown (2007) points out that extrinsic motivation refers to our desire to perform activities to obtain known and external rewards, both tangible and intangible in nature. This type of motivation comes from external sources, such as the motivation to win prizes, receive cash rewards, and/or attract public attention.

Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is teacher-centered and does not consider students' motivation as an important element in language learning. With GTM, students are passive participants. Therefore, GTM weakens students' motivation through drill practice and rote memorization. On the contrary, BDI is student-centered and aims at addressing students' diverse needs to keep them motivated and engaged throughout the class. When students' socio-cultural, linguistic, cognitive, and academic needs are clearly addressed, they are more likely to be activated early in the learning process. This kind of activation allows students to make positive connections with their previous knowledge and experience, and eventually enables them to

achieve their learning goals and celebrate their success. What is critical to this activation, connection and affirmation process lies in our knowledge of each student's unique biography (Semrud-Clikeman, 2015). In recognition of what each student has brought to the classroom, teachers can differentiate the instruction to meet a student's individual needs. Just as Herrera (2016) says, "No one can be forced to learn. We can only encourage, support, and thus motivate students to join the community of learners on their education journey" (p.13). Motivation is the main driving power for language learning. Without motivation, active learning or successful learning will rarely happen.

Additionally, the different social cultural contexts in which the English language learners from China are involved motivated the selection of this research. Socio-cultural theory (SCT), emerged from the work of the Russian psychologist Vygotsky (1978), Leont'ev (1981), and Wertsch (1985). SCT literally refers to society and culture, and this theory views language learning as an ongoing process within certain social and cultural contexts. It is a theory on the development of psychological practices which consider social interaction as the core of communication and learning process. Vygotsky's (1978) theory investigates the social situation or context where behaviors occur and argues that psychological structures do not automatically come to the individual's mind but are formed as a result of interaction with the social context. In other words, particular attention is given to social interaction due to its close relationship with the individual's activities.

Furthermore, from the socio-cultural point of view, 'learning is also seen as a socially mediated process. It is dependent on face-to-face interaction and shared processes, such as joint problem solving and discussion' (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 195). In this sense, learning is a shared activity within the social context, and this problem-solving process is accomplished by

collaborative learners who may possess different background knowledge and experiences in a shared context. In order to reach the goal of successful learning, the process of having supportive dialogue which directs the attention of the learner to key features of the environment and prompts them through successive steps of a problem is called scaffolding (Wood et al., 1976). Through scaffolding, language learners receive support to expand and bridge their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). ZPD is defined by Vygotsky as follows:

> The difference between the child's developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the higher level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.
>
> (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 85)

From the aforementioned definition, ZPD is viewed as an important concept in SCT and refers to a zone between a learner's level of current performance and the level of potential performance. Vygotsky (1978) argues that learning occurs when new information and skills fall within the zone between what the learner already knows and what he or she can do with necessary assistance to make them understand the new topic, make new connections, and affirm their knowledge. To make it simple, when the gap appears between what the learners already know and what the learners will be able to achieve with assistance, learning will happen.

ZPD has served as a baseline for many researchers. Herrera (2016) mentions Vygotsky's ZPD as one of the theoretical foundations of BDI framework. The sociocultural theory is also fundamental in the development of the CLT Approach through the concept of ZPD (Herrera & Murry, 2016). BDI serves the same purpose as CLT does in second language learning, viewing developing language learners' communicative competence as one of the many goals. Language learning in different socio-cultural contexts varies; therefore, teachers are encouraged to be

cognizant of the social contexts that surround the learners and motivate students to learn. With that being said, BDI demonstrates a more sociocultural perspective to increase CLD students' motivation to learn and reach both linguistic and academic success. Through using BDI, teachers first learn students' biographical backgrounds from the perspectives of sociocultural, linguistic, cognitive and academic dimensions, and then they incorporate differentiated instructions into the class throughout the three phases: activation, connection and affirmation.

Rationale

Reflecting on the years of the researcher's learning and teaching English in China and her English language experiences in the United States, the researcher had a strong desire to find out: (a) what are the experiences of the Chinese students who were exposed to BDI? (b) why do not all Chinese students have appreciated the way English language was taught previously and is being taught presently? (c) why did they not gain satisfactory English proficiency as the curriculum requires? and (d) how do they value the BDI teaching with focus on their needs in their language learning? The researcher has the intention of conducting this research to explore the participants' experiences after their exposure to both GTM and BDI and of determining how the participants differentiate and make the most sense of their English language learning experiences about GTM and BDI.

As globalization and diversity brings new challenges to EFL teaching and learning in China, GTM is no longer the best teaching approach to help improve English language learners' communicative competence and promote their SLA. BDI encourages teachers to embrace student diversity and bridge student's ZPD so that they can help boost student's learning motivation and address each student's individual needs. BDI appears to offer a new path to EFL teaching and learning in China, and this method will compete to meet the demands of fostering language

learners' intercultural awareness and promoting their communicative competence, and to increase students' motivation to learn within different socio-cultural contexts. In order to narrow the significant gap between how EFL students currently learn and how EFL students can be taught in the future to enhance their communicative competence, EFL learners in China need continuous adaptability and appropriate learning support. Thus, it is necessary to understand an EFL learner's perception of English language learning experiences with different teaching approaches within different socio-cultural contexts. It is also critical to examine BDI's pedagogical impact in order to develop effective teaching and learning practices for future EFL teaching and learning in China.

Research Purpose & Research Questions

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the English language learning experiences of three international students from China who studied or are currently studying at a Midwest state institution and have been exposed to GTM in China and BDI in the United States.

Research Questions

1. What are the experiences that the Chinese students have had with GTM in China and with BDI in the United States?
2. In what ways do Chinese students compare and contrast their perspectives on, experiences with, and/or outcomes arising from, their exposures to GTM in China and BDI in the United States, provided as paths to their second language acquisition?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frameworks that informed this study will be discussed in details in Chapter Two, however, now the researcher would like to briefly orient the reader to the primary theoretical framework for the research topic---- Biography Driven Instruction (BDI).

The theoretical framework, BDI, as a comparison to GTM, is the major driving force that attracts the researcher's interest in conducting this research. BDI, first proposed by Herrera, is a model of culturally-responsive pedagogy that focuses on the efforts of many others who have contributed their whole careers to promoting our understanding of the circumstances that can help develop SLL/ SLA and, most importantly, allow students to succeed and flourish (Herrera, 2010). According to Herrera (2010), BDI embraces the student diversity through incorporating students' sociocultural, linguistic, cognitive, and academic dimensions of their biographies into the learning process. Teachers investigate students' biographies before lesson delivery so that they can tailor the BDI strategies to maximize students' learning throughout the three stages: activation, connection and affirmation.

Biography Driven Instruction (BDI) falls under the big umbrella of CLT, with the focus on promoting diverse students' communicative competence in addition to students' unique needs and interests, which can add the thriving power to accelerate EFL students' academic and linguistic success. In contrast, there have been more negative voices on GTM because it only focuses on grammatical rules and rote memorization and to a large extent it weakens students' communicative competence. BDI strategies have been used in ESL settings among many different countries, and teachers and students in ESL classrooms have given credits to BDI teaching. However, there are limited researches of using BDI in an EFL setting so far.

Connecting the current EFL teaching trends in China to BDI teaching, the researcher had the strong desire to explore the participants' experiences on English language learning with different teaching approaches within different social-cultural contexts. Eventually, with the research findings from this study, the researcher looked forward to making some theoretical contributions to the future literature review as well as some practical implications to the EFL teacher educators, stakeholders and curricula and assessment reform regarding the value of using BDI in an EFL setting.

Methodology

Qualitative research is largely conducted as the overarching methodology in the education field and aims to answer "the whys and hows of human behavior, opinion, and experience – information that is difficult to obtain through more quantitatively-orientated methods of data collection" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 1). A qualitative study was mainly inspired to capture people's behaviors, opinions and experiences as indicated within their words and actions, as well as the meanings that lie behind their languages and actions. In order to make the best possible interpretations on the participants' lived stories, the participants' words, behaviors, interactions, emotions, decisions, and the processes of meaning making need to be documented and told. The goal of conducting a qualitative case study is to discover the ways that participants share their stories and understand their lived experiences as they construct their understanding of their experiences (Kim, 2015).

With this goal in mind, the researcher in this study aimed to explore the ways that the participants understood their lived English language learning experiences and retold their stories as they were sharing their understanding of their English language learning experiences on GTM and BDI. Yin (2009) defines a case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a

contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 13). Merriam (1988) describes a qualitative case study as "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit" (p.21). Therefore, the methodological approach that was proposed and best suited this study was the case study approach and will be explained in detail in Chapter Three.

Methodological Framework

In qualitative research, an appropriate theoretical framework can provide the researcher a good lens to view and understand the research context where the meaning making process occurs. In terms of the research purpose and research questions for this study, the epistemology that guided this study was constructionism, focusing on the basic question "*How do we know what we know*?". Specifically, the methodological framework that this study was grounded in was symbolic interactionism.

Crotty (1998) defines constructionism as "the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, be constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (p. 42). From the perspective of constructionism, the basics of the meaning making process relies on the interactions between human beings and the environment. People build relationships with the objects within the environment and through the interactions with the surroundings people construct meanings for what they see, hear and perform. An object in the world does not carry meaning itself until people attach meanings to it. In order to interpret the relationships between ourselves and the objects in the world, we have to in different ways interact with the objects within certain social contexts. The world is not stable and neither is the environment; consequently, the interaction between people and the objects is not stable. The

culture, the identity, the environment, the emotion, the language, the personality can all contribute to the meaning-making process and the understanding of a certain experience.

Within the epistemology of constructionism, the appropriate theoretical lens chosen for this study was symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism "has its roots in American pragmatism" (Schwandt, 2007, p. 283) and many pragmatic philosophers such as Peirce, Dewey, James, and Mead helped lay the groundwork for the framework of symbolic interactionism (Crotty, 1998). Blumer, a student of Mead, received the most applauses for the influence Mead's thought has had in shaping the framework of symbolic interactionism and developed the Blumer-Mead version of symbolic interactionism:

> First, humans act toward the objects and people in their environment based on the meanings these objects and people have for them. Second, these meanings derive from the social interaction (communication, broadly understood) between and among individuals. Communication is symbolic because we communicate through language and other symbols and in communicating create significant symbols. Third, meanings are established and modified through an interpretive process undertaken by the individual actor.
>
> (Schwandt, 2007, pp. 283-284).

From the aforementioned definition, the primary assumption of this symbolic interactionism framework is, when constructing their social world humans are viewed as active participants, not passive receivers, to continually adjust their thoughts and behaviors and modify their understandings based on the interactive process with the things that symbolize meanings in their life. In essence, the meanings constructed through the interactive process are attached to the significant symbolic objects, and humans create, construct and interpret meanings of these social symbols based on what they believe to make the most sense to themselves.

Symbolic interactionism was believed to be appropriate for this study because it focused on the participant's meaning-making of their English language learning experiences as students when they interacted with the two different teaching approaches. The participants' subjective experiences of English language learning with two different teaching approaches served as the foundation for understanding and studying the English language teaching system in the society. The student participants interacted with the two teaching approaches within different socio-cultural contexts and constantly adjusted their behaviors and understandings. Their narratives and meaning making of the interactions with the symbols, such as the two teaching approaches, was closely associated with the socially constructed realities of the environment where they lived. Their understandings of the two teaching approaches as the symbols that they interacted with shaped the way they socially constructed their own English language learning experiences and determined the way they engaged themselves in English language learning.

Research Design

This multiple case study was conducted over a period of four months. Case study method is used in most qualitative research to help find the answer to the 'how' or 'why' questions of a contemporary set of events with in-depth inquiries. For the purpose of this study, this multiple case study was bounded by the English language learners' experiences in GTM and BDI located in a midwestern state university. The researcher contacted the relevant administrations and the potential participants to gain access to conduct the research. After purposeful and criterion sampling, the case study was investigated through the lens of three Chinese international students after they were exposed to both BDI and GTM.

The data collection methods for this study included semi-structured interviews, participant object elicitations, meeting notes, documents, research journals from both participants

and researcher, member checking, and peer debriefing. With prompts prepared in advance, the intentional semi-structured interviews served as the primary source of data, but informal and natural conversations not necessarily followed the prepared probes. Please see more details in Chapter Three.

The data analysis started with in vivo coding and descriptive coding of the data and continued with pattern coding and focused coding. After three rounds of coding process, the researcher was able to categorize and theme the data that related to the research purpose and questions. Later, guided by research questions, the researcher used a first-person vignette to summarize the participants' individual narratives, along with a first-person poem and cross case comparisons to demonstrate an analytical understanding of the research findings.

Significance of the Research

Through the epistemology of constructionism and the theoretical lens of symbolic interactionism, it was more likely for the researcher to launch a qualitative case study to observe what the participants have experienced or have been experiencing with GTM and BDI. Through conducting interviews with the participants to capture their experiences, the researcher obtained more detailed information and gained new insights from analyzing the participants' experiences.

Theoretical Significance

As for the research, the researcher had the ability to interview the participants about their English learning experiences and find out how they approached the new meaning-making process in regards to their English learning experiences. When multiple truths about the participants' English learning experiences were targeted, this research could provide a good reference for future research on how to adapt both GTM and BDI into the EFL instructional practices through different theoretical lenses.

Practical Significance

Through the data analysis and discussions on the research findings, this study had some practical purposes of contributing to the existing literature by adding the potential value of BDI to EFL teaching in China, the pedagogical applications of using BDI into future instructional practices of EFL teaching in China, as well as the curricular and assessment aspects to be considered to maximize meaningfulness for students and effectiveness for educators when using BDI in China. Future studies could focus on the field practice of testing BDI in China.

Definitions of Key Terms

For the purpose of study, the following terms were used:

1. BDI —Biography-driven instruction. BDI encourages teachers to embrace student diversity through incorporating students' sociocultural, linguistic, cognitive, and academic dimensions of their biographies into the learning process (Herrera, 2010).
2. GTM— Grammar Translation Method. Natsir & Dedi (2014) summarize five basic elements about the GTM: (a) Students are taught through mother tongue; (b) the vocabulary in GTM is memorized by translating it to the native language; (c) in terms of the grammar, the GTM emphasizes that learners must understand the grammar before producing the sentence of text.
3. CLD students—A term used to refer to the students who are culturally and linguistically diverse.
4. EFL— English as a Foreign Language. This is a term of choice in countries where English is not the predominant language, such as China.
5. SLA— Second Language Acquisition/ Second Language Learning. It will be used interchangeably throughout the study.

6. Prism Model—It is expanded by Thomas & Collier (1997) and includes four major dimensions that drive language acquisition for students: linguistic, academic, cognitive and sociocultural.
7. SCT— Socio-Cultural Theory. It is also called 'cultural-historical psychology'. It refers to society and culture, and views language learning as an ongoing process within certain social and cultural contexts.
8. LLM—Language Learning Motivation. According to Gardner (1985), motivation consists of four elements: "a goal, effortful behavior, a desire to attain the goal, and favorable attitudes toward the activity in question" (p. 50). Most researchers believe motivation has many different types and plays a critical role in students' second language learning.

Chapter Summary

Through this chapter, the readers can capture a holistic view of the research topic from the following aspects. First, the researcher gave a brief introduction to the background of this study, an in-depth and clear rationale for the selection of BDI as effective in answering the research questions, and an outline of the research purpose and research questions that include appropriate contextual details. Later, the researcher elaborated the appropriateness of choosing the methodology and the theoretical framework that supported this qualitative case study. Finally, the researcher had a discussion of the significance that may be associated with this research, and the operational definitions that were related to the research questions.

The remainder of this study will be presented in next four chapters.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Introduction

Second language learning (SLL) has often been considered a complicated process as the outcomes of SLL are influenced by a variety of factors such as the motivation of the learner, the diverse social-cultural backgrounds the learners bring with them and the different social contexts where learning occurs. In this chapter, I present a holistic review on the theoretical frameworks which help support the understanding of the research questions. I include a detailed review on Language Learning Motivation Theory (LLM), Socio-cultural Theory (SCT), the relationship between LLM and SCT, Grammar Translation Method (GTM), Biography-Driven Instruction (BDI), and the interactions among LLM, SCT and BDI.

Language Learning Motivation Theory

In the past decades, the trend towards motivational theories related to language learning has generated much interest in the topic among language teachers and second language (L2) researchers. Research findings have indicated that motivation plays an important role in language learner's achievement and can have both beneficial and detrimental impacts. Although its importance is widely recognized, the concept of motivation proves its complexity and confusion based on the research of different types of motivation theories. In general, educational, social and cognitive psychology, as well as general educational and social theories and sociolinguistic theories have all contributed to understanding the LLM within a formal school context (Keblawi, 2016). Significant aspects of LLM are presented in this chapter to create a foundational framework for a deeper understanding of the research topic.

Definitions

Language learning motivation (LLM) has gone through different stages over the past decades, and because there are so many aspects and personal learners' traits to consider in the process of understanding learners' motivation towards SLL, it has been challenging for researchers to agree on one single definition of L2 motivation (Guerrero, 2015). Gardner and Lambert (1959) are the pioneers of research in the area of motivation. They first proposed two types of motivational orientation---- integrative and instrumental. The integrative orientation is about meeting the needs of one's self, while the instrumental orientation is more for a substantial benefit. Gardner and his associates' work has produced far-reaching influence on motivation research and has inspired numerous studies on motivation in SLL.

According to Gardner's Socio-educational Model (1985), he depicts motivation as a combination of effort towards the goal, desire to achieve the goal of language learning, positive attitudes towards the language learning and satisfaction experienced in target language learning. Oxford & Shearin (1994) claim motivation is a crucial determinant of the extent to which learners are actively involved in learning a second or foreign language. A motivated learner is defined by Masgoret & Gardner (2003) as persistent and attentive to the task at hand, expands effort, has goals, desires and aspirations, enjoys the activities, makes attributions concerning success and/or failure, is aroused and makes use of strategies to aid in achieving goals. This descriptive definition vividly explains what a motivated learner looks like. Later, motivation is defined through using different models and theories, such as the socio-educational model (Gardner, 1985; Gardner & Smythe, 1975) and self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

In the socio-educational model (Gardner, 1985; Gardner and Smythe,1975), motivation for learning another language consists of three major components (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995) that include: (a) effort to achieve this goal, (b) desire to learn, and (c) attitude toward the task. Later, Ryan and Deci (2000) define that motivation has been classified as extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation. Throughout the learning process, motivated learners strive for success in order to realize their goals. Intrinsically motivated learners seek to fulfill their own interest and needs, joyfulness and satisfaction while extrinsically motivated learners tend to perform for practical reasons such as passing an exam, winning an award or a prize. Learners make efforts to achieve the goal with varied motivation as the driving force.

Csizer & Dörnyei (2005) conducted an experiential study to evaluate the internal structure of motivation and examine the interrelationships among seven motivational components. Based on their findings, they redefined the integrativeness as the "Ideal [Second Language] Self" (p. 30) and add a new definition of motivation as "the desire to achieve one's ideal language self by reducing the discrepancy between one's actual and ideal selves" (p. 30). Thus, it creates resonance to connect this integrativeness to one's intrinsic motivation. There is a distance between the actual self and the ideal self, and the motivation provides the power for one to push the self to move from a further distance to a shorter distance until the actual self meets the ideal self. Guerrero (2015) views motivation being associated with traits of commitment, enthusiasm, and persistence to achieve goals. In order to reach goals, learners make a commitment to be passionate and never give up, which later changes into the motivation in their inner mind so that learners are stimulated to take action and consistently work towards the goal.

In terms of how motivation affected the Chinese English language learners' decision-making process when they were exposed to GTM and BDI, and in what ways the Chinese

English language learners are more motivated to learn, my study operated under the definition of motivation being a desire, an enthusiasm, or a willingness to exert effort to successfully learn another language. Furthermore, it is a driving force of a learner's participation and engagement in the learning process, and is an incentive to deliver a commitment, passion, and persistence and gradually push the actual self to be closer to the ideal self in terms of becoming an effective language learner.

Types of Motivation

Motivation can be classified into intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Brown (2007) mentions that intrinsic motivation refers to performing activities for our own satisfaction or pleasure. It is a force that propels individuals to act in order to achieve personal contentment or internal satisfaction. According to Coon & Mitterer (2010), intrinsic motivation occurs when individuals without wanting any obvious external rewards but instead act simply to enjoy an activity or exercise an opportunity to explore, learn and maximize potentials. People who are intrinsically motivated are willing to do things to meet their inherent needs and do not act for external benefits.

The contributors that can be identified as increasing intrinsic motivation are: challenge, curiosity, control, cooperation and competition, recognition (Zhao, 2015). Intrinsic motivation is more relevant to what learners really need and can sustain for a longer period. But Extrinsic motivation is on the opposite side of intrinsic motivation. Brown (2007) points out that extrinsic motivation refers to our desire to perform certain activities for known and external rewards, both tangible and intangible in nature. This type of motivation is more associated with temporary needs and can come from outside, such as the motivation to win prizes, receive cash rewards, and attract public attention.

Meanwhile, in order to understand why language learners are motivated to learn the target language, it is necessary to understand the learners' immediate or ultimate goal or purpose for learning the language. Gardner & Lambert (1959, 1972) identify two types of learner motivations as integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Learners' orientations are predictors of their motivation and its sustainment to learn the target language. According to Gardner (1985), integrative motivation refers to a learner's desire to at least communicate or at the most t integrate (or even assimilate) into the target culture and language, while instrumental motivation refers to a learner's desire to achieve more external or pragmatic gains such as advancing a career, getting a highly-paid job or passing a required examination. Integrative motivation focuses on learning the target language, increasing the affiliation with the target community and becoming a valued member of the language community, while in contrast, instrumental motivation is connected to the desire to learn the language to accomplish external purposes, such as gaining prestige or power, obtaining practical rewards or getting more utilitarian benefits.

The relationships between motivation and second language proficiency are considerably complicated, multifaceted and EFL setting specific. Liu (2016) identifies typical instrumental motivations for Chinese learners include passing examinations, obtaining certificates or diploma, bringing honor to their family and/or securing a good job. Under the EFL setting in China, Liu's study (2016) suggests that the relationship between motivation and foreign language proficiency is situation specific and context dependent, and both integrative motivation and instrumental motivation can become effective contributors to a learner's EFL proficiency at various stages of their foreign language learning.

Both integrative and instrumental motivation can be formulated and boosted at specific stages of learning and can strongly affect learners' EFL learning process in China. The motivations that the Chinese English language learners might have when they were exposed to GTM and BDI depends on what goal they desired to achieve with these two different language methods and what their main purpose is for learning the English language. A second language learner can successfully learn the target language with either an integrative motivation or an instrumental one, or with both. Motivation can also be either intrinsic or extrinsic, or both, for one type of motivation does not rule out the existence of the presence.

Before the discussion about the applications of motivation in SLA and in EFL setting, a note on terminology I chose for this research has to be made. In this research, I did not distinguish between the terms second language acquisition (SLA) and second language learning (SLL) but interchangeably used them in discussion. SLA and SLL are differentiated according to Ellis (1985) who asserts acquisition as the natural process of picking up and mastering a second language through exposure and learning as the conscious process of studying a second language. I do not keep such a distinction in this research because for the research participants who were exposed to both the BDI and GTM teaching approaches, English is their SL/ FL. Consequently, the acquisition process and the learning process for these participants was blended, integrated, and interdependent so it was impossible to separate them; in a sense, it was not meaningful to make a distinction between acquisition and learning in a strict way.

Applications in SLA and in EFL Setting

Motivation is widely acknowledged as a significant influence in SLA (Gardner, 1985; Gardner & Lambert, 1972) and has been extensively researched in second language/foreign language (SL/FL) setting (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Gardner, Smythe, Clement & Gliksman,

1976; Dörnyei, 2005; Liu & Zhang, 2013; Toni & Rostami, 2012; Vandergrift, 2005; Wesely, 2009; Yamashita, 2015; Zhang & Xiao, 2006). Research studies have given a strong emphasis to the application of motivation in EFL classrooms and has generally determined its presence as influential for high levels of EFL academic achievement (Bernaus & Gardner, 2009; Damavand, 2012; Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011; Proctor et al., 2014; Toni & Rostami, 2012). Appropriate curriculum and good teaching are essential elements for effective language learning programs, but these elements are not enough to ensure students to demonstrate desired outcomes as Dörnyei (2005) asserts, "without sufficient motivation, even students with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals, and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching enough to ensure student achievement" (p. 65). In other words, besides appropriate curriculum and good teaching, motivation is another significant factor in stimulating language learners' desire or ambition to learn an L2 and achieve language learning success.

Researchers in the past few decades have reached a generally accepted conclusion that motivation does influence the overall acquisition of a target language (Dörnyei, 1998; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). According to Ushioda & Dörnyei (2012), numerous studies have investigated the impact of motivation on SLA, and have found substantial evidence associating motivation to overall SL achievement and positive connections between motivation and other language learning-related variables (Gardner, 2007; Dörnyei, 2009; Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012; Liu, 2015). Additionally, Dornyei (1998) proposes that if students are not motivated to learn, it is less likely they are willing to adopt language-learning strategies and achieve language learning success. When students have no motivation to learn, it is unusual for them to engage in any learning activities. Thus, they will have limited success in acquiring a new language.

In an EFL setting, motivation also provides the fundamental driving force to start off FL learning and to maintain the usually tedious FL learning (Dörnyei, 2005). Motivation has been regarded as an important contributor in EFL learning and correlates with EFL proficiency. Research has targeted more studies on the impact of intrinsic motivation rather than extrinsic motivation. A significant amount of empirical research in the field of SLA has examined the relationship between intrinsic motivation and language achievement and has found intrinsic motivation has a positive effect on SLA. Vallerand (1997) proposes that language learners with intrinsic motivation are more likely to produce positive learning results, while language learners with extrinsic motivation are more likely to see negative learning outcomes. From this standpoint, intrinsically motivated learners tend to maintain the learning passion for a longer period, and this type of knowledge is self-sustained (Bravo Jorge, et. al., 2017). In contrast, extrinsically motivated learners are more likely to remain engaged in language learning for just a short period, and as a result, their retention of knowledge is temporary.

Research has also confirmed that intrinsic motivation is an important indicator of students' motivational intensity, persistence, and final grades (Neols, Clement, & Pelletier, 2001; Pae, 2008). Whether intrinsic motivation has a more positive influence than extrinsic motivation on SLA remains unclear due to the difficulty in isolating the value of extrinsic motivation (Zhang, Lin, Zhang, & Choi, 2016). It seems reasonable to validate intrinsic motivation being a more positive influence in EFL learning since intrinsic motivation has a longer sustaining effect in language learning. However, extrinsic motivation can be an effective factor to first stimulate language learning and later boost learners' subsequent passion for learning as well. Liu & Zhang (2013) launched a study of FL anxiety and motivation among1697 Chinese university students, and the study's results revealed that external motivation, intrinsic motivation, motivation

intensity, and academic achievement were all important predictors of students' performance in English language learning. Accordingly, it is unreasonable to assume that one type of motivation outweighs another type of motivation when assessing the effect on language learning.

In comparison to the intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation, both integrative and instrumental motivation are also significant motivators in SLA and hold equal importance in EFL learning. Engin (2009) conducted a study to examine the relationships among integrative, instrumental, and work avoidance motivations and students' successes in SLL, which confirmed the importance of their roles in SLA. Wesley (2009) completed a mixed method study of young learners and reported students were both integratively and instrumentally motivated to study the target language and found that relationships with teachers and peers were influential factors in shaping students' motivation. Liu (2012) analyzed 1431 questionnaires and 215 reflective journals to find out the study's participants had high integrative and instrumental motivation to learn English. Liu (2016) investigated the relationships between motivation and EFL proficiency among 262 Chinese university students and ascertained that both integrative and instrumental motivation were effective to promote EFL proficiency, though the effect varies at different learning stages.

Muñoz & Ramirez (2015) claim that the motivation for learning a second language is an essential factor when "the source of motivation is not intrinsic, but responds more to external aspects such as graduation, employment opportunities, traveling, and government mandates" (p. 198). These external sources of motivation, including family members, peers, teachers, and members of the target language community, can help a second language learner transfer from being an externally motivated student to an intrinsically motivated student. Therefore, it is

possible for learners who are initially extrinsically motivated to develop intrinsic motivation to continue to engage and progress in learning another language.

There may be a positive and strong correlations between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation towards SLL (Gonzales, 2011; Lin, McKeachie, & Kim, 2003; Vandergrift, 2005). However, according to Lightbown & Spada (2006), research shows that the distinction between the two types of motivations is not clear because the learning context the language learners are involved in differs from time to time and from place to place. Saville-Troike, M. (1988) argues that neither type of motivation is more favorable than the other in terms of language learning. Mezei (2008) believes that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can coexist in an individual. Therefore, both motivations can have significant influence over SLA and it is not necessary to distinguish which one works better towards SLA because the influence each exerts varies based on the learning context.

In conclusion, after the literature review on the LLM and its application in SLA and EFL, I have a clear picture about the role of motivation in affecting learners' SLL and can now better understand my participants' English learning experiences and their exposure to GTM and BDI in relation to language learning motivation.

Socio-cultural Theory

What is Socio-cultural Theory?

Socio-cultural Theory (SCT), also called 'cultural-historical psychology', views language learning as an ongoing process within certain social and cultural contexts. It is a theory on the development of psychological practices which consider social interaction as the core of communication and learning processes. This theory asserts that language learning occurs and continues when language learners interact with social and cultural contexts.

The SCT theory first emerged from the pioneer work of the Russian psychologists Vygotsky (1978), Leont'ev (1981), and Wertsch (1985). Vygotsky, a well-known theorist of child development, wrote many works on child development. Since his first translated writing *Thought and Language*, appeared in 1962, his views on child development have been increasingly influential and followed and promoted by many other psychologists and child development theorists such as Bruner (1985), Wertsch (1985), and Rogoff (1990). Vygotsky's views on child development have also been extensively applied in classroom practices by many educational researchers (Mercer, 2012).

Vygotsky's original ideas on child development indicate that current socio-cultural theory is best described as a 'neo-Vygotskyan' (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). Since the 1980s, the foremost figure advocating the relevance of socio-cultural theory to SLL has been Lantolf. In the mid-1990s, Lantolf edited two collections of papers that illustrate the application of different aspects of Vygotskyan ideas about SLL (Lantolf, 1994). Lantolf and other scholars followed this collection up by providing useful updates about theoretical development as well as a summary of a wider range of empirical socio-cultural research (Dunn and Lantolf, 1998; Lantolf, 2000; Swain et al., 2002).

As Lantolf (2000a) proposes, the core concept of sociocultural theory resides in the higher forms of mediated human mental activity. Humans do not act directly on the physical world but rely on certain tools and human activity, and we, as human beings, also depend on symbolic tools or signs to mediate and regulate our relationships with others and with ourselves (Vygotsky, 1986). Vygotsky's theory investigates the social situation or context where behaviors occur and argues that psychological structures do not automatically come to the individual's mind but are formed as a result of interaction with the social context. When human

beings interact over time with the physical world, we often create the artifacts that can be seen as physical and symbolic tools. Lantolf (2000a) also points out that during humans' interactive process with the world we constantly modify these symbolic artifacts or physical tools as needed before passing them on and making them available for future generations. These symbolic tools are not limited to objects, numbers, signs, graphs, music, art, and language. As we interact with the surroundings around us, we always use the context- and/or culturally constructed physical tools or symbolic artifacts to establish an indirect but mediated relationship between ourselves and the world.

From the previous description of SCT, one of the prominent features of SCT is considering learning as a social process in nature where humans make meanings of things through physical and symbolic tools within certain social or cultural contexts. Social interaction is at the center of individual activities. Humans have to interact with the surroundings to build social relationships and understand what they are experiencing. From the socio-cultural point of view, learning is an ongoing social process and is "dependent on face-to-face interaction and shared processes, such as joint problem solving and discussion" (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 195). Language learning is a type of human activity that can be seen as a socially mediated process. Throughout the language learning process, language learners go through face-to-face interactions to communicate in the target language community. Language learners also have to interact within the social and cultural contexts and understand the language contexts involved in language learning. This process is not a random one in which language learners automatically pick up the information and communicate with purpose.

SCT and Language Learning

There is extensive literature including both theoretical and empirical studies inspired by SCT perspectives on second language learning (Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Appel, 1994; Lantolf & Thorne, 2005)). According to Mitchell & Miles (2004), SCT emphasizes the integrated nature of individual (psychological) and social (environmental) elements in the learning process and the importance of context in language learning. The individual language learners interact with both individual and social elements within context to comprehend the language learning. With its emphasis on contextual language learning, SCT has had an immense effect on language learning.

Agreeing that learning is a social activity, many other sociocultural scholars such as Cole and Engeström (1993), Van Lier (2000) and Lantolf (2000) shifted their attention from individual cognition to the mental activity of members within the same social community. The social community members are involved in provides the context or surrounding for them to interact with and reach shared understandings. Zhang, Fan & Du (2013) claim learning is the product of shared activity and believe the traditional teacher-student relationship should be changed to one that leads to collaborative learning. In this type of relationship, the problem-solving process is accomplished by collaborative learners who may possess different background knowledge and experiences in a shared context. The higher-level learners can assist the lower-level learners. As a result, learning for members of this community is more effective.

From a socio-cultural perspective, Mitchell & Myles (2004) propose that language learners' early language learning occurs from a meaning-making process done in collaboration with other members of a given culture, and from this collaborative activity, language itself develops as a tool for communication. Similarly, through the collaborative activity with other members of the target language, the second language learner has an opportunity to create more

tools for communication and add new ways of meaning-making processes (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). The language learning is a meaning-making process that reflects the given culture, and language learners interact with the unique type of culture in the society to make sense of what they are seeing, hearing and doing.

According to Mu (2018), "language is the carrier of culture and the purpose of language learning is to communicate, but communication is not only a linguistic phenomenon, but also a cultural, even a cross-cultural phenomenon" (p. 618). Thus, language is an important part of culture, and language learning can be greatly influenced by its embedded culture and its corresponding social context. Language learning must be connected to its culture. Researchers have agreed that the ultimate goal of language teaching is to cultivate learners' communicative competence which includes both linguistic competence and cross-culture competence. To be able to use the target language appropriately and effectively, it is important to understand that language mirrors culture and culture influences language learning.

Language learning is a gradual process of culture integration. As Kramsch (2000) highlights, language is the guide to social reality. Language is closely intertwined with society and culture, and language learning cannot be limited to just mastering linguistic knowledge. Without understanding the social and cultural contexts where the target language exists, it is less likely for language learners to master the language and integrate into the target language community. Language does not exist in a vacuum. Language both reflects culture and is restricted by culture. Culture helps to shape the language. The intercultural communication has to gain value and strength in order to promote language learners' SLA.

SCT and its Applications in SLA

From the SCT perspective, learners are seen as active participants in the learning process whose capacities are affected by the culture of the environment where they develop skills (Anning, Cullen, & Fleer, 2008). In the mid-1980s, Frawley (1997) and Lantolf (2000) began to explore the relevance and implications of SCT in SLA. Since then, a significant amount of research directly or indirectly inspired by SCT has been carried out on SLA. Lantolf and Thorne (2005) completed a book-length study on SCT contributions in SLA. Additionally, general SLA publications have included significant sessions on SCT research (Ellis, 1997, 2003; Mitchell & Myles, 1998). Researchers such as Lantolf, Donato, Thorne, Pavlenko, Swain and Lapkin and others (Lantolf, 2000b) extended Vygotsky's SCT to SLA and mainly focused on how SLA can be explained through SCT. This focus is to provide understanding of how the second language learners acquire the target language when they interact and collaborate with others within the given context.

SCT supporters agree that learning and cognitive development which also includes language occurs as a result of social interactions. Lantolf & Thorne (2006a) argue that in order to reach high order thinking, human cognitive activity has to develop through interaction with social and material environments. In other words, it is essential to have interactions with people and a variety of cultural or linguistic artifacts in the development of thinking. As described by Lightbown and Spada (2006), from the perspective of SCT, speaking and thinking are "tightly interwoven" (p. 47), and language learners internalize what is being said through the communicative period and gradually gain control over their mental processes through different activities. Speaking mediates thinking, and thinking motivates speaking.

When discussing the applications of SCI in SLA, two central constructs of SCT for second language (L2) development have to be mentioned: mediation and internalization (Lantolf, 1994). Swain, along with her colleagues and students, has also integrated several of the core concepts of SCT – particularly the mediational function – into her famous output model of SLA (Swain, 2000, 2001; Swain & Lapkin, 1998, 2001, 2002). There are many constructs of SCT, but the concentration in current research is on three areas: L2 mediation, Scaffolding, and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

Mediation. One of the distinguishing concepts of SCT is that the higher forms of human mental activity are mediated (Lantolf, 2000). According to Vygotsky (1987), people do not act on the physical world directly but rely on physical or symbolic tools or human activity to establish indirect or mediated connections between themselves and the world. Humans also use these symbolic tools or signs to mediate and regulate relationships with others and with themselves. Among these symbolic tools, language is the most pervasive and powerful artifact that functions as an important tool for thought or as a critical means of mediation to help mediate people's connection with the world, to each other, and to themselves. Language acts as the central tool for learning. Mitchell and Myles (2004) also believe that "learning is mediated partly through the learner's developing use and control of mental tools" (p. 195). In other words, humans have the ability to regulate and control their behaviors through tools, signs or artifacts in their surroundings which make sense to them. These items are socially constructed and closely associated with the cultures they are a part of.

Within the given social context, Swain (2000) emphasizes that "language use and language learning can co-occur" (p. 97) and the process of language use and language learning is both a cognitive activity and a social activity. In accordance with what Swain said, language use

mediates language learning. Language learning occurs through both self-regulation and other-regulation. Other-regulation usually happens at the initial phase and is typically mediated through language. Collaborative activity is the initial means by which language learners can reach shared understanding until they take over the new knowledge into their own. Once the learner masters the skills and can carry out tasks or activities on their own, they enter into the self-regulation phase and will be more capable of autonomous output.

Lantolf (2000) presents three types of mediation: mediation by others, mediation by self, and mediation by artifacts. During the mediation process, Lantolf (2000b) proposes three types of artifacts can be utilized as means: physical artifacts (such as pen, pencil, notebook, and cup), symbolic artifacts (such as language, images, numbers, graphs, signs and pictures) and cultural artifacts (such as portfolios, tasks, traditions and the computer). Through the use of a variety of mediational means, human beings effectively interact with themselves and the world, externally control their behaviors and internally regulate their thoughts (Niu, Lu, & You, 2018). Language learners can appropriately take advantage of the three meditational means to eventually develop their self-regulation.

Within the EFL learning context, Gao (2009) reports that the Chinese EFL learners seldom have real-life opportunities for using and learning English and many of the learners rely on an English corner which serves as a social community to support their English language learning. When learning contexts become the constraints, learners will negotiate with their learning process as Gao (2010) believes that the learning contexts play an essential role in the language learners' learning processes in general and their use of strategy in particular. In other words, EFL learners' language learning process is mediated and regulated through the use of tools they believe make the most sense to them in the learning context. They can draw on the

similarities and differences between their L1 and L2, and the comparisons with cultural artifacts such as wearing Halloween costumes to do trick or treat vs. wearing red Chinese New Year clothing to pay a visit to neighbors for treats and lucky money.

Scaffolding. Mitchell and Myles (2004) point out that "successful learning involves a shift from collaborative inter-mental activity to autonomous intra-mental activity" (p. 195). Collaborative inter-mental activity has been through certain procedures until it enters into the learners' autonomous functioning phase. These certain procedures during language learning are the key elements to successful learning. Ellis & Barkhuizen (2005) claim successful learning involves shifting control within activities from the group to the individual, from the external to the internal. The shifting of learning does not occur automatically and has to follow certain steps. In order to attain successful learning, learners have to engage in a process of supportive dialogue which directs learners' attention to key features of the environment and prompts learners through successive steps of a problem, and this process is called scaffolding (Wood *et al*., 1976). According to Wood *et al.* (1976), scaffolding has the following functions: (a)attracting interest in the task; (b) simplifying the task; (c) keeping pursuit of the goal; (d) revealing critical features and discrepancies between what has been produced, and the ideal solution; (e) controlling frustration during problem solving; (f) illustrating an ideal version of the act to be performed.

From the aforementioned functions, it is clear that scaffolding plays an important role in helping learners understand what is being learned in a more effective way. After the scaffolding phase, learners can transition their learning status from first dependent other-regulation to subsequent independent self-regulation. In the process of SLA, scaffolding is a strategy commonly used by teachers to guide students to understand ongoing tasks or new concepts through comprehensible input helpful suggestions and leading questions, and to take students

from where they are to a higher level. Language learners benefit from scaffolding by obtaining a clearer picture of what is being taught and how they can achieve the goal step by step with comprehensible input.

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD has had an increasingly influential impact in many research areas, such as developmental psychology, education, and applied linguistics including SLA. Through scaffolding, language learners receive assistance and support to retrieve, connect, expand and bridge their ZPD. Smidt (2009) discusses ZPD as being one of Vygotsky's central contributions to learning and teaching that originates from his focus on the significance of cultural tools and social meaning. The ZPD is defined by Vygotsky (1978) as, "the difference between the child's developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the higher level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (p. 85). From this definition, two developmental levels were established: the actual developmental level which is determined by a learner's actual ability without support from others, and the potential level of development that can be determined about a learner's ability when assistance is given from others (De Guerrera & Villamil, 2000). Closing the gap between these two levels means actual learning occurs. When support from others is offered, learning proceeds. It is likely for learners to complete more cognitively demanding tasks and reach higher-level thinking if they can receive the appropriate support from others.

In Vygotsky' Socio-cultural Theory (SCT) of development, play is considered as a particularly important activity. Through play, children can create a ZPD when doing collaborative activities with others, which enables them to perform beyond what they can currently independently achieve because they have the support of an adult or other more capable

peers (Vygotsky, 1978). According to Lantolf and Thorne (2005), from Vygotsky' SCT, ZPD is forward-looking with an assumption that if a child is able to achieve with the assistance of others, she or he will be able to achieve better independently in the future. In this sense, ZPD-guided assessment can provide teachers the thoughts to determine the development achieved presently and the development to be achieved in the future.

Some research has shown that ZPD is also useful in SLA (Antón, 1999). In regards to the relationships between ZPD and SLA, Ohta (1995) defines ZPD as "the difference between the L2 learners' developmental level as determined by independent language use, and the higher level of potential development as determined by how language is used in collaboration with a more capable interlocutor" (p. 96). It is not difficult to infer that collaborative activities with others function as an important tool to narrow the gap between L2 learners' actual ability in target language use and L2 learners' potential ability in target language use when offered additional support from others. Zhang, Fan & Du (2013) argue that the concepts of ZPD or scaffolding are important contributors in SLA because they help teachers comprehend that the potential development of a learner can be nurtured through using a mediator or some assistance from others, including teachers and peers. No matter what kind of meditators or assistance are being used, the goal is to bridge the distance between L2 learners' actual ability and L2 learners' potential ability in language use so that L2 learners can more effectively achieve SLA.

According to Vygotsky's SCT, learning collaboratively with others, and learning through participation in socio-culturally practices or in an instructional setting, can greatly help shape the development of language learning. Thus, learning environment (e.g., instructed L2 settings) can influence learners' developmental changes of language learning. Lantolf and Thorne (2005) assert, "the ZPD is not only a model of the developmental process but also a conceptual tool that

educators can use to understand aspects of students' emerging capacities that are in early stages of maturation" (p. 207). In other words, in L2 classrooms, teachers must identify and target this ZPD area to engage learners in learning and have the potential to use the ZPD as a tool to predict how language learners can achieve in the future, and teachers can also create conditions and possibilities for learning that might require specific forms of development with the assistance from either adults or capable peers. Identifying the ZPD can facilitate teachers to address each learner's needs and provide teachers more thoughts regarding the differentiated instructions.

To briefly summarize, the novice EFL learners and the experienced EFL teachers or more 'capable other' (Vygotsky, 1978), can communicate and collaborate with each other in the EFL classroom to help improve L2 learners' SLA. The 'capable other' can refer to the more capable peers as well. In order to bridge the gap in students' ZPD, teachers provide students the scaffolding information to help maximize the need of understanding. One of the methods of doing so can be pairing less capable learners with more advanced learners. During the scaffolding phase, in order to help decrease the ZPD distance between the learners' actual level and their potential level, both teachers and students are active participants and interact with each other through the tools of language, symbols and signs in either a classroom setting or a micro-social community setting. The review of SCT in this section can help me better understand one of my research questions about how the participants make sense of their English learning experiences with GTM and BDI under different social cultural contexts.

Language Learning Motivation and Socio-cultural Theory

From the socio-cultural perspective, learning including L2 learning is a mediated process. Learning, including L2 learning, is also both a cognitive and a social activity. In this sense, SLL/SLA is viewed as a socially mediated process. According to Kim (2013), in the process of

mediation, each L2 learner's previous language learning experience, learning history and culture play a crucial role. Kim (2013) also ascertains that despite the fact that learners have the same instructor and are learning the same contents in the same classroom, L2 learners' learning outcomes such as the L2 proficiency level show drastic individual differences, due to each learner's unique background and culture. Therefore, how to maintain L2 learners' language learning motivation in this socially mediated process is challenging for both L2 learners and teachers. According to Kim and others, L2 learning motivation is generated when an L2 learner recognizes a gap between his or her current level of L2 proficiency and the desired level (Kim, 2005; 2010a). The gap mentioned here resonates with Vygotsky's ZPD theory. If a L2 learner does not recognize the gap or distance between his or her actual development level and the potential level or does not think learning efforts can make a difference, then his or her learning motivation does not activate or tends to be low. However, if the learner is likely to think he or she can narrow the distance between the actual level and the potential level by making conscious efforts or by believing efforts will be rewarded, he or she is more likely to be motivated. Kim (2013) proposes "in the mediational process, L2 learning motivation fluctuates" (p. 460); this fluctuation varies throughout the learning process with the mediated assistance from others.

From a social-cognitive perspective of motivation, Pintrich (2003) proposes an individual's learning behavior is an internal process. Three motivational components in the cognitive model are identified by Pintrich & Schunk (2002) as being: a value component—*Why am I doing this task*?, an expectancy/self-efficacy component—*Can I do this*?, and an affective component— *How do I feel*?. Sociocultural theorists argue that a learner's cognitive processes are significantly impacted by social interaction and cultural institution (Hawkins, 1994; Okazaki & Sue, 1990). Many scholars also agree that a student's perceptions of value, as well as

expectancy and effort toward a task, reflect the influence of psychological processes and social-cultural mediation in learning (Oldfather & Dahl, 1994; Oldfather, West, White, & Wilmarth, 1999; Rueda & Dembo, 1995; Wertsch, 1991). Within this context, the value, expectancy and effort respectively refer to "*Why am I doing this task*?", "*Can I do this*?" and "*Did I try*? or "*how often did I try*?".

The impact of motivational beliefs or cultural differences of learners were examined by many researchers (Rao & Sachs, 1999; Rueda & Chen, 2005; Watkins & Ismail, 1994) who claim a leaner's motivational belief about foreign language learning is impacted by the individual's cultural background. Differences in motivational belief can result from family cultural background values (Uba, 1994), sociocultural adaptations, such as voluntary vs. involuntary (Ogbu & Simons, 1998), or socioeconomic status and perceptions of and responses to schooling (Ogbu, 1995a). Rueda & Chen (2005) completed a study utilizing a background information survey, a motivation information questionnaire and a learning outcome questionnaire to determine if diverse ethnic groups have differences in the types of motivational beliefs which may explain their behavior regarding SLA.

Traditional Grammar Translation Method (GTM)

What is GTM?

Grammar is one of the important components of English language learning. Without grammar, language is chaotic and unintelligible (Brown, 2007). No matter who we are, English native-speakers or English language learners, basic grammar plays an important role in communication. According to Brown (2001), a variety of methods can be applied in the language teaching process, such as *Direct Method (DM)*, *Total Physical Response (TPR)*, *Whole Language Approach (WLA)*, *Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)* and *Grammar Translation Method*

(GTM). Every teaching method has unique features and focus. Among them, GTM used to be a popular traditional foreign language teaching method. Natsir & Dedi (2014) summarize five basic elements about GTM: (a) students are taught through their mother tongue; (b) the vocabulary in GTM is memorized by translating it to the native language; (c) in terms of the grammar, the GTM method emphasizes that learners must understand the grammar before producing sentences; (d) there is no instruction using the authentic material in GTM; (e) the goal of GTM is to force students to analyze the language grammatically rather than to use the language for real-context communication.

Additionally, Prator & Murcia (1979) add more definition of the major characteristics of GTM as follows: (a) classes are taught in the mother language, with little active use of the target language; (b) most vocabulary is taught in the form of lists of isolated words; (c) long elaborate explanations of the intricacies of grammar are given; (d) grammar provides the rules for putting words together and instruction often focuses on the form and inflection of words; (e) reading of difficult classical texts begins early; (f) little attention is paid to the content of texts, which are treated as drill practices with grammatical analysis; (g) often the only drills are exercises in translating disconnected sentences from the target language into the mother tongue; (h) little or no attention is given to pronunciation; (i) the focus is on accuracy, and not fluency. In this sense, GTM only emphasizes grammatical usages but places no emphasis on real communication.

From the aforementioned description, GTM mainly requires learners to translate whole texts word for word from the target language into the mother tongue and then memorize numerous grammatical rules and exceptions as well as enormous vocabulary lists (Elmayantie, 2015). The fundamental purpose of using GTM to teach the target language is only to make learners read literature written in the target language but not to improve learners' communicative

competence which is what CLT mainly focuses on. The nature of the GTM emphasizes the written form, paying little attention to the oral from (Mondal, 2012).

There are four fundamental skills in English language learning: listening, speaking, reading and writing. GTM only focuses on helping students develop reading and writing skills and promotes mastery of grammatical rules in the target language but ignores students' listening and speaking skills. To achieve this goal, learners use textbooks as the basis for the translation of words, phrases and whole paragraphs or texts from one language to another (Natsir & Sanjaya, 2014). The memorization of grammatical rules and vocabulary is extremely important in this method. With GTM, the teacher is seen as the center of the class and the class turns their attention to the teacher (Larsen-Freeman, 2003; Liu & Shi, 2007). Being the focus of the class requires the teacher to have extensive knowledge of the target language since the teacher is the main source of information (Matamoros-Gonzalez *et al.*, 2017). GTM is truly a teacher-centered teaching method. When using GTM, students are not active participants but passive listeners. In the class, students' role is limited to listening to the teacher, taking notes, memorizing grammatical rules and vocabularies, translating word by word, and completing drill practices. There are no real-life contexts in the class; rather there is an environment of repeating or substituting the words or phrases according to the grammatical rule system.

The Advantages and Disadvantages of Using GTM

Regarding the advantages and disadvantages of using GTM to teach English, scholars have different perspectives. DeKeyser (1995) conducted a study and reported that meaning-based teaching that provided explicit grammar explanation was preferred. Male (2011) carried out a mixed study to investigate students' attitude towards grammar and the teaching of grammar and concluded the students believed grammar was important in learning English, and they preferred

explicit grammar teaching. Nagaratnam and Al-Mekhlafi (2012) examined pre-service teachers' attitudes towards the grammar teaching method and found that they had positive attitudes towards grammar teaching and preferred implicit grammar teaching.

Although research has shown that many students are in favor of GTM for achieving academic purposes, little has been mentioned that students embrace GTM because it meets students' interests and needs. According to the previously mentioned key components and goals of GTM, students' best interest is not targeted. Thus, when teachers use GTM to teach, they have no intention of thinking about students' interests and needs but instead just focus on grammatical instructions. Ebsworth and Schweers' (1997) study revealed that teachers believed grammar teaching helped the learners whose aim was to develop good academic and business English and to achieve higher proficiency in English.

Due to GTM's limitations on grammar usage, some negative voices were heard in the field. Thuleen (1996) claim GTM is teacher-centered so the teaching and learning environment is not conducive for active learning, and the learner has no opportunity to use techniques for their own language learning. GTM requires mainly rote memorization and drill practice to gain language fluency, and students cannot apply their own ideas into the drill practice. The only way to learn English through GTM is to follow the grammatical rules. Passive learning is the main product in GTM-led classroom. Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011) illustrate the pitfalls of GTM only focusing on grammatical rules, and students only being taught the lexical rather than focusing on listening and speaking skills. Students who learned English through GTM usually cannot perform well in listening and speaking as these skills are not a part of GTM teaching.

Kong (2011) argues that, students taught with the grammar-translation method do demonstrate some problems. These problems include: only focusing on written language, having

poor speaking ability, suffering from long-term deaf mutism to L2, relying on translating everything into L1 and demonstrating poor communicative competence. Thus, silent English is the product of the GTM method. However, the main purpose of learning a language is to use the target language to communicate. Natsir & Dedi (2014) argue that GTM method is antiquated and teachers do not care about students' feelings and emotions because there is no principle related to handling this area in this method. In GTM, the relationship between teacher and student is not close, and students normally consider teachers as the authority in the class.

Elmayantie (2015) warns of the danger of GTM by claiming this method only teaches students about language but does not care about students' communicative competence. This warning notifies communicative competence being the key words. Hymes (1972) proposes that language should be taught in communicative situations in order for learners to achieve communicative competence. This communicative competence is also the main goal of language learning. Chang (2011) explains the similar concern about GTM by arguing that although GTM can help improve students' mastery of the grammatical rules, students cannot freely use these grammatical rules to communicate in real life, which results in students' poor communicative competence.

To conclude this portion of the discussion, although GTM was popular and preferred for the sake of teaching students grammatical rules, it has displayed some drawbacks in relation to language learners' communicative competence. The importance of learning a L2 reminds us that students have to demonstrate communicative competence to achieve successful SLA.

Current EFL teaching in China

China has been investing time and effort in pushing EFL teaching to a higher level, and many EFL teachers have been passionate about their roles. China has placed English language

learning as a priority; however, students' English proficiency across the nation remains low (Education First, 2012). EFL students are not embracing the current EFL teaching in China, and are reluctant to push themselves to learn English due to the needs of social and economic development. However, despite teachers' enthusiasm in teaching, Wu (2001) argues that EFL teachers are facing challenges and are appealing for increased support and efforts to promote English language teaching in China and for expounded research in English language learning in a non-target language environment. Rao (2010) supports Wu's findings and claims the same rapid development of English language education has resulted in a number of difficulties and challenges for EFL teaching in China.

Unique Features of the EFL Context in China

English has been introduced to primary and secondary schools across China for many years, but the English learning and teaching outcomes is not satisfactory. On average, students learn English for a total of 10-16 years, starting from first grade to the senior year in the college. Ideally, most Chinese youth should at least be able to communicate in English without much difficulty. However, the learners in China are not demonstrating high-level English language proficiency. Only a small percentage of EFL learners in China are at an advanced level of proficiency while a much larger percentage of them are at a low level of proficiency. Studies have found that implementation of CLT in Chinese context is constrained by many factors (Cheng, 2010; Hu, 2005; Jin & Cortazzi, 2006; Kim, 2008; Rao, 2013).

The dominance of GTM. GTM dominates regular EFL classrooms, and CLT is limited to international EFL classrooms. The traditional instructional practices still predominate or exist with some CLT activities in most classrooms (Hu, 2005). In public schools, students are expected to pass written exams to prove they have reached a certain English proficiency level.

The passage of exams is impactful as students are more motivated about the learning outcomes rather than the learning process itself. Most EFL learners in China do not address the needs to actually speak the target language because speaking is not a required component of the exams (Zhong, 2012). Students in China will give extra attention to exams when they have the purpose of learning English for obtaining practical benefits. Ye (2007) argues that most EFL learners from secondary schools in China are exposed to limited linguistic knowledge but attach more importance to language grammar so they fail to convey themselves in both verbal and written communication in EFL classrooms. In this sense, it is understandable that EFL learners do not intend to develop their communicative competence if, for them, the purpose of learning English is just to pass a written test.

In fact, in China many large-scale exams are designed to test EFL learners based on structuralism. The format of exams is predominantly multiple choice, which has been found to constrain language teaching in a rather negative way. It is the exams that produce a significant impact on shaping both teachers' teaching approaches and learners' learning approaches in China because scoring higher on the exams is the main driving motivation in the process of their English learning. Rao (2013) states that the English language teachers in China today still cling to the traditional teaching methods and techniques. Rao (2002) in his earlier research analyzed two reasons for why GTM is preferred in China: (a) students do not like to participate in communicative-type activities and prefer more traditional classroom work; (b) teachers feel discouraged from continuing with CLT due to students' negative responses and their lack of training in how to use CLT in the classroom. Harvey (1985) mentions that both GTM and the traditional language teaching methods in China share the same goals and components because both of them encourage rote memorization, recitation and strict adherence to grammar rules. The

Chinese EFL teachers' limited speaking skills, as well as their inadequate methodological training, have caused them to lose face in front of their students and have resulted in the Chinese EFL teachers reverting to GTM (Woolsey, 1992). Thus, today traditional, teacher-centered, textbook-centered, and grammar-based methods are still popular in Chinese EFL classrooms.

EFL learners' motivation types. Zhong (2012) mentions three main types of students' motivations in terms of the Confucian tradition: (a) They want to have social mobility and to bring honor to one's family; (b) Intrinsically they want to cultivate themselves to become perfect; (c) They insist that higher achievement on exams leads to better job opportunities and higher social status. Based on the three motivations, Chinese students put much emphasis on the importance of effort and self-determination in the learning process, which tells why fun activities in class are viewed not as important as the drill practice of grammar rules.

EFL learners' learning strategies. The EFL learners in China placed much emphasis on rote-memorization and repetition strategies in the process of SLA. As Rao (1996) points out, teachers devote almost all their class time to teaching a text where they explain and analyze some language points (e.g. tenses, sentence structures), which is followed by translating the text and drilling the patterns in the text. After the text explanation, all students are required to memorize new vocabulary words from the text and recite them. Other studies on Chinese EFL learners have yielded similar results that Chinese learners have been forced to recite and memorize English vocabulary words and texts as a daily learning routine (Zhong, 2012). Guan (2013) also argues that in general the current EFL teachers in China still prefer the teacher-centered and textbook-centered teaching pattern and the top-down traditional foreign language teaching mode. This also indicates the same features of GTM through which students in the classroom do not have much freedom in learning to their best interest but follows the patterns and complete drill practice.

The shortage of qualified EFL teachers. China has a large EFL student population and this student population reality requires a big team of EFL teachers. Not surprisingly, the lack of qualified EFL teachers is the most serious constraint in EFL teaching in China (Rao, 2010; 2016). To compensate for the shortage of English teachers, many Chinese schools have made efforts to hire more native-English-speaking teachers (NESTs) to fill the EFL teaching vacancies (Rao, 2016). However, numerous studies have found that the EFL teaching offered by NESTs was not as satisfactory as expected (Chun, 2014; Jeon & Lee, 2006; Ma, 2012a; Rao, 2010). Rao (2016) summarizes three types of major problems about the teaching from NESTs in China as being an insensitivity to students' linguistic problems, conflicts in teaching and learning styles, and unfamiliarity with local cultural and educational systems. In order to help develop EFL teaching in China, more eligible NESTs and local Chinese EFL teachers need to be trained.

Limited cultivation of creativity in the EFL classroom. Due to the implementation of the new English Curriculum Standards by the Chinese Ministry of Education in 2011, teachers have placed increasing attention to the development of creative learning opportunities and creative instructional strategies in the EFL classroom (Cheng, 2011; Li, 2016; Lu, 2014; Wang, 2015; Zhou, 2013). There is an increasing number of EFL teachers who have recognized their roles in the cultivation of creativity in the education system (Hua, 2012; Li, 2010; Pang, 2012; Rao, 2014).

However, it has been noted that educational reforms to infuse creativity are not widespread around China, and there are limited studies on how the EFL teaching and learning policies have been implemented into teaching practice (Hartley & Plucker, 2014). There are many reasons to support explaining why EFL teachers are facing challenges in implementing creative education in EFL classrooms in China.

China's unique social culture. One of the typical features of Chinese social culture is that people do not often value creative thinking as encouraging (Chien & Hui, 2010; Gauntlett & Thomsen, 2013). Students are educated to value conformity and obedience rather than individuality due to the rooted influence of Confucian culture (Cheng, 2010; Chien & Hui, 2010; Niu & Sternberg, 2003). Being creative sometimes may differentiate an individual from others, so "standing out from the crowd generally is not highly appreciated in Chinese societies" (Niu & Sternberg, 2003, p. 108). Students in China are expected to perform the same based on the uniform standards. In a traditional EFL classroom, students are expected to listen to teachers rather than raise question (Cheng, 2010; Zhao & Wang, 2013).

Large class size. A typical English class in primary and secondary schools has an average of 50 students. And a college English class for non-English major students has over 100 students. Large classes make it difficult for instructors to assign pair or small group work, and the number of students also becomes challenging for teachers to supervise. Due to the large class size, the traditional classroom seating arrangement in Chinese schools limits the communication among students and fails to inspire students' creative engagement (Cheng, 2010; Li, 2016). The students in the back rows of the classroom receive less attention from the teacher and have fewer opportunities to respond to questions, and, consequently, their interest and motivation in learning may decrease (Li, 2016).

Centralized curriculum and limited class teaching time. In China, the Ministry of Education officially sets the national curriculum which all teachers are pushed to follow because the national curriculum has the benchmark for the standardized tests. It is unique that only China has the *Gaokao* (an annually held national standard test for admission to college) that has significant impact on students' future. In order to score high in every subject area during

Gaokao, students have no choice but to only focus on academic success. Since students have many core classes to attend, English class is only a small part of their daily schedule. Thus, EFL teachers have limited class teaching time, and they have to teach to the test first. Neither teachers nor students in China have a strong need to improve students' communicative competence.

Looking back on what has been done with EFL teaching in China, it is not difficult to see that EFL teachers and students in China are facing challenges. It is understandable that the EFL learners in China prefer GTM in the classroom to meet their high test score needs. Thus, this section of discussion provided me a context for understanding how my participants may make sense of their English language learning experiences related to GTM, and, it also enabled me to comprehend the fluctuation of their motivation under the unique Chinese EFL teaching contexts.

Biography-Driven Instruction

Schools are considered as micro-societies where teachers from the dominant culture often teach culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students with whom they are unlikely to share the same cultural backgrounds (Gay, 2013). From Gay's words, it is necessary to transform teacher preparation for culturally responsive teaching (CRT) in order to help students at all levels succeed. According to Gay (2010), culturally responsive teaching is defined as "using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively" (p. 106). In other words, teachers use the cultural identities, experiences, and perspectives of CLD students as a channel or a means in the classroom to plan lessons accordingly and teach them in more effective ways. Other educators and researchers have also emphasized that teachers need to explore, recognize and integrate diverse students' cultural identities and experiences, consequently enhancing their learning motivation and performance (Gay, 2000, 2013; Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2000; Siwatu, Chesnut, Alejandro, & Young, 2016).

Students' diverse backgrounds are closely related to their learning motivation and performance. In order to promote Gay's CRT to a new level, Biography-Driven culturally responsive teaching was first proposed by Herrera (2010). Herrera (2016) makes a strong argument that as the diversity of student populations continues to increase in schools across the nation, the ever-changing demographics of our classrooms have to be acknowledged. It is unprecedentedly important for current educators and teachers to make efforts to find ways of providing equal educational opportunities and high-quality education which promotes both their linguistic and academic achievement. One of the goals in education is to make CLD students the center of the instruction by identifying the CLD students' needs and teaching them more effectively to achieve the curricular goals. In order to reach this goal, biography driven instruction (BDI) method is proposed to provide teachers with the guiding principles to differentiate instructional practices in ways that help promote the success of all students both linguistically and academically in their classrooms (Herrera & Murry, 2016). Since then, BDI method has been credited with meeting students' individual needs.

What is BDI?

Biography driven instruction (BDI) is a model of culturally-responsive pedagogy that provides educational philosophy and instructional strategies for educators and teachers who have contributed their careers to promote our understanding of the circumstances that can help develop SLL/SLA ,and most importantly, allow students to succeed and flourish (Herrera, 2010; Herrera, Kavimandan, & Holmes, 2011). Herrera (2010) mentions that BDI embraces student diversity through incorporating the sociocultural, linguistic, cognitive, and academic dimensions of students' biographies into the learning process. The incursion of students' biographies into the learning process is an important component for teachers to use in making decisions to deliver

lessons. BDI capitalizes on teachers' careful investigation and use of the sociocultural, linguistic, cognitive, and academic biographies of the CLD students as a guiding channel to instructional decision-making, aiming at promoting both their linguistic and academic achievement at all levels (Perez, Holmes, Miller & Fanning, 2012).

It is worth noting that the term of CLD students has a wide range and is more representative and inclusive (Herrera, 2016). According to Herrera (2016), CLD serves to include "not only our nonnative English speakers but also those students whose first language is English yet who use various dialects and registers that, perhaps, do not adhere to the expectations of Standard American English (SAE)" (p.6). The teachers in the classroom should be more aware of the wider implications of the term CLD and develop instructional practices that truly address students' diverse backgrounds and needs.

According to Herrera and Murry (2016), BDI is proposed as a research-based instructional method which highlights the reciprocal facilitation and navigation of the official classroom space and the unofficial space of students' lives outside the classroom, and their role being an asset for the promotion of culturally responsive teaching and learning. In other words, BDI emphasizes the importance of what diverse students bring with them from both inside the classroom and outside the classroom. In order for teachers to deliver lessons in a more culturally responsive way, it is important to navigate the information that diverse students have brought to the classroom. BDI requires teachers to view diverse students as assets in the classroom, and BDI is seen as an effective model that has been used in practice by many researchers.

Through using BDI in the classroom, teachers can get more information to clearly address CLD students' need and actively seek to develop and account for the full potential of CLD students (MacDonald, Miller, Murry, Herrera, & Spears, 2013). Teachers are encouraged to

explore students' diverse backgrounds so they have the knowledge of how to accommodate students' needs appropriately and how to plan accordingly to help students succeed linguistically and academically. Additionally, the research on BDI has provided key evidence that new perspectives on teacher preparation and development for attaining global competence with diversity are calling for further attention and study (Perez, Holmes, Miller, & Fanning, 2012).

To summarize, the goal of BDI (Herrera, 2010) is to (a) take each individual student's background knowledge into consideration, (b) create an instructional climate that promotes growth from the known to the unknown, and (c) provide a "space" for individual students to demonstrate and celebrate his or her success at the end of each lesson. Underlying the goal of BDI is the assumption that, teachers first investigate the biographies of all CLD students (sociocultural, linguistic, cognitive, academic dimension) and value diverse students' identities and experiences. Next, teachers utilize students' assets and resources to make instructional accommodations so that teachers can provide structured opportunities for students to become active learners and make connections between what they know and what they do not know. At the end of the class period, teachers allow students to take ownership of the new knowledge and celebrate their learning success.

The Three Phases of BDI

When teachers implement lessons in accordance with BDI principles, there are three distinct and interrelated phases: the Activation Phase (before), the Connection Phase (during), and the Affirmation Phase(after). At each phase, teachers assume different roles to support student learning (Herrera, Holmes & Kavimandan, 2012).

During the activation phase, the teacher acts as an observer while students are documenting their background knowledge and are discussing with peers. According to the words

of Herrera, Kavinmandan, and Holmes (2011), the goal of the activation phase is to create a low risk environment for the learners so they can draw from their background knowledge, including their funds of knowledge (at home), prior knowledge (in the community), and academic knowledge (at school) to link to the new content learning. All learners can use both linguistic and non-linguistic forms to associate their understanding, such as their L1, L2, or any symbolic tools or artifacts such as pictures, formulas, charts, signs, diagrams and stick figures to relate to the topic learning. The primary goal at this phase is to provide students a safe and comfortable zone in which we can help students activate their background knowledge and demonstrate to them our willingness as a teacher to be invited to their lives. In the activation phase, students feel safe to share and respond to activities and prompts that allow the teacher to investigate and pre-assess students' background knowledge. Teachers then observe students' discussions and record the insights that might provide useful prompts for the instruction phase by incorporating what students already know and what content knowledge students are going to learn.

During the connection phase, the teacher serves as a facilitator assisting students in the process of meaning-making. In order to help students follow the navigation of content learning, teachers model for students their own way of approaching a task and unpacking the meaning or relating it to existing knowledge. As students negotiate their understanding of the new content, teachers revoice the important connections students have made between their background knowledge and the content knowledge (Herrera, Kavinmandan, & Holmes, 2011). The modeling and revoicing from teachers helps to provide students the comprehensive input they need to achieve learning at the *i*+1 level, and it also narrows down the ZPD distance. During this phase, the teacher can incorporate the overall knowledge of students' biographies, as well as the new knowledge that he or she recorded from the activation phase into the classroom to purposefully

guide students' construction of meaning and knowledge, and provoke connections from what students already know to what is the unknown knowledge. In this phase, the teacher can also adapt and tailor teaching strategies as needed to support student learning and ensure all learners are actively engaged in learning throughout the connection phase. The main purpose of this phase is to promote students learning and growth from the known to the unknown and to have students gradually take ownership of the content knowledge.

During the affirmation phase, the teacher acts as an affirmer to help students celebrate their successful learning. In this phase, the teacher can use authentic assessment to keep track of student progress and document students' incremental growth in both content and language, as well as determine what needs to be revisited (Herrera, Kavinmandan, & Holmes, 2011). In this phase, teachers tend to place greater emphasis on the learning process than the learning product, recognizing each student's starting point at both the linguistic and academic levels and communicating with students about their gains and understanding of knowledge. It is important to let the students recognize the value of their incremental gains and their mastery of new knowledge throughout their learning process. It is also necessary to have students respect what each individual has brought to the classroom and value their individual contributions to the class. At the end of the lesson, the teacher allows students to reveal what they have learned, and they celebrate students' successes. Additionally, through the affirmation phase, students gain opportunities to reflect on and discuss what they have learned and what they need to revise and improve on in order to move towards new learning (Herrera, Holmes & Kavimandan, 2012). Students realize they have used what they brought to the class as a foundation for building new skills and knowledge.

From the discussion of these three interrelated phases of BDI, it is not hard to understand that it is beneficial for CLD students to perceive what they already know, reflect on what they are learning and summarize what they have learned in order to build a good foundation for future learning. Instructions throughout these three phases enable CLD students to view themselves as valued members and contributors to the learning community (Herrera, Holmes & Kavimandan, 2012). When students are allowed to see their value both in the classroom and in the community, they are more aware of the importance of their roles in learning and become more confident and motivated to actively engage in learning.

BDI Strategies

BDI strategies play an important role throughout the full implementation of the lesson where students' learning occurs. The teachers' successful delivery of BDI strategies with CLD students is a good method for increasing their global competence with diversity and such strategies incorporate what we know about CLD student assets and needs (Herrera, 2012). Strategies have been developed and have provided teachers with instructional tips and routines that facilitate BDI teaching (Herrera, Kavimandan & Holmes, 2011).

BDI includes more than 20 different strategies (Herrera, 2010; Herrera, Kavimandan, & Holmes, 2011) which can provide guidelines to support classroom teachers as they scaffold instruction and explicitly utilize students' biographies to promote both linguistic and academic learning. BDI strategies are delivered in three phases: Activation, Connection and Affirmation. Although each strategy supplies a unique structure for the overall learning process, all the strategies are implemented to guide students in activating their background knowledge, making connections between what they already know and what they are going to learn, and

demonstrating and celebrating their language and content success (Perez, Holmes, Miller & Fanning, 2012).

To recapitulate, BDI strategies are mainly designed to create a risk-free class environment, to encourage comprehensive input and recurrent use of L1 to help understanding, to develop retention of students' motivation and interest, to leverage the sociocultural skills and knowledge, to promote student interaction for comprehensibility, and to integrate a variety of learning techniques into student learning. BDI strategies are also implemented to guide teachers in using purposeful grouping and scaffolding techniques which keep all learners engaged in learning and have the power to promote learners' self-confidence among students of all levels of English proficiency (Herrera, Holmes & Kavimandan, 2012). BDI strategies are implemented in the three phases: activation, connection and affirmation to ensure learners' active engagement in the classroom and to conduct an effective learning.

The Foundations of Biography-Driven Instruction

Herrera (2010) mentions that the foundations of BDI originate from a wild range of educational research and theory. With the increasingly changing demographics of the student population in the classroom, as well as the political dynamic on diverse student populations, many teachers are unprepared to teach them effectively. They are seeking guidance to accommodate students' individual needs. Thus, how to address students' unique needs and how to best plan to meet these needs becomes more relevant to teachers' instructional practices. To find a way to generate a solution to the problem, there should be a shift in mindset from viewing our students through a deficit perspective to viewing them through an asset perspective (Herrera, 2016). In addition, the existing programs and models of teaching CLD students provide a starting

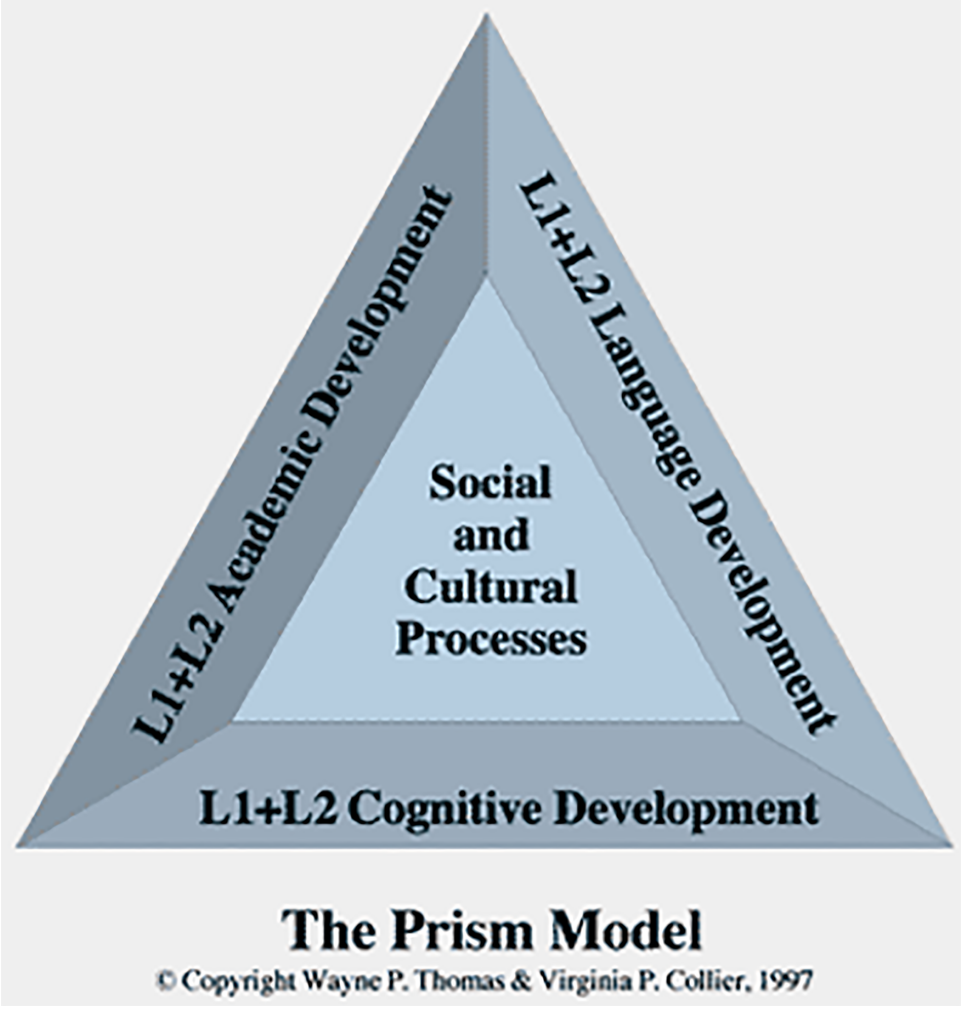
point for proposing new and more effective methods for future teaching among diverse student populations (Herrera, 2010).

Grounded in the communicative and cognitive approaches of teaching and learning, the BDI method situates teaching and learning in a more comprehensive way. The BDI method has evolved from the work of many educators and researchers whose findings are important factors to understanding BDI structure and in providing key components for the design of BDI.

The Prism Model.

Figure 2.1.

The Prism Model



As illustrated in Figure 2.1., the Prism Model expanded by Thomas & Collier (1997) includes four major dimensions that drive language acquisition for students: linguistic, academic, cognitive and sociocultural. These four basic dimensions must be understood so we can provide learning opportunities to enable students to reach their fullest potential. Thomas and Collier (1997) mention that no single dimension of CLD student success should be addressed separately. All these four dimensions are critical for CLD students' future linguistic and academic success. They are interrelated and cover developmental processes that occur simultaneously for the CLD student (Herrera & Murry, 2016). All of these four components—sociocultural, academic, cognitive, and linguistic—are interdependent and if we focus on one but neglect another, this may prove detrimental to a student's overall growth and success (Thomas & Collier, 1997).

As illustrated in Figure 2.1., the social-cultural dimension is at the heart of the prism model. Thomas and Collier (1997) believe that it is necessary and crucial for educators to provide a socio-culturally supportive school environment, allowing linguistic, academic, and cognitive development to naturally flourish in both L1 and L2. This model also resonates with the previous socio-cultural theory in helping EFL learners understand their English language learning experiences and acquire their SLA.

Thomas and Collier (1997) point out that student realities influence their SLA processes. Figure 2.1. displays the student realities as social and cultural processes, academic development in L1 and L2, cognitive development in L1 and L2, and language development in L1 and L2. These processes all affect a learner's capacity to acquire SLA and to succeed both linguistically and academically. According to Thomas and Collier's (1997) findings, they strongly recommend that students with diverse backgrounds benefit enormously in the long-term from L1 cognitive and academic development. They also claim that L1 schooling is powerful for students who have

lost their L1, bilingual students, and/or even students who just initiated L2 learning. Their understanding of students' realities confirm that L1 age-appropriate schooling is critical for L2 linguistic, cognitive and academic enrichment. L2 must be taught in a socio-culturally supportive environment while challenging students to succeed at age-appropriate levels through L2.

Funds of knowledge. The funds of knowledge is defined as those historically developed and accumulated bodies of knowledge that are essential to the function and well-being of a family (Moll et al., 1992). The idea of funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) highlights the value of knowledge and resources that students gather from their homes and families. This idea has been guiding educators' thoughts and practices for more than a decade. Each student brings a wealth of historically accumulated and culturally developed sets of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual well-being. In reality, a students' primary socialization occurs within a group of people who interact with them and help shape their language and ways of thinking about the world. The funds of knowledge that families and students possess are viewed as students' home assets, such as family traditions, native language, home literacy practices, and family dynamics (Herrera, 2016).

Based on the aforementioned definition, students' funds of knowledge are closely associated with their understanding of the world, as reflected in their native language, family traditions, personal actions, individual roles and certain behavior patterns. Since this type of knowledge is accumulated within a student's immediate household, it is often seen as hidden truth or secret truth as it is passed on from generation to generation in daily activities and is understood through a shared lens within the household. It is a simple truth that you have to live there to understand the complicated situation. These ways of thinking, doing and being in the world are unique to the students who are involved in the same family and make automatic sense

to them, but other people who do not share the same culture and traditions might not think the same way and might find it difficult to understand. For example, a particular saying, joke, rule or symbol makes automatic sense to us within the same context of our family, but it makes no sense to an outsider. We are often asked to explain why things are the way they are, but it is still difficult for an outsider to truly understand because they do not live in the same culture. Thus, funds of knowledge is an indispensable component in facilitating students to make connections to the new concepts and to understand the new learning.

Herrera (2016) argues that, funds of knowledge, especially those that are tied to culture, are not always captured by teachers in the classroom. Thus, Herrera (2016) adds in order to understand what our students know and how they communicate with what they already knew, we must first understand the cultural surroundings that have shaped their thoughts and actions. It is not an automatic path to understand their hidden culture unless we make a conscious effort to observe as they go through the meaning-making process of what we teach. Once we recognize students' fund of knowledge, we can conceptualize contexts and scaffold information that make more sense to them and provide them opportunities to become valued members and active learners in our classroom rather than silent observers or passive participants.

Research into how the brain learns. Current research into how the brain operates during learning processes sets the stage for teachers to understand what kind of learning contexts and situations can best enable the brain to perceive, process, and store the information for future use. According to Sousa (2006), the cognitive belief system guides our thinking process and the information stored in our brain for a long-term storage drives our view of the world because this information helps us to make sense of what has happened in our life, to understand how nature runs, to differ cause and effect, and to help us develop decision-making.

Other scholars such as psychologists Bjork, Dunlosky & Kornell (2013) hold similar opinions towards how the brain learns as Sousa asserts, stating that in order to have new information stored in our brain, it must first have meaning, which is associated with what is already stored in our memories. They emphasize the relationship between the existing knowledge in our brain and the new information we need to understand. If there is no association between what we already knew and what we are learning, the brain is less likely to process and store the new information. Therefore, teachers will need to create a space where they can help students connect their prior knowledge to the new concepts so they can support students in validating the existing knowledge, making sense of the new concepts and effectively storing the new information.

The Information Processing Model summarizes how the brain makes sense of new information, highlighting the importance of past experiences and emphasizing both sense and meaning for long-term storage of information. Brain research reminds us that in order to invite the brain to learn, the teacher must value what kind of knowledge the students bring to the class and create a gap to challenge students' brains to think and connect. Herrea (2016) describes this process as "getting oxygen to the brain" (p. 12) and encourages teachers to use a variety of strategies and activities to support students in activating what they know and in making connections to build better understanding. If we know how the brain processes information, we can make modifications during our instruction to facilitate students' learning.

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). Gay's insights into CRT sets up a strong foundation on the framework of the BDI method. Gay (2000) defines CRT as a culturally validating and affirming instruction, aiming at employing the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning

more relevant and effective for them. Every student brings his or her own "historical self" (Herrera, 2016, p. 13) to the classroom. This "historical self" can refer to his or her own language, dialects, culture, traditions, life styles, unique behaviors and life experiences. Creating a learning environment that is culturally relevant and responsive to CLD students requires thoughtful planning, continuous learning, and conscious reflection on our deeply rooted beliefs and assumptions (Herrera, 2016).

Many researchers have written about what it means to teach in culturally responsive ways (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto, 2000; Ogbu & Simons, 1998) and have agreed on the need for CRT. According to these scholars, CRT is student-centered and takes students' interests and needs into consideration before delivering a lesson. It advocates for teachers to teach to and through the strengths of the CLD students. Gay (2000) strongly affirms that CRT can help address the cultural diversity of students and alleviate problems caused by cultural conflicts. In classrooms, the CLD students bring diverse cultures to the classroom and expect the teacher to deliver lessons that relate to their own cultures. When teachers try to create a classroom where personally meaningful connections can be made, where individual interests and needs can be met, and where failure can be seen as just another opportunity to learn, teachers are putting students at the center of learning. Teachers are showing respect to the uniqueness of every student and caring for every student.

Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1984). In regards to how learners develop a second language, Krashen' research findings gained credibility for explaining the language input and guiding teacher practice. Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1984/2002) suggests that language is acquired "by understanding input containing *i*+1; that is, by understanding that language contains input including structures that are a bit beyond the acquirer's current level" (p. 40). The small "*i*"

in "*i*+1" represents a learner's current language competence. When utilizing comprehensive input to strengthen learners' understandings teachers creates an opportunity for learners to stretch one step beyond the current limit of language level and reach the "*i*+1" level.

Learners begin language learning and advance through the process step by step in a method of receiving comprehensible input. Comprehensible input is the type of knowledge learners are able to understand, despite its unfamiliarity, through making connections between what they already know and the new information. Thus, associating language and content to learners' prior meaningful experiences becomes crucial in the learning process as learners cannot understand the things they do not have experiences with or prior knowledge to activate and link new learning to. To activate prior knowledge and create context for understanding, teachers might use role-playing, field trips, hand-on activities, and experiments to actively engage students in the learning process.

Based on this input hypothesis, it is also necessary for teachers to design instructions to take all learners one step beyond their current level of development in classrooms where diversity is increasingly becoming the norm (Herrera, 2016). For this reason, Herrera (2016) suggests that teachers keep the biographies of the learners in mind and think about strategies to connect the learners' past experiences and existing knowledge to the new concepts to facilitate the CLD students move one step beyond---- both linguistically and academically.

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1978). Vygotsky' Zone of proximal development (ZPD) is an important concept in socio-cultural theory. It proposes the existence of a zone between a learner's level of independent performance and the level of performance possible with assistance. Vygotsky (1978) argues that learning occurs when new information and skills fall within the zone, or the space between what the learner already knows and what he or

she can do with necessary assistance, thus learners are able to understand the new topic, to make new connections and to affirm their previous knowledge. Aljaafresh & Lantolf (1994) describe the ZPD to be inclusive in all learning settings because it brings together all aspects for earning to occur---- the teacher, the learner, their social and cultural history, their goals and motives, and also the resources available to them. The critical issue in the field of practice then becomes how to take advantage of all pieces of learning setting to bridge the distance between where the learners are currently standing and where they can potentially stand.

Herrera (2016) mentions that the work of Vygotsky has contributed to our understanding of how to take students from their current academic levels to the next level. As Vygotsky (1978) argues, all individuals have the potential to succeed, and learning is highly connected to the particular context, situation and social interaction where learners can perceive the learning gap and become successful with the assistance from others. Herrera (2010) insists that we must value multiple perspectives on what counts as knowledge (including students' background knowledge, prior knowledge and academic knowledge) rather than judging our students on their current level of development from the standardized tests, and we must continually connect students' past to their present, and their present to their future through conducting social interaction and providing supportive assistance to prepare them to move one step beyond their current level of development.

The Interconnectedness of LLM, SCT and BDI

Herrera (2016) mentions another hallmark of the BDI structure and design is Vygotsky's work on the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Vygotsky has proposed that teaching and learning should be located in the zone between what the learner can do interpedently and what he/she can do with the assistance or guidance of an adult or a more capable peer. Accordingly,

teachers who implement BDI primarily act as facilitators of students' various and situated learning processes, including, but not limited to: discovery, the construction of meaning, the categorization of meaning into schemas of prior learning, and the application to a problem or a new challenge. BDI strategies enable students to have opportunities to learn as much from their peers as they may from their teachers. This situated learning occurs at various times through social interaction, dialogic processes, and visual cues. When teachers implement BDI strategies throughout the activation, connection, and affirmation phases of a lesson, they have a goal of taking all learners one step beyond their current of development. That goal is equivalent to Vygotsky's ZPD.

Motivation is another critical contributor to second language learning and also one of the key concepts in the BDI structure. BDI is a student-centered method with a primary focus on addressing students' diverse needs to keep them engaged and motivated throughout the full learning process. Herrera (2016) says, "No one can be forced to learn. We can only encourage, support, and thus motivate students to join the community of learners on their education journey" (p.13). BDI strategies are designed to stimulate students' motivation to learn, to maintain the motivation throughout the lesson, and to retain the motivation to learn in the future. Motivation fluctuates as the socio-cultural contexts change. Ginsberg & Wlodkowski (2009) suggest that cultural isolation often causes motivation to deteriorate; the challenge for instructors is to create a successful learning environment for all learners that respects different cultures and maintains a common culture that all learners can accept. Thus, when using BDI, teachers are required to be cognizant of social contexts that surround the learners, and which motivate students to learn. BDI demonstrates a sociocultural perspective to increase CLD students' motivation to learn and reach both linguistic and academic success by first getting to know their biographical backgrounds

from sociocultural, linguistic, cognitive and academic dimensions and then applying differentiated instruction through activation, connection and affirmation phases. Therefore, motivation theory, sociocultural theory and BDI integrate with each other to provide theoretical perspectives and basis for understanding my participants' English language learning experiences.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I began with a literature review of LLM, including the key scholars, main ideas of the key scholars in regards to the definitions, types of motivation and the applications in SLL, and then I discussed how motivation can affect learners' SLL and how motivation can help me better understand my participants' English learning experiences about GTM in China and BDI in the United States that they were exposed to in relation to LLM. Next, I completed a review on SCT, covering the key scholars and their main ideas, and how SCT allowed me to understand my participants' English learning experiences about GTM and BDI under different social cultural contexts. Along with this review I researched the relationship between LLM and SCT, and how these two theories worked together to fit my study. Following this discussion, I collected the reviews on GTM, including the key scholars and their key ideas, and its applications in China, as well as showing a picture of the current English language teaching and learning situation in China. The next section was about BDI, including the definitions, key scholars and their ideas, and the supporting theoretical frameworks. In the final section, I presented how LLM, SCT and BDI worked together in the process of SLL to fit my research.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

Recall that the purpose of this study was to explore the English language learning experiences of three international students from China who studied or are currently studying at a Midwest state institution and have been exposed to GTM in China and BDI in the United States. The guiding research questions for this study were:

1. What are the experiences that the Chinese students have had with GTM in China and with BDI in the United States?
2. In what ways do Chinese students compare and contrast their perspectives on, experiences with, and/or outcomes arising from, their exposures to GTM in China and BDI in the United States, provided as paths to their second language acquisition?

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research has a broad terrain and has long been applied in sociology, anthropology, education, history, and many other disciplines (Aronin & Singleton, 2012). Qualitative research mainly focuses on interpreting people's stories and their lived experiences. In education, qualitative research is predominantly conducted to answer "the whys and hows of human behavior, opinion, and experience — information that is difficult to obtain through more quantitatively-oriented methods of data collection" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 1). For the purpose of this study, a qualitative research design was appropriate to investigate and understand the participants' English language learning experiences and perspectives on both GTM and BDI as demonstrated by their words and actions, as well as by the meaning that their language and behavior carry. Therefore, this study was grounded in qualitative inquiry because of a need to construct narratives that emerge out of in-depth understanding of the participants' English language learning experiences with the two teaching approaches.

Qualitative research can be conducted for varied purposes. In a broad sense, qualitative researchers do not emphasize the generalizability of the research findings from their studies but the comprehensive understanding of the participants' shared stories. According to Lather (1991), the three main purposes of qualitative research are to understand, interrogate and deconstruct. For most qualitative research in education, the goal is to simply explore and understand someone's experiences in an in-depth manner (Patton, 2015), but not to generalize or to predict a trend across a broad population. The uniqueness of individuals' experiences and their subjective understandings are the centering point in qualitative research. Therefore, this study was not designed to obtain generalizable results. Instead, the purpose of this qualitative case study research was initiated between a need to understand and explore, and a need to question certain sociocultural contexts that could influence the participants' English language learning experiences. Thus, the general purpose of invoking in-depth understanding in qualitative research aligned well with the purpose of this study.

In addition, qualitative research often employs inductive methods of comparing rich and descriptive data from various narratives and works with both visual and verbal communication (Merriam, 2009). Case studies have been extensively used in qualitative research because qualitative research typically conducts in-depth inquiries and involves a small population who are situated within their natural setting (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). This case study was conducted to understand: (a) how the interpretation of the three participants' English language learning experiences within distinct socio-cultural contexts had influenced their motivation to engage in second language learning; and (b) how their interactions with the two teaching approaches had helped them approach English language learning and promote their second language acquisition. The three participants' words and meaning-making processes, in addition

to other sources of information needed to be documented and interpreted, which could be fulfilled by a qualitative research design. Accordingly, the general guiding principles of qualitative research aligned with the research questions and the research purpose of this study.

Subjectivity in Qualitative Research

Subjectivities, or "personal stakes of the researcher" (Peshkin, 1988, p. 17) exist in both qualitative and quantitative research. Bhattacharya (2007) explicitly defines subjectivities as the researchers' individual and professional beliefs, assumptions, and values they bring to the research topic. As a matter of fact, subjectivities cannot be simply disregarded because no one can hold an absolutely neutral position in the research. As human beings, we possess various subject positions and are always negotiating our subject positions within different discourses of what these positions are meant to be. In other words, our positions indicate we encounter individual beliefs, assumptions and values we have on situations. In the light of our unique personal backgrounds, the way we perceive the world, understand the surroundings and make choices of action can be varied. As a researcher, it is not wise to claim value neutrality because we always hold certain perspectives no matter where we are or what we do. In this world, probably only robots are absolutely neutral as they are designed to have no biases. Nevertheless, robots cannot provide us rich and detailed data like human beings with subjectivities can.

Qualitative research requires rich and detailed data gathered from the researched subjects, and the research results primarily rely on how the researcher understands and interprets the collected data. Bhattacharya (2015) asserts, "how well a qualitative researcher can achieve depth of understanding is contingent on the relationship the researcher makes with the participants, the quality of data collection, and the researcher's analytical skills, informed by his or her positionality" (p. 36). From this assertion, the understanding is that subjectivity plays an

important role in how well a qualitative researcher can conceptualize the collected data and interpret the lived experiences of the research subjects. Subjectivities, no matter if they are acknowledged or unacknowledged, can influence one's study, particularly if it is a human-subject related research, just as Davies (1999) views subjectivity as the way in which the research products are affected by the individuals and the processes of doing research. On this account, it is necessary for the researcher to make an evident subjectivity statement before conducting qualitative research.

In this section, I provide a brief orientation to the importance of identifying subjectivity through personal reflections and convey a subjectivity statement in order to lay the foundations for my own experiences that helped shape the lens through which I approached this study. However, declaring my subjectivities does not affect my methodological processes to be innocent. More importantly, the disclosure of my subjectivities reflects my critical thinking process and intellectual honesty and adds more academic rigor and trustworthiness to this study. On the completion of this qualitative research, I anticipated to find multiple realities and possibilities as the potential answers to the research questions on how the Chinese students compared and contrasted their English language learning experiences on both BDI and GTM, and how they valued these experiences as pathways to SLA. Throughout this study, I retained my critical awareness and reflected on my personal experiences and narratives that could inform this study and influence my understandings and interpretations of the research results.

Personal reflection, as Hertz (1997) proposes, has a similar essence as the epistemology that informs and guides the research, and focuses on the basic questions of "*What do I know?"* and "*How do I know what I know?"*. According to Hertz (1997), personal reflection also involves an ongoing conversation about the lived experience while living in it at the same time.

Our personal negotiation with the lived experience mirrors and strengthens our understanding. The emphasis on a personal understanding of why things happen the way they do necessitates the researcher to employ critical consciousness on how one's personal experiences and interests could influence one's meaning-making process throughout all phases of the research (Callaway, 1992). During the research, researchers have to interact with the research participants while particularly situating themselves well to understand the participants' viewpoints so they were able to obtain the best possible truths. According to Hertz (1997), reflexivity in the research informs the researcher of constantly questioning his or her own interpretations on the lived experiences, with the goal of producing better, more reliable research results. In other words, researchers should reflect on and question themselves on how the data results can be interpreted and why the data results should be interpreted in that way in order to, if needed, modify their interpretations to discover more possible truths.

Effective qualitative researchers should always be cognizant of the importance of acknowledging and identifying their subjectivity throughout the course of the research (Peshkin, 1988). Although it is not possible to attain pure objectivity in research, it is fairly achievable for researchers to collect and present research findings in as objective a manner as possible. In order to better react to their subjectivities, the researchers need to be more reflexive and more attentive about the roles they play in the process of research design, data collection, data analysis and data representation (Pillow, 2003). Furthermore, the process or practice of acknowledging one's subjectivities necessitates the research and adds trustworthiness and accuracy to the study through ongoing critical thinking and self-reflection. By acknowledging my subjectivities in this study, I was more well-informed that the beliefs and assumptions I held were playing important

roles in helping me construct with authenticity a shared understanding of the participants' experiences and my interpretations on their experiences.

Subjectivity Statement- Beliefs and Assumptions

I am a 33-year old, female international student from China. I grew up in China and spent my first 24 years in China. Before I moved to the United States, I received both my Bachelor's and Masters' degree in China with a focus on ESL studies. I am currently a full-time teacher at a local public school, teaching Chinese language and culture to students at secondary level, as well as teaching an ESL class to students at high school level. At the same time, I am attending a Midwest state university as a part-time doctoral student in the department of Curriculum and Instruction, with a focus on ESL Studies.

I graduated with a Bachelor's degree in 2006 and started teaching English at a vocational college in China. I taught EFL classes at that college for six years. I have always wanted to discover better ways to help students from China improve their English language proficiency. I mainly received my English language learning education from GTM approach within the Chinese social-cultural context. I often received decent scores on English written tests, but I mostly struggled with reading and speaking English. To be precise, I learned *Silent English*, and so do other students in my generation or in other younger generations. When I was teaching English in China, I witnessed that so many students lacked an interest and motivation to speak English, and they typically struggled with listening and speaking English. I truly understood their sufferings as they reminded me of the pain I had when I was a student trying to learn English with GTM.

It occurred to me that learning English could be so much fun if students' interests and needs are satisfied during the learning process. In the 2016 Spring semester it was my first time

attending an ESL method class in the US. It was such an inspiring and exciting class that I always looked forward to attending each week. From that class, I learned that English could be taught in a totally different way with BDI. I had a strong feeling I was in love with BDI as it is a teaching approach which meets students' interests and needs as well as values students' learning from four different dimensions: cognitive, sociocultural, linguistic and academic. This BDI approach brought my attention to the new ways of learning English and helped broadened my horizons to acquiring SLA. I reflected on my previous English teaching experiences and strongly recommended that students in China should be provided this new avenue to learn the English language in a more effective way.

After I was exposed to the BDI teaching and discovered how fascinating this approach is, I have been utilizing some BDI strategies in both my Chinese language classes and ESL class in order to examine the effectiveness of BDI. In the meanwhile, I have taken more coursework on BDI to enrich my knowledge on how to adapt BDI to my teaching and how to assess students with BDI. I have also attended some professional workshops related to ESL teaching and some trainings on Kagan Cooperative Learning Structures. I am hoping I can gain as much theoretical knowledge on BDI and collect as much practical experience on using BDI strategies in the classroom to build more support for future research.

Reflecting on my years of teaching English in China, I personally did not like the way English was previously taught and is currently taught in China, and I truly wish to seek a more effective way of teaching and learning English for the EFL learners in China. As an international student from China, while I was studying at a Midwest state institution, I especially enjoyed the BDI teaching that benefited my SLA. It was that awareness and amazement that inspired me to initiate a research on BDI and EFL teaching. My initial interest was to explore the experiences of

international students from China who were exposed to both GTM and BDI. After taking more ESL and qualitative research courses, I became especially interested in the international students from China who have their focus on ESL studies at the department of Curriculum and Instruction at a Midwest state institution because it was more likely that they could better understand and articulate their English learning experiences about GTM and BDI.

In general, both my personal experiences of learning English in China and the US and my identity as an international student, a foreign language teacher, a mom, a wife, and an immigrant have shaped who I am today as a person, a teacher, and an academic. Additionally, my experiences and my identity have inspired me to conduct this research and have influenced my beliefs, assumptions and values in this study. Even though I personally appreciated BDI as a new way of teaching and learning English, I understood that not all other people would share the same perspectives as I did because we approached the world and constructed the understanding of our lived experiences differently. Some people might agree with my viewpoints on BDI while some might still favor what GTM has advocated. Moreover, I understood that I could not put myself in a fully neutral position while I was conducting this research. As a human being in this dynamic world, I would always carry my own personal assumptions and beliefs throughout the phases of the research just as Peshkin (1988) argues that one's subjectivity cannot be removed no matter what the stance of one's persuasion is at a given point.

Additionally, my subjectivity intertwined with me as a person and a researcher, as well as my interpretations of the participants' stories. My strategy to position myself well in this study was to keep a greater awareness of who I am and what I should perform as both an insider and an outsider to avoid as many biases as I could throughout the process of the meaning-making, critical thinking and of acting myself in the other's role. My goal was not to investigate which

teaching approach is better, but it was to explore what the English language experiences of my participants were, how they unpacked their English learning experiences within different social cultural contexts, and how they interacted with the two teaching approaches to promote their SLA, in the hope that some pedagogical applications from this research could be discovered and valued for future EFL teaching in China.

Methodological Framework

In this section, I started with introducing constructionism as the epistemology that informed the theoretical perspective for this study. Then, I discussed symbolic interactionism as the specific theoretical lens that guided the methodological approach in this study to address the research questions.

Constructionism

In qualitative research, a good methodological and theoretical framework provides the appropriate lens for the research study and helps understand the context in which the research is situated. According to Crotty (1998), the selection of a suitable theoretical perspective provides a context for the process involved and necessitates its criteria for a logical and organized study. For this study, the epistemology I chose was constructionism, which focuses on how we know what we know. Crotty (1998) defines Constructionism as "the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (p. 42). In terms of this definition, human practices, interaction, and social context are the principal words in constructionism. Within a social context, human beings interact with the world and themselves to construct the meaning of what they perceive, hear, think and do. The world and objects in the world may entail no meanings in themselves, yet

they need to be taken seriously because human beings interact with them to construct meanings (Crotty, 1998). Bhattacharya (2017) holds the similar opinion that people construct their own meanings based on their interactions with the reality to understand the meaning-making process in qualitative inquiry.

Constructionism, one type of epistemologies that informs most qualitative research, centers on the interactions between human beings and their surroundings. Human practices are the basics of meaning-making process. Human beings are always involved in various activities which connect an understanding of the relationships between them and the objects in their world. If people do not interact with the world, the world itself is meaningless. The interaction between human beings and their world is important to help people construct meanings of what they perceive in the world. Likewise, human beings differently construct meanings at varied times, in distinct ways, and within particular social contexts. According to Crotty (1998), "We don't create meaning. We construct meaning. We have something to work with. What we have to work with is the world and objects in the world……" (p. 44). In other words, an object does not carry any meaning itself until we ascribe a meaning to it. For example, money is money no matter where it is. If we give it a name 'money', then it is money. However, when we view money from a different point of view, money could have other meanings. There is a shared understanding that money can be used for different purposes. Money can be used to solve some social conflicts while people are fighting for money. Money can help people purchase food. Money stability is able to maintain social order. Correspondingly, the understanding of money depends on what functions money has served for people in the society.

From the constructivists' viewpoints, the truth of reality is not stable and multiple truths exist. The interpretations can serve a variety of purposes and will bring multiple truths to the

forefront. Most researchers are supporters of constructionism as a result of its multiple possibilities on findings. According to Fish (1980), “The conclusion, therefore, is that all objects are made and not found and that they are made by the interpretive strategies we set in motion” (p. 191). This quote indicates that how we interact with world can affect the way we interpret the meanings of objects. In order to attach a meaning to that object or interpret the interaction between us and the objects, people have to interact with the objects in the world through many diverse ways and experience them within different socio-cultural contexts. Similarly speaking, we cannot simply ignore the existence of the actual objects, but we have to be involved in the context to navigate through the meaning-making process. Our consciousness and understanding moves towards the objects, and the meanings of the objects are shaped by our constructing.

The world is already there no matter what happens. The objects are already there prior to our experience with them. We want to understand our relationship with them and understand them through active interaction with them. A meaning-making process relies on how people construct the meaning of the object. How we interpret the world and the objects in the world is closely associated with our subjectivity and intentionality. What we are, who we are and what we want jointly drives us to construct divergent meanings of what people have experienced, as well as helps us interpret the meaning making process of what we see, what we hear and how we feel. The constructivists believe that “different people may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon” (Crotty, 1998, p. 9). Diverse people have mixed perspectives and understandings on the same object because they interact with the same object in a distinct way within a particular social context. That variety is why we as researchers need to take both our objectivity and subjectivity into account during the meaning-making process.

In addition, many ingredients such as cultures, class, race, gender, environment, emotion and personality can impact one's knowledge and one's understanding of a certain phenomenon, even in the same circumstances. The meaning making is a dynamic process with human beings as the active participants. The culture that we live in shapes the way in which we perceive things or feel things and offers us a view of the world so that we can interpret the world where we are living in a more meaningful way. In education, students have to interact with their learning environment, peers, teachers, languages, textbooks, teaching resources, teaching approaches and learning strategies in order to make the most sense of what they experienced or what they are experiencing. As the constructionism theorists advocate, researchers construct their own understanding based on their interaction with the participants and various data sources. For this study, through building rapport with the three research participants, I wanted to investigate their experiences of English language learning and interpret their stories based on their lived experiences or ongoing experiences with the exposure to both GTM and BDI.

Symbolic Interactionism

With the epistemology of constructionism in mind, the theoretical lens I chose to guide the methodological approach and the research design for this study was symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism supporters hold a positive attitude towards culture as our inherited meaning system. Crotty (1998) proposes that symbolic interactionism aims to extensively explore the understandings in culture as the principles that guide our lives in a meaningful way. Thus, culture and social context are crucial to symbolic interactionism.

According to Schwandt (2007), symbolic interactionism, a social psychological and sociological theory, is rooted in American pragmatism. Symbolic Interactionism has its origins from the thought of many pragmatist philosophers such as George Herbert Mead, Charles

Sanders Peirce, William James, and John Dewey who laid the groundwork for the later framework of symbolic interactionism (Crotty, 1998). Symbolic interactionism is a diversified matrix and is mainly divided into two streams: the Iowa School and the Chicago School (Blumer, 1986; Kuhn, 1972; Crotty, 1998). The Iowa School, guided by Kuhn, possesses a much more empirical and quantitative orientation, with the goal of developing standard measures to identify and quantify the meaning people ascribe to the world (Kuhn, 1972). On the contrary, the Chicago School, guided by Blumer, puts the emphasis on "the origin and development of meaning" (Crotty, 1998, p. 78) and believes that people living in the world are continually evolving, modifying and developing themselves. The Chicago school members insist that the evolving self is never fully developed and the meaning people attach to the world cannot be truly finalized, standardized and quantified because the self is always changing as it actively interacts with the world in distinct ways.

Herbert Blumer, a student of George Herbert Mead, was given primary credit for the influence Mead's thought has had in the realm of sociology. Blumer was also recognized as the pioneer doing the work about symbolic interactionism. He was mainly influenced by Mead's earlier contributions on constructionism and later formulated the most prominent version of the symbolic interactionism theory. Blumer's symbolic interactionism refers to three basic interactionist assumptions:

> First, human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that these things have for them; Second, the meaning of such things is derived from, and arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows; Third, these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters.
>
> (Blumer, 1998, p. 2)

From the aforementioned three assumptions, Blumer asserts that human beings frequently attach meanings to objects based on their own understanding of the objects and their behaviors towards objects, things, and events. The relationships between them and the objects are informed by the meaning they construct when they interact with the surroundings. Social interactions play an essential role when people attempt to organize and interpret the world. Blumer emphasized that social interactions indicate choices human beings make when they try to make meaning of their world, events, objects, and surroundings. Blumer also believed the meaning making is an interpretive process in which individuals constantly adjust their thoughts and modify their understandings depending on their interactions with the objects which symbolize meanings in their life.

Symbolic interactionism concentrates on the meanings that people connect to their social interactions and the world they live in (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). In social interactions, we all use objects to understand our world. When interpreting an object, people apply meaning to it based on their previous knowledge and experience in relation to that object. Blumer (1969) argues that the social construction of meaning depends on the individuals' interactions with the environment and with symbols. The symbols we use to understand the world could be "anything that can be indicated, anything that is pointed to or referred to" (Blumer, 1998, p. 10). The symbols may include physical objects, social objects, and abstract objects. The symbolic aspect of symbolic interactionism is mainly contingent on what people deem to be symbolic, tangible or intangible. Although objects themselves possess no intrinsic meanings, people place meanings on the objects based on their interactions with the world.

Individuals are the actors in the process of interpretation because symbolic interactionism views human beings as active participants who construct their social world but not as passive

recipients who conform to objects of the world (Blumer, 1986). In education, students are viewed as active participants in the classroom when using learning strategies. If students do not interact and participate with the learning activities in the classroom, students will not be able to understand how learning strategies can facilitate their learning and increase their motivation and engagement. If this is the case, the learning strategies bear no meaning for effective learning by students. For teachers or educators, they are acting as facilitators in classrooms, and they have to interact with their students and teaching tools to reflect on the teaching approach they are using.

The teaching reality is constructed by the teacher or the educator through the phases of observing, interpreting the surroundings, assessing students' performance, interacting with students, and designing activities that provide students access to learn effectively. Teachers adjust and modify their instructional practices based on their interactions with students to ensure successful lesson delivery. Through the interaction with students, teachers obtain the knowledge of students' individual needs. The key point is on the teachers' making meaning of their personal experiences as educators. Similarly, in a broad sense, when a new concept in a social science area is introduced, individuals from the educational field might not be able to understand the concept until they connect it with their prior knowledge and interact with the new ideas. In order to understand the new knowledge, the individuals will have to interact with objects that relate to the new concept.

Meanwhile, it is important to understand the focus of symbolic interactionism so that the researcher can better understand the collected data through this theoretical lens. Crotty (1998) points out the central notion of symbolic interactionism is putting oneself in the place of the other. In other words, a researcher in the study is playing the role of an actor who is trying to interact with the research participants and see the world from the perspectives of others. In

symbolic interactionism, the researcher's subjective view of actions, objects, events, and society is important to consider because this subjectivity will affect the researcher's interpretations on how the participants construct meaning, how they present and interpret their meaning making process and how they define the situation to make choices of action. In order to analyze a person's choices, one has to observe their involvement in the social processes, by which meaning is constructed (Blumer, 1986). Correspondingly, through adopting the viewpoint of the research participants, as a researcher, I can gain a better understanding of the social reality experienced by the research participants while they make meaning of their interactions with the world.

Within the framework of Blumer's theory of symbolic interaction, this study aimed to understand the subjective experiences of the participants and the meanings they ascribed to the two teaching approaches, and how they interacted with two teaching approaches in their lived experiences. Each participant attaches meanings to his or her English language learning experiences based on interactions with the socially constructed realities of environment and the two English language teaching approaches. Therefore, symbolic interactionism was appropriate for this study and could provide a suitable theoretical lens to analyze the English language learners' choice of actions on English language learning as they interact with the two teaching approaches and continually adjust their English learning behaviors, beliefs and practices.

Research Design

In this section, case study was the specific methodological approach that I chose for this inquiry to govern my own choice and use of methods. Following this methodology, a detailed research design was mapped out with some specific methods I proposed to use: open-ended and semi-structured interviews, participant object elicitations, notes and research journals.

Case Study

Within the methodological framework of constructionism and symbolic interactionism, a multiple case study was conducted to gain an in-depth and holistic understanding of the English language learning experiences of the participants after their exposure to both GTM and BDI. My research design featured a qualitative perspective because my research questions were open-ended, with the focus on exploring the English language learning experiences of the Chinese students who were exposed to both GTM and BDI. My research design also aimed to explore the ways that the Chinese students compared and contrasted their perspectives on English language learning experiences with, and/or the outcomes arising from, their exposures to GTM and BDI, provided as paths to their SLA. This kind of case is not critical, extreme or unique, representative or typical, revelatory or longitudinal. In addition, a case study version of qualitative inquiry is appropriate when the focus is a bounded system. In this study, my focus of research was bounded in one single Midwest state institute. Each Chinese student was one case. The unit of analysis was their English learning experiences associated with GTM and BDI. Finally, symbolic interactionism served as a theoretical lens for me to analyze the data collected through interviews, participant object elicitations, notes and research journals.

Case study research is closely linked to the contexts where the case activities happen. According to Stake (2006), a qualitative case study requires "experiencing the activity of the case as it occurs in its contexts and in its particular situation" (p.2). The case study approach situates itself to gathering data from various resources needed to develop a detailed and comprehensive understanding of both the choice of actions for the participants and the social context with which they are intertwined. Hays (2004) argues that case studies aim to investigate contemporary cases in order to seek illumination and understanding, unlike biographies and

other historical research approaches. English language learning is considered as a common contemporary activity. Also, Creswell (2007) defines case study research as a "study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system" (p. 73). A bounded system is needed to define a case. The underlying criteria for selecting a case with rich data is that it must be one from which others can learn a great deal about how much the research topic matters and therefore its worth as an in-depth study (Patton, 2001). For the sake of this study, the bounded system was a student's English learning experiences with GTM and BDI.

A case study is about answering the 'how' or 'why' questions of a contemporary set of events over which the researcher has little or no control (Yin, 2009). In reviewing the research questions, my focus on this study was a contemporary event within a real-life context. Moreover, I had little control over these events. Yin (2009) mentions that a case study is commonly used in qualitative research to answer focused 'How' or 'Why' questions with in-depth inquiries; it can be done for a relatively short time period ranging from a few weeks or months to a whole year. Some case study research can even last for a couple of years. In education, case study research is relatively more operable. In terms of my study, case study was indeed a more feasible approach by which to conduct in-depth inquires and collect rich data. I conducted this study for a total of four months, hoping to produce some in-depth descriptions and interpretations on the participants' English language experiences after their exposure to GTM and BDI. In case studies, issues are investigated through in-depth data collection procedures involving multiple sources of information such as observations, interviews, audiovisual material, documents, and reports (Creswell, 2007). For this study, I relied primarily on the data collection of in-depth semi-structured interviews, participant photo elicitations, notes and research journals.

Definitions of case study. There are multiple definitions of case study in qualitative research. “Case studies are reports of alternative paradigm inquiries” (Lincoln & Guba, 2002, p. 213), yet the case study “does not implicate any particular approach” (Wolcott, 1992, p. 36). Yin (2009) defines case study in detail:

> First, a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. Second, the case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis” (p. 18).

This twofold definition of case study provides a way to distinguish case studies from alternative research approaches, and indicates some key elements and variables included in case study.

While Wolcott (1992) defines case study as an end product of research, Merriam (1998) proposes that a qualitative case study involves an intensive, holistic description and also an in-depth analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit. Later Merriam (1998) adds to her understanding of case studies that a case study has the most defining characteristic of setting a boundary of the case. She agrees that a researcher needs to set a boundary or identification of the scope of a study but acknowledges there is negotiating room in what might be defined as a case (Bhattacharya, 2005). A case may refer to studying a single person, program, policy, or any other specific contemporary phenomenon bounded by the interest of the investigator (Merriam, 1998). Case study research can involve the close examination of people, topics, issues, or programs (Hays, 2004). Both Hays (2004) and Yin (2009) mention that the case can be an individual, a

group of people, a school, a school district, decisions, some event or entity, programs, an implementation process, an organizational change, or other issues. Thus, it is not difficult to understand a case study research has its flexibility in the definitions of cases.

Rationale for case study. Case study is a commonly used methodology among qualitative researchers (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). A case study can provide readers a vivid and real-life experience within a certain context. In qualitative case study, the uniqueness of each individual case and each context is important for qualitative researchers to approach the best possible understanding (Stake, 1995). Case study is rather complex and "the case study researchers considers many features of the case" (Stake, 2006, p.3). In case study, not only the readers but also the participants, the researcher and the gatekeepers play active roles in understanding the case.

However, Bhattacharya (2005) argues that it is difficult to understand how a case study can be holistic or panoramic because the experiences of the participants can never be fully captured or clearly placed in categories, regardless of the amount of time spent in the research field. In other words, the participants' lived experiences are fluid and changing over time and space. Bhattacharya (2005) also suggests that a researcher can only be able to capture a freeze frame of a participant's life, and a pattern of negotiations, experiences and understandings during the course of the study. Accordingly, the researcher has the freedom to ask questions not previously asked and can focus on specific understandings to generate a variety of knowledge. For this study, the ultimate goal of making inquiries was to discover the pattern of the participants' lived experiences and to interpret their stories with more authenticity and accuracy.

Furthermore, case studies are responsible for inductively rather than deductively discovering "new relationships, concepts, and understandings" (Merriam, 1998, p. 13). This type

of discovery exemplified my understanding of the reflexibilities and possibilities of conducting a case study research. New understandings and new possibilities in case study research was the most refreshing and amazing part, adding confidence and excitement to my research study. Yin (2012) argues that a multiple-case study requires a large amount of resources and time beyond the single means of an individual student or an independent research investigator. However, the evidence from multiple cases is often regarded as more compelling and more robust to the whole study (Herriott & Firestone, 1983). The data obtained across multiple sources would provide the researcher with more profound and situated knowledge and allow data triangulation among each data source which would in turn contribute to the trustworthiness and academic rigor of this study. Conducting a multiple case study for this research mainly enabled me to construct a better understanding of each participant's interactive relationships with the two teaching approaches. Nevertheless, it will still be a reader's decision to define what is new, known or unknown.

As a novice qualitative researcher, I had a strong desire to embrace the diversity and the flexibility of a case study research design that other qualitative approaches could not offer. Therefore, I was particularly drawn to this methodological approach which was designed with the broad implications of case study as a method of inquiry, and also provided a holistic view of deep insights into the individually constructed realities perceived by the Chinese English language learners. Additionally, the justification of this case study design helped inform and reinforce the interpretative process, as well as support the constructionism epistemology and theoretical lens of symbolic interactionism that guided this study. I did my best to convey the messiness and ambiguities, state the limits and possibilities of the research, clarify what I was able to investigate out of this research, and communicate any claims, questions and concerns

during the research period. Thus, this case study became an active interaction between the participant and the researcher, and also the process and the product.

Research Site and Gaining Access

Based on the pilot study I conducted earlier, I thoughtfully reflected on the whole process and followed a 'replication' design but decided to make some extensions and modifications for this multiple-case study. I chose the same research site, the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, School of Education at a Midwest state institution. At this institution, an ESL methods class with the focus on BDI approach was offered to students in the department of Curriculum and Instruction. Also, some international students from China were enrolled in this ESL methods class. I lived only one-hour away from the research site, so it was advantageous for me to commute to the research site, build a closer relationship with the participants, conduct face to face interviews and address any follow-up questions to the participants. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I followed the mitigation protocols and completed the majority of the interviews via Zoom, Google Meet or WeChat.

In order to conduct this research, I first needed to gain access to the potential participants. Gaining access involves acquiring permission to go to any places and observe the participants or the events whenever you want, request and read whatever documents you desire, and do all of this for as much time as needed (Glesne, 2011). The first thing I did was to contact the ESL methods course instructor to request information on how many international students from China were enrolled in this class in the past 5 years, how many of them are taking this class currently, and, if possible, contact information for these students. After contacting the instructor, I sent out an email to the Dean of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, seeking permission to conduct my research in the building of School of Education if needed. Next, I proceeded with

contacting the potential students via emails or through other means of contact information such as WeChat, cell phone number or QQ Messenger and ask them for their consent to participate in this research. Once I received responses from the potential students, I was able to select the eligible participants with purposeful, criteria-based sampling.

Participant Selection

In this study, my focus was to explore the English language learning experiences of three international students from China. It is essential that I select the participants I can gain access to, are willing to participate in this study and share information, and are eager to shed light on specific issues under the study (Creswell, 2007). The participants needed to meet some criteria because criterion sampling is one key process that can affect the selection of the participant.

Based on the pilot study, I made some minor changes to the criterion for this study so I was able to recruit more eligible participants. The first criterion for the pilot study was, the participant needed to be a Chinese graduate student who had completed his or her undergraduate program in China with a focus on ESL studies and was enrolled in or is currently enrolled in either a master's program or a doctoral program with a focus on ESL studies. The participant also needed to have the living experience in the US for over a year. I contacted the Department of Curriculum and Instruction to inquire about an estimate of possible graduate students who could meet this criterion, but I ended up with few possible participants. Consequently, I had to expand the research scope and did not limit potential participants to graduate students currently in the institution, but would include both graduate students and undergraduate students who could have graduated and have lived in the US for at least a year. Fortunately, I was finally able to identify more eligible participants for my study.

If the participants received English education in China, they have been exposed to GTM which is the dominant teaching approach in China. For the participants who just arrived in the US, they were more likely to experience a significant culture shock and were still getting adjusted to new life here. After one year living in the US, they would become more acclimated to the new life and feel more comfortable communicating with native-speakers. Accordingly, they could more effectively describe their experiences of learning a second language.

The second criterion was that the Chinese students had the access to take an on-campus ESL methods class with a specific focus on BDI, or they are taking the ESL methods class during my research period. The third criterion was a willingness of all participants to engage in this research. If they were not willing to discuss and share their experiences, it would be unlikely that I could have gathered the valid data to unveil the best truths.

After the criterion sampling, I walked through the procedure of recruiting some eligible participants for this study. I reached out to the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at a Midwest state institution to find out the number of enrolled Chinese international students who previously had taken the course of ESL methods with a focus on BDI or who are presently experiencing BDI teaching. I then reached out to the potential participants through email or other contact information to ask for their consent to participate in this study. Three participants responded to me with their consent to participate in my study. In the email to the potential participants, I outlined the purpose of the study, the objectives of the study, and the length/time of commitment which would be required of them if they were selected to participate.

Data Collection Methods

In order to collect rich data, the researcher had to access different types of resources and not just from one single resource. Case study evidence may derive from six sources: documents,

archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artifacts (Yin, 2009) and "good case studies benefit from having multiple sources of evidence" (Yin, 2006, p. 115). In this study utilizing multiple sources of evidence enabled me to discover more truths about the participants' lived experiences during the data collection phase. Specifically, the data collection methods for this study included open-ended and semi-structured interviews, participant photo/artifacts elicitations, research journals from both the researcher and the participants, and notes from email correspondence, WeChat messenger correspondence, and meetings. As informed by an earlier pilot study which I conducted, the interviews served as the primary source of evidence while the rest served as supplementary data sources for me to gain more insightful understandings of the participants' experiences on English language learning.

Based on my experiences from the pilot study, I expressed my expectations to gather some photos or some physical artifacts from the participants' previous digital documents and assignments from the ESL methods course; however, there was a possibility that some participants might not be able to provide their previous documents. Their lacking of providing previous documents did not cause any undue hardship between them and me. Furthermore, data were purposefully gathered at various times as spacing out the data collection can contribute to the trustworthiness and authenticity of the study (Glesne, 2011). For this study, I conducted the interviews with the participants every two to three weeks. This spacing gave the participants a break in order to not impose stress or cause any discomfort as it would if data collection was too intensive.

The data were collected through open-ended interviews, participant photo/object elicitations, research journals from both the researcher and the participants, documents such as email correspondence, WeChat messenger correspondence, meeting notes, and member checking

notes. The below data inventory in Table 3.1. contains the number of pages which was generated as raw data during the case study research. The total number of pages became finalized once the actual data was collected.

Table 3.1.

Data Inventory

Source of data	Number of estimated pages	Number of total pages
3 one-hour interviews with each participant	35-50 pages per one hour of transcription	416 pages
1 one-hour photo/object elicited interview with each participant	8-10 pages per one hour of transcription	26 pages
Journal reflections 16 weeks	2-3 pages every two to three weeks	19 pages
Communication (email, informal conversation)	1-2 pages per interaction 3-6 interactions	10 pages
Documents & Meeting notes	1-2 pages per meeting 3-5 meetings	6 pages
Member check for each Interview (~30 minutes)	2-3 pages per member checks, 3 member checks	8 pages
	Total Pages	**485 pages**

Interviews

Interviews are a common research method in qualitative inquiries. Interviews refer to an interactive process of human conversation in which stories, ideas, anxiety, excitement, concerns and information can be articulated and shared. According to Yin (2009), most case studies are about human affairs or behavioral events in society, so interviews become the indispensable source of case study evidence. If the interviewees are well-informed, they can provide the researcher important insights into such affairs or events. Kvale (1996) also claims that through interactive dialogues we gain the access to know other people, learn about their experiences, feelings, and hopes and the world they live in. Because of the conversation between the researcher and the participants, the shared understanding becomes more accessible.

An interview is a process in which both the researcher and the participant engage in a conversation that focuses on questions related to a research study (deMarrais, 2004). Likewise, interviews are conversations that help the researcher know the participants better and can provide a lengthy and detailed description as well as serve as valuable sources of information for the researcher. In this specific study, interviews were the principal source of information from which I was able to find answers to the research questions. My goal was to investigate the participants' experiences of learning English and explore their feelings, judgements and understandings of the two language teaching approaches within different social cultural contexts.

Conversations occur informally or formally as a common social activity. However, for the sake of data collection in qualitative research, interviewing through conversations should be viewed as a structured process (Merriam, 2009). For the purpose of this study, a total of three semi-structured, open-ended interviews were conducted with each interview lasting for about 60 minutes. Since I did the majority of the interviews via Zoom, sometimes the interviews lasted

longer than the proposed time period either because the participants were highly involved or because the internet connection was not good. The first interview focused on the participants' experiences with GTM. The second interview focused on their BDI experiences. The third interview was a follow-up interview with a focus on how the participants compared and contrasted their experiences with and/or outcomes arising from their exposure to GTM and BDI as paths to English language acquisition.

In order to make the interviews more organized, some question prompts shown in Appendix E were prepared before the interviews. The research purpose and research questions of this study served as the guidelines to prepare the question prompts throughout the interviews, but the participants' responses guided the direction of the subsequent interviews and prompted the development of additional questions. During the interviews, it was important for me as a researcher to observe the reaction of the participants and adjust accordingly the ways of making inquiries and adding more questions as needed in order to dig deeper about and gain the best possible truths. Although the flow of the qualitative interviews can be adjusted as needed, many studies can benefit from an interview guide which serves as the basis for the conversation (deMarrais, 2004). In other words, it is always wise for the researcher to have an interview guide in hand just in case there is an unexpected pause or awkwardness during the interview. With the interview guide, the researcher can make the interview flow go smoothly as planned and keep the interview under control. In addition, I tried to keep all the question prompts simple and easy so the participants would not get confused.

Reflecting from the English question prompts as a limitation in the pilot study, I made some changes in this study in order to receive better answers to the questions because the participants could use their first language to articulate their experiences in a more efficient and

comfortable way. Accordingly, the prompt questions were addressed in both English and the participants' first language. The prompt questions on Appendix E were prepared to guide the interviews. All interviews were conducted in accordance with the participants' preference for the specific techniques, ways and the location. I completely respected their time, schedule and whatever conditions made them feel more comfortable to be involved in the interviews.

Participant Object Elicitation

Object elicitation is about asking the participant to pre-select and bring an object into a research interview (Harper, 2002). Photo and artifact elicitations are forms of participant-driven data collection methods in which the participants select photos (take pictures) or bring objects that can help them understand their lived experiences in a meaningful way. Using objects in interviews can have the same power as using language in the interviews because both of them are forms of symbolic representation.

In human society, people often interact with the objects surrounding them and ascribe meaning to certain objects and then use the objects to represent their thoughts, experiences, beliefs and values. There is an active relationship between people and the objects as they attempt to construct meaning from what they see, what they hear, why they take action and how they can achieve the goal. The object elicitation can provide different lenses and insights into the relationship among people, objects, emotions, attitudes, values, beliefs and assumptions. Accordingly, the selection of object elicitation fit well within this study's theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism because it provided evidence and insight into the meanings that were attached to the participants' interactions with the two English language teaching approaches and their different English learning environments in both China and the United States.

When I was doing the pilot study, I discovered the participant actually liked to use the object elicitation to explain to me the attached meanings. Thus, in this study, I encouraged the participants to share any related documents which could help them explain the meaning making process of language learning and to collect the artifacts from the participants after the interview. Those documents could include any of their homework assignments, projects, reflections or notes after the exposure to BDI. Lander (2017) supports the ideas of using object elicitation as this form of data collection allows the researcher insight into the participants' experiences that cannot be disclosed from interviews directed by the researcher. For the elicitation with documents or objects, I offered the participants the following prompt:

> Please bring any objects, documents, assignments, journals or whatever else you think can demonstrate your understanding of your English language learning experiences.

When the participants brought the photos or objects to the interview, I provided the following line of inquiry to guide our elicited conversations:

1. Please briefly describe this photo/object and tell me why you chose it.
2. Please tell me about the connection between this photo/object and your experiences as an EFL learner in China or an ESL learner in the US.
3. Please tell me about your unique experiences that are connected to this photo/object.
4. Please share with me how you view this photo/object in your English language learning.
5. Do you have anything else you would like to share about this photo/object?

After each photo/object elicited interview, I transcribed the data during the week it was completed for the purpose of keeping the freshness of the information the participants shared with me. Soon after the transcription, I also performed member checking with the participants to

ensure the accuracy of information. I then did a preliminary data analysis on the combined the data so I could become more prepared for the subsequent interviews with some follow-up questions in plan. Figure 3.1. and Figure 3.2. are two samples of participants' photo elicitations.

Figure 3.1.

Ava's DOT Chart Activity

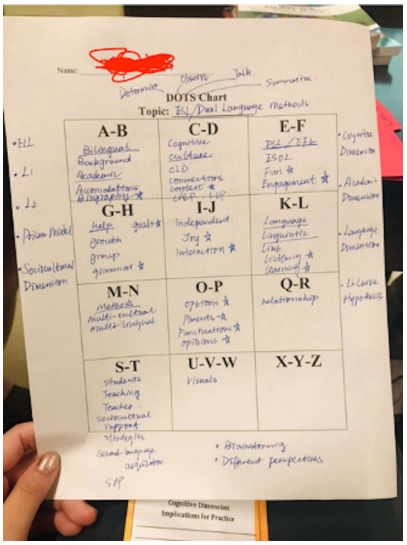
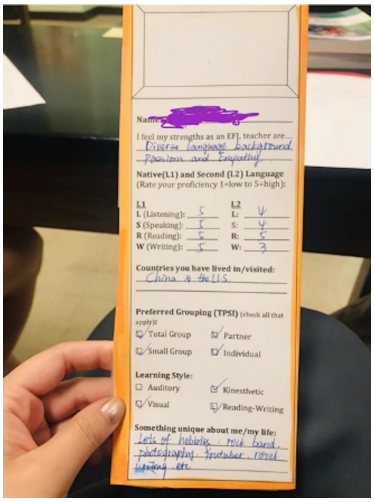


Figure 3.2.

Ava's Biography Card Activity



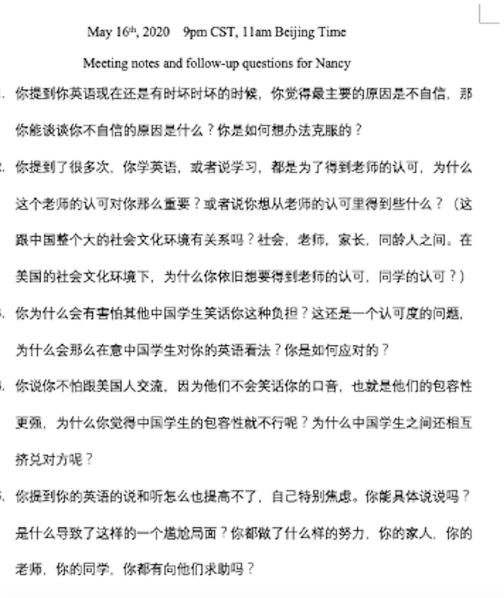
Research Journal

A reflexive approach to the research process is widely accepted in many qualitative research studies (Ortlipp, 2008). Within this reflexive approach, researchers urge themselves to reflect on themselves, "their presuppositions, choices, experiences, and actions during the research process" (Mruck & Breuer, 2003, p. 3). A research journal reflects the researcher's personal perspective on what happened and why it happened the way it did. On most occasions, the researcher adds their individual judgement to the event and explains the reasons that they decide on in relation to their own experiences, beliefs and assumptions.

In this particular study, I maintained a regular research journal and also took notes from the participant's responses during the interviews and after the member checks with them. After each interview, I wrote some reflections as research journals to enrich the data. In Appendix F, I attached a sample of my research journal pages. These research journals captured my instantaneous reflections, and also included my own feelings, doubts, anxieties, assumptions, and expectations during the research process. From the pilot study, the reflective journal served as a valuable tool for me to go through critical thinking process and put my thoughts in an organized format so that I was able to triangle the data in a more complete manner. Moreover, I used member checking as a means to clarify any questions and concerns during the transcription or coding phase. In addition to the regular research journals, I also took notes to record some of my instantaneous thoughts. Figure 3.3. is a sample of my notes after meeting with one of the participants.

Figure 3.3.

Meeting Notes



May 16th, 2020 9pm CST, 11am Beijing Time

Meeting notes and follow-up questions for Nancy

1. 你提到你英语现在还是有时坏时坏的时候，你觉得最主要的原因是不自信，那你能谈谈你不自信的原因是什么？你是如何想办法克服的？
2. 你提到了很多次，你学英语，或者说学习，都是为了得到老师的认可，为什么这个老师的认可对你那么重要？或者说你想从老师的认可里得到些什么？（这跟中国整个大的社会文化环境有关系吗？社会，老师，家长，同龄人之间。在美国的社会文化环境下，为什么你依旧想要得到老师的认可，同学的认可？）
3. 你为什么会有害怕其他中国学生笑话你这种负担？这还是一个认可度的问题，为什么会那么在意中国学生对你的英语看法？你是如何应对的？
4. 你说你不怕跟美国人交流，因为他们不会笑话你的口音，也就是他们的包容性更强，为什么你觉得中国学生的包容性就不行呢？为什么中国学生之间还相互挤兑对方呢？
5. 你提到你的英语的说和听怎么也提高不了，自己特别焦虑。你能具体说说吗？是什么导致了这样的一个尴尬局面？你都做了什么样的努力，你的家人，你的老师，你的同学，你都有向他们求助吗？

Together with the interviews, participants photo-elicitations, informal conversations, meeting notes, correspondence notes, and research journals, all these types of data collection methods guided me through a data triangulation process and offered me different insights into the participant's experiences.

Membership Role

It is unlikely that a qualitative researcher can adopt a completely neutral role in the research while interacting with the participants (Flick, 2009). As a qualitative researcher, it is impossible to avoid the subjectivity influence and situate ourselves with no bias because we come to know this world based on what we knew, experienced and assumed. Our roles in the research will decide on how much information we can obtain from the participants. With that being said, researchers have to assume their roles within the context of their research and position themselves well to conduct the research. Adler and Adler (1987) presented three membership roles in which a researcher can be assigned:

> *Peripheral member* - involves daily or near-daily contact, interactions with members varies from acquaintanceship to close friendship with key informants. This is the most marginal role and least committed to the context.
>
> *Active member* - Researcher assumes a more central place in the setting that involves a functional role in addition to an observational role. This facilitates trust and acceptance of the researcher but increases the identification of the researcher with members of the setting. Self-reflexivity, role awareness and periodic withdrawal from the setting are needed to maintaining the research role.
>
> *Complete member* - fully immersed in the research setting. One may study a setting in which he or she is already actively a member or "become the phenomenon" of interest. (p.33)

From the aforementioned three membership roles, it is clear that every membership role comes with varying degrees of both benefits and drawbacks, and each has a unique function to gain access to information from the participants. In regards to this study, I considered myself as a similar participant of the group that I intended to study because I myself met the sampling criterion and have been involved in English language learning for years. Accordingly, I positioned myself as a complete member and an insider researcher. There are both advantages and disadvantages being in the role of a complete member during this qualitative research.

As for the benefits, the most exciting one is that I have a better knowledge of the culture and language experiences being studied, which saved me time and energy becoming familiar with the research topic. Another possible benefit is that my previous experiences on English language learning and teaching helped me explain the research topic in a more efficient way and established rapport more quickly with the participants as we had a sense of shared understanding

on the topic. Just as Bonner (2002) argues, "the shared understanding between the researcher and the participants helps promote both the telling and the judging of truth" (p. 9). I believed that my personal experiences of learning English language from both GTM and BDI, in addition to my years of life experience in the US has given me more credibility and has created more affinity with my participants, which could help build stronger trust and rapport in an easier and faster way than if I were an outsider to the research field. The last possible benefit is that I also speak the same first language as the participants, which facilitated our verbal communication because I truly understood their concerns and the embarrassment of learning a second language. Whenever the target language became a barrier in understanding some concepts or terms, we used our first language which narrowed the gap of understanding. I believed the use of our first language while communicating may strengthened the relationships between the participants and me.

However, I am not saying that being in the role of an insider researcher while researching has all benefits but no downsides. It is likely that insider researchers will also face challenges due to the familiarities and closeness with the research topic. Furthermore, as an insider, I have my own experiences, beliefs and assumptions which can affect the future interpretation of the participants' stories. In another sense, I was also like an outsider because I was not any of my participants and could not fully represent my participants. Therefore, I paid careful attention to my subjectivities and preconceptions during the research in order to interpret the participants' stories as authentically as possible. Meanwhile, I had to be more aware of delivering messages to the participants without giving them an impression that I was more an advocate on the research topic rather than a researcher. Once again, I have my own subjectivities but I tried my best to avoid prejudices.

Data Management

Besides the methodological framework and the specific data collection methods, a qualitative case study research design also includes gathering, managing, and analyzing data from divergent sources. As illustrated in the data inventory, the data that were collected, used, organized, managed, and handled during this study included audio recordings of interviews, transcripts of the interview recordings, participants' object elicitations, meeting notes, correspondence notes, the research journals from both the participant and the researcher, and member checks.

After I gained verbal consent from the participants, I recorded all the interviews with an electronic recording device —a password-protected iPhone through an app called Voice Recorder, and then transcribe the interviews. If needed, I also translated part of the interviews from Chinese to English. All transcribed and translated data were stored in my personal password-protected computer and the unsecured originals were deleted from the recorder. After each transcription the texts were transferred to a word document which I sent to the participants for member checks. According to Kvale (1996), member checks allow a researcher to get feedback on findings, as well as to verify that the information gathered gives an accurate description of what the participant intends to convey. By doing so, the participants could validate the information from the interviews and confirm for accuracy to add new insights to the data file.

I then carefully coded, highlighted, labeled, dated, categorized, organized and saved every piece of data in a secure file for future use. All research data were stored both electronically and physically. Meanwhile, I avoided using the participants' real names in the transcribed data in order to maintain confidentiality. Instead, I used pseudonyms for all

participants. I followed the same routine regarding their personal information such as home, school names, teachers' names and so forth.

Data Analysis

To begin with, I used In Vivo coding and descriptive coding for the interview transcriptions, collected documents and research journals. In Vivo's root meaning is "in that which is alive," and a code refers to a word or short phrase from the actual language found in the qualitative data record, "the terms used by [participants] themselves" (Strauss, 1987, p. 33). Saldaña (2009) insists that In Vivo coding is especially appropriate for naïve qualitative researchers when they learn how to code data, and it is also good for studies that prioritize and respect the participant's voice. In Vivo Codes are recommended ways to analyze in case studies (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995) which is perfectly applicable in this case study. As a beginning researcher, for the first round of data coding, I read all interview transcriptions, highlighted all the keywords, phrases or sentences that relate to my research questions. For the second round, I used in Vivo coding to code all data that helped me answer the research questions. Saldaña (2009) also agrees "in Vivo codes can help provide imagery, symbols and metaphors for rich category, theme and concept development" (p. 76). Thus, when I read through in Vivo coding the second time, I tried to sort out some categories and themes. In Appendix G, I attached a sample of the in Vivo coding for this study.

After the second round of In Vivo coding, I was able to recognize some patterns in the paragraphs told by the participant. Accordingly, for the third round of data coding, I mainly used descriptive coding, pattern coding and/or focused coding (Saldaña, 2013) to code the data. These types of coding aligned well with my study because it facilitated the process of theming the data and attaching significant meanings of the data to the research questions. Saldaña (2009) defines

descriptive coding as summarizing in a word or short phrase—most often as a noun—the basic topic of a paragraph of qualitative data. Saldaña (2013) interprets "pattern codes not only organize the corpus but attempt to attribute meaning to that organization" (p. 209) and "focused coding searches for the most frequent or significant codes" (p. 213). Both pattern coding and focused coding were used to help me make sense of the in Vivo codes. The pattern coding and focused coding also enabled me to discover and develop the most recurrent and relevant categories from the data set to address the research purpose and research questions.

However, it is important to notice that these codes are identification of the topic and not just abbreviations of the content (Tesch,1990). The topic refers to the theme, or what is talked or written about, while the content is the substantive information of the paragraph. This was a process through which the researcher was able to develop the key vocabularies of the data into a category or a theme for further analysis. Saldaña (2009) argues that descriptive coding primarily guides the researcher to a categorized inventory, tables, graphs, summary, or index of the data's contents. In this study, in addition to in Vivo coding and descriptive coding, pattern coding and focused coding assisted me in summarizing the transcribed paragraphs and identifying the categories and themes more easily. For some of the descriptive coding and pattern coding, I used my first language to take notes whenever I was inspired by anything during the research period. In Appendix H, I attached a sample of the descriptive coding. Appendix I was the samples of pattern coding and focused coding for this study.

When I reviewed the highlighted parts of the description notes, I first thought about how to categorize them and name them, and later I used post-it notes of different colors to label the codes. Next, I put all the sticky notes on the wall in order to see a clear picture of the topic. I also sorted out the in Vivo codes, descriptive codes, pattern codes and focused codes in my computer

and was able to identify different categories under different themes. In Appendix J, I attached a sample of theming the data process. By doing so, all my transcribed data were turned into a clear picture of the participant's English language learning experiences with all themes along with different supporting codes. After sorting out the themes, I was able to correlate all these themes and codes to my research questions and find answers to these questions.

The transformation of the data was a complicated process in this study because this process occurred throughout the course of the pilot study. Thematic analysis is recommended to analyze both In Vivo Codes and Descriptive Codes (Auerbach & Silversten, 2003; Boyatzis, 1998). After I completed the work in the coding phases, I moved towards data analysis with question-by-research-question for each theme using an inductive analysis method. In addition to a within case synthesis, I also used thematic case descriptions and a cross-case synthesis at the phase of data representation. Figure 3.4. summarizes an overview of data analysis process.

Figure 3.4.

A Visual Representation of Data Analysis Cycle



Data Representation

After reviewing all the themes and supporting codes, I was able to see a holistic picture of how the themes shaped the participants' understanding of their English language learning experiences after the exposure to both GTM and BDI. During the within case analysis phase, I first wrote thematically organized case study narratives for each participant from the first-person view. In order to support the narratives that I presented and maintain the power of language in the narratives, I integrated excerpts in the participants' first language along with English translations from the interviews and other data sources as evidence of the findings. During the cross-case analysis phase, I constructed a first-person view poem to be able to interpret the participants' stories. I chose to use the first-person view because it allows me to stay closer to the participants' voices and better portray the participants' experiences as they negotiated their interactions with the two teaching approaches under different socio-cultural contexts. Next, I presented a cross-case analysis to unpack the poem and compared and contrasted these narratives by discussing the similarities and differences across each participant. From both the within case analysis and the cross-case analysis, I was able to fulfill the research purpose and discover the multiple truths as the potential answers to the research questions under the theoretical frameworks of BDI and symbolic interactionism.

Assurances of Confidentiality and Ethical Issues

The considerations of confidentiality and ethics were essential in qualitative research since I conducted a research on human subjects. I constantly kept in mind an awareness of the need for the confidentiality and ethical behaviors. In my pilot study, I explained the consent forms and contact information to the participant and I used a pseudonym for her to ensure

anonymity and protect her identity, and the identity of other names or institutes she mentioned during the interviews. I continued to do so in this study.

The participants reserved the right to withdraw at any time during the study. The participants could also ask me questions about anything that concerned them. Throughout the study, I respected the participants' lived experiences and honored their voices by not judging them. Reciprocity is the "giving back to the participant for their time and efforts" (Creswell, 2007, p. 44). I showed my appreciation and respect to the participants for sharing their English language experience and expressed my gratitude for their time and engagement in this study. As for the ethical issues, I discussed with my participants various ways to pay attention to their health, wellbeing, concerns, intercultural sensitivity, ups and downs and provided the appropriate student life resources on campus if needed. Additionally, I was prepared to provide the participants any mentorship or guidance throughout their study life in the US based on my understanding and experiences.

Academic Rigor and Trustworthiness

Qualitative research has been historically questioned about lacking academic rigor and trustworthiness (Creswell, 2007). In qualitative research, establishing academic rigor adds credibility to the study, with the goal of demonstrating the value of the study to the academic field. Trustworthiness is key in qualitative research which can help establish credibility, rationalization and legitimization. Qualitative excellence illustrates the complexity of qualitative inquiry and challenges novice researchers to demonstrate academic rigor and trustworthiness. As a novice researcher, I admitted that not every reader would find the same value or rigor in my study that I intended to present. However, I did my best to engage in due diligence throughout this study and be prepared to accept different interpretations of said due diligence.

Although there are no universally accepted standards by which qualitative research is to be judged (Tracy, 2010), there are many different established criteria for qualitative research of good quality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In an effort to establish academic rigor and trustworthiness, Tracy's (2010) presents the "Big-Tent" Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research: worthy topic, rich rigor, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethics and meaningful coherence. With the goal of conducting a high-quality study, I carefully followed Tracy's eight criteria throughout the study, each of which will be addressed in the paragraphs below.

After searching the existing literature, I recognized that there was limited or no research specific to Chinese EFL learners who were exposed to both GTM and BDI. This limitation made my current research topic worthy of pursuing in the education field as this topic is relevant, timely, significant, interesting, or evocative (Tracy, 2010).

Rich rigor can be established when the qualitative researcher engages in the study for an extended period and collects "sufficient, abundant, appropriate and complex" (Tracy, 2010, p. 840) data using favorable theoretical constructs and existing research-based literature that is essential for the data analysis process. Thus, a rigorous qualitative study not only theoretically and practically requires a thoughtful, transparent and methodical research design from the researcher, but also requires a large amount of time and a significant commitment to the whole research process both from the researcher and the participants. To this end, Tracy (2010) recommends that researchers provide evidence of their due diligence, appropriate time spent, effort, care, transparency and thoroughness. These evidences will reinforce the academic rigor during the data collection and analysis process. In this regard, I presented the reader a detailed

explanation of the research process — how the raw data were collected, coded, labeled, categorized, organized, transformed and interpreted into the final case study research report.

At the same time, I used researcher's reflective journal before, during and after the study as journaling is significantly important for establishing trustworthiness and rigor (Bhattacharya, 2007). Having reflexivity was important for effective qualitative research as I went through the thinking process on the participants' shared experiences. I understood that I could not completely avoid my personal bias and assumptions in the study, but I constantly reminded myself to be aware of my own subjectivity and positionality. Reflexivity refers to the process of continuously using critical thinking and reflection on the self as a researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). A research journal in this study reflected my personal perspectives on what happened and why it happened the way it did. On many occasions, I also added my individual judgement to the event and explained the reasons I decided on with regards to my own presuppositions, choices, experiences, beliefs and assumptions. I expected this journaling process to challenge me to expand the ways I conceptualized and interpreted my understanding of the data, which was another means to ensure credibility and academic rigor.

Sincerity refers to "the honesty and transparency about the researchers' partiality, goals, and foibles as well as about how these played a role in the methods, joys, and mistakes of the research" (Tracy, 2010, p. 841). In other works, how much sincerity the researcher has demonstrated is relevant to how well the researcher has dealt with their subjectivity, goals and preconceptions, emotions, and mistakes throughout the research. According to Tracy (2010), sincerity can be achieved through self-reflexivity and transparency. Self-reflexivity reminds researchers to be mindful of their strengths, weakness, beliefs and assumptions, while transparency refers to how honest researchers are about the research process (Tracy, 2010). Thus,

in this study I strived to achieve a level of sincerity through continuously being aware of my subjectivities towards the topic and include as much transparent and elaborate documentation as possible regarding how I claimed to know what I know.

Credibility is associated with how trustworthy and how plausible the research findings are (Tracy, 2010). Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that a study must be dependable to claim its trustworthiness. In an effort to strengthen this type of credibility, trustworthiness and dependability, I first made sure I gave the opportunity to each potential participant to decline participation. Then, I provided the justification of doing this research and clearly elaborated the research purpose and research questions that guided the study, and I also documented features of the constructive case study in a way that aligned with its purpose to ensure believability. Next, I collected data from multiple sources, spaced out the data collection, used peer debriefing and member checks as well as data triangulation as the techniques to support building credibility.

Peer debriefing is another means in this study to help increase rigor and credibility. I asked for peers to review and discuss the research process and research findings so I could gain a broader perspective on the interpretations and narratives. Peer debriefing is a process by which one can expose oneself to a peer who is familiar with qualitative research methods and the research topic. The peer debriefers reviewed the data I collected, the way I organized and analyzed my data and the interpretations I have made. The peer debriefers then identified any parts of the study that seemed awkward or incoherent, lacked logical flow, indicated perspectives or narratives that needed more investigation, or demonstrated inconsistences that needed further clarification. By incorporating peer debriefing, I can explore "some other aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 308) in my mind and increase more perspectives to the study for enhanced trustworthiness.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that "the member checking technique is the most critical technique for establishing credibility" (p. 314). This assertation of its essential role was why I used member checking to ensure the participants can verify the accuracy of the information I collected during the interviews as well as the accuracy of the interpretations during data analysis and the research findings discussions. I then used data triangulation to increase trustworthiness in the data analysis because data triangulation is a way of assuring the validity and reliability of research. Through data triangulation, I was able to conduct through different methods a careful reviewing of the data and determine the patterns of all data to achieve a more accurate and valid estimate of qualitative results.

When it came to the research findings, I wrote with rich descriptive and analytical details by comparing and contrasting the narratives so that the interpretations could be transferable, consistent, accurate, dependable and trustworthy (Tracy, 2010). Furthermore, I also used the researcher journal to record my intuitional reflections or spontaneous inspiration towards the topic because journaling is a continuous process throughout the course of the research to help increase trustworthiness and rigor (Piercy & Benson, 2005).

Resonance refers to how the study is able to affect a reader in a meaningful way (Tracy, 2010). Transferability is one of the ways to achieve resonance. Transferability can be accomplished when readers feel as if the story of the research is similar to their own life experience in some way (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to obtain resonance in this study, I presented the narratives which authentically described the thoughts the participants had experienced, with the intent that the readers would be able to reflect on their own English learning experiences. By conducting this study, I provided a significant contribution to the limited literature on this research topic within the field of education and encouraged more future

researchers to dig deeper on the value of using BDI in China. This study also offered a reference for the future practitioners to test the validity of using BDI in China.

Ethics are not only a means to help establish trustworthiness and rigor, but also "constitute a universal end goal of qualitative quality itself" (Tracy, 2010, p. 846). When the research shows evidence of consideration of the different aspects of ethics, such as procedural ethics, situational and culturally specific ethics, relational ethics, and existing ethics (Tracy, 2010), a study meets the ethical requirements. I already discussed the ethical issues in the earlier section on assurances of confidentiality and ethical Issues. To abide by the last criteria that Tracy (2010) advocated— meaningful coherence, I addressed the research purpose I stated for my study and ensured every part of the research aligned well with every other part so that the research questions, theoretical and methodological framework, research design, data collection, data analysis, data representations, research findings and the conclusions and implications were all meaningfully interconnected.

Although there are no commonly accepted criteria used to assess qualitative research, I carefully followed Tracy' s (2000) eight guidelines for considering qualitative excellence and briefly outlined the strategies that I used to establish the academic rigor and trustworthiness by providing specific examples of how the study worked with each individual component. Consequently, incorporating the eight characteristics of conducting a good qualitative research into my own study assisted me to make powerful arguments for establishing academic rigor and trustworthiness.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I firstly recalled the research purpose and the research questions, provided justification of a qualitative inquiry, and examined my role as a qualitative researcher by

situating myself well, along with a personal subjectivity statement. Next, I presented the methodological frameworks which guided me through this study and discussed how the frameworks can provide the theoretical lens to examine the research findings. I then moved on to a thorough research design for this investigative case study by introducing the procedures of data collection, data management, data analysis and data representation. In closing the chapter, I did a recursive reflection on this research design and addressed the issues of confidentiality, ethics, academic rigor and trustworthiness in regards to credibility and authenticity in research.

Chapter 4 - Research Findings and Discussion

This multiple case study was conducted to explore the participants' English language learning experiences after their exposure to both GTM and BDI. The premise of this study was that all participants could offer valuable and insightful understanding regarding GTM and BDI, as they were the primary recipients of the two teaching approaches. This familiarity made them the foremost authorities of their own English language learning experiences. The participants were able to articulate their past and present English language learning experiences in a descriptive and cohesive manner. This chapter presents the research findings and thematic analysis based on the interviews, the participants photo elicitations, notes and research journals.

The collected data was analyzed through the lens of the BDI theoretical framework with regards to the research purpose and questions. Moreover, I examined the data through an additional lens----the methodological framework of symbolic interactionism, which grounded my analysis as I investigated the following inquiries: (a) how the participants constructed their understanding of GTM and BDI; (b) how they created meanings about English language learning experiences, and (c) how they presented and defined their interactions with GTM and BDI within different socio-cultural contexts.

To begin with, I provided a descriptive illustration of each participant during the phase of within case analysis. I wrote stories in a first-person vignette for each participant's narrative because this enabled me to stay close to the data, honor their narratives, value their stories and represent their English language learning experiences using verbatim excerpts from the interviews. In addition, I chose to directly cite their first language for some of the verbatim excerpts in order to maintain the power of the language from the participants. During the pilot study, the participant preferred to share her story in English but indicated that sometimes she was

not able to precisely articulate her thoughts due to the language and cross-culture barrier. I was cognizant of the loss of language power which was identified as one of the limitations from the pilot study. Moreover, when the Chinese transcripts from the interviews were translated into English, the same issue occurred. As a result, I decided to cite the participants' first language to avoid the loss of language power in this study.

Following by the first-person vignette stories, I constructed a first-person view poem to represent the data using the participants' own words of choice. Later in this chapter, I presented a descriptive and analytical illustration to unpack the poem, and compared and contrasted each participant's narrative stories to gain analytical insights through the lens of BDI and a symbolic interactionism perspective. Additionally, the descriptive details and analytical thoughts allowed me to establish strong arguments on its pedagogical implications for future studies.

Participants' Journeys

Sophia' Profile

Sophia is a confident and passionate EFL teacher in China in her late-thirties, holding a doctorate degree in curriculum and instruction with a focus on ESL studies. She originally attended college in China and obtained an undergraduate degree in English in 2005. After graduation from college, she started a teaching career in China for a short period of time and then changed her focus. She decided to obtain a master degree in Communication from an American institute in 2009. After earning her master's degree, she maintained her EFL teaching career in China for a couple of years before she decided to again further her education. In 2018 she achieved a doctorate degree from an American institute and worked at a local college for one semester. In the fall of 2019, she returned to China to teach college English at an elite university.

She is a high-achiever and has complete confidence in her own ability to succeed. Following is Sophia's description of her journey to both GTM and BDI.

Sophia's Own Story

I was born in the early 80s, and I considered myself as part of the older generation compared to the 90s and 00s generation. I started my English language learning when I was a 7th grader, which I believe was the norm for the 80s generation. For the younger generation, they started English language learning at an earlier stage, such as from kindergarten or at an elementary level. At that time, we didn't have options to attend some after-school English programs or some intro-class to English because at that time learning English was not popular, and we simply started to learn English as a required class just like math, Chinese and science.

I have very supportive parents. Unlike many other parents in China, my parents did not push me hard in my academic performance. Instead, they trusted me and my capability to learn and granted me enough freedom and flexibility to study at my own pace. I don't have a tiger mom who yells at me all the time and forces me to study hard; instead, I have a super caring mom to always encourage me to try my best without focusing much on the results. I know I am both a good daughter and a good student to my parents. My outstanding academic performances did make them proud of me, but they also accepted my failure on tests. My mom always told me, "凡事只要你尽力了，努力了，至于结果的好与坏，那就顺其自然吧！如果你没有做好，那说明你努力得还不够！那就继续努力。" (As long as you make your efforts, try your best, you don't have to worry about the results. You need to learn to calmly accept whatever comes out of your efforts. Just go with the flow! If you don't excel, that just means you did not work hard enough. Then you will just need to continue your efforts.) Over the years, I have learned a lot from my mom's positive attitude—'Just go with the flow'.

I remember when I started my middle school, I had to ride my bike back and forth between my home and school because my family lived in the city and it was just a short distance from my home to school. At the beginning, I really loved riding my bike. However, later I felt somewhat disgusted riding my bike every day. I had to repeat this routine for six years until I graduated from high school. The daily routine never changed. I rode my bike to school in the early morning, rode it back home for lunch, and then rode it to school in the afternoon. I rode it back home for dinner and rode it back again for 晚自习(night time seminar class). After that, I rode it back home. All my classmates lived in the city, so we all did the same thing every day.

At school, every student received the same daily schedule, a completely full schedule. I didn't even have extra time to think about other things in life. Although many of my classmates complained about the tight schedule, I never complained because I knew "在这这个时候，所有人都是这样的，你就没有什么特别的感觉，你唯一能做的就是自我调整。"(At that time, when everybody is doing the same thing, you are not the exception. The only thing you can do is probably self-adjustment or self-adaptation.) I learned how to adjust myself to the tight schedule and tried to find the joy of learning from doing other things in life. I believe that "你要得到什么，你肯定要付出呗。"(You have to make efforts to gain whatever you want.) For example, since my elementary school years, I always had to sit in the back rows of the classroom because I was tall. It was always the last three back rows. I was tall, and I had no choice. I was told if I sat in the front row, I would have blocked other students' view. I hated sitting in the back because it was so far away from the teacher and chalkboard. Until the time I attended high school, I was so happy that classroom seating rules changed. Students with highest test scores had the priority to choose where to sit in the classroom. Since then, I was always the first one to choose the seat. I felt so accomplished and satisfied as I got to pick wherever I wanted to sit. Also, when it came to

the monthly test or final exam, students from the whole school were placed into different testing classrooms based on their last testing scores. If you had a good standing among all your peers, you could choose where to sit in the testing rooms. I was always one of the first few students to be called to enter the testing room.我觉得自己特别有成就感，因为你付出了就会有回报的嘛! (I had a great sense of pride and achievement because my efforts paid off.)

I don't really have a quite clear memory of how I learned English since it has been over 20 years; however, one of the most impressive things I could remember about learning English was testing. To be honest, I didn't learn English for the purpose of communication. We were not taught to communicate. Instead, the main purpose of learning English was to pass the test and obtain high test scores on all kinds of tests. One of the other impressive things I could recall was reading aloud, repeating after the teacher and reciting all vocabulary words, paragraphs and whole texts. The teachers neither focused on the pronunciations of words nor the contexts when or how the words would be used, but simply requested all students use rote memorization for vocabulary words and grammar drill. All they taught us was to perform on the weekly quizzes, monthly tests, quarterly and semesterly standardized testing. The norm for English proficiency at that time was to obtain high test scores and to be able to accurately and quickly recite the words and paragraphs. As long as we followed the teachers' directions to memorize the required words and phrases and master the grammatical rules, we were told a satisfactory test result which would make teachers, parents and administrators happy would be secured. The test results, however, were not always satisfactory. Many of my peers struggled with rote memorization. For me, it was not a big deal as I believed that I mastered everything the teachers required. I never disappoint myself, my teachers or my parents whenever it came to testing.

I hated doing all kinds of test booklets. I bet no students liked doing them. It was just a time-consuming and tedious process; therefore, I didn't really practice much on grammar. I did not think it would help me improve my English language proficiency, at least speaking. I had no doubt that the grammar drill practice would help with my tests as those were required by the teachers and the teachers' teaching focus was on grammar and tests. I don't want to deny that there were some benefits of reciting paragraphs and whole texts. I think reciting somewhat set up a good foundation for my English learning. "我觉得，在一个沉浸式英语学习的环境里，人家就一直给你说，加上肢体语言，一遍两遍三遍，不断地重复。实际上这个强化的过程跟咱们这个背课文是一个道理。现在在中国这样的英语学习环境下，一个英语不是母语的国家，这种输入，这种强化，只能是靠你自己背课文，就是反复地背，反复地看，大量的输入，这样才能体现。" (It is my opinion that, within an immersion English teaching context, the teachers constantly speak to you in the target language with the help of body language. They repeat once, twice and more. Actually, this is somewhat the same process as our reciting the paragraphs and texts. Within a EFL context in China where English is not the first language of learners, we can only rely on massive reciting input to facilitate the English learning.)

At school, I was an excellent student, a role model for other peers in my teachers' eyes. I was obedient, clever and organized. I don't like the traditional grammar teaching, but I couldn't change it. I always believed in myself using the "语感" (the language intuitive feeling) to succeed in any kind of standard testing. I bought a great variety of grammar books, but I barely read any of them. I don't think I ever spent extra time working on grammar rules drill practice as I really hated grammar teaching. From my middle school to high school years and up until I graduated from college and became an English language teacher, I have always trusted my "语感" (language intuitive feeling) which proved to be beneficial on standard tests because I

performed well on all kinds of tests without grammar drill practice. Even throughout my teaching years at the college, I have rarely taught my students grammar. My opinion is, “ 我就觉得学习语法没有太大的必要，这是一个很小的问题。考试可能很需要，但是我不需要。那实践证明，我不靠学习语法，就靠我的语感，我照样可以考高分呀！考试的成绩不就证明了嘛！”（I don’t think learning grammar is quite necessary. Grammar is only a small part in language learning. Maybe it is very necessary for standard testing, but I don’t need it. It is proved to be right I can still obtain high test scores without learning grammar, but relying on my language intuitive feeling. All my high scores are the best proof.）

I have to admit that my middle school and high school teachers taught me English in an old traditional grammar way. The teaching focus was primarily vocabulary words and grammar rules. At the very beginning of the class, all students would be asked to read the new vocabulary words from the text aloud, then repeat the words after the teachers. After the reading, the teacher would explain each word’s meaning in Chinese and what kind of grammar rules the verbs may have regarding the tenses. Then, students would be directed to go back to the reading text and find all the new vocabulary words and highlight them. Teachers would then explain the meaning of each sentence in Chinese or ask students to do word-to-word translations. Following that, teachers would write down all the language points on the blackboard and have students take notes, telling them that these language points were very important because they were often the focus of standard testing. Whenever the teacher mentioned the testing points, as students we were extra cautious because we didn’t want to miss these so-called important grammar points, and we didn’t want to be blamed for or regret making stupid grammar mistakes after the actual tests. We were expected to master all the grammar rules and use them to score high on tests. My secondary teachers rarely focused on teaching listening and speaking skills as those two parts

were not at the core of testing. My teachers were strict with students, setting up high expectations for them, especially for the '*good*' students, urging them to study hard. Under the teacher's supervision, we were persuaded to believe that we would succeed if we worked hard.

I did want to mention one thing about my teacher's influence on my motivation to learn as I believe that good student-teacher relationships will impact students' learning. I built good relationships with most of my secondary school teachers, and I truly appreciated their support and confidence in me to become successful in the future. They cared for me and provided me useful advice whenever I needed help. However, I didn't have a pleasant experience with one of my science teachers in high school. That science teacher didn't like me and I didn't like him either. Due to this discomfort, I was so reluctant to attend his class and, on most occasions, I chose to skip his class. I held a negative attitude toward his class and lost my interest and motivation in learning science. I was begging for a change because we didn't get along with each other. Fortunately, a new science teacher came when the new school year started. I immediately liked the new science teacher and really loved his teaching. I started to catch up with learning science and did an awesome job in science class. This new science teacher made me believe that I was valuable in the class and I could learn science well.

In a learning environment like China, the majority of students, teachers and parents are stressed out due to the pressure of social competition. Especially during high school years, all students are driven to study hard, and I think we all are brainwashed to believe that the annual *Gaokao* (an admission test to college) is the only path to change our destiny. Students just could not ignore *Gaokao*. In reality, "我们要用尽一切办法挤过独木桥。"(In Chinese culture, *Gaokao* is regarded as a single-plank bridge which connects good life on the other side. Therefore, all students had to make every effort to successfully squeeze over the single-plank

bridge.) When I felt too stressed, I sometimes yelled out loud or went out to run for a while to get a little relieved. Then I had to face the reality and get well prepared for the first and foremost test of our lives. 你只有通过试卷，你才能得到你想要的生活，因为试卷是你努力的一个证明啊。在跟其他同学的竞争中，你要证明你比他们强，你只有通过试卷的分数，这是唯一的一个方式。 (The only way to obtain the life that you dream of is through the paper-pencil test because the test is the best proof of how hard you have been working. Among the peers, if you want to prove that you are better than others, the only way to prove it is the test scores.) Everybody in the school knows that we had to follow this type of irrational competition model.

As a student, I didn't want to just complain about the unfair education system but to do my best to adjust to the life. I clearly knew that if I wanted to learn successfully, I would need to find an effective way to learn instead of doing "题海战术" (endless testing booklets). I didn't like the way my teachers taught. I hated writing down all grammar rules and completing the "一黑板一黑板的语法题"(multiple-choice grammar questions on the whole blackboard). I know grammar is important to understand sentences, but I was resistant to the way my teachers taught grammar. However, I chose to hide my real emotions about the grammar teaching in front of my teachers as we knew that going against the teachers would ruin our student-teacher relationships. I still did what the teachers expected me to do. After class, I would always find my own fun ways of learning English. I liked reading authentic English materials and watching original English movies and TV shows during my spare time. I bought the original English magazines on a regular basis and enjoyed reading the authentic writings. I believed all this after-class reading actually helped improve my sense of language intuition, enlarged my vocabulary size and accelerated my reading comprehension. Until now, I have still maintained this reading habit and have appreciated the way I approached and learned English outside the classroom.

Many teachers praised me for having a good mastery of the English language knowledge and many peers admired me for learning English so well. However, “关于英语学习，我真感觉没有特别自豪的时候，但是我有挺感谢语言的时候。我觉得，这个语言其实是给你开启了一扇新的门，可以让你去看英文原版书，欣赏原版书带来的乐趣，可以给你的人生很多的新的机会，可以让你有机会能走出国门去读书，可以让你在沟通方面更有信心地去看看外面的世界，可以让你遇上更多的很好的人，而这些人可能来自不同的国家，却也像自己的亲人一样，有的人甚至是改变你命运的。所以我觉得，我真的就是英语学习的受益者。” (About English language learning, I really don’t have a very proud moment. But I have lots of moments that I appreciate about English language learning. It is my own opinion that English language learning opens a new door for you, allowing you to read authentic English books and appreciating the joy of reading, providing you new opportunities such as the opportunities to travel outside your country and study abroad, in turn making you more confident communicating with others when you travel abroad, and giving you the possibility to meet lots of nice people who come from different cultures but treat you like a family member, and who may change your destiny. All in all, I sincerely consider myself a beneficiary of English language learning.)

I haven’t felt so appreciative of English language learning until I travelled outside China and studied abroad. Each time when my small family traveled to other countries, I was confident to communicate with other foreigners as I knew how to use English to fulfill all kinds of needs. Some people say they don’t want to travel abroad because they don’t understand what people from other countries say and they feel uncomfortable asking for help when needed due to the language barrier. Being able to communicate in English opened a new path for me to learn about people from other countries and cultures which is so rewarding to me.

When I first started my academic journey in the US, I did experience a painful beginning in being able to understand what the professors were saying. They talked so fast and some with such a heavy English accent that I could not understand the lectures and was unable to follow up with the class conversations, which disappointed me to a great extent. You know in China we didn't really have any opportunities to practice the target language and barely had conversations with native English speakers. We were used to the slow English that our traditional classroom English teacher has taught. Moreover, our English teachers speak much more Chinese than English in the classroom. I even had to drop one of my courses because it was too intense for me to understand the professor. That experience was like a nightmare because I couldn't figure out the right direction to go. "我记得我那时候上课一看到老师就脑子一片空白，光见他的嘴在那儿动，但是就是啥也没听懂，然后心里特别抗拒，就完全不想听，就觉得他说啥我都听不懂。"(I remember at that time when I saw the professor in the class, my brain went blank. I could only see his mouth moving, but I couldn't understand him at all. Then I became resistant to that class. I didn't even want to listen to the professor because I couldn't understand him.) I was frustrated, but I didn't give up. I held high expectations for my academic performance and didn't want to fail any of the classes, therefore, I kept telling myself that, "没关系，刚开始一定都是这样，过了适应期就好了。" (No worries! It must be common for every international student at the beginning. Once I pass the transition period, everything will be fine.) I always maintained a positive attitude among challenging times. I am so grateful for my mom's words for me ---- "Just work hard and don't struggle too much with the results. Be calm and keep going!"

I am ready for what lies ahead of me. I understand that living in a new country poses challenges for me. I believe I can conquer the obstacles ahead. I had the patience and encouraged myself to accept the challenge. "熬呗，熬过去聊，慢慢就好啦！"(Hang in there! It will

slowly get better!) After the first couple months of struggles, I became more adapted to the new environment in the US and began to understand the professors more and more. However, during teamwork with my American classmates, language and culture barriers hindered our smooth communication. I was reluctant to present my real thoughts in front of native speakers because I was afraid of not expressing myself accurately and appropriately. Sometimes I had cool thoughts to share, but I couldn't address myself adequately. If I could use my first language, I would have illustrated in a much better sense. I understood that we all came from different cultures, and of course we held different social belief systems and culture value standards.

I also have a funny story to share. The first time I went to a local Burger King restaurant to order a hamburger and some French fries, I had a hard time making myself understood. I was very confident that I knew how to place an order, so, I talked to the waiter and said, "I want to order a hamburger and some chips." The waiter turned to me, very confused, "Oh, I am sorry. We don't have chips here." I was confused too because I was quite sure that chips was the word that I learned from my textbook when I was in China for what I was wanting to order. I thought it was just a simple word. "How couldn't you have chips here? I saw them on the menu picture." I pointed to the menu. Almost immediately, the waiter laughed, "Oh, I see what you mean. You want some fries." I was embarrassed as I didn't even know how to order fries in an appropriate way. I seriously questioned myself, "How can I not know this? All my English teachers from China taught me the same regarding how to say "薯片/薯条" (chips). " I just didn't believe the native speakers could not understand me. Chips are chips, fries are fries, and they are different here. Then, I realized that my English teachers from China only taught me the text book English language but didn't teach me how to use it in a real-life situation in an appropriate way.

Another funny story occurred when I was invited to watch a football game for the first time. I never watched a football game when I was in China because we don't have this type of sport. My friends told me that we were going to have a tailgating potluck before the game. I didn't understand what a potluck or tailgating was because we also didn't have this in Chinese culture. You had to experience it to understand, so, I was trying to confirm my understanding with my friends based on my limited prior knowledge of potlucks and tailgating. I explained to my friends, "So, are we going to have a trunk party?" My friends all laughed out, "No, no, no, in our culture, trunk party means something really different. Somewhat inappropriate, like stripper party. Tailgating is a party that we set up near the entrance of the stadium a couple of hours before the game. We bring all kinds of food and drinks to share. We also do BBQ and fun games." I felt so embarrassed that I self-created the words that I had never known. It was such a joke. Anyway, as days went by, I learned so many things that were different from the textbook English I learned in China. Thus, I understand that language communication is not solely about language itself. Language communication is closely intertwined with socio-cultural context. Language communication exempt from real-life contexts is plain and meaningless.

During my study in the US, my family had offered me as much support as they could to help me get through the difficult times. My aged parents took turns to travel long-distance to the States to help me take good care of my son which made it possible for me to gain enough time and energy to work through my PhD journey. Their unconditional love to me and my small family gave me the strength to overcome the obstacles ahead of me. To be honest, my academic journey in the US wouldn't even be possible or successful without their support. Along the way, my parents hadn't pushed me hard to simply complete the journey; instead, they had encouraged me to work at my own pace, "as long as you work hard towards it, you will make it through." I

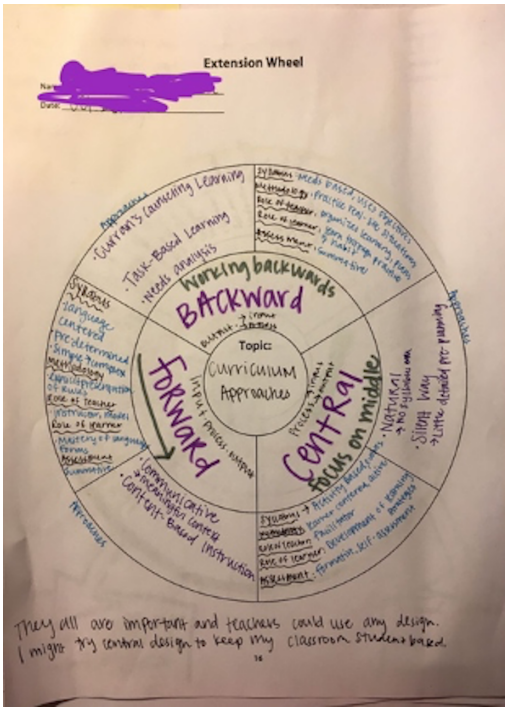
am so thankful that I have such caring parents to have my back. In the meantime, I am fortunate to have met some very nice people in the US and they have treated me just like their own family member, which has meant a lot to me and has really touched my heart.

Throughout my PhD course, I have had the opportunity to take the ESL methods class and have been exposed to BDI teaching. Before the class, I expected to learn some new teaching methods that I could use for my future employment as a teacher. However, to be honest, for most of the class periods I felt quite disconnected and struggled because "那门课老师就要求我们在同学之间去探索，而我本身在上学的时候并没有过类似的经历，我都没有见过，没有尝试过，没有听过，我想象不出来，所以对我来说产生的共鸣很少很少。我个人觉得那门课没有多大的效果，有点浪费课堂时间，对我来说收获不大。"(For that class, students were requested to explore among classmates. But I didn't have any prior knowledge or similar experience over the learning content. I have never seen this before. I have never tried this before. I have never heard about this before. I couldn't imagine any of the related items. So, I had very little resonation in the class. I personally thought I didn't learn a lot from that class, but it was a waste of time instead.) For me, "BDI 就是根据每个学生的个人背景，对每个学生进行一个全面的了解，包括他的文化，他曾经学过什么，然后在这个基础上，根据他个人的学习特点，再通过各种各样的活动去帮助他学习，这是一种非常个性化的教学。"(BDI is an individualized teaching. Based on each individual student's background, teachers will need to have a full picture of the individual student such as the student's culture and what he learned before. Then, according to his personal learning preferences, teachers will design all kinds of activities to meet his needs and facilitate his learning.) I have to admit that the most impressive thing I remember about BDI is the hands-on activities or the BDI strategies. These strategies can help motivate students to learn and keep them engaged in learning.

I especially liked one of the BDI strategies —— extension wheel, shown in Figure 4.1.. “我感觉它是在一层又一层的大大框架上面，然后找到跟它相关联的，再往下再能分成几个分支。这实际上就像咱们说的一棵大树或者像一把大伞一下样，一层又一层的是一个道理，只不过它这个形式是像轮子一样，可它蕴含的就是学习当中的一个条理性。哪怕是学语言，你也可以给它找出来中间有哪些条理，哪些关系。所以我比较喜欢这个。”(I feel this is like the big frame, from which we go down step by step by finding out the relative strings. And each string has a couple of different threads. This is very much like the big tree or the big umbrella we usually say in our Chinese culture. Under the big tree, there are different branches. Extension wheel is just a form of BDI strategies. But they all imply the same learning logic. Even if you are learning a foreign language, you can still find out the logics and relationships among words. That is why I like this strategy.)

Figure 4.1.

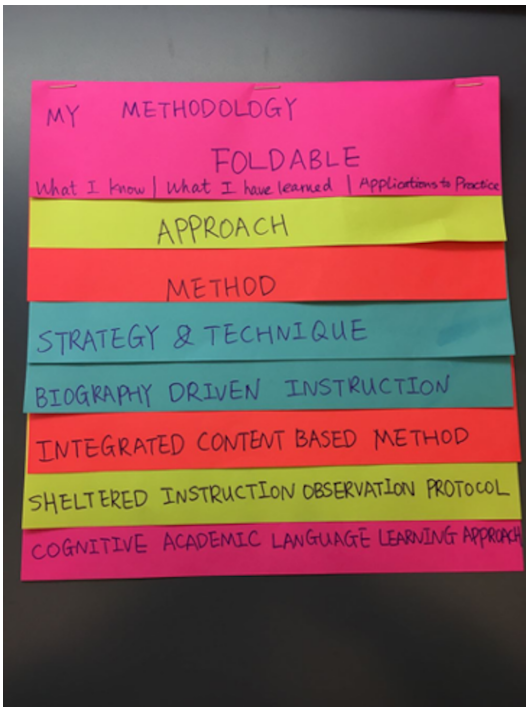
Sophia's Extension Wheel



When thinking about my future target student population, I don't think all BDI strategies will best fit for them. I plan to teach college students in the future, and I don't think they will have much interest in the BDI activities because the majority of BDI activities are designed for K-12 students. For example, one of the BDI strategies is called foldable book, shown in Figure 4.2.. I think for adult learners it is a waste of classroom time. It is one way of note-taking, and adult learners won't need to design the foldable book to write down all the notes. Instead, they can simply use their computer or a hard copy notebook to complete the note-taking. But for little kids, it may be a good fit as these BDI strategies are at their cognitive levels, and kids truly need hands-on activities to keep themselves busy and engaged. Kids will also love the hand-craft designing process of making a foldable book, and they won't need to master a whole bunch of knowledge at one time but can focus on a little bit each time.

Figure 4.2.

Sophia's Foldable Book



I am not saying all BDI strategies are not appropriate for adult learners. For some of the BDI strategies, I plan to modify them a little bit and apply to my future classroom, such as mind map and extension wheel. I like these types of BDI strategies because they are more suitable for my target student population. In addition, I have to consider the teaching reality within a Chinese EFL context. We all know that the class size is big and the class teaching time is limited based on the EFL curriculum. I probably will adopt the flipped classroom model by assigning students some homework for preparation and asking them to present their work through BDI strategies. In that case, I don't have to worry much about the limited class teaching time and will still be able to take full advantage of instruction time to teach the required content while giving students opportunities to present what they have learned in a creative way.

The other thing I want to mention about BDI teaching is the assessment. I like all kinds of formative assessments that BDI teaching advocates because it can greatly help reduce students' anxiety level and allow students more flexibility and creativity on answers. I believe that most young EFL teachers in China are aware of the necessity of decreasing students' stress levels and encouraging students' novel creativity. Many of the EFL teachers from universities have studied EFL teaching abroad and have been exposed to the student-centered communicative teaching methods. However, within the Chinese EFL context, the majority of EFL teachers don't have the initiative to take risks and become the agent of change due to some constraints which refers to big class sizes, limited teaching time, lack of administrative support in using time-consuming activities in classrooms, strict performance appraisal and pressure from students' parents.

In the Chinese education system, standardized testing has had a significant impact on students' promotion to advanced grades or colleges. I normally do not complain because I know complaining is of no use. The competition among students, parents, teachers, and schools is all

about students' testing scores. 在中国这样的国情下，你不拿一个分数，你怎么给学生和家长一个交代？对学生来说，将来中小学生要升学，大学生要考研，每个学校都有限定的招生人数，他们都是需要划一个分数线来作为分界点的。如果你给一个主观的题，让学生可以有自己的判断。你说你有了进步，你有了很大的进步，可你到底有了什么样的进步？那两个学生之间，两个学生都有一定的进步，那这个一定的进步是多大的进步？最终它还是需要量化的，要不然学生和家长都一头雾水。(Under the Chinese culture context, if you do not have a specific testing score, how do you explain to students and parents? For students, they need an actual score to be promoted to the middle schools, high schools, colleges and even graduate schools. Every institute has its own enrollment requirements and they all need to draw a dividing line. Imagine that you give students a test that will be graded based on their subjective answers. You as a teacher tell them that "You have made some progress. You have made great progress." but how much progress have you made for real? Both student A and student B have made some progress, but how much is the progress? The assessment needs to be quantified, otherwise both students and parents will be confused.) In China, students understand that high testing scores are the quickest path to success. Parents compare their kids' scores to strengthen their family pride. Teachers compare their students' scores to gain popularity, substantial rewards and promotion. Schools compare their students' scores to obtain a better reputation and increase enrollment. Therefore, if these obstacles cannot be wiped off the slate, it will be always a challenge to use BDI assessments in China.

However, as a college teacher, I do think it is possible and feasible to apply some of the BDI teaching into my own classroom. Although many EFL teachers in China lack the awareness of fostering students' cross-cultural communicative competence, we can still find some ways to combine BDI teaching with GTM teaching through getting to know the students' interests and

needs, preparing more informative resources for students to explore, allowing students more freedom to present individual opinions, adopting more flexible assessments, using flipped classroom model and designing more activities to engage students' learning.

Ava's Profile

Ava is an "实诚的东北女孩" (honest, sincere and straightforward girl from Northeast China) in her late twenties. I had the privilege to know her closely because we took some classes together and later we became friends. When I first met her, she wore a pair of big glasses, looking quite fashionable like a "文艺小清新" (quiet, elegant, simple and refreshing person). She always had a big, sweet smile on her face and showed her modesty and politeness throughout our conversations. She didn't immediately go into the workforce after graduation from college in China but chose to continue her education in the US in order to obtain a Master's in ESL and a Doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction with a focus on ESL studies. She hasn't really been employed in the education field but has maintained a full-time student status. She told me that during her years in her doctorate program, she was fortunate to have the opportunity to do some part-time jobs both on and off campus, as well as work as a research assistant and teaching assistant for her advisor. Following is Ava's narrative of her journey to GTM and BDI.

Ava's Own Story

I am the only child born in a typical teacher family in the northeast of China. My mom is a college professor and has had huge impact on me throughout developing years. When I was a little child, my mom had readied a full plan for me. I was advised to take as many 兴趣班 (all kinds of after-school programs that introduce students to various fields, such as English, music, piano, story-telling, theatre, singing and drawing and so on.) After-school programs cost extra money, but my mom had saved money for this investment and insisted that I needed to start all

kinds of programs in order to discover what I really liked and what I would love to learn. She wanted me to start learning English early because she had a unique professor perspective and believed that learning English was important for the future. I simply followed her advice and started learning English before I enrolled in kindergarten. Luckily, I didn't hate to learn English from the beginning but loved it because of my amazing first English teacher. My first English teacher taught me English with lots of hands-on activities in a fun and easy way. I always looked forward to attending the English classes outside school. I earned countless prizes from that English class. I continued my after-school English class until the end of my primary school year. That was a really joyful English learning experience with no stress but fun activities and prizes.

My mom was very happy with my strong interest in English and satisfied with the preliminary results of English learning. My interest and desire to continue English confirmed her initial decision to have me start English at an early age with the hope that I could study abroad in the future. After I entered into my middle school and high school years, things changed. With the crazy school schedule, I didn't have extra time to continue my outside English classes. Every student complained about a tight schedule and a ton of homework. In order to get high testing scores on real tests, doing practice tests was highly recommended and was required by most of our teachers. Therefore, our after-school time was filled up with piles of testing booklets. To be honest, I hated doing all kinds of English grammar questions practice. I didn't really follow the teacher's homework instructions to complete them. My mom spent tons of money buying me different kinds of grammar testing booklets, but I don't think I ever finished one of them. I felt guilty for all the money spent on the booklets but gained just a little self-comfort for purchasing the booklets because it seemed like I would get a good grade for just getting them.

Throughout my middle school and high school years, neither was I one of the best students with excellent academic records, nor was I one of the worst students with weak academic performance. I was in the middle rank of my class, and I was totally fine with that. I was simply happy with whatever rank I maintained at that point. One thing that did make me happy and stress-free was that my mom did not drive me too hard to study and didn't ever blame me for average grades like what most parents usually do in China. Traditionally, parents in China set high expectations for their kids, are strict with them and push them extremely hard. My mom always encouraged me to try my best and work harder as she believed that I had plenty of room to grow better. She did everything she could to support me in every possible way. She hired a tutor to help me improve my English, specifically for the English tests. Unfortunately, after the annual admission exam *Gaokao*, I didn't obtain a score high enough to be able to attend one of my favorite colleges. I was very disappointed at my horrible performance because I wasn't able to choose my favorite major due to my comparatively low comprehensive score. I wanted to major in English because I loved English, but I couldn't. Eventually, I had to accept the reality that a high testing score was the only path to a well-known college and a competitive major.

Life is not easy and things won't always move forward as planned. After *Gaokao*, my mom had to run around tirelessly and consult her friends in order to find me a relatively renowned university to attend. I hit my luck because my mom helped me secure an admission to a well-known provincial Normal University, but I had to major in general education. The normal acceptance into the English major was extremely competitive in good colleges and I didn't reach their minimum admission score. My mom didn't give up on me though, and she kept telling me that, "你是女生。女生学师范也还行。你得去试一下，没试怎么知道不可以！"(You are a girl. I think it is a good career for a girl to become a teacher in the future. You need to try before

you say no.) I wasn't willing to accept it but I didn't want to disappoint my mom. In addition, to be realistic, it is better to have a college to attend than nowhere to go. Therefore, I ended up going to a college with a major that I knew nothing about.

Throughout my college years, my mom has been extremely supportive of me financially, mentally and physically. I have to admit that I am not an outgoing girl. I never expected myself to participate in any type of on-campus pre-service teacher skills competitions. However, since I chose teaching as my future career, I had to step out of my comfort zone and involve in some competitions to gain some learning experience. My mom was the first one to support me to accept the challenge. I prepared for the on-campus pre-service teacher skills competition, practiced again and again, but I still felt too nervous to present the lesson. The night before the competition, I couldn't fall asleep at all. I called my mom and told her "Mom, tomorrow I am going to the real competition stage." I was so nervous. I did a rehearsal about the whole lesson to my mom on the phone. I was able to calmed down a bit. My mom knew me so well and could probably see through me. After I finished my rehearsal, she didn't speak one single word for at least 20 seconds. Then, she told me earnestly, " 女儿啊，我觉得你天生就是一个老师！" (My dear daughter, I just feel like you were born to be a teacher!) Those were the most beautiful words that I had ever heard in my life! My mom had never praised me like this. I know she always told her friends about how proud she was of me and how awesome her daughter had been doing in school, but that night was just different. She used so many nice words to compliment me and cheer me up, with an extremely sincere heart. Her words wiped away all my concerns, and I quickly became confident. My hard work paid off, and I was awarded the first prize in the competition. I was so happy that I didn't disappoint my mom. And I know my mom was happy

as well. Even now, I still appreciate how much my mom's encouraging words meant to me, and I even made a wish that in the future I will treat my own kids the same way as my mom did to me.

College years went fast, and I enjoyed most parts of my college life through doing some fun and engaging things I personally like. I secured my GPA at a relatively good spot. However, during my senior year in college, I was in a dilemma searching for a decent career. I didn't like my major, so I didn't want to continue the education with the same major in a graduate school in China. I wanted to become a teacher, but my major would only allow me to be certified in becoming a general elementary or secondary " 政治老师" (a teacher who specially teaches government, politics and moral cultivation). I didn't want to become this type of teacher. Due to the limited career possibilities of my major, I had no better choice but to seriously think about my mom's recommendation since I started my English learning to have me study abroad.

It was like an overnight decision. I took up the courage to tell my mom, "I want to study abroad. This is my last best option." To my surprise, my mom didn't even question the reason why I decided to take this new path. Instead, she said firmly, "Go for it! I have already saved all the money for you." This is my mom. She didn't hesitate to support me to find a new world that has all the possibilities ahead of me. What shocked me even more is my grandparents gifted me all the savings of their retirement pensions and told me not to worry about any financial burden. I couldn't be more thankful to my family. Without my family, I wouldn't be who I am today.

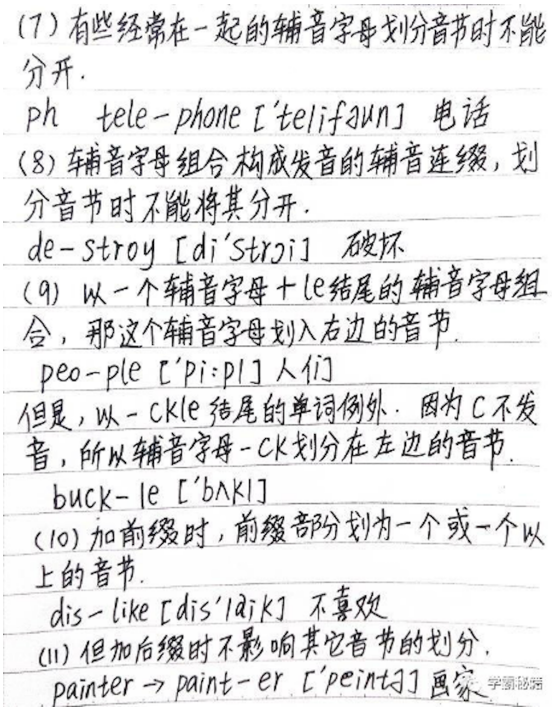
After I made the decision to study abroad, I started to prepare for TOEFL (The Test of English as a Foreign Language) ---- a language proficiency test that measures the ability of non-native speakers of English to use and understand English, a test that is required for every international student who wants to study in the US. The TOEFL test is not the same as the standardized tests I had taken in the past years at all. It included the testing of all four basic skills

of language learning: listening, speaking, reading and writing. I had a frustrating time getting high enough scores on the listening and speaking parts just because these two parts are not the focus of the EFL teaching and learning I had while learning English in China.

All I can remember about my English language learning since my 7th grade year are grammar rules, language points and rote memorization of vocabulary words and text paragraphs. I didn't think the English teaching from my middle school years to high school years was of any difference. The school schedule was super tight, filled with all kinds of core classes. In high school, we sometimes had some seminar classes for students to catch up with homework or revisions of learning contents. However, it happened a lot that some of the core class teachers appeared to rob us of that valuable seminar time and taught more testing points. A regular English lesson I experienced would include introducing new vocabulary words, translating these new words into Chinese, analyzing each word's grammatical use in the sentences, going back to the reading texts, finding out where these new words are, highlighting the new words and taking notes of grammar points, translating the whole text into Chinese, completing the reading comprehension questions, reciting the text paragraph, and preparing for the weekly quizzes. My English teachers primarily Chinese while teaching English grammar points and rarely focused on English listening and speaking. Throughout my middle school and high school years, I used many notebooks to write down grammar rules and language points as shown in Figure 4. 3..

Figure 4.3.

Ava's Grammar Notes


(7) 有些经常在一起的辅音字母划分音节时不能分开.
ph tele-phone ['telifəun] 电话
(8) 辅音字母组合构成发音的辅音连缀，划分音节时不能将其分开.
de-stroy [di'strɔi] 破坏
(9) 以一个辅音字母+le结尾的辅音字母组合，那这个辅音字母划入右边的音节.
peo-ple ['pi:pl] 人们
但是，以-ckle结尾的单词例外. 因为C不发音，所以辅音字母-ck划分在左边的音节.
buck-le ['bʌkl]
(10) 加前缀时，前缀部分划为一个或一个以上的音节.
dis-like [dis'laik] 不喜欢
(11) 但加后缀时不影响其它音节的划分.
painter → paint-er ['peintə] 画家

I was somewhat jealous of one of my favorite English teachers from high school because I thought she was a genius with a powerful memory. She never brought any teaching plans to the class. 她一上课，一进门，就跟大家笑一笑，然后说我们今天要学什么，归纳什么，然后她就开始板书，从黑板这头写到那头，满满的一黑板，就都在她的脑子里，她就没有东西照着写，所有的东西都是她背着写的，我们不知道她是怎么背住的，就感觉她把整本英汉字典都写在黑板上啦，而我们当时就跟着抄，然后我们都知道这些东西都是高考会考的。(Once class begins, she enters the classroom, smiles at us and tells us what we are going to learn today and what we are going to summarize today then she turns to the blackboard and starts to write on the board from the left end to the right end, from the top edge to the bottom. She fills up the board pretty quickly. She doesn't have anything in her hands to copy and write. She simply

exports all language points from her brain. We are not sure how she successfully memorizes everything. We just feel like she probably already memorized a whole English-Chinese dictionary. We just need to follow her and copy all the notes from the board to our notebooks because all these notes will be examined in *Gaokao*.) There was little interaction between the teacher and us throughout the class period. There was no so-called comprehensible input for us to understand the new content. There was no feedback from the teacher regarding our mastery of grammar learning. My English teacher was just busy feeding us everything within the limited teaching period. She even told us that if we admired her excellent English, we would need to follow her teaching method and memorize as much as possible as this was the same way that she was taught by her English teachers.

Every student like me in China learned English with the extremely boring grammar teaching. We had to memorize all necessary vocabulary words and phrases as well as grammar rules to pass the written tests. The listening parts on the tests were easy and the speaking was not even included in the testing. Teachers stressed that we only needed to try our luck for listening as it was not a significant portion of the test. Our major focus was the reading and writing, with no real-life context learning. For example, "老师让学生造一个句子，她就只会把这个句子的中文给你放这儿，然后就问你这个句子用英文怎么说？她就不会问你，如果是这样的情况你应该怎么用，如果是那样的情况你应该怎么用。而对于大多数学生来说，我们学这个英语就不是说要真正跟老外交流什么的，反正这就是国家要求的，就像语文数学一样的课，学它不是因为兴趣或是要用它，而仅仅是因为它要考试，就是要考试。" (When a teacher asks a student to make a sentence, the teacher will just give you a Chinese sentence and then ask you how do you say this sentence in English. The teacher won't ask you, "how would you use this sentence under this context or how would you use this sentence under that context?" For the

majority of students in China, we learn English not to be able to really communicate with native English speakers. It is what the national education system requires, just like Chinese and math classes. It is not because we are interested in it or we have to use it so we want to learn English. The reason we need to learn English is just because we need to pass the required English test.) Thus, teachers distributed their teaching time based on the proportion of content on the testing and told us that a good mastery of grammar rules was the key to the success on the tests.

A big class size plus limited teaching time is the biggest issue in my English class. My class normally has a total of around 50 students and each English teacher has to teach five to six different classes daily. Every class period is around 45 minutes. Teachers are pushed to teach to the test while students are pushed to learn for the test. If we do something in the class that is not about the testing, it is considered as a waste of valuable class time. Thus, it is almost impossible for the classroom teachers in China to reach out to every student and learn about them. Many parents invest money in the after-school program with the hope to see their money quickly get rewarded with their children's good test results. Similarly, the students want to prove that they are not wasting their parents' money in the after-school programs, and they also want to bring pride to their family by getting a high score which will make their parents happy and satisfied.

Within a traditional Confucius culture, teachers' authority is best demonstrated in China. Teaching is considered as a decent profession in China and teachers receive significant respect from students, parents and the whole society. Throughout K-12 education, no matter what teachers teach in the class regarding what the curriculum requires, they are considered always be right and have the correct answers. Students will not risk challenging their teachers. I remember, "大学以前都是老师说了算嘛，班主任就是天，比什么都权威，班主任说什么就是什么，没人会说不。上大学以后会好些，老师会尊重学生的想法多一些，但是学生还是不会刻意

为难或是挑战老师。”(Prior to the college, the teachers have the final say. The head teacher is considered as the God of our class and is more authoritative than anything. No students will say no. After going to the college, it becomes better as teachers respect students' opinions more. However, students will still not purposely embarrass or challenge teachers.) Teachers sometimes can be biased because they like obedient and well-behaved students, especially those students with excellent academic records. When I was in high school, it was a tradition that at the beginning of each semester the whole class would need to select some representatives to help the head teacher manage the class. It was rather ironic that you wouldn't get elected by how popular you were but by how extraordinary your academic scores were. My head teacher made it a rule that all candidates receive their ranks based on their comprehensive testing scores from their last semester and whoever ranked in the top would get elected. That was why I always got elected as the English class representative because I always got the highest testing score.

I enjoyed the pride that I felt by getting high testing scores in English. I also appreciated my English teacher's trust in my ability to learn English well. I am especially thankful for my first English teacher who guided me to learn English in a fun way from the start. I believe learning a new language at the beginning is difficult for every language learner, but if you were enlightened in an easy and relaxing way, you felt in love with learning English in a flash, and it built a good foundation for future learning. I believe that interest is the best first teacher and“如果从一开始你就对学习英语很感兴趣，又学得比较优秀，那你就学了就更想学，就学得更好，因为好学生的话老师会夸奖你，同学会羡慕你，其他人也会夸奖你，然后你就更想学，就是这样一个良性循环。”(If you are interested in learning English, and understand it well, then it is more likely that you will want to learn more because as an outstanding student in learning English, your teacher will praise you, your classmates will envy you, and other people

will compliment you. Thus, you feel more motivated to learn more and more. This is called a virtuous learning circle.)

During my senior year in college, my mom had me attend some intensive classes at the New Oriental Education learning center in order to perform well on the TOEFL test. Before I went to the learning center, I was confident in myself as I believed I built a good foundation of English language knowledge. Attending these classes was one of my most frustrating moments in learning English. The TOEFL test preparation was exhausting due to the large amount of time being spent on mastering so many skills and memorizing so many things in a short time period. The teachers there were more compelled to teach us every test skill all at one time. However, I didn't easily give up but chose to fight for it. I knew, "我没有更好的选择，因为我要参加考试。而关于考试类的东西，只要我付出努力我就可以拿高分！"(I don't have a better option. I have to pass the test. I know as long as I work hard, I will get a high score.)

The techniques I learned from the teachers at the training center were helpful because I preferred to understand the meaning of the words first and then use it correctly. It helped me save time and make learning more effective. With the good techniques in hand, I greatly improved my reading and writing, but speaking was still my weakness. I felt embarrassed to speak English in front of another Chinese person because I was afraid of people' judgement on my accent. On most occasions, I would rather be quiet than be judged. I wanted to avoid that discomfort.

Many Chinese students have the fear of being judged about speaking English in China, which also affect their performance in studying abroad. I am one of these many students. My first couple of months studying in the US was quite challenging because I was busy battling with understanding others' English and making other native speakers understand me. When I had the opportunity to study in New York, I got a part-time job and was pushed to speak English. Day by

day, I made exciting progress by combining body language with poor English in order to talk to my American colleagues. Thankfully, they didn't judge my broken English but encouraged me to speak as much as I could. They confirmed they could understand me. It was such a natural process that I was getting used to the life of speaking and understanding more and more daily English with no fear of being judged but gaining more openness and confidence to speak up.

There is an interesting fact I wanted to share about learning English in China. "如果你的周围都是美国朋友的话，那么你就必须得说英语他们才明白。然而，有的时候就算你听懂了他们说的一句话当中的每一个单词，可是你还是没能明白那句话的整体意思，这个就真的是跟语境文化有很大的关系，而这恰恰是我们中国英语教育未能很好涉及到的。我们的英语教育重视的是语法教学，忽略了语言的真实语境教学。"(If you are surrounded by some American friends, you will have to speak English to make yourself understood. However, sometimes you can understand each single word they are saying, but you might still not be able to follow the whole conversation. This frustration is closely associated with the real-life socio-cultural context, which is missing in our Chinese EFL education. In our EFL context, grammar teaching is the focus while real-life context teaching is neglected.) Many Chinese students are good at English grammar, but it is time for them to speak English, most likely they will get stuck with stumbling like "oh…. ah….eh…." They just don't feel comfortable and confident to speak English. This is our culture. "在我们的文化里，学生很怕犯错，因为我们从小被训练的模式就是怕犯错，犯错是不光彩的，我们在中国接受的就是授之以鱼而不是授之以渔。"(In our culture, students are afraid to make mistakes because we have been trained this way since we were little. Making mistakes is embarrassing and we should avoid it. In China, what we accepted from education is, "if you give him a fish, you feed him for a day." but not, "if you teach him to fish, you feed him for life.") We were taught to take the shortcut to reach the destination and not

to focus on the process. “至于你学了英语之后如何去用，中国不是说不让你去用，而是说你只之后怎么用，你要自己去练习，老师上课只教你如何考试得高分，然后你怎么把学到的这些知识点用到生活中，那是你自己回家后要做的事。而回家后因为没有任何语境，自己又不是在英语国家生活，所以也就不需要了，家长也没法陪着孩子一起练口语，也不是每个家长都有能力请外教陪练口语，所以我们的英语学习这个顺序从一开始就错了。” (Regarding how to use English in real life, in China you can still choose to speak English after the class. But you will have to practice speaking English on your own. The English teachers are just responsible for teaching you how to score higher. Then how you connect the language points you learned from class to your real life is your own business after school. However, after you go home, you can’t find any reasons to practice English within a real-life situation, and you are not living in an English-speaking culture, so it becomes unnecessary to speak English. It is evident that most parents in China won’t have the ability to speak English with their kids. Neither have many parents the ability to hire a native-speaker to practice English with their kids. Thus, I want to say learning English in China has probably gone the wrong direction from the beginning.)

Another interesting fact is, many native English speakers took the English tests in China but couldn’t score high. Why? The testing is specially designed for students in China based on the national curriculum which indicates that grammar rules is the testing focus. Teachers spend hours and hours explaining the grammar rules and requiring students to complete incalculable grammar practices. While native English speakers are fluent in speaking English, they probably do not focus on small grammar mistakes. They know how to speak English but do not certainly know how the sentence structures work separately. Moreover, they were not trained to take this type of tests in China. I believe many questions on the test won’t even make sense to them.

I learned silent English in China, but when I was studying in the US, I had to speak English to survive. I was so happy that people around me didn't care about my heavy English accent. As far as I could make myself understood, the communication would be effective and successful. Gradually, I was gaining confidence talking to other native speakers. I appreciated their patience and thoughtfulness whenever I couldn't address myself appropriately. The real-life communication became a necessity here. Learning English wasn't just about passing the tests, but became so meaningful. I shared with my mom about my initial struggles talking to native speakers but I eventually overcame all the obstacles and found it so practical and meaningful to learn English. My mom was proud of me and assured me I would enjoy the study and life in the US. Her initiative to support me learning English from an early age was the best decision ever.

Although I personally dislike grammar translation teaching, I have to admit that I have somewhat benefited from grammar learning. At least I built a solid language structure foundation from grammar learning. Due to the accumulation of vocabulary words and grammar rules, I was able to conduct relatively proficient academic writing in the US. When I was studying in the US, I noticed that teachers here also teach grammar in the class but in a fun way. I also learned that English can be taught in a different way after I had the opportunity to learn BDI teaching and use some of BDI strategies in my field teaching.

Before I came to pursue my degree in America, I held my personal teaching goal of how I could facilitate my future students to learn English in a risk-free and relaxing way. In terms of my learning experience in China, I considered English learning disgusting and dull, something just to complete a required task. I have been dreaming of one teaching method that can help students learn English in an easy, fun and engaging way, as well as guarantee students' learning with little to no stress. In the first class I was introduced to BDI, I fell in love with the BDI

teaching philosophy immediately because it resonated with my personal belief, and it broadened my horizons that learning English can be so much more than grammar learning.

It was such a refreshing testimony to see how my BDI professor used the pre-assessment to learn about our individual backgrounds. I never expected my professor to ask me about where I came from, what my primary language was, what I like to do, and what kind of learner I am and so on. I thought this personal information could provide no valuable tips for her instruction. I thought it was such a waste of class time. I thought I was not going to like her way of teaching. I thought I would not be able to learn useful teaching strategies from her; however, I was proved to be totally wrong. My professor collected the information from each individual student and adjusted her teaching as needed to meet our needs. One day she asked me if I understood the new concepts in my first language. She also invited me to compare the differences between my own culture and American culture and share with the whole class. I felt much motivated to learn as I comprehended the concepts in Chinese but I struggled with processing them in English as well as elaborating it clearly in English. She praised me and told me that it was totally understandable that I couldn't be able to demonstrate it in English for now, but it was fantastic that I was able to understand the concepts in my primary language. She appreciated me sharing my native culture with the class because that was also a valuable learning experience for them. 我感觉我整个人一下子就被激活了，因为我发现我来到这个教室里学习我并不是一无是处，然后我本身带来的一些东西中，这个也可以帮助我学习，那个也可以帮助我学习，我的整个自信就来了，我的压力感也瞬间消失了! (I immediately felt my whole self was activated because I found that I came to this classroom to learn, and I added some value to the classroom. So much information I brought to the classroom can help my learning. This piece of information about myself can help

me learn and that piece of information about myself can help me learn. Then, it was amazing to see that my confidence came back and my stress level was gone.)

Contrastingly, I have never had the same good experience in China because my teachers would never ask about my personal information. My personal background was not important for improving my testing scores. My English teachers preferred to know how many grammar rules I had mastered so they would know which grammar structure they needed to stress more about and which ones they would need to teach less. Teachers rarely asked us what we were interested in, what our strengths and weakness were, or what our preferred learning style was. I recalled my secondary school teachers used to do this daily. “上课的时候老师说这个句子请 XX 同学给我翻译一下，然后 XX 同学就卡在那里了，因为他不会。接着老师就会说，你不会，那请另外一个同学帮他一下。就这样，无论是再和善的老师，都是这样教学生的。可是这种方法最大的问题就在于老师并没有给学生去表达自己的机会，学生也许是知道这个答案的，他只是不会用英语去说，可是老师就立马不给机会了，学生也就自然地放弃了！”(In the class, when a teacher asks student A to translate a Chinese sentence into English, student A got stuck and couldn’t answer it at that moment. Then, the teacher will quickly move to next student and ask student B to help student A translate. Whoever the teacher is, the teaching routine remains unchanged. The biggest issue about using this teaching method is that the teacher doesn’t give students opportunities to express themselves. Maybe student A knows the answer, but he just doesn’t know how to translate the Chinese sentence into English yet. The teacher doesn’t give him another try. Then student A simply gives up.)

Through my professor’s BDI preassessment, for the first time in my life, I had an aha moment that I learned who I was for real, what kind of learner I was, what language learning stage I was at, in addition to recognizing what my strengths and weaknesses was. My professor

valued whatever I brought to the classroom. Yes, I was new to this country, to this campus and to this classroom, but I was not worthless. I was affirmed that my previous experience had great value in my present learning and in the classroom as other classmates could also learn from me. My professor respected my existence and reassured me that I was important in the classroom and I could help make great contributions to the class. I learned so much from her class with little to no anxiety. I never worried about memorizing grammar rules for tests. Neither did I fear being judged by the teacher or my peers. The BDI learning environment is so welcoming that I almost forgot I was a student. I learned everything in such a natural way. I have dreamed of this type of learning for a long time. Compared with GTM, I really like how BDI teachers consider students' backgrounds and how they plan the lesson and tailor the strategies to engage students' learning and help each student succeed based on those students' individual interests and needs.

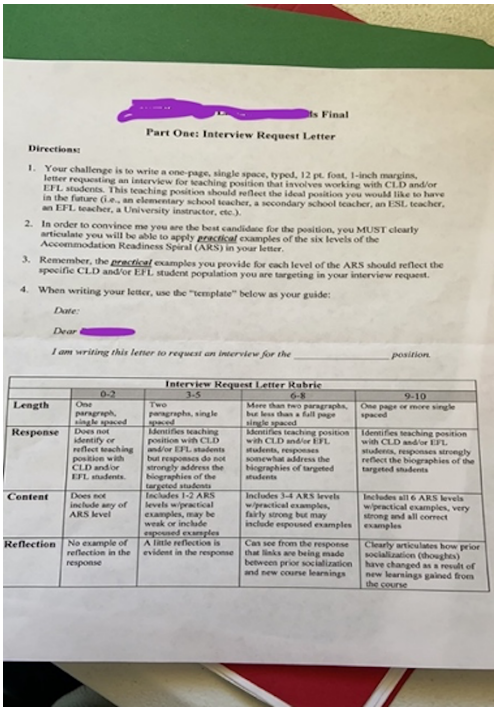
I wish I could have had the opportunity to be taught with BDI methods when I was a little child. There are lots of hands on activities in a BDI-led class. 作为小孩子，我这么小，我就是需要有人有条理地指导我一步一步去完成的，因为我的认知水平还没有达到成人的阶段，我没有那么多的自觉性可以轻松独立地完成一项任务。我是孩子，我就喜欢涂涂画画，我涂的越多，我就记得越多，我通过手工活动记下来的东西才是最重要的。(As a little child, I need someone to scaffold the information and guide me to complete the task step by step as I haven't reached the adults' cognitive level and I wouldn't be able to finish a project easily and independently. I am a child, and I just like random drawing. The more I draw, the more I can remember. Through doing all kinds of crafts, I can remember things much easier and that is the most important part of learning.) When I was little, my teachers in China didn't teach me to learn through all kinds of hands-on activities. Instead, they taught me the same way they taught adults. They assigned me tons of homework to finish at home where I couldn't get the assistance that I

could get from classroom teachers. They required me to memorize every piece of information, but I didn't really understand the information because it didn't make any sense to me.

Another amazing part of BDI teaching that I admire is the authentic assessment. From my years of learning English in China, I surmised that every grammar question had a right answer and all students were expected to demonstrate solutions to the problems in exactly same way. Multiple choice or cloze were the major types of questions on the testing paper while open-ended questions only make up a small proportion. After my exposure to the BDI approach, I especially like the authentic assessments. I never anticipated that I would love mid-term and final exams from my BDI class so much. I was asked to review the notes from this semester and comprehend them from my own perspective through making connections with real-life situations. As shown in Figure 4.4., one of the most impressive parts about the final exam was to use what we learned from this class to summarize our teaching belief and write a job application letter which we could use for job searching when we graduate. The rubric is about how well we can apply the theories into practice. This assessment was so practical, purposeful and meaningful to me so I had the strong desire to spend many hours reviewing and processing the learning concepts as well as reflecting on the past teaching and learning experiences. I took this assessment seriously because I knew I would benefit from it.

Figure 4.4.

Ava's Final Exam Project



[redacted]'s Final

Part One: Interview Request Letter

Directions:

1. Your challenge is to write a one-page, single space, typed, 12 pt. font, 1-inch margins, letter requesting an interview for teaching position that involves working with CLD and/or EFL students. This teaching position should reflect the ideal position you would like to have in the future (i.e., an elementary school teacher, a secondary school teacher, an ESL teacher, an EFL teacher, a University instructor, etc.).
2. In order to convince me you are the best candidate for the position, you MUST clearly articulate you will be able to apply ***practical*** examples of the six levels of the Accommodation Readiness Spiral (ARS) in your letter.
3. Remember, the ***practical*** examples you provide for each level of the ARS should reflect the specific CLD and/or EFL student population you are targeting in your interview request.
4. When writing your letter, use the "template" below as your guide:

Date:

Dear [redacted]

I am writing this letter to request an interview for the _____ position.

Interview Request Letter Rubric

	0-2	3-5	6-8	9-10
Length	One paragraph, single spaced	Two paragraphs, single spaced	More than two paragraphs, but less than a full page single spaced	One page or more single spaced
Response	Does not identify or reflect teaching position with CLD and/or EFL students.	Identifies teaching position with CLD and/or EFL students but responses do not strongly address the biographies of the targeted students	Identifies teaching position with CLD and/or EFL students, responses somewhat address the biographies of targeted students	Identifies teaching position with CLD and/or EFL students, responses strongly reflect the biographies of the targeted students
Content	Does not include any of ARS level	Includes 1-2 ARS levels w/practical examples, may be weak or include espoused examples	Includes 3-4 ARS levels w/practical examples, fairly strong but may include espoused examples	Includes all 6 ARS levels w/practical examples, very strong and all correct examples
Reflection	No example of reflection in the response	A little reflection is evident in the response	Can see from the response that links are being made between prior socialization and new course learnings	Clearly articulates how prior socialization (thoughts) have changed as a result of new learnings gained from the course

While I was in China, I treated every assessment as a burden and couldn't think of any meaningful purposes for taking the assessments because I would not be able to make meaningful connections to the assessment. I wasn't able to predict the value of learning English in China. How could I be motivated to learn when I couldn't even foresee the potential benefits of learning English? What was the real purpose of taking the grammar tests? Am I going to correct grammar mistakes all the time in real life communication? No, I am not going to. Therefore, this type of assessment is of no significance to my future life. However, I understand that it is challenging to conduct authentic assessment under the Chinese EFL context due to the shortage of eligible EFL professional teachers. Switching to a completely new assessment system won't happen overnight

but needs all EFL educators, administrators as well as students to push it through. Otherwise, we will still be overshadowed by grammar translation teaching.

Nowadays, the great news is that many elementary schools in China are recommended to reduce homework and to maximize students' learning in the classroom. The elementary school teachers in China also shoulder relatively less pressure over students' testing scores. Therefore, I personally think it is time to change and now introduce BDI teaching to elementary EFL teachers in China to help boost students' English learning motivation and improve their communicative competence from the start. The EFL Teachers in China will have to be creative in merging BDI into different age groups within consideration of the present curriculum. In the future, I plan to teach adult students in college. I am not sure if I am going to completely switch to BDI teaching because it truly depends on how big the class size will be, how many teaching hours I will have, and how I will be expected by the administration to teach the curriculum. Although there are some challenges of using BDI in China, I am positive and confident that BDI teaching is like a flashlight on the way to learn English and will be a wise addition to facilitate students' English language learning under the Chinese EFL context since so many students are looking forward to the change and are eager to improve their communicative competence as a global citizen. I will try my best to make BDI teaching more feasible in the adult classrooms by making necessary modifications to meet adult students' needs.

Nancy' Profile

Nancy is in her early 30's and is currently a PhD student in Curriculum and Instruction. She is a typical " 西北女孩" (Northwest girl) from China, simple and honest. Her broad smile, playful laugh, as well as her optimistic and positive attitude towards life is very contagious. I loved all our casual conversations during the study. She is quite humble to share her story. She is

strong-willed, clearly knows what she wants and works extremely hard towards her goals. She studies with a sense of pride, a sense of effort, a sense of purpose and a sense of seriousness. She attended three years of college in China and made an important decision to study in the US as a foreign exchange student during her senior year. After she earned her B.S. in the US, she strived for a M.S. by switching major from Accounting to Education, followed by pursuing a Doctorate in Education which is what she is truly passionate about. During her academic journey, she had the exposure to BDI teaching and was able to apply BDI into classrooms. Following is Nancy's depiction of her journey to both GTM and BDI.

Nancy's Own Story

I was raised in a small family with both my parents being employees of a state-owned enterprise. I grew up with other children whose parents were also the employees of the same enterprise. We lived in the same neighborhood, a pretty isolated community. I didn't really have the opportunity to know the world beyond our small community until I completed my elementary school education, and my family decided to move to another city. Since our parents worked for the state-owned enterprise in northwest China, they had the responsibility to work at the frontline such as the desert area. When our parents are out for work for months, we will be taken care of by the teachers at school and by grandparents at home. Our teachers are responsible not only for our academic learning but also for our daily life. Our parents greatly appreciate the teachers,"我们的孩子之所以能考上大学, 之所以能成功，那都是老师教得好，都是老师用脚踢进去大学校门的，因为国有企业学校的老师负责了学生的一切！他们就是孩子的第二父母！" (How can our kids gain the opportunity to attend colleges? How can they succeed? That is because all their teachers were highly responsible for both their learning and life, and worked hard to push them into college. They are the students' second parents.)

Since I entered kindergarten, my parents educated me that whatever the teachers say is always right and I need to show my full respect to all my teachers. They also fully respected my teachers and were willing to ask for any suggestions from my teachers. Similarly, our school teachers taught us that we needed to respect our parents and appreciate how much they sacrificed to raise us in a better way. This is the norm in the context of traditional Chinese culture, like no big deal. My parents showed me their unconditional love and offered me the best they could to help me grow mentally, physically, emotionally, academically and professionally. They did not set high expectations on me but always encouraged me that "如果我想改变自己的命运，那么我就得面对现实，更努力学习，因为成功没有捷径可走。" (If I want to change my destiny, I will have to face the reality and word harder. There is no shortcut to success.") I appreciate my parents inserting their own life experience throughout their parenting to naturally impact me.

My parents are old-school and believe that being able to survive in society is the first life skill that I need to master. They insisted that English was just a tool for communication, and there was no need to major in English, although they noticed that I showed a strong interest in learning English. They preferred for me to learn a practical skill. They simply put me in school and believed whatever the teachers taught was important to learn. From their perspective, personal interest was less important than survival skills. They also held a firm belief "把成绩考出来那才是王道。"(Good testing score speaks the loudest. Good testing result is the most important, the most authoritative and the most useful for everything else.)

After *Gaokao*, I didn't obtain a satisfactory score to make me qualified for a renowned college or a major that I preferred. The truth is it was the *Gaokao* test result that decided my interest, rather than my interest leading to the college or the major that I favored. My parents insisted that an accounting major was a better pathway to a future career for a girl like me. They

were traditional and stubborn, not willing to risk sending me to major in something that they wouldn't be able to see ahead to the possibilities. Overall, I was a well-behaved and obedient daughter. I understood the hard work that my parents had been through, so I didn't go against them about the major they picked for me. I always listened to my parents because I didn't want to disappoint them. I followed their advice and strived for what they expected me to achieve. Until then, a happen ending was achieved. I was happy because my parents were happy.

With my parents being the employees of the state-owned enterprise, the enterprise was responsible for hiring all eligible teachers and providing all technology support. It was nice to see the enterprise decide to hire an English teacher for the school when I was a 4th grader. I really liked my first English teacher because she praised me a lot. In the beginning I didn't know what it meant to learn English, but thought it was fun to follow the teacher and read the English words aloud. I looked forward to attending her class every day. She showed us English videos and short English movies with no Chinese translations. I didn't understand the words, but the pictures, audios and videos attracted my attention. I felt so involved in it and truly enjoyed the scenes by guessing the meaning of the English conversations. There was no testing in English and the teacher never talked about English grammar rules. It was all about having fun learning. Since then, I have had a special feeling about English learning. Interest is the best first teacher, and my first English teacher captured my interest. Her praise and recognition meant so much to me.

I maintained my keen interest in English learning until I transferred to a new city middle school and met a new English teacher. Before that move, I received all my education in a remote northwest area enterprise-sponsored school, which society considered as a lower quality school compared to the city schools. I was aware of the discrepancies created between remote schools and city schools in the beginning. The discrimination between city school students and remote

school students made me uncomfortable. The city school students felt superior to the remote school students as they had the easy access to the best quality education. They laughed at my heavy accent, old-fashioned dressing style and even outdated thinking. Things became worse after the first mid-term exam. I received a 110 out of 120 in English, but my English teacher doubted. My parents were called to the parent-teacher conference and were told that " 我知道她是刚从外地转学过来的，所以我觉得这根本不是她的真实水平。她这都是瞎蒙的。"(This is not her real score. She just hit it by luck. She doesn't have the capacity to score this high as I know she just transferred from a remote school to our school.") I overheard their conversation and I suddenly felt something hit my head hard and it hurt so much. I was mad, speechless and disappointed as I couldn't believe that my English teacher was so biased against me, and she never trusted my ability to achieve success. I hated her so much.

Since then, I just couldn't find a reason to motivate myself to learn English from her. I never actively raised my hand or answered questions in her class. I chose to hide myself behind the pile of books and purposely avoid eye contact with her. Her disgusting words hurt my pride so much and always lingered in my heart. I tried my best to forget and forgive it, but I just couldn't. I worked so hard to obtain a teacher's recognition but was hurt so badly at the end. I gradually lost my love and passion for English learning but was pushed to learn it just for passing tests. I knew the reason, and I thoroughly blamed that English teacher for my loss of enthusiasm in English as she cruelly killed my interest in English learning. However, I had to learn to comfort myself "It is okay. It will be fine. This teacher won't teach me forever."

All my memory about English learning throughout my secondary school years is the rote memorization of vocabularies, practice test booklets and grammar rules as shown in Figure 4.5., Figure 4.6. and Figure 4. 7..

Figure 4.5.

Nancy's Vocabulary Bank Book



Figure 4.6.

Nancy's Test Booklet



Figure 4.7.

Nancy's Comprehensive Grammar Book



Every time when we had English class, the first thing we did is to dictate the vocabulary words. If we misspelled one word, we would be punished to write that word for 20 times or more until we could memorize it. Our teacher indoctrinated us “单词是一切，你只要把单词背下来， 你的阅读就上去了，你的写作也就上去了。你单词不会，你啥都不会，你还想写作，那是不可能的！”(Vocabulary words are all. If you can memorize the vocabulary words, your reading and writing will be improved. If you don’t know the words, you will know nothing, not to mention writing. That is impossible!) We were to memorize all the vocabulary words because these words would be in the unit quiz. If we couldn’t score high on the unit quiz, the teacher would tell us it was because we couldn’t remember the vocabulary words.

After learning about the vocabulary words from that unit, the teacher would move to the dialogue and reading the text. As for the dialogue and text, we simply read it once and then the teacher would explain the grammar usages and ask us to translate each sentence into Chinese. The grammar rules and translation were so boring. One of the most memorable grammar rules from my teacher was that,"一个句子是一定不可以同时存在两个动词原形的！"(Two action words can never co-exist in one sentence with their original forms.) We spent most of the class time on grammar rules and translation but speaking and listening were rarely mentioned. Our teacher always instilled this belief, "Our class teaching time is valuable and we need to focus on testing points, so we don't have enough time to practice listening and speaking. If you want to improve listening and speaking, go ahead and do it after class." Ironically, very few of us had taken the initiative to practice listening and speaking beyond class time.

I cannot remember how many booklets I bought and how many I had to practice. I hated doing all these booklets. So did many other peers. I was sometimes doing my test booklets with grammar questions in my dreams. How crazy! The test booklets were mainly about vocabulary words and grammar rules. Our teachers usually asked us to skip the listening and speaking practice as it was only a small portion of the test score. Therefore, I carried a misconception that learning English in China was just about vocabulary words and grammar rules. If I mastered the vocabulary words and grammar rules, I would be able to nail the standard English test.

My misconception about English learning lasted until I made a decision to study abroad as a foreign exchange student. I struggled much with listening and speaking when I started my student life in the US. I had a painful time making myself understood and understanding others. I failed to adapt myself well to the new life because of the language and culture barrier. Before I could register for core classes, I had to take an ELP class (English Language Program) for the

first semester to improve my English language proficiency. It was not quite a pleasant experience taking the ELP classes at first because of the strange looks at me from other Chinese students. I knew they were judging my poor English. I was scared to interact with them because I didn't want to embarrass myself when their English was all better than mine.

I went back to my dorm and swore to make every effort to change. I was so fortunate to have another foreign exchange student from China as my roommate. She is a " 学霸" (Straight A student) and has many amazing ways of learning English. In order to improve our speaking, we tried to communicate in English as much as we could. Gradually, I became more confident and comfortable speaking English to others. Our relationship best explains the Chinese saying "近朱者赤近墨者黑" (Basically, this says people will be easily influenced by their surroundings and the companions they hang out with.) I appreciated her companionship when I was stressed. I hated this kind of culture that Chinese like to crowd out others who are better or worse than them. So many academically excellent students in China preferred to hide their efforts because they either wanted to show off that they didn't work hard but they are smart enough to maintain good academic records or they were frightened that even though they spent much effort learning they still couldn't succeed. I do not like this culture, but it is too bad I was raised in this culture.

My undergraduate study was not an easy journey because I was so busy catching up with all the missing credits. I had to spend another two and a half years completing the undergraduate program in the US. The classes were not easy and I failed some core accounting classes and had to retake them, which greatly accelerated my anxiety level. I kept telling myself that I couldn't waste more time doing things other than obtaining all the credits for my program because I was just so concerned about being compared with my Chinese peers. As for the communication with my American classmates, I was aware that they were disappointed when we did the group work.

I was the one who always kept silent and couldn't offer any insights due to my fear of not being able to express myself in correct English. I felt so left out from the group work.

There is a Chinese saying "人贵有只知之明。"(It is important to know one's limitations.) I am glad I know my own limit and where my weaknesses lie. I notice that I haven't improved much on both my academic and conversational English. I am struggling with exploring good methods to improve, but I never give up. I am not a good risk-taker, but I am determined to overcome the obstacles and change. I need more self-confidence and self-care before I can move forward. I used to care too much about others' opinions and judgements of me, and I still do. However, I have learned that sometimes I have to lower my self-expectation and be patient with myself while making efforts to change. Before each presentation in class, I was well-prepared and determined, "Don't be nervous. You are prepared. You will be fine. Just go for it!"

I've got to share a story here. I remember one of my professors from business school had some bias towards international students from China who were more likely to take the shortcut to pass the test by using hard memorization on the answers. In order to attract his attention and remove his prejudice on Chinese students, I was super active participating in the class discussion, carefully taking notes, and writing down the specific solutions to each question. Whenever he quizzed us, I wrote down the detailed problem-solving steps along with each question on the paper just to let him know that I was not one of those students who he thought simply memorized the answers to the questions. I wanted to prove that I listened to him, I took the notes, I reflected, I made connections, and I understood the concepts. Hard work paid off. When he looked at my quiz paper, he gave me a firmly positive look and nodded his head with a smile. I was so excited that I almost burst into a scream "YES! I did it!" Later, the professor even wrote me an email and praised me on how awesome I did on the quiz and admitted that he hadn't seen an amazing

student like me for a long time. He affirmed to me that he knew I worked hard and he believed that I have a bright future ahead because of my academic rigor and due diligence. I couldn't tell him how flattered and joyful I was but I was so motivated to be a better student in the future.

Each time when I obtained recognition from my professor and my classmates, I felt so pumped and satisfied. Most of my professors and my American classmates didn't judge my heavy accent but appreciated me sharing in class. From my standpoint, my teacher is always the No. 1 person to give me the feedback because my teacher is the one who can verify the value of my learning. I never wanted to disappoint any of my teachers. I am not the smartest student, but I promise I will be the responsible and diligent one who is humble to learn from others and will work hard to reach the goal. I wanted my teachers to value my efforts, trust my ability, recognize my progress and respect my personality. Each time I earned my teachers' recognition, I gained more confidence and increased my motivation to learn even better the next time. That was such a rewarding journey. In addition, my parents' traditional educational belief about teachers largely impacted me because " 能得到老师的认可，那是多么荣耀的一件事情。如果说我得到了老师的认可，那么也就相当于我得到了父母的认可。这就等于双赢。我可以同时让老师和父母都满意。"(It is such a glory thing to get teachers' recognition in any way. If I obtained teachers' recognition in one way, at the meantime I also acquired my parents' recognition in another way. This is a win-win case. I can please both my teachers and my parents.) That was why I always worked hard to get recognized by teachers.

This rewarding journey got even better when I was exposed to BDI teaching. Before I took the BDI class, I had the expectation of learning something new to teach English in the future as I was stuck with GTM for such a long a time and I hadn't made myself love it. Many of my classmates, especially the boys in my class who liked math and science more than language,

were quite resistant to learn English. I am always dreaming of one teaching approach that “这种英语教学方法可以让学生把课堂当成一种兴趣课，把英语当成一种语言工具，能够简单快乐地学习，而不是把学英语当成一种负担。”(From this teaching approach, students would rather treat the class as a fun learning class, use English only as a language tool, can simply learn in an easy and happy way, than consider English learning as a burden.)

The first BDI class was introduced to me through a biography card activity. Honestly, I never expected my professor to learn about me in such a detailed way as all the teachers I had in China wouldn’t have done that due to the large class size and different focuses of teaching. In China, teachers normally don’t spend much time getting to know every single student in their classes. They prefer to spend more time delivering more test-related information to students as they consider it a much better and fairer way to teach on average. Basically, teachers teach every student the same way no matter how different each student is. When they notice the individual differences among students, they just tell students to work harder and catch up after class through seeking extra help from tutors or attending classes offered by learning centers outside school.

I was amazed at the quantity of information listed on the biography card from the professor. It was the first time I was offered this opportunity to share my own origin. In the beginning I doubted whether this information would even add some value to my learning. I was told to tell as much as I could and I could even use my first language to provide any information. How cool is that!!! How dare the professor ask me to use my first language to answer questions? Can she even understand it? Anyway, I felt really engaged in the class and revealed many things about myself that I never imagined doing in America. 我在西北长大，我爱我的家乡，我爱说家乡话，我不觉得自己是西北来的就很土，我就觉得反正我有的你们也没有。(I grew up in northwest of China. I love my hometown, and I love to speak my home dialect. I don’t think I

am old-fashioned, poor and behind just because I come from the northwest. Whatever I have in me, you don't have it. And I am proud of who I am.) I had so much pride in sharing my personal background. I wanted others to know about me. I felt a very special bond between me and the BDI class, and I so enjoyed the biography card activity.

To my amazement, the better part of BDI class came after the biography card activity. For the rest of the semester, I was aware of how much my professor had used the information I offered on the biography card to facilitate my learning. It was such a "潜移默化的过程"(She exerted a subtle influence on me gradually and accumulatively without announcing my name, mentioning my weakness or embarrassing me in any way.) 她并没有故意让我看出来这是为了让我有所提高才设计的，她每一堂课都会自然地融入活动，让学生在不经意间参与活动，我在做活动之前并不感触到老师是为了我，我就是在做活动当中突然间感觉到，哇，这不就是我缺少的嘛，那种感觉真好！(She didn't purposely design the activities just for me to improve. She inserted the activities in every class and had students participate without noticing that. Before the activity, I didn't know this activity was specifically adjusted for me. During the activity, I suddenly realized that "Wow, this is exactly what I need. And I feel so good!") More to the point, I sometimes didn't even notice how she approached my learning struggle but just naturally diminished my fear through all kinds of hands-on activities. She definitely brought joy and excitement to my learning through this particular BDI teaching method. I loved the approach so much and became more engaged in each of her classes.

I cannot describe enough how terrified I felt each time my English teachers from China called my name to answer questions. I often avoided the eye contact with the teacher in order not to be called on. I hated how embarrassed I was each time I failed to give the correct answer and then my teacher would start to criticize me "How could you get this wrong? You should have

known the right answers if you reviewed and memorized what I asked you to do." Sometimes I couldn't even sleep well the night before the teachers checked our mastery of the required memorization. I would be praying that "Please don't pick me! Please don't!". The next morning, in spite of the fatigue from the lack of sleep, I was still more afraid of being judged instead of being cared for. I wish my teachers would have said "I appreciated your effort on this. I know you have tried, but I believe you could do better next time." I understand that teachers in China shoulder much pressure pressing students to attain average high scores from the standard testing as people in society have a mindset that high scores are due to good teachers. Accordingly, both teachers and students in China have unavoidably faced the overwhelming anxiety straight from society. It is the students' daily obligation to study hard and pass tests with high scores, and it is the teachers' daily commitment to teach to the test.

Another great point I like about BDI teaching is how it encourages students to connect the new concepts to what they already knew. During the BDI class, I particularly feel terrific about "在这堂课上，只要我能把所学的知识跟以前的经历联系起来，我都会记得特别清楚，而且很长一段时间我都不会忘记。然而，如果我没有能够参与这种相互联系的过程，就只是听别人说，听听我就忘啦，有时候还很容易走神，这个真的让我自己觉得害怕，让我觉得自己啥也没学到!"(In the class, as long as I can relate the new learning content to my previous experience, I was able to remember it solidly and sustain the memory for a long time. However, if I was not able to make any connections with what I knew before, instead of just listening to others, I easily forgot what I just heard from others. Sometimes part of me was still listening to them, but part of me was already absent-minded, which really freaked me out because I was so concerned that I didn't learn anything new.)

My BDI professor spent a majority of class time encouraging us to make connections through all approachable ways such as native language, prior experience, drawing pictures, math symbols, tables and signs. Once the connection makes sense to us, it is considered acceptable and worth exploring. In her class, time flies so fast. Sometimes I was deeply involved and did not even want the class to end so soon. On the contrary, my English learning in China was separated from real-life contexts. The struggle was that I was always complaining why only 10 minutes had passed and we still had to endure another 35 minutes. It was really more of a torture to be in the class. Every time I think about "在我们的教育体制下，我们中国学生缺少的就是这种与现实联系起来的能力，我们的教育很多时候都是以教师为主，单一输入，而我也相信，只要高考制度存在，那么教师为中心的教育就很难得到改变，因为你高考就是指挥棒，唯一的目的就是让学生考出考成绩。"(In the Chinese education system, most students lack the ability to make connections. Our education is mostly teacher-centered with one-way input teaching. I also believe that, as long as we have *Gaokao*, it will be extremely difficult to change the teacher-centered education system because *Gaokao* is the only baton with the sole purpose of pushing students to test for high scores.) I felt so disappointed and frustrated that we were the generation to be sacrificed to meet the social development.

The last reason I am the biggest fan of BDI is the authentic assessment. I thought I would be scared to death to take the test like what I normally felt in China. To my astonishment, when the professor administered the mid-term or final test, I wasn't fearful at all because she already notified us what we would be tested over and what kind of preparation we should do, and what kind of materials or notes we could bring with us. Wasn't that so awesome?! I never imagined I could bring notes with me to an actual test, which greatly eased my anxiety. In China, I was only

allowed to bring myself, my pen, a timer and a bottle of water with me. In addition, the test site looks like a court, so serious and scary.

When the professor mentioned we could have notes for references during the test, I felt much relieved and had the excitement that I started to like testing for the first time ever. She did not expect a standard answer from us but would embrace all possible answers to the questions. She emphasized that we should make connections through utilizing all the theoretical content into future teaching and considering our target student population in addition to our previous student teaching experiences. There were no right or wrong answers but all attainable solutions. I reflected on my learning experience in China and incorporated my thoughts into the real teaching through a critical thinking process. My professor gave me a thumb-up, indicating that she surely liked my answers. That was the first time ever in my student life that I felt so respected, valued and proud. I even made a commitment to myself that I would teach my future students in this way so they will truly feel learning is not a burden but a joy.

Frankly speaking, when I was in China, I hated all the standard tests because " 我觉得这个考试真是太不公平了，并没有展现出来我的强势，因为我就不是一个适合这种考试的人。"(This type of test is so not fair. It doesn't test where my strengths lie at all. I am just not the person who fits the test.) I remembered each time I complained, my dad tried to persuade me earnestly, "这种考试制度你是没法改变的，你只有好好学习，你才能改变现状。"(You cannot change the testing system. The only thing you can do is to study harder and then you might be able to change your destiny.) Standardized testing is not designed as an individualized assessment, but for making factory manufacture standard-based products out of all students. Thus, the testing cannot authentically measure each student's capability. Believe it or not, I survived all these standard tests like many others in China.

However, many students were not that fortunate to compete to the last moment. Some of them simply gave up half way through, while some failed so many times that they lost the only opportunity to attend colleges. Sadly, for those students who gave up early or didn't pass the annual *Gaokao* to gain the access to colleges, they had to go into the workforce and earn a living with much lower pay. A college diploma is the golden key to open the door to a relatively decent-paid job. This is the social reality in China. Due to the large population, it is more and more competitive each year to see college graduates hunt for jobs, not to mention how challenging it can be for those early drop-outs. What makes it worse, the unique standard tests in China already cut off a quick path for some students to be able to live a better life before they were even aware of the uncertainties about their futures.

"学习在活动中开始，在活动中进行，在活动中结束, 还在活动后继续。" (Learning starts from doing an activity, proceeds through doing a different activity, ends by engaging in another activity, and continues to happen after the activities.) This is the best conclusion I can come up with to describe the BDI approach I was exposed to. Learning through BDI strategies doesn't even allow me time to be distracted but instead keeps me fully engaged. 让人欣慰的是，在参与学习的过程中，我全程没有跑锚，因为我很多时候都很容易思想跑锚，可就是在这个 BDI 的课上，我害怕跑锚，不敢跑锚，因为一旦思想开小差，我就发现我根本就跟不上这个活动的节奏了。(Thankfully, during the learning of BDI, I haven't been distracted the whole time. In many instances, I am an easily distracted learner. But in the class of BDI learning, I am afraid of being distracted and never dare to be distracted because I found that once I become absent-minded for a short while, I wouldn't be able to completely follow the activities.) All the activities from the BDI approach first provided me the visual stimulation, then kept me busy through both individual work and group work, and always helped me stay focused with

prompts and goals from beginning to end. What is more important is that teachers using the BDI approach didn't judge students through just one final assessment but consider every aspect in students' lives and document their incremental progress throughout the learning process, which may affect their linguistic and academic learning. 总之，BDI 注重过程，而非结果。(In one word, the focus of BDI is the process, not the result.)

On the contrary, in China, the focus is the result, not the process. 在学习 BDI 的过程中，我整个没有任何压力，学得很放松。你要知道，当你放松警惕、放松压力的时候，你学习的积极性和参与度也就随之提高了，再加上这种灵活的评估制度，绝不是像国内的一考定乾坤的模式，那整个的学习效率就高好多。(Throughout the BDI class, I had no stress at all but learned with much ease. You know, when you are relaxed and stress-free, your motivation and participation in learning will also increase. In addition to the flexibility of assessments, your overall learning efficiency will be much higher. It will never be like the "one test says all" model in China.) I am grateful for the opportunity to learn through BDI strategies which have changed my views of English language learning and have set a good foundation for my future teaching.

After I learned about the BDI approach and strategies, I had the pleasure to apply some of the strategies to an ESL class during my student teaching at a local high school. I was so glad that I got the opportunity to test some of the BDI strategies in a real classroom and was able to make more connections between theory and practice. The ESL class was quite small so I was able to easily know about the students and tailor the BDI strategies to help meet their individual needs. I wasn't surprised to see those children so engaged in class just like how involved I was when my professor taught me with the BDI approach. One of the ESL students even shared with me that she really appreciated me taking care of her special needs, her preferences and tastes through the uniquely engaging activities. As a student teacher, I felt so fulfilled at that moment.

The strong motivation and participation of the ESL students I student-taught reinforced to me that the BDI approach could make a difference to facilitate students' learning in an effective way. After my graduation from the US institution, I returned to China and had the opportunity to use BDI in some small sized classes at a training center. Students from the center expressed their interest in some BDI strategies and commented that the activities were refreshing and engaging, different from the ones in their regular English class. Furthermore, they felt the class was caring, fun and dynamic and time went so fast that they still wanted to learn more. However, those students also conveyed their concerns that their regular class teachers would not waste so much time doing all kinds of activities to engage their learning because they have to prepare for the standard testing by mastering all test-related language points and grammar rules.

Those students' concerns are also the challenges faced by the EFL teachers in China if they apply BDI teaching into the regular classroom. The major argument is, BDI teaching will offer a risk-free and fun learning environment to students, but not align with the Chinese testing system. How ironic this is!!We learned English to just pass the required tests, with the results of students complaining about their language incompetence when it occurs to them that language communication becomes the barrier to solve real-life problems. I agree we need an EFL revolution in China. Maybe changes will be slow, but we s need it. Globalization has created a massive demand for the younger generations to be equipped with communicative competence.

From my standpoint, BDI teaching has a big selling point in China under the current global trend. I founded my own studying abroad consulting company not a long time ago and have worked with so many parents and students who desire to pursue their dreams of studying abroad. I learned that those parents held their children to a high standard and would invest whatever they could to help pave the road for their kids' future. Many parents in China have

perceived the need to improve their kids' communicative competence. That is why nowadays so many parents chose to send their kids to bilingual kindergartens, pushing their kids to English training centers to learn spoken English, and hire native-speakers as tutors to practice authentic English. They know their kids' regular class teachers will help them with the standard testing but ignore the speaking practice in the classroom. In this information age, they also recognize the importance of communication as they expect their kids to be able to survive and thrive in a foreign country in the future. Thus, I see a great hope of being able to boost BDI teaching in the private English training centers in China, as well as the elementary classrooms in public schools.

For many private English training centers, they make efforts to boost the sale of their programs by telling parents and students that they aim to cultivate students' learning interest, increase students' motivations to learn English, focus on students' communicative competence and promote students' academic competence. More importantly, what they are trying to teach can compensate for the traditional classroom teaching so students can eventually reach both academic and linguistic competence. For the elementary students, it is even more possible to incorporate BDI teaching into their English classes as teachers neither have to shoulder the pressure of standard testing nor have to take the risk of being judged by administrators or lose any benefits. 对于小朋友来说，因为小孩子年龄比较小，他们的好动能力比较强，而不是静静地坐那。作为老师，你就得把课堂变成一个活的氛围，让孩子动起来，孩子一旦动起来做一个事情，他就不容易走神，否则，小孩子一直规规矩矩地坐在那里那是很容易跑锚的。(For little kids, due to their young age, they tend to like moving around more in the classroom instead of quietly sitting there for the whole class period. Therefore, as teachers, we will need to turn our classroom into a dynamic learning space to allow kids to engage in all kinds of hands-on activities. Once the kids are involved in activities, they will less likely get distracted

by other things. But if we require the kids to sit in their own spots for the whole time, it is not possible to keep them engaged. The kids will easily get annoyed.) For the sake of children's learning, BDI teaching will truly offer a new path to fulfill the purpose of increasing the young Chinese English language learners' motivation and improving their communicative competence.

Discussion: Cross-Case Comparison

A First-Person Poem: Journey to the West

I am lucky,

I am different,

I had a struggling journey

From the east to the west.

I thanked my parents,

In big and small ways.

I grew up not to disappoint them,

I argued, resisted and complained,

But I respected, listened and obeyed,

Just to bring them joy, pride and glory.

I appreciated my teachers,

With my respect and fear.

I never went against them,

I always followed their rules,

Not to annoy them but please them.

I hated others' words on me,

I doubted what I was learning,

I questioned what I learned,

I threw my sweat and pain in.

Did it even matter?

No, no, no…….

This was the bubble I was born in.

For me, life is like a running race,

For me, class is like a factory,

For me, test is like a fierce fight,

Between me and my peers.

Race is a race,

Fair or not fair?

That is not our problem.

We've just got to be good enough.

I knew my teachers' pain.

I knew they were pressed,

I knew they were pushed,

I knew they were restricted,

I knew they compromised as well.

This was the bubble we lived in.

What is the best out of the new light?

Does it apply to all?

It is not simply a yes or no answer.

It really depends on,

What you want to apply,

Where you apply it,

Whom you apply it to,

Who has the power of what you apply?

And in what ways you apply it.

East or West,

To be able to say it is the best.

The journey from the east to the west,

Never ends,

Good or not?

Only life and practice can tell.

In this section, I compared and contrasted the English language learning experiences that Sophia, Ava and Nancy shared about their journey interacting with both GTM and BDI, and composed a poem to portray a vivid picture of their lived experiences in order to stay close to the authentic data and best interpret the participants' stories. The journey of their English language learning started from the East, which symbolizes China and continued to the West, which symbolizes America. Recall that this multiple case study was bounded in one single Midwest state institute and each participant was one case. The units of analysis were each participant' English learning experiences associated with GTM and BDI.

All three participants were purposely chosen for this study to share insights about their understanding and choices of action regarding their interaction with both BDI and GTM under

different socio-cultural contexts. I decided to study their experiences because I believed that the dynamic socio-cultural environment they lived in could result in explicitly dissimilar perceptions of their reality of BDI and GTM as well as affect their motivations to learn English, which would create large space for discussion. Through the data analysis process, I was able to discover that their choices of emphasis under different socio-cultural settings, personal needs and professional development, perspectives of home, school and society, as well as general concerns and expectations from home, school and society throughout the journey were remarkably similar. According to their narratives, so many similar factors drove them to who they are today as they lived under the same big socio-cultural atmosphere. However, I am not saying they were all identical in each direction. The exceptions were their choices of action, self-efficacy and ambitions relating to the level of ability and comfort regarding English language learning with BDI and GTM and how to integrate BDI into GTM in future teaching practices.

Based on the information the participants provided in their narratives, as well as the data I gathered through my journal reflections and notes, I was able to discover two broad recurrent themes: That Was Cruel: The Blatant Disclosure of Sacrifice; That Was Real: Teachers Teaching in Tension. I present the following analytical discussions based on these two themes.

That Was Cruel: The Blatant Disclosure of Sacrifice

The three participants' narratives demonstrated a cruel reality that Sophia, Ava and Nancy had to confront throughout their journey to GTM and BDI. When they did not feel personally motivated to learn English, the participants, in varying degrees, sacrificed their individual interests and needs to align with family and school expectations as well as societal needs. In addition, they were forced to give up individuality to conform to family and school culture. With no better options in consideration, they had to go with the flow and used their sense

of self and self-efficacy to navigate the conflicts and make accommodations to continue English learning.

Making family happy and proud. In China, it is a traditional cultural belief that children represent the family and are expected to bring their family pride and glory by obtaining good test scores and being a good student in school. All three participants concluded that this type of Chinese cultural belief had played an influential role in their student life. There was a direct connection between being an A plus student and making their parents proud. They heavily valued the importance of winning glory and dignity for their family and desired to fight hard for it through demonstrating active engagement in class, keeping a positive attitude towards learning, showing respect for their teachers, and obtaining high test scores.

All three participants indicated that having an outstanding performance in school helped parents earn their 面子(*mian zi*, it literally means one's face, but here it refers to earning respect or reputation in front of other parents as a result of one's good ways of raising outstanding children.) and created a good public image. Accordingly, parents who were given the face in grace by the public would feel conceded. Other parents would cast an envious look at them, praise them and desire to learn from their great parenting style. This type of jealousy would in one way make parents feel their effort to raise extraordinary children paid off and, in another way, make them believe their children are superior to others' children. More importantly, having an excellent academic record prompted parents to believe that their children must have dedicated enough time and effort in learning and have properly followed teachers' instructions. Moreover, parents were convinced that their children must have mastered sufficient use of appropriate learning strategies and have developed stronger competitiveness over other peers. In different socio-cultural settings both in China and in the US, Sophia, Ava and Nancy worked hard to earn

their family a good name. Whenever they achieved a success in big or small ways, their family felt joyful and proud of them, which also made their learning experience a rewarding and pleasurable one. They never wanted to disappoint their parents and bring shamefulness to their family. Thus, bringing their family happiness and pride has been a good motivator for them to continue their learning in English and strive for a good learning outcome.

Respecting parents & following their advice. Three participants highlighted that they grew up in a culture of Confucianism from which filial piety was considered as a basic social rule that all Chinese were taught to follow. Filial piety has been one of the most important moral tenets that Chinese people show strict adherence to for thousands of years. In general, filial piety requires children to offer unconditional love, respect, support, loyalty and deference to their parents because their parents give life to them and support them throughout their developing years. One of the fundamental acts of filial piety is to obey one's parents' wishes and respect them all the time. Thus, the three participants showed strong loyalty and respect to their parents because they believed that no parent would expect their children to be bad.

The three participants also mentioned that whenever they had to decide on things when they were young, they always tended to ask for their parents' opinions first and then followed their suggestions. In particular, they talked about their crucial decisions on what type of college to attend and what type of major to choose after the annual *Gaokao*. Their parents played irreplaceable roles in their decision-making regarding the options of colleges and majors. Even though they indicated their personal preferences, that was not the focus of the family discussion. After all, they knew little about the potential of the major options as they spent the majority of their school time targeted on the annual *Gaokao*. They believed their parents would know more than them because they had been exploring the society for years. In addition, their parents shared

their life experiences with them, asked for advice from their teachers, consulted professional enrollment officers, and searched for answers from their friends in order to help them make a wise decision. For all these reasons, they chose to respect their parents and followed their parents' advice to attend a college which they personally might not like but their parents believed to be good for them and their future career.

The three participants did not regret following their parents' advice because the annual *Gaokao* score was the deciding factor for them to be able to choose their college and major. Their parents were just more realistic than them, reminding them of the possibilities, potentials and risks. They appreciated and respected their parents' efforts to help them move forward. They also pointed out that their motivation to continue English learning was not significantly influenced in a way that their parents recommended. Instead, they tried to adjust themselves and accept the reality so their parents were satisfied with the results of sending them to school.

Family environments & family expectations. Although each of the three participants was the only child in the family, each of them grew up in quite different family environments which afforded them varying freedom and flexibility with respect to their English language learning. Under the cultural umbrella of the Chinese education system, many students in the beginning choose to approach English language learning based on academic mandates and family impositions. Many Chinese parents force their children to learn English because it is school-required, society-required and job-required. For Sophia, Ava, and Nancy, the freedom and flexibility offered from their respective parents differentially influenced their motivations to start English as well as their choice of action on continuing English language learning.

Sophia was an autonomous student who didn't require much of her parents' attention to her academic learning both in and out of school. She was appreciative of the openness, tolerance

and trust from her parents from the very beginning to allow her sufficient autonomy in learning. She was motivated by the autonomy, freedom and flexibility to learn and became very self-directed about her learning. Ava was raised in a teacher's family. Since her childhood, her mother had imposed a strong influence on her learning preferences. Her mother had everything planned out for her before she even noticed. Ava was grateful for her mom's overall plan to pave the road for her. Her mom's initial decision to have Ava learn English before formal schooling offered her an opportunity to have an advantage over other peers. Along with her mom's persistence in pushing her to continue English language learning, she admitted that the gifted English class was the only one that she especially wanted to keep on attending even though at some point she did not have the strong motivation and enthusiasm for English learning.

In contrast, Nancy grew up in a family where her parents had to leave her for months due to their job requirements. Correspondingly, Nancy received much freedom from her parents when being taken care of by her grandparents. Her parents told Nancy to respect her teachers and follow her teachers' words all the time as they did not have time to stay with her and supervise her study. Nancy's parents did not push her to learn English until her family moved to the city area where she had to deal with so much uncertainty and unfairness. Nancy was sensible enough to wholeheartedly understand her father's hardship and decided to study harder with more sweats and pains so she would not disappoint her parents. Only by performing well in school to meet the expectations would her parents feel proud of her and be able to avoid having stress after a long exhausting day of work.

Respect teacher's authority. There is an ancient saying in Chinese, "一日为师，终身为父。"(One who is your teacher for a day is your father for the rest of your life.) For over two thousand years, there has been a significant influence of Confucianism on the lives of Chinese.

Chinese people are educated to encourage the practice of Confucian values and instill his values in their offspring. All three participants shared the same perspectives in response to teacher respect and teacher authority which is in accordance with the traditional ethics practiced by Chinese students that they should respect their teachers deeply, treat their teachers like their fathers, value the virtues embodied by their teachers, and not challenge their teachers.

The three participants reported that, in order to maintain respect for their teachers and their good virtues, they not only had to show complete respect and courtesy from their hearts but also faithfully follow the teachings imparted to them. Even when they did not like the teachers or their "boring" teaching styles, they had to hide their true feelings in order not to irritate their teachers or make things difficult for teachers. Otherwise, it was more likely that they had to pay the price for the unwise decisions because teachers had power and control over their academic results. Their teachers might conference with their parents and express concerns on their poor performances in school, which would make their parents distressed and apologetic. Thus, they all chose to fully respect teachers' authority and please teachers by adjusting their thoughts of thinking and actions in the classroom. They all indicated that their motivation to learn English was somewhat decreased owing to this forced respect for teachers.

Similarly, when the three of them were studying in the US, they continued to follow the admonitions of Confucianism on teacher respect. They held full respect for their professors in their hearts, loyally obeyed the professors' words, and carefully followed instructions in preparation for leaving a good impression on the professors. They observed students in the US were encouraged to challenge teachers, which in one way strongly impacted their traditional cultural consciousness and, in another way, helped broaden their horizons on their understandings of student-teacher relationship. This new understanding of teacher authority

suggested that the student-teacher relationship had evolved to something more than just respect for the teachers. Thus, the three participants became more motivated to learn English because they also wanted to join the line to challenge their professors and become more accomplished.

Striving for good student-teacher relationships. All three participants made a particular point that a harmonious student-teacher relationship functioned as a catalyst in fostering their motivations to learn and succeed in the process of second language acquisition. The powerful influence that student-teacher relationships had on the three participants fluctuated: (1) their willingness to explore and engage; (2) their self-control over academic struggles; (3) their resilience to adapt to new surroundings; (4) their freedom and confidence to learn at their own pace, and (5) their determination to reach goals. Participants confirmed that teachers' trust, encouragement and acknowledgement considerably boosted their confidence in English language learning and ultimately promoted their engagement in learning and contributed to their success.

Sophia highlighted that she always attempted to build a good relationship with her teachers and performed well on every test so her teachers would speak highly of her and give her recognition and support throughout her English learning. She pointed out that whenever she happened to have a dull teacher who only focused on the textbook or on grammar, she never really crossed the line to upset the teacher. Instead, she chose to attend the class as required but work on her own after class while many other peers might complain a lot and purposely skip that class. Ava revealed that she was an in-between student who clearly understood the importance of building rapport with teachers. She explained that she did not want to destroy the relationship with her teachers even though she did not like them because she knew that her teachers had the most power over her overall performance. In addition, if she irritated her teachers, she would be categorized as a bad student and her parents would be mad at her.

Nancy admitted that she was not a smart student and she did not have confidence becoming an outstanding student in the class. However, she never wanted her teachers to be disappointed with her. She especially desired to gain teachers' recognition of her efforts and attempts even if she did not achieve the best results. Unfortunately, Nancy experienced a distressful time building a smooth student-teacher relationship with one of her English teachers from middle school. She recalled from the very beginning that English teacher held a negative and judgmental attitude toward her by criticizing and comparing her with other peers in public. That English teacher also showed no trust in her academic ability just because she transferred from a poor and remote school district. The criticism and distrust awfully ruined Nancy's self-image, self-worth and dignity, and made her feel humiliated and embarrassed. Thus, she found it difficult to reflect on her problem or take responsibility. She also did not feel the classroom a safe place to learn and gradually lost her enthusiasm and confidence in English learning. That teacher's humiliating words were constantly hovering in her mind which caused her to have trouble concentrating and learning. In turn, Nancy presented a negative learning attitude in English class and intentionally avoid eye contact with that English teacher.

Peer pressure. The three participants reached a consensus that peer pressure in China was a common phenomenon owing to the competitive social reality, and on most occasions, peer pressure was the driving force that drove them to study hard so they did not fall behind. Sophia honestly stated that she did not have many concerns over the peer pressure as she belonged to the best student category---- academically successful. Other peers were jealous of her and strived to chase her. Ava declared that she did not care much for the peer pressure because she identified herself as an in-between student, and she was totally fine with her academic standing in the class. She knew she had not worked hard to achieve a good test result so she did not envy others. She

sensed that other classmates, especially the top ranked ones, always competed to achieve a better position among the class or the grade so they could obtain a temporary relief from pressure to perform on tests. Nevertheless, Ava maintained a good self-concept which may be defined as self-comfort and purposely avoided the peer comparison so her confidence and motivation to learn English was not negatively affected.

The exception was Nancy's case. She frankly admitted that peer pressure was quite a burden on her academic life no matter where she was. She was extremely afraid of other peers' judgmental opinions of her because she felt others were better than her. As a result of the unique environment where she grew up, Nancy humbly put herself in an inferior position where she frequently admired other's extraordinary performances and cheered for them. She demonstrated her ambition to exceed others and her desire to maintain her individuality but at the same time she struggled with peer pressure that hindered her trust in her own abilities. She also honestly acknowledged that the less she cared about peer pressure, the better she would perform.

Academic struggle: why not make learning meaningful? The same complaint and struggle came from all three participants: Why do we learn what we learn? When they learned English in China, it was all about grammar tests, drill and practice and rote memorization. Their teachers rarely paid any attention to English listening and speaking skills practice during their elementary and secondary years because the state or national standardized testing did not require students to master English listening and speaking. Accordingly, their teachers used a teaching strategy called "题海战术" (Test Banks) and assigned them a massive amount of test booklets for daily practice to analyze the grammatical rules in each sentence. All participants clearly knew that the ultimate goal for learning English is to be able to communicate. Nevertheless, like most other students in China, after they remembered all the grammar rules, they were still not able to

speak English fluently. Therefore, they experienced a painful struggle to connect these grammar rules to real-life communication and found no practical value in the way they were demanded to approach English for written tests.

In marked contrast with GTM, three participants uttered a similar statement that BDI created a more risk-free and meaningful learning environment where students went through the following three stages: (a) students retrieve their prior knowledge through teachers' purposed prompts; (b) students make connections between what they know and what they will learn with teachers' scaffolding support and necessary assistance; and (c) students celebrate their learning success with teachers by reaching out to the community or applying what they've learned to real-life situations. They were aware that the meaningful learning from BDI approach kept them on task and enhanced their motivation in learning throughout different instructional stages.

Research in learning motivation suggests that when students are able to perceive that a lesson connects to their personal life or has personal value or relevance, they tend to engage more in class, make more efforts, and achieve better results (Miller & Brickman, 2004; Vansteen-kiste, Simons, Lens, Soenens, & Matos, 2005). On the contrary, when students do not understand why the teacher is teaching the content, "they often view the request as arbitrary, imposed or simply meaningless busywork" (Reeve & Su, 2014, p.355). Three participants affirmed that their English learning in China was not a meaningful experience and believed that learning should be associated with their real life so they would be able to establish connections between what they learned in the classroom and the applicability of using this learning to fulfil their personal needs in the real world. They also acknowledged that only by making learning meaningful can their motivation and desire for English learning increase.

Whose needs should be fulfilled first? The three participants expounded that individual students' needs were not first considered in the Chinese EFL classrooms due to some socio-cultural factors. These factors included Chinese social collectivism, a strong Confucianism legacy, and social competition. First of all, Chinese people value the culture of social collectivism, not social individualism. Chinese people tend to prioritize collective interests and place family and work group goals above individual needs or desires. They believe that it is an honor for individuals to make personal sacrifice to meet social needs. In addition, teachers in China were pressured to teach their students to perform at an average level on tests. As a result, the three participants stated they understood why their personal needs were not first cared for in the classrooms. Second, the influence of Confucianism instilled for a long time promoted serving family and society first with the goal of becoming a good student in order to give back to family and society. The three participants described that many students in China were forced to learn and perform well on tests in order to please their family and meet the expectations of society but had to put aside their individual needs. Finally, the three participants mentioned a social reality that social competition in China is extremely fierce due to the large population and limited social resources. Therefore, students had to learn what the society needs most at certain times in order to survive; whereas these occupations might not fit their personal needs and interests at all.

Challenged and empowered after the struggles. Sophia, Ava and Nancy went through insurmountable struggles and challenges when they learned English with GTM in China. However, those setbacks did not discourage them in their English learning journey. After they were exposed to BDI approach, they wished their teachers could have taught them this way so they would have endured less stress and anxiety to learn English. Instead, they would have enjoyed the fun process of English learning. All three participants wanted to promote a profound

change in the EFL teachers' pedagogical beliefs and instructional practices within the Chinese educational context. They expressed their sincere hope that the next generation of EFL learners in China would not suffer from lacking communicative competence but could benefit from the new teaching approach of BDI instead. They proposed that at the beginning the change should first be implemented in collegiate level classrooms, and then slowly transitioned into private English training institutions, followed by the shift to elementary schools and eventually enforced in secondary schools. Moreover, they clarified that the first-stage transformation didn't have to be a complete change from GTM to BDI, but a combination of BDI into GTM. All of them three believed this shift in the Chinese EFL classrooms will certainly take time and effort, but they hold a positive attitude towards this change as fast developing globalization requires people to possess a fluency of communicative competence. They indicated they were the 'sacrificed generation' from GTM but they hope the next generation will not have to sacrifice and suffer.

That Was Real: Teachers Teaching in Tension

It was not until Sophia, Ava and Nancy began their academic career in the US that they found a sense of autonomy, freedom and flexibility in English language learning. All three discovered that the risk-free and self-paced environment their BDI professors created was conducive to their individual learning goals and learning styles, compared with the overly inflexible Chinese education system they had gone through. Due to the constraints from the Chinese society, teachers teaching is in tension and students had to give up their individuality to navigate this tension.

Large-scale and non-personalized factory training model. The three participants agreed upon the fact that the current Chinese education system is trying to produce talents in a large-scale factory training model. The Chinese national curriculum covers fewer topics with

every student taking the same classes before they attend college. Most English classes are teacher-centered and function in a similar way with the foci on drills, memorization, practice and repetition. Students in China have limited options for personal preferences in learning, and suffer from the same pressure coming from massive memorization, endless homework, excessive quizzes and tests, little creativity, not much learners' autonomy, strict obedience and harsh disciplines. In distinct contrast, students' readiness for critical thinking, teamwork and collaboration, self-management, creativity and innovation, and cross-culture communication, remains to be addressed in the Chinese national curriculum. The three participants were cognizant that the entire society has witnessed the mass production and universalization of talents without their own characteristics, which has led to weak global competitiveness.

Rigid and challenging *Gaokao* assessment system. Similar to other Chinese students, the three participants were driven to pass the annual entrance examination *Gaokao* in order to attend a college and attain a potentially bright future as "高考就是指挥棒" (The annual college entrance examination *Gaokao* is the baton.) According to the participants' illustrations, the test results of *Gaokao* to a large extent determines students' future because it affects not only which college students might go to and which major they could choose, but also their prospects for future employment, base salary, marriage options as well as social status. As a result of this rigid assessment system, the three participants and other students in China had to bear tremendous pressure to perform on *Gaokao*. Although few students in China favor this overwhelming assessment system, they had no better options but to go with the flow. On top of that pressure, the participants also noticed that *Gaokao* was the only path for students from the poorer areas to be able to change their fate, improve their lives and rise above poverty. For the students who do not have strong and decent family backgrounds, attending colleges is the only way to change

their destiny. Only if a student passes the *Gaokao* test, he or she may gain the opportunity to attend a college. In other words, *Gaokao* is the external force to drive students to learn for the test, prompt teachers to teach to the test, and pull parents to join their children to fight.

Transparency in teaching, learning & recruiting. Another common issue that all three participants brought up is the transparency in teaching which largely affected their motivation in learning. Regarding the transparency in teaching, participants described with particular emphasis on the questions of "*Why do we learn what we learn*?" and "*How do we learn what we learn*?" They recounted that all they knew about the rationale for the content was the sole purpose of passing the tests and getting high grades. Their teachers did not explain to them why they were required to complete particular activities or assignments. As an alternative way, their teachers simply told them to follow the instructions and finish the work so that they would eventually benefit from obtaining good grades. Students had no idea why the assignments were specifically chosen for them and how the work they had to complete on time was relevant to their life. Accordingly, three participants discovered that the lack of transparency in teaching and learning had made them less motivated to engage and learn. Instead, they felt reluctant and only do minimum work necessary just to make their teachers and parents content.

In addition to the lack of transparency in teaching, participants also agreed that the numeric grades they received from each test only meant they mastered the required language points or grammar rules for the units during a certain period. The numeric grades were proof of the sweat and pain they invested in learning and a representation of their academic excellence compared with other classmates. These grades were also recognized as a satisfactory answer to their parents and a reward for teachers' hard work. Nevertheless, the numeric grades did not indicate any descriptive feedback of good quality from their teachers, so students were not able

to identify their strengths and weaknesses and navigate ways to improve. In the meanwhile, three participants expressed their concerns that Chinese parents were so used to the numeric grades from which they could capture a clear picture of where their children stood and how far their children were away from the top students. Thus, the three participants alluded to the fact that the descriptive feedback from teachers with respect to students' incremental progress might not be the best report presented to parents.

Following the discussion of numeric grades, the three participants simultaneously reported that when it was time for them to step into the workforce, nearly all of the recruiting organizations asked them for their general grade ranking and various exam certificates, such as College English Test Level-4 (CET-4), Level 6 (CET-6), Test for English Majors Level-4 (TEM-4), and Level-8 (TEM-8). In comparison, the valuable skills such as critical thinking, teamwork, creativity, self-management played less important roles in job searching. Therefore, students made every effort to learn in order to receive the test certificates and gain a better chance of obtaining an interview opportunity. However, students found the test of no value in real life, even if they worked so hard to pass it because they could barely apply anything they learned from the textbooks or their teachers to their new job. Consequently, their motivation to learn could not last long because it was test-driven, not performance-based.

Restrictions from large class size vs flexibilities from small class size. In terms of class size, three participants expressed the same concerns about how the large class size in China confined their communicative learning, increased the time their teachers had to spend on classroom management, and challenged their teachers to be able to take care of each student's individual needs within a limited teaching period. Due to these limitations, the most commonly adopted class activity participants were involved in was whole class work. Group work and role

play were poorly employed while individual presentation was more of a show from the most outstanding students in the class. A big class size considerably limited their physical movements so fun-movement related class activities were always an extravagant wish because they were required to sit in the assigned seats and do piles of paper work on grammar rules or rote memorization. Under these circumstances, participants' motivation in learning English was greatly constricted as they could not find any enjoyment in the rigid classroom activities.

In a sharp contrast with the large class size in China, all three participants especially admired the small class size in the US. They wished they could have had the opportunity to learn English in such a small class size in China so teachers could be more available to them and meet each individual student's needs to the best potential. In addition, they would have enjoyed more fun and dynamic class activities to engage in English learning, such as using target language to practice real-life conversations, group collaboration and presentation, and mini movie talk etc. They all pointed out that it was more likely that students' personal needs could get well taken care of by teachers within a small class size. In addition, when teachers could address their personal needs, they felt more respected and valued in the class and more comfortable to try.

Professional collaboration & in-service training. The three participants held different perspectives regarding professional collaboration and in-service training because of their varied teaching experience at different grade levels in different institutions. Sophia was a relatively experienced teacher working at the collegiate level. She stated that most of her colleagues had travelled outside China, studied abroad as a visiting scholar for a certain period of time or even obtained a diploma from an English-speaking country. Thus, they were familiar with the popular communicative teaching method and favored raising the awareness of English language learners' cross-cultural communication in order to promote English language learners' communicative

competence. Nevertheless, due to the restrictions from the national college English curriculum in China and the constraints from a large student population and teaching allocation time, they showed no willingness to take risks to be the agent of change but chose to be fixated on conservative teaching instead.

Both Ava and Nancy had limited teaching experience as young graduates. After they were exposed to both GTM and BDI, they were able to apply BDI in classroom-based teaching, either as a student teacher or as a graduate teaching assistant. Reflecting on their short-term teaching and making connections with their previous English learning in China, both of them believed that it was necessary to carry out professional collaboration and in-service training about BDI approach so Chinese EFL teachers in public schools could be better prepared and feel more comfortable using the BDI approach in class. Nancy worked at a private English training center in China and founded her own studying abroad consulting company. Hence, she provided another different perspective that using BDI to teach in private English training centers would be promising and feasible as those training centers aimed to promote learners' communicative competence as well as students' critical thinking skills, which many parents would have hoped for. Thus, she insisted that BDI training workshops be offered among pre-service teachers and in-service teachers to secure a smooth transition from GTM to BDI.

Self-efficacy: resilience & persistence. In a culture that family and society hold high expectations on the young generation, the three participants reached a consensus on the belief that their self-efficacy significantly contributed to where they are today and helped them shape their perceptions and choices regarding English language learning. Regardless of their similar beliefs on self-efficacy, they demonstrated a different endurance and resilience towards their levels of stress, depression, and anxiety as they navigate the tension from teachers' teaching.

From Sophia's description of her good self-management skills of school and life, she demonstrated a remarkably high self-efficacy, believing in her abilities and competencies to organize her life, perform required decision-making and succeed in managing both expected and unexpected situations. According to Roman, Cuestas, & Fenollar (2008), students with a positive self-concept tend to have more confidence in themselves, be more willing to take risks, have more tolerance for frustration, and are more likely to succeed in general. Sophia calmly treated emotional stress and anxiety as a normal procedure in her life and managed the physical burden in a relaxing way. The more she believed in her capabilities to persist and succeed, the better she performed tasks, and the more confidence and trust she gained for herself to do better.

Different from Sophia's excellent self-efficacy, Ava presented a moderate self-efficacy in response to stress and anxiety from school, family, and society. Since she was little, her mom had everything planned for her and perfectly paved the way for her. Accordingly, she did not have much concerns about her directions and how she should deal with failures and struggles. The stress she held throughout her academic life was that when she did not perform well, she thought about her parents' wholehearted investment in her and felt guilty for: (a) not putting enough effort and dedicated time into learning; or (b) not mastering the sufficient use of appropriate learning strategies. She demonstrated a remarkable self-awareness and knew how to protect her self-worth, self-image and dignity. She tried to avoid embarrassment over social comparison and peer comparison that could cause more anxiety and distress. Fortunately, her parents did not compare her with her classmates, which evidently helped her feel relieved. She was good at self-comforting, self-regulating, and self-encouraging to absorb positive energy and gain support. Overall, she maintained good self-control dealing with failure and changeable factors.

In distinct contrast with Sophia and Ava, Nancy developed a relatively low self-efficacy in English language learning. She started learning English with great passion and enthusiasm. It was not until her new middle school English teacher's insulting and embarrassing remarks hurt her self-image in public that she felt humiliated and disrespected, causing her to form a negative attitude and an even lower self-efficacy toward English learning.

Nancy recalled that was the worst memory of her English learning experience because she had never expected a teacher to treat her in such a mean way, which negatively impacted her confidence, her motivation, her task choice and her level of effort and persistence in learning. Subsequently, she was not able to hold a good self-regulation. Instead, she constantly underestimated her ability to grow, undervalued her tendency to succeed, and performed poorly in English classes. She experienced a hard time concentrating on her teachers' instructions. That particular teacher's negative comments made her stressed out and unmotivated to continue English learning. Accordingly, Nancy's self-esteem and self-respect decreased even more because of her inability to concentrate and orient her goals of success, poor time management skills, a fear of failure, and struggle to persist. Thus, Nancy believed that having strong self-efficacy beliefs could help students who struggle in English learning stick to their goals and become more successful.

Administrative support. The three participants conveyed different concerns on administrative support that was considered as being essential to teachers' willingness and efforts to effectively integrate BDI into EFL classrooms in China. Sophia commented that receiving administrative support to apply BDI into her classrooms in her department should not be a problem because the EFL teachers at the collegiate level had their own autonomy for teaching. Moreover, college students shouldered less pressure in learning English compared to the students

who had to pass the annual exam Gaokao, and were able to enjoy more autonomy of learning. College teachers were encouraged to design various activities to increase students' engagement in learning and promote their communicative competence. Given more freedom to course delivery, Sophia implied that she would most likely have the courage to push the boundaries of her classroom instructions and make an attempt to investigate the new teaching approach of BDI and help her students promote their intercultural communication.

Contrastingly, both Ava and Nancy expressed their concerns on obtaining administrative support if they ended up teaching secondary students in public schools in China because Gaokao was still the one and only standardized assessment for college admission in the Chinese education system. As long as Gaokao exists, the administration won't take risks to support BDI teaching as they expect to see the average testing results within a short period, while BDI teaching requires a large amount of teaching time and involves significant efforts in planning. In China, English teachers in public schools are given limited teaching time to instruct a wild range of content from the curriculum to a large size class; this will not allow them much freedom to design interactive activities to engage students in communicative learning. Furthermore, English teachers in China are being primarily evaluated by the administration based on students' test scores, which will inevitably lead to pressure.

Possibilities for impossibilities: concerns and hopes about change. In terms of integrating BDI approach into EFL classrooms in China, one aspect of concern the three participants shared was the administrative support that was discussed earlier. The other aspect of concern they conveyed was the EFL teachers' willingness, courage, and dedication to change. In view of the restrictions from the Chinese national EFL curriculum and the teaching reality of large class sizes, limited teaching time, a wide range of teaching content, and a required

standardized test, many EFL teachers in China would not be overly eager and courageous to become the agent of change. Despite that EFL teachers in China realized how urgent and indispensable it was to teach students cross-cultural communication skills to help promote their communicative competence, many of them would still hesitate to take the first step forward because they might risk not being able to keep their jobs. They would be blamed for being excessively radical, going too wild and stiffing the relationships with the administration. They might also not be able to maintain their reputation for teaching students to achieve the best academic scores, thus becoming ineligible for receiving monetary rewards, prizes, funding, and stipends. All of these obstacles would create challenges for the EFL teachers in China to transform the current teaching mode.

In addition to the challenges and concerns from administrative support and EFL teachers themselves, the three participants voiced another concern from students' parents who could impose pressure on teachers for not teaching students required skills to pass the tests in a certain period. It was not uncommon that most Chinese parents merely cared about their children's academic results at the end of the school year without knowing how much their children actually learned from school. For parents, the numeric grades are the straightforward proof to tell how well their children learned, how well their children's' teachers taught, and how good the particular school's reputation was. Parents wouldn't be able to tell how many extremely valuable skills their children mastered because they lived in a culture that fostered social comparisons, peer comparisons, and parent comparisons.

With a BDI approach in use, it will take time and effort to make students transform. All three participants referred to an interesting fact that the native English speakers did not perform well on the English language test that was specifically designed for Chinese EFL leaners.

Likewise, there would be a chance that the Chinese EFL students might not be able to perform well on the unique standardized test after the BDI approach was integrated. Even so, parents in China believed that teachers' top priority is to teach students to the test. Once the parents were notified the testing results and realized that their children failed to earn high grades, they would cast doubt on teachers and blame teachers for not doing the right job.

Although challenge exists with any change, the three participants hold different hope for the possibilities of applying BDI into EFL classrooms. Sophia was hoping to integrate some of the BDI strategies into her college English classes to facilitate students' learning. She described in details that she would not completely change to BDI teaching because she believed it would be exceptionally challenging for her to manage a big class of over 100 students with BDI strategies. More than likely, she would consider a flipped model to enhance students' learning by assigning students prep work to complete outside the classroom and preparing to present in the classroom through BDI activities. Ava expressed her interest in combining BDI approach with GTM approach no matter where she will teach in the future. She was in favor of using some BDI strategies to learn more about her students, to differentiate instructions based on students' interests and needs, as well as to carry out authentic assessment to boost students' confidence and motivation in English learning. Nancy was also a firm supporter of BDI teaching. Considering the challenge of applying BDI into the EFL classrooms in public schools, she insisted that BDI teaching could be feasible in private English training centers where: (1) class size is small; (2) students come with a goal of improving their communicative competence; and (3) parents expect their children to study abroad in future. She believed that the BDI approach would be the best fit to address those students' needs.

Chapter Summary

I began this chapter with the narrative stories of each participant to provide context and understanding of their English language learning experiences as English learners from China after their exposure to both GTM and BDI. Each narrative is a direct first-person retelling of their stories as I have tried my best to interpret them and then verify them with each participant. Through navigating the experiences of each participant, I composed a first-person poem to summarize the participants' experiences and make the data representation richer and deeper. Along with the data triangulation, I conducted the discussion by comparing and contrasting the three narratives across two broad recurrent themes, which were: That Was Cruel: The Blatant Disclosure of Sacrifice; That Was Real: Teachers Teaching in Tension. In the next chapter, I will offer the conclusion, implications, and limitations of this study and future research directions.

Chapter 5 - Conclusions and Implications

As both an EFL learner in China for nearly 13 years and an EFL teacher in China for 6 years, as well as my experience being an international student in the US for nearly 5 years, I have become exceedingly aware that many EFL/ESL students from China who were exposed to GTM teaching have struggled extensively with their low English proficiency and poor communicative competence. This struggle has remarkably impacted their motivation, confidence and enthusiasm for English language learning. In the beginning, it was this awareness that guided me into an inquiry to investigate how BDI could function as an alternative approach or an additional approach to the current EFL teaching in China so it can help provide Chinese EFL learners a new pathway to their second language acquisition.

In Chapter 4, I presented the three participants' narrative stories and a descriptive and analytical discussion on the researching findings. Recall the purpose of this case study was to explore the English language learning experiences of three international students from China who studied or are currently studying at a Midwest state institution and have been exposed to GTM in China and BDI in the United States. The epistemology guiding this study was Constructionism. The theoretical lens for this study was The BDI framework. Grounded in the methodological framework of Symbolic Interactionism, this qualitative study addressed the following two research questions:

1. What are the experiences that the Chinese students have had with GTM in China and with BDI in the United States?
2. In what ways do Chinese students compare and contrast their perspectives on, experiences with, and/or outcomes arising from, their exposures to GTM in China and BDI in the United States, provided as paths to their second language acquisition?

In this chapter, I aim to unpack the research questions in a scholarly voice in alignment with the BDI theoretical framework and Symbolic Interactionism methodological framework as well as the existing literature. In addition to addressing the research purpose and answering the research questions, I conclude both the theoretical and practical implications of the research and discuss the limitations of this study. I also provide some recommendations for potential future studies that could be conducted as a continuation of this work.

Research Questions Unpacked

As discussed from the previous chapter, the major findings of this study revealed that the three participants shared similarities on understanding their English language experiences with GTM and BDI through two broad recurrent themes: That Was Cruel: The Blatant Disclosure of Sacrifice; That Was Real: Teachers Teaching in Tension. The findings also indicated some differences illustrated by the three participants which contributed to the interpretation of their interaction with the two teaching approaches.

In this section, I intend to answer the research questions in a collective way instead of in an individual way as the answer to one question is often overlapped with the answer to another question in qualitative research. In qualitative research multiple truths are often discovered as answers to the initial research questions. As a result of the rich and entangled data collected, my detailed analysis and interpretation of the participants' experiences informed some deeply interwoven complexities in which the participants live and make the most sense of their world under different socio-cultural contexts. As such, providing easy, simple and linear responses to each research question individually would blur multiple truths where a qualitative researcher strives to disclose and destroy the complexity where the beauty of a qualitative research lies. Thus, I provide interpretations of findings to examine the two research questions collectively

from the following perspectives: conclusions from participants' narratives, GTM responses, and BDI responses.

Conclusions from Participants' Narratives

Both positive and negative experience play a role in understanding how and why people perceive things in a certain way. On their journeys to GTM and BDI, the three participants were forced to give up their individualities and sacrifice their personal interests and needs to conform to family, school and social culture as well as accommodate to family and school expectations even when they were not personally motivated to learn English. In addition, they had to use their sense of self and self-efficacy to navigate the tension from teachers teaching and self-motivate to continue English learning due to competing societal values and needs, family imposings and academic mandates. After examining the detailed analyzed data in a rigorous and thorough manner, I identified the following assertions to address the two research questions:

a. Students desire a supportive and risk-free growing and learning culture where teachers and parents can see them as a whole person to meet their individual interests and needs.
b. The blending of comprehensible input and meaningful learning as well as student-centered pedagogical practices work together to enhance students' motivation to and engagement with English language learning.
c. Fostering cross-cultural awareness is beneficial to students for improving their intercultural competence and communicative competence in real-life situations.
d. Educational system reform aligning with both societal needs and individual needs could support integrating BDI approach into the predominant GTM teaching and aid in helping Chinese EFL learners succeed.

e. Holding a strong sense of self-efficacy is essential for Chinese EFL learners to intensify their motivation and maintain their passion for English language learning.

Sophia, Ava and Nancy identified that one key ingredient to their perseverance in English language learning was the gracious support they received along the way from their family. In the traditional Chinese culture, families often force their children to study and impose high family expectations on them. Participants admitted that when family imposing on their learning became an issue, they felt reluctant to learn. Luckily, all participants received parental support from many layers, which allowed them diverging levels of autonomy, freedom and flexibility to work toward their goals at different stages of their academic careers. Moreover, the participants agreed the rigid academic mandates greatly pressured them and decreased their motivation to learn.

Another point that all participants echoed was the exaggerated teachers' authority which was regarded as a culturally-embedded notion that significantly impacted students' motivations to learn. Chinese culture attaches much importance to maintaining harmonious interpersonal relationships and demonstrating appropriate manner that matches one's position in a hierarchical social system (Dong, 2009). Students in China were not supposed to voice their discontent or disagreement against teachers because teachers held strong power and strict governance over students in school. Any academic disagreement would be considered as unacceptable disruptive behaviors which could pose a threat to the teacher's authority in that culture and cause damage to a teacher's reputation. Thus, students were forced to maintain cultural expectations for respect.

Legitimate teacher authority and class discipline are essential to build student-teacher relationships and to generate overall teaching effectiveness (Haley & Ferro, 2011). All three participants highlighted the importance and effectiveness of a teacher's authority in managing students' behaviors and improving students' learning outcomes but believed that the over-

exaggerated teacher authority in the classroom had alienated the relationships between students and teachers. Due to the power disparity, it became less likely that an authoritarian teacher could be like a friend to guide students to engage and learn. There was always a clear dividing line between teachers and students, and this line established less student-teacher communication, less respect for teacher authority and less motivation and willingness to explore new learning.

The three participants shared surprisingly similar needs and desires for support from parents and teachers. On one hand, they wanted their parents to respect them, understand their struggles, and allow them more freedom so they would be able to maintain their enthusiasm and willingness to continue English language learning. On the other hand, they expressed their hope that their teachers wouldn't label, clarify and judge them by a one-time test score but could see them as a whole person, such as where they are from, where they were at previously, where they are at presently, where they are headed in the future, and how they view themselves. When they were seen, heard, respected as valued members in the classroom, they felt more encouraged and stimulated to take risks and stick with their goals without fear.

From the three participants' narratives, comprehensible input and meaningful learning should be established as the basic expectations for learning. When they were studying in China, teachers were expected to teach to the test while as students they were forced to learn for the test because the whole education system was test-driven not performance-driven. Whoever acquired the highest scores would receive the top priority to enjoy many things other students were jealous about, such as enjoying a better relationship with teachers and administrators, receiving awards and scholarships that could better prepare them for future study programs, bringing pride and joy to their family, getting a better chance to attend a well-known college, choosing their favorite seating locations in the classroom and showing off among classmates. Although these

benefits they obtained from getting high scores were considered as external motivations to promote their learning, they had to admit that was the prevailing culture they grew up in and everybody else competed for these privileges.

In Chinese EFL classrooms, teachers were expected to teach to the test required by the curriculum. Instead, comprehensible input and meaningful learning were ignored. The model of "填鸭式教学" (Teaching students the same way as Cramming the ducks' belly with food) or "一刀切" (One size fits all) was the major strategy that the whole society adopted to differ academically superior students from academically inferior ones. The acceptance of receptive learning in this culture put students in a position where they couldn't find the value of learning. The only connection they had made with the learning content was to excel on weekly quizzes, monthly and quarterly exams, final exams for the semester and eventually the annual *Gaokao*. All participants conveyed that the comprehensible input and meaningful learning from the BDI approach filled a significant gap for them between what they used to study for and what they are supposed to study for.

Additionally, one frustration shared by all three participants was that in China student-centered, two-way teaching was more of a superficial talk on the social media but rarely used in the teaching practicum, especially after students entered secondary schools. After all, the norm for measuring success in this society was students' test scores. Participants could hardly deny the fact that EFL teaching and learning in China was test-driven, textbook-oriented, teacher-centered and a one-way model. The overall perception of students' struggle in English language learning from the society was mainly deficit-based---- the lack of efforts, not enough time devoted, insufficient learning strategies or incapability to understand. Under this circumstance, it is not difficult to understand why students felt so reluctant to engage in English language learning.

Correspondingly, participants expressed their wish that EFL teachers would consider putting students at the core of teaching and devote more time and effort to integrate comprehensible input and meaningful learning into current GTM-led teaching to facilitate students' learning.

The next similar frustration the participants expressed over their limited fluency in English was the lack of cross-cultural awareness. They felt at a loss and experienced more urgency to enhance their cross-cultural awareness when they were involved in interactions with native English speakers. The current Chinese EFL classrooms were dominated by traditional GTM with an overemphasis on language structure itself but gave little attention to the real-life cultural interaction. As such, when a real communication occurred, students were not able to compare their native culture with the target language culture to address themselves in a proper way but rather had to simply respond with the fixed sentence structures and express their thoughts in a way more suitable to a Chinese context. In other words, their capacity for cultural interaction was not good enough to secure a smooth conversation.

Language learning was closely associated with its culture. From an observed EFL class, He & Yang (2018) argue that the lack of fostering students' cross-cultural awareness in the EFL classroom causes students' communicative competence to be far from satisfactory, and contrastingly, learning a language based on a deep understanding of its culture enables students to yield twice the result with half the effort. The three participants resonated with this argument and believed that when they had a strong sense of cross-cultural differences, they became more likely to speak the target language in an appropriate way and lead the real-life conversation, which in turn made them feel more competent. They also expressed their interest and eagerness to learn about culture differences in class which could enhance both their language competence and cross-cultural communication competence.

In terms of transitioning from GTM to BDI in EFL classrooms in China, the participants expressed their concerns that if the current Chinese education systems does not change to align with students' individual needs, it will be difficult to see the actual change from the new teaching approach. As a result of the rigid education system in China, both teachers and students would not risk making the change immediately but would rather wait and see what direction the national English curriculum will go. As many scholars (Anderson, 1993; Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Cortazzi & Jin, 1996a, 1996b; Hu, 2002b; Rao, 1996) have pointed out, some contextual constraints on the adoption of communicative language teaching exist in Chinese EFL classrooms. The participants reiterated these constraints in their narratives which corresponded with the existing literature. These constraints included teachers' lack of professional knowledge of communicative language teaching, lack of administrative support, large class sizes, limited instructional time, outdated, uneven and scarce teaching resources, and emphasis on high-stakes tests, all of which created a conflict for shifting completely from GTM to BDI.

After the participants' exposure to BDI teaching, they found that BDI approach requires a significant amount of time-consuming hands-on or interactive activities to attract students' attention and engage them in learning which traditional EFL teachers would not emphasize. Furthermore, EFL teachers in a traditional EFL classroom rarely considered students' individual needs first when designing the class because they had so many students to take care of at the same time, and they must first consider the collective needs which were required by the school administration and society. Thus, it was not surprising to hear the participants' voices of concern about the challenge they would face if they choose to apply BDI into GTM. Only if the educational system reforms align well with the social needs and individual needs would the integration of BDI into GTM become more operable to help EFL learners in China succeed.

Last but not least, holding a strong sense of self-efficacy is one of the many important components that can impact Chinese EFL learners' motivation and passion to English language learning. From the participants' narratives, they demonstrated divergent levels of self-efficacy regarding English language learning, which has differentially affected their confidence in their ability to accomplish a task, their trust in their skills to perform a task, their efforts to expand on a task, their desire to participate in activities and their enthusiasm and commitment to their individual academic goals. Furthermore, the levels of self-efficacy influenced their resilience with failures and struggles, their perseverance in the face of difficulties and challenges, their tolerance of stress and anxiety, their willingness to embark on new exploration, and their determination to their choice of action.

These findings with respect to the functions of self-efficacy in the participants' English language learning were generally compatible with the previous literature about the roles of self-efficacy in one's life. Numerous studies show that self-efficacy has been largely proven to be a significant predictor of one's physical and psychological behavior, effort, resilience, choice of actions, persistence, academic performance as well as learning outcomes (Bandura,1997; Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Graham & Weiner**,** 1996; Marie, 2006; Lent et al., 1987; Fenollar et al., 2007; Schunk, 1995; Wang et al., 2008). Self-efficacy is not simply about how capable one is, but about how much one believes in oneself to be able to perform a task well. The findings from this study revealed that Sophia held the highest level of self-efficacy which offered her more confidence and trust for the continuation of learning English and her motivation to English language learning remained high and stable. Ava and Nancy demonstrated relatively low levels of self-efficacy, and their motivation for English language learning fluctuated based on how capable they believed themselves to be.

Based on the participants' demonstration of self-efficacy and their responding behaviors, it is safe to assert that self-efficacy is closely associated with one's motivation to engage and learn. Belief in self provides a dynamic atmosphere for one to think, decide and take actions. The stronger one can perceive self-efficacy, the higher one will set their goals and be firm in their commitment to the goals (Bandura, 1986). To unpack this assertion, the higher level of self-efficacy one holds, the better one can manage one's distress and anxiety, and the more effective one's trust will be in self to perform a said task. The stronger the sense of self-efficacy one can maintain, the more effort one will be willing to invest in one's learning. The more self-efficacy beliefs one can foster, the higher one's motivation to engage in learning will be, thus there will be a better chance one will have a positive learning outcome.

GTM Responses

Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is a teaching approach that the vast majority of students in China are familiar with and have experienced for years since their formal education. Today, GTM is still the predominant method for leading students to learn English in Chinese EFL classrooms. GTM, mainly taught in a learner's native language, is a solely teacher-centered method of teaching with an emphasis on a teacher's authority of grammatical knowledge. GTM does not focus on enhancing language learners' basic language fluency of listening, speaking, reading and writing in order to communicate smoothly, let alone pay any attention to learner-learner interactions, learner-teacher interactions, interpersonal communication skills or intercultural communication skills. Contrastingly, GTM mainly aims to foster learners' abilities to attain a high proficiency of word-to-word or sentence-to-sentence translation with grammar accuracy. Due to the lack of attention to the learners' communicative competence, GTM has received extensive criticism in second language learning field and has been rejected by many

scholars as it is considered a tedious and ineffective teaching approach to help learners acquire second language competence.

According to the participants' narratives, many Chinese students who learned English with GTM have displayed some common problems and struggles, which are in alignment with what existing literature has identified as the disadvantages of GTM. Dong (2016) points out the phenomenon of "哑巴英语"(suffering from dumb English) and "高分低能" (obtaining high scores on standardized English tests but having low communicative competence) extensively exists among high school students in Chinese EFL classrooms. The three participants indicated the following struggles demonstrated by the Chinese EFL students: (1) relying too much on word-to-word or text-to-text translation to comprehend English reading texts; (2) developing a habit of Chinglish thinking; (3) losing confidence and enthusiasm to explore English language learning; (4) lacking the appropriate cross-cultural communicative skills; and (5) experiencing frustration to maintain their motivation and passion in English language learning. In other words, GTM failed to prepare the Chinese EFL learners with the readiness to communicate in real-life situations, thus causing learners' inability to make meaningful connection with their life and decreasing the learners' participation and motivation in English language learning.

Although GTM has shown so many drawbacks, an interesting finding was revealed from the participants' responses to GTM, which was different from the previously discussed literature on the disadvantages of GTM. The appealing finding also inconsistent with my expectations, was that all participants felt they actually benefited from GTM teaching although they didn't like it. My initial assumption was that the participants would blame their struggles on GTM and suggest a significant change of teaching approach, yet they all agreed that GTM laid a good foundation for their English language learning although they mainly learned about grammar rules which

were not considered good for language fluency. They stressed the importance of their mastery of grammar knowledge which enabled them to use correct grammar in their academic writing. They believed that GTM proved to be an effective approach for them to perform well on all the tests in a Chinese EFL context. As a matter of fact, learning English in China is quite a utilitarian experience. As long as students can get high scores on tests, they are going to value the teaching approach that helps them achieve the goal in the easiest and quickest manner.

Therefore, standing in the position of the participants, it is not difficult to understand that if a person grows up in a culture where English learning is not performance-based but test-driven, and that person is not given the option to choose his or her learning subjects in his or her preferred way, he or she will have to learn how to adapt to the reality and appreciate and grow with what is offered. This understanding of one's social interaction with his or her cultural environments also resonates well with the tenets of Mead's Symbolic Interactionism (Bhattacharya, 2015) from which many dynamics including culture, family, school, society and self can impact one's understandings of the symbols in their life and one's choice of action.

BDI Responses

Biography-Driven Instruction (BDI) is a student-centered teaching approach that falls under the umbrella of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) proposed by Hymes (1972), which highlights the importance of addressing each student's individual needs by getting to know each student's unique biographies and using differentiated instructional practices to facilitate each student's academic and linguistic success. The BDI approach also stresses that each student is unique and can bring different assets to the classroom. BDI requires teachers to use differentiated instructional methods and strategies to create a risk-free and welcoming educational environment where each student can be seen, heard, respected and valued. When

teachers can best accommodate students' individual needs, they are more likely to engage students in English learning, help accelerate students' English language acquisition and promote both their academic and linguistic achievement.

After the three participants' exposure to BDI teaching, they expressed their gratitude that how their personal interests and needs were addressed in the classroom. The participants were surprised and excited when their professors used differentiated instructions to accommodate their needs based on the biographies they provided. Dissimilar to teachers of GTM, the BDI teachers didn't intentionally announce whom certain activities were designed to help. By contrast, the BDI teachers preferred a natural way to guide students' learning without embarrassing anyone who may lack the required skills to complete a task. The participants felt safe and comfortable attending the class and interacting with peers who come from different cultures. When students feel the classroom is a safe place to stay, they tend to become more motivated to take risks, make increased efforts and actively engage in learning.

In addition, the participants especially liked the following principles of the BDI approach: scaffolding, comprehensible input, making meaningful connection and authentic assessment. All these principles they learned about BDI are in a sharp contrast with GTM which only emphasizes language accuracy not language fluency. When scaffolding was used to help the participants unpack the meaning of new concepts with comprehensible input, they could easily make connections with their prior knowledge and their personal life experience, thus making them perceive the practical value of learning. When they could make the most sense of the new learning content, they would not struggle or want to quit; but instead, they desired to discover more. Furthermore, the BDI authentic assessment truly touched the heart of each participant because they were tired of standardized tests and they wanted a change. BDI authentic

assessment offered them a new pleasant experience because they were able to connect the assessment to their real lives and find the significance of doing an assessment.

Although BDI provided the participants a new perspective of English language learning, they were still conservative about introducing BDI to Chinese EFL classrooms. Sophia has been teaching at the collegiate level for many years and demonstrated no desire to change her target student population. Ava and Nancy have never had actual teaching experiences in a Chinese EFL classroom but expressed their ambition to teach future EFL learners also at the collegiate level. Therefore, the participants held more concerns about using the BDI approach to teach college students because they agreed BDI is more suitable for teaching a younger student population.

According to the participants' descriptions of their experiences with the BDI approach, it requires lots of time-consuming hands-on activities and classroom interactions to attract learners' attention and keep them engaged. For college students, their cognitive level is already past the age of performing easy time-consuming hands-on activities; instead, they prefer more higher-level thinking and critical thinking activities after a brief introduction to the learning content. Students in China were deeply influenced by the concept of not wasting limited class time on the minor things but rather the concept of putting straight emphasis on the learning goal. Thus, all three participants didn't have much confidence of applying most of the BDI strategies into an adult EFL classroom. However, Sophia pointed out that she will combine BDI teaching into her traditional EFL classes through a flipped model. She acknowledged that BDI strategies could effectively activate students' prior knowledge, closely connect students' learning from known to unknown, and actively affirm students' mastery of new content and celebrate students' success, which in one way helped maintain students' interest in the topic, and in another way fostered their enthusiasm and motivation to inquire more.

The three participants shared surprisingly similar perspectives on the application of the BDI approach into EFL classrooms at the secondary level due to the many constraints of the Chinese EFL teaching reality discussed earlier. They reaffirmed that although BDI is a good teaching method of CLT, it doesn't align well with the secondary curriculum and syllabus due to the aforementioned many restrictions. The conditions the BDI approach requires to secure an effective and successful learning cannot be easily satisfied in the Chinese secondary EFL context. First of all, the BDI approach requires massive amount of interactive activities used to keep students on task, and it would be easier for teachers to be able to take care of each student's needs in a smaller sized class. On the contrary, there is no way to shrink the current student size in a Chinese EFL classroom as China has a large student population and lacks eligible EFL teachers. Secondly, the BDI approach requires plenty of time spent on practicing the target language so students get more exposure to it. In contrast, students in China normally have a very tight daily school schedule already filled with many subjects to learn so they are only assigned a short class period for each subject every day. Lastly, the BDI approach embraces authentic assessment to make language learning more meaningful and valuable and because Chinese EFL learners have to first worry about the standardized test. They do not have extra time to worry if what they are learning is meaningful or not as they are busy preparing for the required tests.

In addition to those restrictions in Chinese EFL classrooms, students' parents will doubt the effectiveness of the teachers' teaching if their children do not attain high scores on tests. Parents will most likely push the teachers to teach to the test first and then consider the needs of communicative skills. After all, if their children cannot get high enough scores to acquire access to a good college, the parents will become disappointed at their investment in education. Furthermore, school administration will be pushed by parents and society to require teachers to

focus more on students' testing scores than on their communicative competence. When the average performance on the standardized tests is good, the school's reputation will be enhanced thus giving the school an advantage for increasing student enrollment, gaining more resourceful and financial support from local government and various sponsors, as well as receiving more support from students' parents. Likewise, teachers will lose many benefits if their students cannot obtain satisfactory test scores, such as losing their reputation for being a popular teacher, reduced annual income, fewer bonuses, and less respect of their professionalism from students.

The last response from the three participants regarding BDI application in Chinese EFL classrooms is that the BDI approach will be a good fit for students at elementary levels and those at private English training centers. Students at elementary levels in China generally carry less academic stress and anxiety with them, and elementary teachers have more autonomy to teach EFL classes in a way that help foster students' learning interests and boost their motivation to learn English. Therefore, participants agreed there would be a better chance to merge BDI into the elementary classrooms, which would provide an inclusive and risk-free learning environment where students are willing to inquire, explore and involve. Similarly, BDI will be a wise addition to teaching students at private training centers where students often strive for improving their communicative competence through taking extra hours of classes outside of school, in addition to maintaining their good performance on tests. Those students and their parents will be more likely to embrace the BDI approach which can help foster students' cross-cultural awareness, cultivate their critical thinking skills, and enhance their communicative competence.

Theoretical Implications of the Research

From the aforementioned interpretations of the researching findings, no single element in the participants' shared experiences functions as the most decisive factor for leading them to

where they are today, instead varying contributors in their life such as home, school, society and self, have shaped their perceptions of realities. Those contributors are not independent but intertwined in a form expected or unexpected to impact the participants' interaction with their surroundings. The revelation of multiple possibilities is the goal of conducting a successful qualitative case study. In this changing and complex world, so many things are intertwined to help form the participants' perspectives of how they perceived English language learning with both GTM and BDI approaches, how they constructed their unique understandings of English language learning in different socio-cultural contexts, as well as how they made their own choices of action in their social interactions with the two different teaching approaches.

Likewise, the research findings from this study are highly consistent with the BDI framework in terms of the participants' motivations to learn English language under different socio-cultural contexts. Based on the previous data analysis and discussions on the research findings, the researcher concluded that many components can influence an EFL learner's experience, such as the learner's primary language, home culture, family background, and previous experience. Moreover, family expectations, student-teacher relationships, peer pressure, academic mandates, family impositions, job requirements, social competition and surviving needs can significantly contribute to an EFL learner's motivation to engage in learning. Under the theoretical framework of BDI, every EFL learners' biographies need to be taken into serious consideration before any decisions about teaching strategies are made so that adjustments of instructional teaching practices are made to meet each individual student's interests and needs. Once students' uniqueness is learned, can differentiated instructions, along with the process of scaffolding and comprehensible input, be used to maximized their understanding of English language learning as well as guarantee the effectiveness of EFL teaching and learning.

This good alignment between the research findings and the theoretical frameworks affirmed that the research purpose of this qualitative study was framed in a way that invited multiple possibilities instead of just one possible truth as a potential answer to the research questions. This kind of framing informed an in-depth inquiry for the researcher to be able to explore new dimensions to construct the understanding of the participants' experiences, look for possibilities of commonalities of the participants' experiences as well as compare and contrast the differences of their experiences. In other words, these multiple responses to the research questions in one way provided the current researcher different angles to enhance the understanding of the research, and in another way offered future researchers a good reference point on how to integrate BDI into Chinese EFL classrooms through different theoretical lenses.

Practical Implications of the Research

Given the data analysis and the research findings discussed in the previous chapter, the researcher was able to identify some contributions to the existing literature by discussing the value of BDI to EFL learners, which comprises the pedagogical implications of using BDI into Chinese EFL classrooms and implications on the policy, the curricular and the assessment.

The Value of BDI to EFL Learners

BDI invites teachers to place students at the center of teaching and embrace the diversity by integrating students' sociocultural, linguistic, cognitive and academic dimensions of their biographies into the learning process (Herrera, 2010). Tola (2015) conducted a research to verify to what extent BDI lesson planning can affect students' performance in a typical EFL classroom and affirmed that BDI lesson planning had a positive impact on the performance of EFL learners in Ecuador. Since the foundations of BDI come from universal teaching principles and BDI can make significant contributions to all learners in the classroom, in addition to the findings of this

study, it is reasonable to claim that BDI can be beneficial to EFL learners pertaining to their anxiety and persistence, motivation and engagement, communicative competence and academic performance. By understanding EFL learners' individual biographies from their sociocultural, linguistic, cognitive and academic dimensions, teachers can modify instructional practices as needed to increase the likelihood of the efficacy of BDI strategies.

Implications for EFL teacher educators. The first pedagogical implication of using BDI in Chinese EFL classrooms is to encourage EFL teacher educators to learn their students and build positive student-teacher relationships in order to address each student's individual interests and needs. Herrera (2010) mentions that biography cards allow EFL teachers to get a holistic picture of information on students' sociocultural, linguistic, cognitive and academic dimensions. The participants from this study indicated that they felt more motivated to risk, engage and learn when their individual interest and needs were addressed in the classroom. Thus, EFL teachers in China can use biography cards, interviews, questionnaires, online surveys, or even home visits to obtain students' background information, and then use this data as a starting point to plan accordingly and to guide their instructional practices for a successful lesson delivery. Teachers may make accommodations and adaptations as needed to implement their lessons in order to reach every student in the EFL classroom.

In addition, building rapport with students in EFL classrooms can motivate students to learn, investigate and voice their concerns without fear. The three participants acknowledged that teacher's authority largely reduced their willingness to communicate with teachers. A positive student-teacher relationship helps protect students' self-concept, self-image and self-dignity and helps them foster more confidence, more frustration tolerance and more persistence in learning; whereas a negative student-teacher relationship hurts students' feelings and decreases their

motivation to continue learning. Thus, EFL teachers in China can try to establish a harmonious student-teacher relationship through (a) using biography cards to remember students' names; (b) knowing about their lives outside school and knowing their strengths and weaknesses; (c) using hands-on activities to communicate with students in an open, respectful, honest and caring manner; (d) using authentic assessment to acknowledge their incremental progress instead of demonstrating a harsh and judgmental attitude toward them, and (e) using group collaboration to show the trust in students and hold them accountable for what they do.

The second pedagogical implication of blending BDI into Chinese EFL classrooms is to encourage EFL educators to use differentiated instructions and tailor different BDI strategies to address students' needs, offer them autonomy of learning, reduce their anxiety levels, increase their persistence, and enhance their engagement. With the "one size fits all" mode that the three participants mentioned in Chinese current EFL classrooms, most students have to sacrifice their own interests and needs to accommodate to societal needs and family and school expectations, thus causing their motivation to learn English to significantly decrease. Through understanding EFL learners' biographies, as well as using appropriate BDI strategies, teachers can deliver an effective lesson and "help promote students' motivation, lower their affective filters, increase engagement and thus strengthen learning" (Herrera & Murry, 2016, p. 4).

For EFL learners, EFL classrooms are probably the only English-speaking environment they have access to so learning English will become more manageable if their teachers are aware of and incorporate the elements of students' biographies that bring them life, laughter, and love. Often EFL learners come to the regular English classroom with excitement and willingness as well as anxiety and concern to start learning a new language. They lack self-confidence in learning the new language which can cause them to raise their affective filters. When learners'

anxiety levels are high, they are less likely to persist in learning. When learners' anxiety levels are low, they are more likely to be involved and keep learning. Herrera (2016) argues that when classrooms become places where failure is treated as just another opportunity to learn, students are more willing to risk learning without fear. Thus, BDI strategies can act as a beneficial and caring support in EFL classrooms to promote more autonomous learning, help reduce students' anxiety levels, encourage their persistence, increase their motivation and active engagement and eventually, accelerate their SLA. Omaggio-Hadley (2001) suggests that language educators should take a flexible approach to teach and design activities responsive to learners' needs and preferences. Differentiated instructions and activities can facilitate each student gaining an equal access to connect what they knew to what they learn.

The third pedagogical implication of introducing BDI into Chinese EFL classrooms is for EFL teachers to foster EFL learners' cross-cultural awareness and improve their communicative competence and academic performance. Herrera & Murry (2015) mention that many EFL/ ESL programs are grounded in the traditional grammatical approach. Many countries such as China, Japan, and Korea still have a preference for the GTM in their EFL classrooms. In traditional EFL classes, students' communicative competence is not the focus of the teaching and learning, but rather the focus is on the grammar rules, vocabularies and written product. In China, most EFL teachers regard having students fully participate in classroom activities and use the target language with correct grammar as the most important components in language learning, but they ignore students' individual learning needs and their cultural backgrounds (Lin, 2009). Rao (2013) argues that the English language teachers in China today still cling to the traditional teaching methods and techniques. The instructional delivery for EFL teachers in China is only about the *drill and kill* and *teach to the test* model and this model needs a change.

Researchers, however, have witnessed a recent move to approach language learning from a constructivist/communicative approach (Herrera & Murry, 2015; Perez, Holmes, Miller & Fanning, 2012). Globally speaking, CLT is the new trend for EFL learners. According to Herrera and Murry (2015), students in EFL classrooms have a good mastery of grammatical knowledge through traditional practice of drills and repetition, but this mastery does not truly bring the EFL learners to a full comprehension of language. Language is a basic tool for communication so communicative competence should be the goal of language teaching and learning.

On another note, it is crucial to understand that systematic and strategic use of students' L1 is significant to understanding the target language. Herrera & Murry (2015) state that, "learning the English language can be more meaningful and engaging when students' native language is used as a bridge for second language learning" (p. 108). Students' native language and culture should not be marginalized because recognizing their origins can help them develop more pride in their personal identities, which in turn makes them feel they are valued members and can make contributions to the class. EFL teachers should not ignore the cultural conflicts occurring in the class; but instead, they need to consider creating a strong connection, rather than a tension, between EFL learners' native language culture and the target language culture in order to foster more cross-cultural awareness for students. Many researchers (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994) argue that culturally responsive teaching can help address the cultural diversity of learners and mitigate the tensions caused by cultural conflict. BDI is an approach that adopts the philosophy of culturally responsive teaching, and embraces and values learners' native culture. Having a strong cross-cultural awareness can help EFL learners interact with native English speakers in a more appropriate manner and avoid misunderstandings throughout communication.

The fourth pedagogical implication of using BDI into Chinese EFL classrooms is for EFL teacher educators to integrate comprehensible input and meaningful learning in order to increase student engagement and improve their communicative competence. Communicative competence can only be achieved if students are effectively engaged in something they value (Gay, 2013). In other words, meaningful learning is important and necessary in order to promote and maintain EFL students' motivation and passion for English learning. Meaningful learning won't occur until comprehensible input is used to scaffold information for students to be able to comprehend the new concepts and make connections. If students do not understand the new concepts or do not value what they are learning, it is unlikely they will stay focused and involved in English language learning, let alone enhance their communicative competence.

In order to make learning more meaningful, one of the most effective ways of helping EFL learners engage and learn is to make them see and believe that their lives matter beyond the four walls of their classroom. Students need the proper context that relates to their life and stay in a classroom where they feel safe, comfortable, and validated to share their personal experiences while at the same time having a willingness to make connections and hold respectful discussions with their peers. Only by doing so can the EFL learners have a much stronger motivation to try and practice more often in an effort to enhance their communicative skills. Accordingly, EFL learners will foster a higher level of self-efficacy in a positive learning atmosphere, which can help push their limits and achieve their initial goal or even strive for a higher goal. BDI addresses these needs and aims to create a low-risk learning environment where the learners clearly understand that the knowledge, experiences and skills they bring to the class will be maximized throughout the learning process (Perez, Holmes, Miller & Fanning, 2012).

Implications for the stakeholders. Research has shown that the BDI approach is proven to be effective in many ESL classrooms. However, one approach may be appropriate in one cultural context, but may not be the best fit in a different cultural context. Based on the findings of this study, it is apparent that EFL teachers and students in China will likely face significant challenges in the transition from predominantly GTM-led classrooms to BDI-led classrooms. The constraints existing in the current Chinese EFL education system will limit the efficacy of BDI teaching unless some administrative support, along with curricular reforms, can be offered to support using BDI in EFL classrooms. The administrative support should at least include the following: providing both in-service and pre-service teachers more funds and opportunities to attend BDI-related professional workshops, allowing teachers more autonomy using instructional strategies in the classrooms, allocating smaller sized classrooms plus reducing the teaching load so teachers can have more time to focus on individual students, eliminating the connection between teaching outcomes and teachers' income, and encouraging and embracing students' academic performance with incremental progress instead of simply standardized test scores. The professional workshop organizers could also provide more opportunities for the in-service and pre-service teachers to learn about BDI teaching and how to incorporate it into EFL classrooms to facilitate students' English language learning and enhance their linguistic competence.

In addition to the administrative support, curricular reform with a focus on the format of assessment is also needed to support the application of BDI in Chinese EFL classrooms. It is not realistic to abandon the rigid *Gaokao* assessment system at this time, but some efforts should be made to focus on testing students' communicative competence. If the assessment is only about high-stakes tests, both EFL teachers and students will have limited options to teach and learn in the way they prefer. EFL teachers will not be able to take care of individual students' interests

and needs. Only if the assessment change can align well with the goal of enhancing students' communicative competence and cross-cultural skills, will BDI-based teaching bring a significant transformation to the EFL teaching in China.

Limitations of the Research

In the previous section, the researcher discussed the contributions that this study has made to the existing literature on the potential of integrating BDI into Chinese EFL classrooms to help address EFL students' needs, foster their cross-cultural awareness and enhance their communicative competence. Despite the researcher's due diligence, academic rigor, and/or strong theoretical frameworks for this study, it is important to point out that this study is not without limitations. In the following section, the researcher presents the limitations of the study.

The first limitation of this study is the researcher' novice research skills. I had to admit that, although I have: (a) taken many qualitative research classes; (b) conducted a pilot study; (c) acquired some knowledge of how to investigate in-depth inquiry through appropriate theoretical and methodological lenses; (d) learned how to map out a qualitative study design with data collection, data analysis and representation, I am still a novice researcher and lack extensive experience in qualitative research. Furthermore, I consider myself as a researcher to be both an insider and outsider in this study. As an insider, I hold my own beliefs, assumptions and values which will unavoidably impact my understanding of the participants' experiences; as an outsider, I cannot completely represent the participants' voices in regards to their interaction with GTM and BDI. To be a responsible and reliable qualitative researcher, I am acutely aware of these limitations in this study and have made every attempt to situate myself in the best position to interpret the participants' stories through data triangulation, member checking, peer debriefing and reflective journals with critical thinking.

Second, the findings from this study were primarily drawn from the three Chinese EFL learners' beliefs, assumptions, and values, which means the EFL teacher educators' and the policymakers' perspectives and understandings of the BDI approach remain to be explored. Different perceptions from a variety of participants in future study could help create different perspectives which allows the researcher to be able to look at the divergent perspectives more convergently and reveal more truths and possibilities to the research questions. The lack of EFL instructors' and policymakers' voices on BDI approach limits this study but provides a reference for future study.

Third, the tenure of this research may be interpreted as a potential limitation. Due to my busy schedule and the Covid-19 pandemic, I was only able to spend four months collecting data for this qualitative study which was bounded in a single institution with three participants as the units of analysis. Within these four months of data collection, as a result of the time zone differences, I had to limit the length and frequency of interviews and correspondence with the participants because two of them had returned to China and the third one was not returning to campus but staying at her apartment. If I could spend more time on this research through building rapport with them and getting to communicate with them face to face, I believe I could know them better and gain a more in-depth understanding of their shared stories and provide a better interpretation of their English language experiences.

Last, the loss of language power may be explained as a limitation. While I was translating the participants' words from their first language into English, I had a strong sense of the language power loss which could weaken the understanding of future readers. That was the reason I chose to cite their participants' original words in their narratives in order to maintain the

language power so the future inside readers can obtain a better understanding of their interactions with the two teaching approaches.

Future Studies

The findings from this study provided a rich and contextualized understanding of how EFL learners from China compared and contrasted their experiences and/or the outcomes arising from their exposure to both GTM and BDI. These findings suggest options for future research. I will highlight a few of these options in this section.

To begin with, it is worth noting the participants' perceptions of these two teaching approaches indicated the struggles and problems that exist in the Chinese EFL education system. The participants also expressed their hope to see a transformation of teaching approaches to help address the needs of all Chinese EFL learners. However, the BDI approach has not yet been used in a Chinese EFL setting, in the future it will be necessary to apply the BDI approach into the teaching practicum to further prove its efficacy in helping foster the Chinese EFL learners' cross-cultural awareness and enhancing their communicative competence.

As discussed in the previous section, this qualitative study was limited to a single institution with three participants as units of analysis. Although small sample size is not necessarily a limitation for a qualitative study, a larger sample size treated with academic rigor and thoughtfulness of resources can make the data set richer. Therefore, future studies with more participants across various institutions could provide a richer data set and allow the researchers the room to conduct a more in-depth and more detailed cross-case analysis if the researchers can handle the data resources with thoughtful consideration.

Another opportunity for future studies would be to expand the scope of the research to include EFL teacher educators' voices as well as the policymakers' voices. In the future, before

integrating the BDI approach into the Chinese EFL classrooms, studies can focus on gaining EFL teachers' perceptions of BDI approach after their exposure to the BDI through a BDI training workshop. Meanwhile, the building and district administrators' perspectives are worth exploring as they are the policy executors in charge of both teachers' teaching outcomes and students' learning outcomes. The convergence of data yielded from teachers, students and administrators across different schools or school systems would lead to additional points of view which can provide the researchers a better avenue to carry on data triangulation thus creating enhanced opportunities to find multiple realities for future research.

Other possible areas for future studies would be to conduct both qualitative studies and quantitative studies to explore and examine the relationships between student engagement, anxiety level, self-efficacy, student-teacher relationships and the BDI approach in a Chinese EFL context. Furthermore, future studies can be designed to test which BDI strategies are the most engaging and effective for improving EFL students' involvement in learning and which ones can help them yield better academic results through pedagogical practices at different levels such as elementary levels, secondary levels and collegiate levels and at different places such as public schools, private schools, and private training centers. If students at various learning levels and from different institutions could share their experiences and insights, this could offer more possibilities for future researchers to make inquiries and investigate how the BDI approach could function as an effective teaching approach in Chinese EFL classrooms.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I first restated my position in this study and reminded the reader about the research purpose and research questions. Then, I elaborated on how the research questions are unpacked through an interpretation of the research findings from the following aspects:

conclusions from participants' narratives, GTM responses and BDI responses. Next, I offered the ways in which I connected the BDI framework and Symbolic Interactionism framework with the findings of the study and discussed the theoretical contributions to the research. Additionally, I provided a detailed illustration on how the research findings contributed to the existing literature in regard to the pedagogical implications of introducing the BDI approach into Chinese EFL classrooms. Furthermore, I reflected on the research findings and gave concluding thoughts on recommendations about administrative support and curricular reform. Lastly, I discussed the limitations of the study and offered suggestions for future directions of studies.

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Appendix A - Direct Participant Email Recruitment

Direct Participant Email Recruitment

Biography Driven Instruction for English Language Learners from China: A Qualitative Case Study

Dear student colleague,

My name is Jinhua Wang. I am currently a doctoral student at Kansas State University and I am contacting you to sincerely ask for help as I am doing my study for my final dissertation. I am interested in exploring the English language learning experiences of English language learners from China.

This study is important because the participants could benefit from engagement in this study by exploring their own experiences of learning English through self-reflection. And other international students from China or other countries who are currently taking ESL methods class or who are wanting to take the course of ESL methods in the future could benefit from the information gained in this study. In addition, this study could provide some suggestions for the future English language teaching reform in China. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to engage in 3 interviews. Over the course of the study, I will interview you for approximately an hour on each interview and follow up with you later. I will also ask you to share any other relevant documents with me such as notes or artifacts pertaining to this study.

There is no risk expected in this study; however, if you experience discomfort or stress during our conversations, you may choose to discontinue your participation in the study without any penalty or loss of benefits. If you are interested in being a participant in this study, please contact me via the information provided below. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Jinhua Wang
Doctoral Student
Kansas State University
jwang@usd345.com or 785-383-6695

Appendix B - Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval Letter

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY | University Research Compliance Office

TO: Dr. Socorro Herrera
Curriculum and Instruction
221 Bluemont Hall

Proposal Number: 10105

FROM: Rick Scheidt, Chair
Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects

DATE: 03/17/2020

RE: Proposal Entitled, "Biography-Driven Instruction for English Language Learners from China: A Qualitative Case Study"

The Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects / Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Kansas State University has reviewed the proposal identified above and has determined that it is EXEMPT from further IRB review. This exemption applies only to the proposal - as written – and currently on file with the IRB. Any change potentially affecting human subjects must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation and may disqualify the proposal from exemption.

Based upon information provided to the IRB, this activity is exempt under the criteria set forth in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, **45 CFR §46.101, paragraph b, category: 2, subsection: ii.**

Certain research is exempt from the requirements of HHS/OHRP regulations. A determination that research is exempt does not imply that investigators have no ethical responsibilities to subjects in such research; it means only that the regulatory requirements related to IRB review, informed consent, and assurance of compliance do not apply to the research.

Any unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or to others must be reported immediately to the Chair of the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, the University Research Compliance Office, and if the subjects are KSU students, to the Director of the Student Health Center.

203 Fairchild Hall, Lower Mezzanine, 1601 Vattier St., Manhattan, KS 66506-1103 | 785-532-3224 | fax: 785-532-3278
comply@k-state.edu | k-state.edu/comply

Appendix C - Participant Consent Form

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Biography Driven Instruction for English Language Learners from China: A Qualitative Case Study

Introduction

The purpose of this form is to provide you information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research study. If you decide to participate in this study, this form will also be used to record your consent.

You have been asked to participate in a research project studying how the English language learners from China understand their English language experiences after their exposure to both Grammar Translation Method and Biography Driven Instruction. The purpose of this study is to explore the English language learning experiences of three international graduate students from China, who studied or are currently studying at a Midwest university and have been exposed to/or are experiencing BDI, compared with their previous English language learning experiences of GTM. You were selected to be a possible participant because of your experiences of English language learning in China and US.

What will I be asked to do?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to be interviewed and to review analyses of the data gathered during the interviews. This study will take approximately 16 weeks during which you will be interviewed 3 times via Zoom or face to face interview, and each interview may last 45-60 minutes. The interviews will be audio recorded.

What are the risks involved in this study?

There are no risks involved in this study.

What are the possible benefits of this study?

The possible benefits of participation are benefits associated with reflections on prior experiences. Participation in this study is totally voluntary. There are no compensations for this study.

Do I have to participate?

No. Your participation is completely voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits, so you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits during this study.

Who will know about my participation in this research study?

This study is confidential. Your name will not be used. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published unless you specifically request otherwise. Research records will be stored in ways that only the researcher, Jinhua Wang, will have access to the records. Electronic files will be stored on the researcher's password protected computer and the researcher is the only person privy to the password. If you choose to participate in this study, you will be audio recorded.

Audio recorder and hard copies of transcripts will be stored in a locked cabinet. Audio recording will be saved for 5 years and then disregarded. The paper transcripts will be kept forever.

Whom do I contact with questions about the research?
If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Jinhua Wang at 785-383-6695 or at jwang@usd345.com or WeChat: wjh179916613.

Whom do I contact about my rights as a research participant?
This research study has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board at Kansas State University. For research-related problems or questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you can contact Rick Scheidt, IRB Committee Chair (785) 532-1483, rscheidt@ksu.edu

Signature
Please be sure you have read the above information, asked questions and received answers to your satisfaction. You will be given a copy of the consent form for your records. By signing this document, you consent to participate in this study. You also certify that you are 18 years of age or older by signing this form.

_____ I agree to be audio recorded.

_____ I do not want to be audio recorded.

_____	_____	_____
Researcher	Signature	Date

_____	_____	_____
Participant	Signature	Date

Please sign two copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Appendix D - IRB Informed Consent Form

PROJECT TITLE:

Biography Driven Instruction for English Language Learners from China: A Qualitative Case Study

PROJECT APPROVAL DATE:	3/1/2020	**PROJECT EXPIRATION DATE:**	7/1/2020	**LENGTH OF STUDY:**	4months

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Socorro Herrera---- Supervising the work of Jinhua Wang

CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):

CONTACT DETAILS FOR PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS:

IRB CHAIR CONTACT INFORMATION:

Rick Scheidt, Committee Chair
(785) 532-1483
rscheidt@ksu.edu

PROJECT SPONSOR:

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH:

The purpose of this study is to explore the English language learning experiences of three international graduate students from China, who studied or are currently studying at a Midwest university and have been exposed to/or are experiencing Biography Driven Instruction (BDI), compared with their previous English language learning experiences of Grammar Translation Method (GTM).

PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED:

3 semi-structured interviews
Documents and Notes
Physical Artifacts and Participant Object Elicitations
Research Journal

BIOLOGICAL SAMPLES COLLECTED (Describe procedure, storage, etc.):

N/A

[Select a statement from the drop down menu]

[Select a statement from the drop down menu]

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES OR TREATMENTS, IF ANY, THAT MIGHT BE ADVANTAGEOUS TO SUBJECT:

N/A

RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS ANTICIPATED:

N/A

BENEFITS ANTICPATED:

The participants might benefit from engagement in this study by exploring their own experiences through self-reflection. And other international students who are experiencing Biography Driven Instruction or are wanting to take the course of ESL methods could benefit from the information gained in the study. In addition, this study could provide a reference for the future larger community of research and practice.

EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY:

The researcher will maintain confidentiality regarding the participants and the collected data during and after the study as outlined below:

a. Using a pseudonym for the participants' names, and locations, other people and institutions mentioned by the participants

b. Removing or encrypting any identifiable information

c. Not sharing any identifiable information with any persons outside this study

d. Ensuring privacy during interviews

e. Storing data in ways that grant access solely to the researcher

f. Electronic files will be stored on the researcher's password protected computer

g. The researcher is the only person privy to the password

h. Audio recorder and hard copies of transcripts will be stored in a locked cabinet. Audio recording will be saved for 5 years and then disregarded. The paper transcripts will be kept forever.

Data will be shared with Dr. Socorro Herrera, professor, with the same standard of confidentiality.

The information or biospecimens that will be collected as part of this research will not be shared with any other investigators.

IS COMPENSATION OR MEDICAL TREATMENT AVAILABLE IF INJURY OCCURS? ☐ Yes ☒ No

PARENTAL APPROVAL FOR MINORS:

PARENT/GUARDIAN APPROVAL SIGNATURE:		**DATE:**	

Terms of participation: I understand this project is research, and that my participation is voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled.

I verify that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

(Remember that it is a requirement for the P.I. to maintain a signed and dated copy of the same consent form signed and kept by the participant).

PARTICIPANT NAME:			
PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE:		**DATE:**	
WITNESS TO SIGNATURE: (PROJECT STAFF)		**DATE:**	

Appendix E - Interview Prompts

1st interview guided prompts:

1. Please tell me some details about yourself, such as your personal information, and educational background.

   请你谈谈你自己的一些基本情况，比如你的个人基本信息，教育背景等等。

2. Please tell me about your typical school day in China.

   请你谈谈你在中国学习的时候，你在学校的一天是如何度过的。

3. Please tell me how you learned English in China.

   请谈谈你在中国是如何学习英语的。

4. Please tell me a proud moment you have had when studying English.

   请你谈谈当你学习英语的时候，你感觉很自豪的一个时刻。

5. Please tell me a frustrating moment when you are studying English.

   请你谈谈当你学习英语的时候，你感觉最受挫的一个时刻。

6. Please tell me something about English tests in China.

   请你谈谈在中国的英语考试。

7. Can you please give a brief summary on your English learning experience in China?

   请你简单总结一下你在中国学习英语的经历。

2nd interview guided prompts:

1. Please tell me about a time when you were in China and you had to speak English.

   请你分享一下当你在中国时你必须要说英语的一些故事。

2. Please tell me about a time when you had to speak English to native speakers in the United States.

   请你分享一下当你在美国时你必须要跟美国人说英语的一些故事。

3. Can you think of a time that stands out to you when you think of learning English in the US and tell me all about it?

   请你谈谈你在美国学习英语的一些特别的经历。

4. Tell me the first time you found out about BDI and please walk me through your decision-making process of using BDI.

   请你谈谈你第一次了解 BDI 的经历，然后请你告诉我你为何决定要使用 BDI。

5. Please tell me an exciting learning moment while you were learning through Biography-Driven Instruction.

   请你谈谈当你学习 BDI 的时候，一个令你兴奋的时刻。

6. Please tell me about a struggle you have experienced while you were learning English through BDI.

   请你谈谈当你学习 BDI 的时候，一个令你抓狂的时刻。

7. Please tell me something about assessments or tests through BDI.

   请你谈谈当你学习 BDI 的时候，评估和考试是如何进行的，让你感受如何。

8. Can you please give me a brief summary on your English learning experience in the United States?

   请你简单总结一下你在美国的英语学习经历。

3rd interview guided prompts:

1. Some follow-up interview questions from the 1st and 2nd interviews will be addressed to the participants.
2. What do you like about BDI in relation to motivation and socio-cultural context and why? 请你谈谈你为什么喜欢 BDI 教学，特别是关于不同社会文化背景下的学习动机方面？
3. What do you like about GTM in relation to motivation and socio-cultural context and why? 请你谈谈你为什么喜欢传统语法教学，特别是关于不同社会文化背景下的学习动机方面？
4. What do you not like about BDI in relation to motivation and socio-cultural context and why? 请你谈谈你为什么不喜欢 BDI 教学，特别是关于不同社会文化背景下的学习动机方面？
5. What do you not like about GTM in relation to motivation and socio-cultural context and why? 请你谈谈你为什么不喜欢传统语法教学，特别是关于不同社会文化背景下的学习动机方面？
6. Which approach do you like more and why?你更喜欢哪一种教学方法，为什么？

Appendix F - Research Journal Samples

Research Journal

3/30/2020 Monday 8pm to 10 pm

我真的没想到 9 年后，中国的英语教育依然跟我当年上学的时候如此相似。XXX 所描述的关于她上学时老师的教学模式跟我当初上学时候的英语老师简直如出一辙。这让我感觉太意外了！因为在我的内心深处，我是有所期待的，我期待她会告诉我的是，现阶段的中国英语教学已经大有改变，已经偏向注重学生的听说交际能力的培养。在全球化迅速发展的大背景下，我没有想到，中国的英语教育依旧是最传统的语法教学，依旧只注重提高学生的考试能力，高分低能依旧是教学的主要产物。在我看来，中国这些年发展迅速，很多出国留学人员回国发展，国际贸易在中国也是进行得如火如荼，那我觉得实用英语应该是趋势呀。跟外国人打交道，能说英语，能了解对方的生活文化，这不更有利于做生意吗？正所谓，知己知彼才能百战百胜啊！我非常不能理解额为什么传统语法教学依旧是主流，这让我感觉特别失望，也特别失落！

我自己初中三年积累了三本非常宝贵的英语笔记本，里面写满了单词，短语，句子的用法，还有一些考试时候容易出错的题，为什么错，要注意些什么，都是老师分析考点后提出来，我把它记下来，提醒自己将来不要犯同样的错误。其实那时候我自己也不明白为什么要这个单词的词性，比如名词，动词，形容词，副词等等。然后老师教了好多口诀，比如”I 用 am, you 用 are, is 用于他她它，凡是复数都用 are.”还比如所，名词只能做主语或宾语，副词修饰动词或形容词等等，脑子里面积累了好多的语法规则，这样的话在考试的时候我就特别注意把这些规则都套用到句子里边，然后去决定哪一个是正确的答案，考试成绩也似乎证明了我的这个语法规则起了作用，因为这些语法规则就是从考试当中总结出来

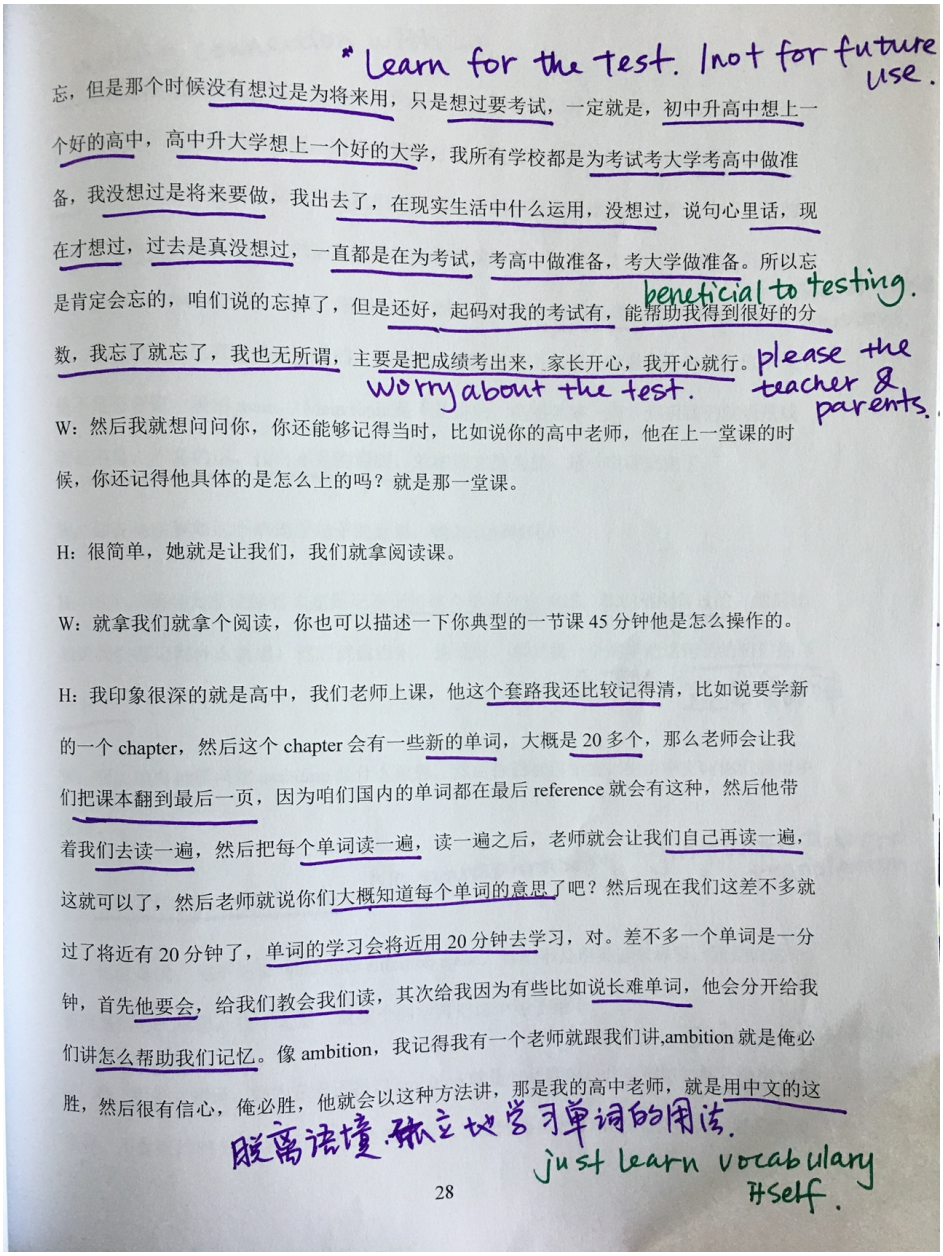
的。有时候做题做错了，就会立马去分析自己哪个语法知识点没有掌握，立马做笔记就错，然后每天回来复习一轮， 直到自己记住。后来到了美国，在跟本地人交流的时候，我发现他们并不太注重语法的用途，尤其是在日常口语交流的过程中，他们也会说 she usually come to my house. 但是这并不影响沟通，所以我就在想，我们的英语教学太固定思维了，我们太强调语法的正确用法，反倒忽略了语言的真正交流意义。所以我们说的句子太刻板，太不地道，甚者有时候说的很晦涩难懂，因为说母语的人根本不是这么说的，他们更强调交流过程中相互理解的意义。

04/05/2020

我记得自己大学的时候还专门买了一个波段收音机，专门听 BBC 和 VOA，用来应付英语专业四八级考试，还有英语四六级考试之类的。因为老师说了，这些英语考试中的听力很多都是来自 BBC 和 VOA 的素材，所以我们必须多听才能对这些素材更熟悉，才能有针对性地进行练习并取得成效。我记得那个时候自己每天都听，然后听 VOA 慢速英语的时候，还一边听一遍写，如果写不下来，就用复读机倒回去反复听，知道自己听懂写对为止。反正一切的努力就是为了能顺利通过考试，为了能拿到一本过级证书，为将来找工作增加一些筹码。那个时候就压根儿没有想过自己会出国，想着能说英语倒也挺好，那也是给自己增加筹码，证明自己又比别人多一项技能，技多不压身嘛，所以呢，也会时不时去英语角，大概是每周一次，由学校的英语协会主办，会有一个主题，然后大家在一起畅所欲言，尽可能地说英语，哪怕是说 broken English,但是能保持一种说英语的态度很重要，慢慢地就觉得自己能越说越流利，但是每次去英语角之前都要做足功夫，把一些会用到的词啊，短语啊，都提前准备一番，这样才能避免尴尬的场面。不过，要说到跟外教沟通，

那自己还是特别地不自信，首先对自己的发音不自信，总觉得自己发音不标准，带着浓重的口音，第二就是觉得自己说的都是太简单的口语，没办法往深的思想去讨论，因为自己的词汇量有限。在宿舍的时候，也会偶尔跟自己的舍友们一起练习一下口语，但是觉得非常地 Chinglish,因为都是经过中文思维过后，然后在进行翻译，再说出来的蹩脚英语。而且大环境就是如此，对于英语专业的学生来说，我们必须要进行一番口语练习才能应付老师的提问之类，当然也为了不让自己在同学面前太过尴尬，要面子，不能让自己太丢人。大学的时候我印象特别深的就是我有一个泛读的老师，我们同学之间都说他是一本行走的活字典，为什么这么说呢？因为他的脑子里就有一本英文字典，每次阅读的时候遇到一个陌生的词，他都能迅速地截取相关信息，包括词性，意思和用法，都能一字不落地给我们展示出来，神奇的就是，他所展示的就跟字典里的一模一样。我当时都给吓懵了，我就觉得太不可思议，这世界上还有这等高人？竟然能把那么厚的字典都背下来！然后我就特别羡慕这个老师，总期盼着自己能有一天也像他那样，成为一本行走的活字典。于是，接下来我也尝试开始背字典，可是我坚持不到一个星期，就觉得自己快要崩溃了，因为这实在太枯燥无味了，实在太让人生厌了，甚至于让我自己都觉得讨厌英语，后悔自己选择了英语作为自己的专业。所以我就放弃了背字典，但是我还是会背单词，我会按照自己的方法来背单词，比如我不会死记硬背，我会把单词融合在句子和语境里去理解并记忆，然后再尝试用自己理解的来造新的句子，甚至是想着我要是在现实生活中用的话，我会怎么说。这样坚持一段下来，我就明显感觉自己的英语思维更加自然，说英语的时候也更加自然，能逐渐做到脱口而出，这时候也无疑是增加了自己学习英语的动力和信心呀！

Appendix G - In Vivo Coding Samples



忘，但是那个时候没有想过是为将来用，只是想过要考试，一定就是，初中升高中想上一个好的高中，高中升大学想上一个好的大学，我所有学校都是为考试考大学考高中做准备，我没想过是将来要做，我出去了，在现实生活中什么运用，没想过，说句心里话，现在才想过，过去是真没想过，一直都是在为考试，考高中做准备，考大学做准备。所以忘是肯定会忘的，咱们说的忘掉了，但是还好，起码对我的考试有，能帮助我得到很好的分数，我忘了就忘了，我也无所谓，主要是把成绩考出来，家长开心，我开心就行。

W：然后我就想问问你，你还能够记得当时，比如说你的高中老师，他在上一堂课的时候，你还记得他具体的是怎么上的吗？就是那一堂课。

H：很简单，她就是让我们，我们就拿阅读课。

W：就拿我们就拿个阅读，你也可以描述一下你典型的一节课 45 分钟他是怎么操作的。

H：我印象很深的就是高中，我们老师上课，他这个套路我还比较记得清，比如说要学新的一个 chapter，然后这个 chapter 会有一些新的单词，大概是 20 多个，那么老师会让我们把课本翻到最后一页，因为咱们国内的单词都在最后 reference 就会有这种，然后他带着我们去读一遍，然后把每个单词读一遍，读一遍之后，老师就会让我们自己再读一遍，这就可以了，然后老师就说你们大概知道每个单词的意思了吧？然后现在我们这差不多就过了将近有 20 分钟了，单词的学习会将近用 20 分钟去学习，对。差不多一个单词是一分钟，首先他要会，给我们教会我们读，其次给我因为有些比如说长难单词，他会分开给我们讲怎么帮助我们记忆。像 ambition，我记得我有一个老师就跟我们讲,ambition 就是俺必胜，然后很有信心，俺必胜，他就会以这种方法讲，那是我的高中老师，就是用中文的这

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去时这样写你的 Grammar 看起来丰富一点，但是如果你觉得你不是这样的学生，你稳打稳拿就拿现在时去做.

W：你能够具体说说你初高中的老师是怎么教你听说读写的呢？

H：听力的话，我们就是放磁带，然后老师以放磁带为主，不是有课程有磁带吗？我们每个同学都有自己的磁带，回去听磁带，然后我的听力就是一听课教材磁带，老师，我觉得老师没什么听力，我觉得老师都是以中文为主。对，要么老师会在听写默写的时候，单词默写，还有对话默写的时候他会读英语，我们就照着他读的去写，这个训练我的听力，因为你听懂了你才会写。然后我的口语的话，就是大声的朗诵，初高中大声的朗诵，早上的早读，每天早上读早读，读大概 40 分钟一堂课的时间。对。然后 writing 的话就是按照老师的方法去写，是那种例子，老师就会给你讲。其实也没有什么方法，就是跟你讲，我的老师当时跟我讲，你只要把单词背下了，你的写作就会写了，要不然你连单词都背不下，你还想写作那不可能的事情。这是他说的话，到现在都还记得，然后阅读的话，就是读文章，初中很短的文章，然后老师就带着你读，还是那句话，只要把单词背好了，你的阅读就上去了。我永远都记得老师说的一句话，你单词背不会，你啥都不会。

W：那他有没有教过你这个怎么背，因为我听到很多的孩子，因为我之前也在国内教过英语，很多的孩子就会说，哎呀我单词记不住，即便我现在记住了，我用了 100 遍记住这个单词，可是我过了一会我又忘了呀。

H：我记得我那个年龄，现在的小孩人家会这样说，但我们那个时代好像没人敢说。都是背，我不知道其他同学是怎么想的，但是我从来没有这样想过，就是觉得我背就行了。会

一贯的思维：单词决定一切，可如何用单词都不管.

belief: Vocabulary is the key to successful language learning.

可是单词量大真的就语言能力自动上句吗？

have no courage to challenge teacher authority

"顺从，不敢挑战"权威"

在学生眼里，老师永远是权威，批判性思维不足.

H：就是按照新东方老师的模板写的。套路.解题技巧.听老师的话

W：之前，在新东方之前，甚至在你接触新东方英语之前，你都是怎么学习英语的？

H：就是老师上课让我怎么学我就怎么学，我没有自己的什么方法，要么就是平常听听那种歌，我买了好多那种磁带。那时候不是还有磁带吗？我上高中还用磁带，然后买了什么披头士的磁带，小甜甜布兰妮是我的偶像，对。就是听他们的歌，但是我觉得用处不大，听他们的歌。追星.迷歌

simply follow teachers' instruction (GTM)
no creative ways of learning

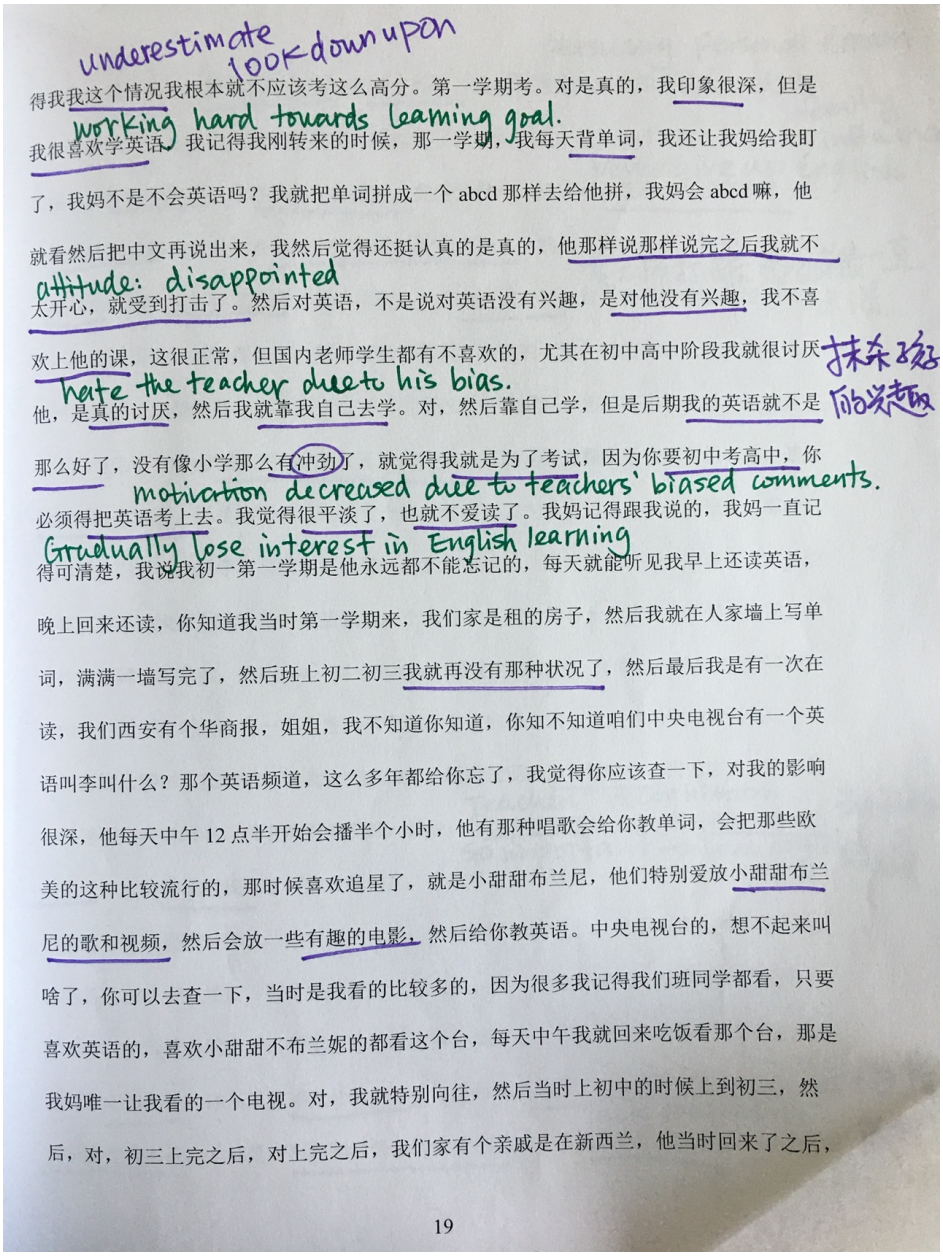
W：那你还记得你的老师，初中、初高中的英语老师是怎么教的呢？

H：初中呢，我那老师教课就很规矩，没有什么创新，没有什么是 motive 这种感觉，从头到尾感觉他的教学课程就是按照大纲走，我能确定，我的老师都是按照大纲走的，然后我们，像我们的写作，老师也会给你讲那种模板，你怎么写，其实那时候我的初高中老师讲的模板和韩国老师差不多，但是他们没有给我们那么，就是他们并没有想到你这种形象的方式，以图片的方式告诉我们是这样去学，他就告诉我说你 introduction 应该怎么写，怎么,他就以口头文,就是以书面 oral 口头，还有 writing 的方式,example 的方式告诉我们，按照他结构去学 writing，那分绝对不会低，所以在我之前我的 writing 我分数一直都是很很一般的,不高也不低，也不拉分，也不怎么提分，感觉像一个流水账，写出来的是一个流水，因为上初中的话是写对话为主，然后上高中的话可能写 100 字的,这样的一个小小的文章，那个时候对我来说 100 字很难了，对，然后看图写文章，感觉写这个朋友在干什么，所以我们的老师就给我们教，你为了拿高分,害怕你的时态出现了问题，从头到尾都用现在时,不用不要用其他的时态，如果你想拿高分，你可以用其他的比如说进行时。过

直接了当不了解学生的发展需求满堂灌.是Teacher-centered

"One size fits all" strategy when taking test.
死板刻板.不能变通.一招通用所有.
无创新可言.无学生的自我想法可言.

Appendix H - Descriptive Coding Sample



underestimate
look down upon
得我我这个情况我根本就不应该考这么高分。第一学期考。对是真的，我印象很深，但是
working hard towards learning goal.
我很喜欢学英语，我记得我刚转来的时候，那一学期，我每天背单词，我还让我妈给我盯
了，我妈不是不会英语吗？我就把单词拼成一个 abcd 那样去给他拼，我妈会 abcd 嘛，他
就看然后把中文再说出来，我然后觉得还挺认真的是真的，他那样说那样说完之后我就不
attitude: disappointed
太开心，就受到打击了。然后对英语，不是说对英语没有兴趣，是对他没有兴趣，我不喜
欢上他的课，这很正常，但国内老师学生都有不喜欢的，尤其在初中高中阶段我就很讨厌
hate the teacher due to his bias.
他，是真的讨厌，然后我就靠我自己去学。对，然后靠自己学，但是后期我的英语就不是
motivation decreased due to teachers' biased comments.
那么好了，没有像小学那么有冲劲了，就觉得我就是为了考试，因为你要初中考高中，你
Gradually lose interest in English learning
必须得把英语考上去。我觉得很平淡了，也就不爱读了。我妈记得跟我说的，我妈一直记
得可清楚，我说我初一第一学期是他永远都不能忘记的，每天就能听见我早上还读英语，
晚上回来还读，你知道我当时第一学期来，我们家是租的房子，然后我就在人家墙上写单
词，满满一墙写完了，然后班上初二初三我就再没有那种状况了，然后最后我是有一次在
读，我们西安有个华商报，姐姐，我不知道你知道，你知不知道咱们中央电视台有一个英
语叫李叫什么？那个英语频道，这么多年都给你忘了，我觉得你应该查一下，对我的影响
很深，他每天中午 12 点半开始会播半个小时，他有那种唱歌会给你教单词，会把那些欧
美的这种比较流行的，那时候喜欢追星了，就是小甜甜布兰尼，他们特别爱放小甜甜布兰
尼的歌和视频，然后会放一些有趣的电影，然后给你教英语。中央电视台的，想不起来叫
啥了，你可以去查一下，当时是我看的比较多的，因为很多我记得我们班同学都看，只要
喜欢英语的，喜欢小甜甜不布兰妮的都看这个台，每天中午我就回来吃饭看那个台，那是
我妈唯一让我看的一个电视。对，我就特别向往，然后当时上初中的时候上到初三，然
后，对，初三上完之后，对上完之后，我们家有个亲戚是在新西兰，他当时回来了之后，
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课的,老师就是有 135 是英语早读，然后 24 是语文早读，然后我记得 246 是语文早读，因为只有周天休息。135 的时候，我记得老师每天都会站在每个组，你就上去找他背去，然后你一背了，老师一画谁背了，谁背了，谁把啥背了，几乎都是在背，还是一个死记硬背。对。而且背的过程他的记性比较大，对，我高考完了就忘了。实话，对，背的过程就背得很快，我不知道为什么当时背得非常的快，但是忘得很快，就是不停的，我记得最后一学期每天都是背，重复再重复，repeat ,repeat,但是高考完了之后立马就忘了，很神奇。

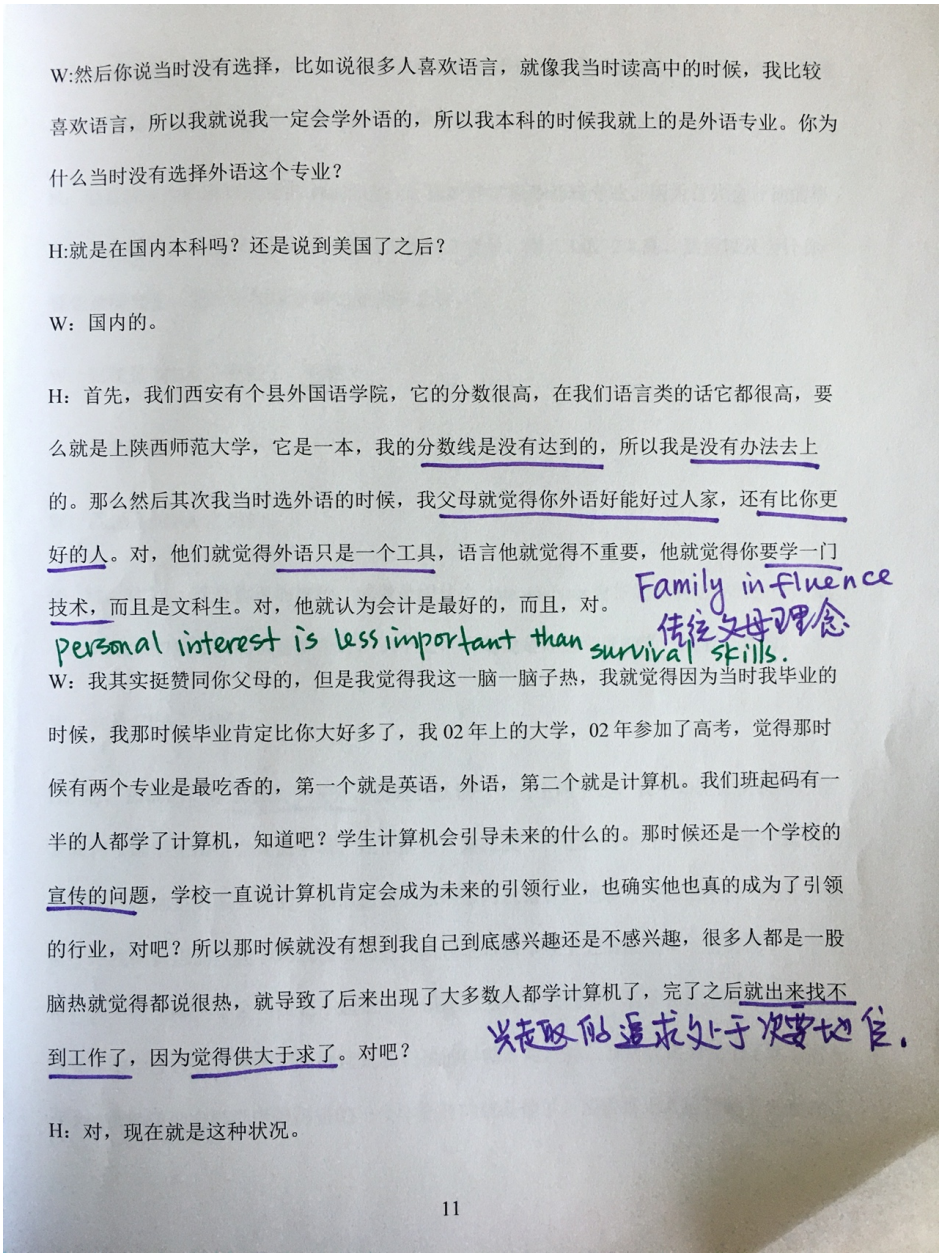
W:你这个我很能理解，因为你背了，你只是让他短暂的存在你的脑海当中，可是你之后你没有用，而这个东西你没有发现它有用处了，你肯定就忘记他了吗？

H：对对对，后期是因为上了大学就没怎么背过用过，而且我们大学课也都是中文老师教。外教，我们班没有外教，我们那个专业没有请外教过来，所以，对，我最后还报过一个班叫美联英语。对，他有外教。费用还挺高，是我上大一完之后我自己让我爸给我报的。

W：为什么你还会去想象这样的班呢？

H：我就想着，想出国了，把英语口语练一练，我就觉得跟外国老师在一起多洋气的。其实说句实话，我感觉我上那个班的时候，我的同学，就是我周围跟我一块补课，上美联英语的同学，他们都有一种心态，要么就是要出国，这个肯定的。其次就是说是想把口语练一练，感觉跟外国老师在一起可洋气了，很有面儿。这个是真的，这个是，对，然后但是我发现去上了外国老师的课之后，我的口语也没有进展，而且我感觉对我的考试托福根本就没有什么好的帮助。

Appendix I - Pattern Coding and Focused Coding Samples



W:然后你说当时没有选择，比如说很多人喜欢语言，就像我当时读高中的时候，我比较喜欢语言，所以我就说我一定会学外语的，所以我本科的时候我就上的是外语专业。你为什么当时没有选择外语这个专业？

H:就是在国内本科吗？还是说到美国了之后？

W：国内的。

H：首先，我们西安有个县外国语学院，它的分数很高，在我们语言类的话它都很高，要么就是上陕西师范大学，它是一本，我的分数线是没有达到的，所以我是没有办法去上的。那么然后其次我当时选外语的时候，我父母就觉得你外语好能好过人家，还有比你更好的人。对，他们就觉得外语只是一个工具，语言他就觉得不重要，他就觉得你要学一门技术，而且是文科生。对，他就认为会计是最好的，而且，对。

Family influence 传统父母理念

personal interest is less important than survival skills.

W：我其实挺赞同你父母的，但是我觉得我这一脑一脑子热，我就觉得因为当时我毕业的时候，我那时候毕业肯定比你大好多了，我 02 年上的大学，02 年参加了高考，觉得那时候有两个专业是最吃香的，第一个就是英语，外语，第二个就是计算机。我们班起码有一半的人都学了计算机，知道吧？学生计算机会引导未来的什么的。那时候还是一个学校的宣传的问题，学校一直说计算机肯定会成为未来的引领行业，也确实他也真的成为了引领的行业，对吧？所以那时候就没有想到我自己到底感兴趣还是不感兴趣，很多人都是一股脑热就觉得都说很热，就导致了后来出现了大多数人都学计算机了，完了之后就出来找不到工作了，因为觉得供大于求了。对吧？

兴趣取向退求处于次要地位。

H：对，现在就是这种状况。

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adaptability is relatively weak.

H:我觉得跟国内比起来的话还是蛮相同的，相似度比较大。因为我不是那种比较像有些同学，他是可能在美国的本科，他就更注重于自己的这样的理解，会参加各种各样的活动，我那个时候是没有参加学校任何活动的，我顶多是在学校打个工,就是 Delby 洗碗,楼上给人打饭，就是我最主要的一个工作，对，然后我没有说是像有些同学就想了，我要融入到美国的生活当中，美国的社团活动我会参加一些社团，我没有。那么我的主要的,我觉得我的活动的轨迹和我室友，因为我还有室友是中国人，他是华南师范的交换生，我俩第一年都是在一起，我们最主要的工作就是白天一起去上课，跟咱们国内很像，然后我们把自己的选择课上完之后就去图书馆看书，然后我那时候还又在考托福，就想把托福的分再往高的拉一拉，然后我还在准备托福，又在准备托福。对，然后下午的时候没有课的时候就去隔壁打工.

生活环境雷同.

把自己闷在一个小圈子里. 活动空间相对有限.

W:为什么没有想到说,因为很多人来到美国都会觉得我来到一个新的不同的国家，英语是母语的国家，我就要融入这个国家，学习他们了解他们,那为什么没有这样的想法呢？

H：我第一学期来的时候是有这种想法，然后就找的美国室友去住，但是我发现，我发现好像我哪里缺失了什么，就是他们对我很客气，然后我的室友笑的时候我笑不出来，但是然后我就发现我现在的最主要的事情就是先把学习学完，所以我并没有那么多精力去跟他们去参加太多的这种他们所说的 party，或者他会邀请我参加他的一些那些去教堂，教堂活动，就是 church 那样的一个活动，我都没有时间去。然后我就觉得我就得赶快去学习，然后赶快把本科上完，对，我的经历可能跟其他人还不一样，就比较焦急，我在本科的时候很忧虑，我感觉自己浪费太多时间。

Stay too focused on passing classes

have no time & energy to make new friends

时间紧. 压力大 不自信

be afraid of wasting too much time on undergraduate study.

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W：你初高中的时候是不是也是这样？

H：对，一直都是想得到认可，还是一直都是在认可的范围内，就感觉丢人。这种感觉。 害怕丢人

W：有没有一种时候你内心自己真的感觉很愉悦，我真的是。不是，我不只是学英语，只是为了让别人觉得我好，而是我说我自己内心觉得真的很开心，有没有这种时候？

H：有，这个就是，我之后不是回国自己做了留学吗？会接触英语，因为要给学生找学校，甚至有的时候做ps，personal statement，会帮助学生跟我一起去写，然后这个时候我就感觉我的英语还挺好，特别有优越感，就觉得我比本科生强。我比他们英语好，我能帮到他们，我还能挣钱，然后这个时候我就很开心。 Can actually use English to help others. satisfied.

W：那个时候是你真正的喜欢英语给你带来的这种快乐，就是说。

H：对对对，挣钱都快乐。

W：还有一个就是真的用上了。学有所用 pleasing moment

H：对对对。用上了。呃。。。我的这个没电了。好了可以，好了，我的耳机没电了。对，这个时候是特别愉悦的，然后其次，其次的话就是说比如说，实际上这个学期的话，我们有一门课是 Dr. Taylor 的 American history of American education。这门课我们大部分都是在那种座谈，像那种座谈性质的，就是让你回去读书，然后 make connections，然后讲讲自己学校，自己学校的这种教育经历，然后很多老外对咱们中国还是比较感兴趣的，然后这个时候我也挺自豪的，就感觉我能表达清楚，然后比如说我们最后的 Final 我做的是 LGBT in China，就是中国的同性恋在中国的学校以及社会的认可度，因为之前他们问

Value: Actually using it.

be proud of sharing her personal backgrounds.

wanting others to know about her.

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我的时候我一无所知，是真的一无所知，然后我做了一个 PPT 就讲了一下，然后以及现在目前 LGBT 在学校，学校里的 LGBT 的现象老师怎么对待的？然后我觉得同学听的还挺认真的，大家还给了反馈还挺好，我觉得这个还挺不错的。peer feedback 对于和同学的认可

W：感觉特别自豪。

H：对。

W：那你再谈谈你学习英语，让你感觉最受挫折的一个时刻。

H：目前来说我到现在我的 writing 的写作不行，还是不行，结构上没有什么大的问题，然后但是内容看起来太白了，对，然后尤其在 lliterature review 的时候，我就感觉我不能非常清楚的把我所看到的材料文献表达出来，然后,对,还有其次就是我的 discussion 部分，我没有创新性，创新不出来东西，这一学期写的东西，目前为止就诚实的说，我都感觉都是拿着别人的东西在写自己的，没有,自己的想法太少了，真的,有的时候很崩溃。lack of own critical thinking.

W；那你有没有想过这到底是什么样的原因导致了你会内心没有想法？

related to her own previous education experience

H：可能是跟我从小到大的这样的一个接受的教育的经历有关，因为我从小到大不是一个有创新性的人才，也不是一个发掘创新的人，都是一个按部就班的，然后是一个模仿，我特别善于模仿，我的模仿功能很好，然后这个不太适用于现在了，完全不是说不太适应，完全是不适用于，所以我这学期就下了很多功夫了，我也在模仿，但是我还是在模仿。就是因为我感觉我自己写出来的 research proposal，整体不管是结构也罢，还是内容的质量也罢，还是以及他的这种怎么说，明显跟人家我看到的一些文献，我们专业的文就是写过

Self-efficacy (low)

determined to change

Appendix J - Theming the Data Samples

Good test results mean freedom to choose where you sit in the classroom (she is taller than most of the peers and used to always sit in the back rows through elementary years.)

Superiority, accomplishment, pride and joy

Hating sitting far away from the teacher

Be proud of self (the value of good test scores)

Actual benefits: first to be called by the teacher to choose seats

Rankings in bulletin boards (Pride)

High test scores are rewarding.

High test scores mean more motivation to learn.

Hide her own real (dislike grammar teaching) feeling in front of teachers

Respect teachers

Not challenge teachers and embarrass teachers

Personal attribute (Resilience)

顺其自然 go with the flow

Managing her own emotions well

Self-adjusting

No resistance, but flexibility

Read her own favorite magazines

Looking for her own outlets

Looking for her own ways of learning

Fulfill her own interest and needs

Finding joys of making friends at school

Friendship means less stress.

Full schedule brings more stress.

Be as patient and perseverant as she can

Believe that 坚持就是胜利。Perseverance means victory.

If you want to obtain something, you have to pay your efforts. (No pain, no gain.)