POETRY WRITING FOR CREATIVE SECOND LANGUAGE EDUCATION: ARTIST-TEACHER IDENTITY (RE)CONSTRUCTION OF INTERNATIONAL TESOL EDUCATORS THROUGH POETRY-BASED LEARNING

by

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(Under the Direction of Melisa Cahnmann-Taylor)

ABSTRACT

This dissertation documents the experiences and interactions of fifteen TESOL graduate students in a poetry writing course where they dedicated themselves to studying, writing, critiquing, and revising poetry. Moving away from traditional second language (L2) pedagogies in East Asian EFL (English as Foreign Language) contexts that prioritize scientific knowledge of L2 acquisition over creative practices, this study examines the possible contributions poetry-based learning made toward the construction of participants' TESOL teacher identity as artists and its implications for L2 learning and teaching. To lay a solid theoretical groundwork, this dissertation reviews the central ideas of Vygotskian Sociocultural Theory (SCT) such as mediation, regulation, internalization, and zone of proximal development, discusses their relation to the understanding of the roles of creative collaboration in L2 learning and development, and integrates the sociocultural understanding of literacy, such as literacy as social practice, multiliteracies, and critical literacy with the potential of poetry-based learning. Through an in-depth analysis of students' poems, questionnaires, interviews, and classroom discourse recorded during poetry revision workshops, this study reveals that 1) international students engaged in

poetry writing as a process to reveal their personal voice, integrating their daily experiences in a new school context and in adapting to a new country and culture. 2) Poetry revision workshops served as *Poetic ZPD* in that it facilitated *creative (l)imitation* (Cahnmann-Taylor & Hwang, 2015) which enhanced participants' identities as connected to and expanding from past structures, thus yielding new future selves, *symmetrical scaffolding* for shared thinking and learning, and *dialogic collaboration* for reflection and revision where creative meaning-making occurred for both teacher and student alike. 3) The experience of poetry writing illuminated the possibility of shaping TESOL teachers' identities through the metaphor of "poet-teachers," viewing L2 instruction as creative, unscripted, concise, communicative, and cultural teaching. Based on these findings, this dissertation sheds new light on the power of arts-based instruction to see L2 acquisition as both art *and* science, as both process *and* product and further suggests the arts can serve as meaningful L2 teaching tool to help students grow as creative and collaborative meaning-makers, not just passive receptors of language form.

INDEX WORDS: Poetry Writing, Sociocultural Theory, Zone of Proximal Development, Second Language Writing, EFL Education, Arts-based Learning

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation comes from an active research agenda that I have had underway since 2012 as a student and a researcher in the creative writing courses where international TESOL educators had themselves in studying, writing, critiquing, and revising poetic crafts. To be specific, I participated in the courses in Fall 2012, Summer 2013 and 2015 as a registered student, and in Fall 2014 as a participant-observer. The current study is focused on observations made in Fall 2014 where I served in the active role of researcher to examine the potential of poetry-based learning in TESOL teachers' identity construction and L2 education. This introductory chapter is divided into three parts: The first part provides the problem statements, and the second part describes the rationale for choosing the international pre-service TESOL educators as the participants and the three research questions that will be answered throughout this dissertation. The final part overviews what it means to be an artist-teacher which calls for a creative and critical understanding of L2 learning and teaching as an artistic practice.

1.1 Background of the Problem

In order to unpack my positionality and philosophical stance for choosing the topic of poetry-based learning as an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) student and as a qualitative researcher, this section provides the problem statements based on the three categories: personal narrative regarding my experience and relationship to the topic, a central phenomenon of L2 instruction in East Asian EFL contexts, and ontological and epistemological understanding of L2 literacy education and international TESOL teacher preparation.

1.1.1 Personal Narrative

My inquiry on the influence of poetry in L2 learning and its contribution to international

TESOL teacher preparation stems from some of the drawbacks and limitations of the traditional

L2 classes I experienced in South Korea. In this section, based on my previous learning

experiences, I will describe how I became interested in the topic of L2 Poetry as an ESOL

student and how creative writing had an influence on my identity as a TESOL teacher.

My Past Story

I was excited when my mother got me a big globe that had a light in it, on my tenth

birthday. I put it on my desk, and I looked into it habitually. Also, there was a huge world map in

my room that my mother put on the wall right next to my bed. I liked to draw and write what I

thought on the map. It was nothing, but a mass of scribbles, yet I still remember my mom used to

compliment me, "Wow, you wrote a poem!" Come to think of it, my mother might have

intentionally given me the globe and the map because it was her hope that I would become a

person with a wide view in a global world. Even though there was no English curriculum in

elementary public schools in South Korea at the time, this environment outside of school imbued

me with the motivation to meet many foreigners all around the world. As a young boy, however, I

could not afford to visit other countries, so I had to find an alternative. Since the internet started

to come into common use at that time, I was able to communicate with many foreign friends

through an online pen pal program. Truly it was an inspiring and fun activity, which allowed me

to experience the written texts that contained various discourses from different people in

different cultures. This kind of message exchange helped me understand more meaningful

aspects of western cultures as I interpreted their social behaviors, norms and traditions.

Although my reading and writing ability in English was very limited at the time, I sincerely

enjoyed the pen-pal activity that had such a positive influence on my passion for English learning.

As most of my pen pal friends were Americans, I had a particular interest in studying in the United States when I became thirteen years old, but my parents could not support me financially, so I ended up continuing public schooling in South Korea. My inspiration and love for English language learning dramatically changed when I first encountered "Academic English" in a secondary schooling context. All of the English literacy courses that I had taken were simply based on the "Grammar Transition Method" that focused only on practicing interpretation and/or translation from a native language to the second language or vice versa. Trained strictly in this method, when I wrote a paper in English, I preferred to work in Korean (L1) first and then translate into English (L2), which meant the writing process took a long time to complete.

In addition to this, most writing courses only dealt with the practice of using the drill of grammar based on memorizing the descriptive rules and working on a sentence level structure. These kinds of "controlled composition lessons" (see Matsuda, 2003) did not allow me to make any grammatical mistakes. Therefore, my thinking process in developing ideas often shut down when I was not able to create a grammatically perfect sentence. Although this pedagogical strategy was helpful to the extent that I could acquire linguistic knowledge and forms of English, it did not improve my ability to produce creative works and meanings in a new language. Interestingly, the writing teachers who might have believed that memorizing the forms of language was the best way to learn L2 writing often encouraged me to copy the sentences and templates from many model essays produced by native speakers. Of course, my memory span did not allow me to memorize the entire essay so that it was exactly the same as the original one;

however, sometimes I wrote many sentences from memorization even without being aware that this act of writing was plagiarism. In this circumstance, the main purpose of improving my ability to write was simply to get better scores on the tests, which was totally different from my previous experience of pen pal writing that had served me as a currency to exchange meanings and understand the contexts mediated by others' ideas and thoughts.

Now looking back over the past, the ways in which I wrote in my early L2 classes lacked any personal voice, agency, and identity that expressed me as an author, diminishing my creativity in English writing as well. Although I considered myself a creative writer, having written more than 80 poems in my first language at the time, most of the English courses that I took in Korea restrained my "creativity switch" from turning on in the process of L2 writing. I thought that this difficulty resulted from my lower level of proficiency in English; however, now as a doctoral student who studies the influences of poetry in L2 learning, I realize that it is possibly attributable to the solid and soundproofing wall of traditional grammar and examination-oriented pedagogies in ELF classrooms that blocked my creative eyes from observing the outside and left my critical and transcultural voice unheard. Although I am not the average Asian L2 English learner and user, I have learned that my experiences are not unique but common in many East Asian EFL contexts (e.g., Kim, 2012; Kubota, 2011; Liu & Littlewood, 1997; Nelson, 1995). Someone may feel that my professional predispositions as a poet in L1 and experiences of poetry writing in L2 already commit me to cultural standpoints of a humanistic, literary view of language, and L2 learning. In order to avoid this subjective influence on the study's credibility, authenticity, and overall quality or validity, in the method chapter, I will provide my subjectivity statement in more detail.

Recently, many international scholars and researchers have pointed out some of the obstacles and limitations caused by too much focus on the "science" of developmental L2 acquisition based on coding and decoding of a text in L2 literacy instruction (Hanauer, 2010; Johns, 1997; Kim, 2012; Matsuda, 2003). Instead, they highlight a need for different pedagogical approaches that understand English teaching and learning as forms of artistic practice that facilitate critical and creative thinking, meaning-making and performance (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010; Hanauer, 2010; Mobley, 2000). In this light, I have found one promising catalyst to this paradigm shift from the poetry classrooms that I participated as a second language of learner. During the courses, I experienced the positive influence of poetry on the dynamic aspects of L2 learning and development, which will be addressed throughout this dissertation. In order to provide a more objective justification of meaning-driven learning and qualification of arts-based pedagogies in L2 classrooms, the following section scrutinizes the central phenomenon of L2 literacy instruction in East Asian countries in terms of the sociopolitical and cultural landscape.

1.1.2 Central Phenomena of L2 Literacy Instruction in EFL Context

In this section, since I experienced EFL education in South Korea, the discussion will often be based on the situation of South Korea as an exemplar of the broader East Asian EFL contexts. Again, one country cannot represent the common educational trend of all Asian countries. However, when it comes to English education, a number of studies have reported that the EFL instruction in many East Asian countries including Japan, China, Taiwan and Korea has many things in common; it especially relies on commodification and skillization of English language (Liu & Littlewood, 1997; Kim, 2012; Kubota, 2011; Park, 2010). The discussion of this section will not only allow a critical understanding of the educational backgrounds of the

research participants and their pre-determined identity on English learning and teaching, but also it will lay the groundwork for the discussion in the following section regarding the need of understanding the nature of literacy as human existence and culture from a sociocultural perspective.

To date, a common trend when teaching English in many East Asian countries is to educate students through a set of standardized criteria (Kim, 2012). As classrooms around the globe are ignited by the fever of test preparation, English pedagogies mostly dwell in the one-way transmission of linguistic knowledge from teacher to students. Freire (1972) draws his metaphor of banking to make an issue of this monologic education where a teacher considers students "as empty containers to be 'filled' by deposits of information" (Lim, 2014, p. 133). Under these circumstances, most L2 literacy practices are entrenched in a classroom by the act of using the grammar drill along with memorization of the rules from the descriptive approaches, which have drawn upon the ideas of Chomsky's (1986) linguistic theory of language. Chomsky postulated that individuals are born with a knowledge that he refers to Universal Grammar "that applies to all the world's languages despite their differences in overt words and constructions" (Pinker, 2005, p. 3). From this perspective, the Chomskian theory of language suggests that it depends on each individual to learn which operational and fixed rules apply to a particular language.

Influenced by this view, EFL teachers in literacy classrooms often consider a student as a processor of input and a producer of output of forms of language such as vocabulary and certain types of syntactic structures that constitute a text (Gibbons, 2003). The importance of learning a form of language cannot be ruled out in L2 classroom, and this approach may result in individual linguistic competence on paper. However, many problems have emerged from this form-focused

pedagogy because it overlooks the functional varieties of language such as using English for interpersonal meaning-making processes and international communications in the global world (Matsuda, 2012). In the remainder of this section, I will summarize some of limitations of the grammar-focused and examination-oriented pedagogy in terms of its lack of consideration of the process of 1) meaning-making, 2) reflection, and 3) cultural learning in L2 classrooms.

First, in many East Asian countries, including South Korea, English writing pedagogy has been frequently associated with test preparation (Shim & Park, 2008). One of the reasons for this phenomenon is well articulated in Park (2010)'s argument regarding the educational ideology in South Korea: "English is a particularly apt index of the entrepreneurial self, because, as a foreign language, it can never be fully achieved to the standards of a "native speaker"; thus, the task of securing good English skills is also an endless one, iconically capturing the essence of the neoliberal ideal of continuous self-development" (p. 26). In this situation, teachers often view students as processors of input of linguistic information (Gibbons, 2003), and output is just judged by a test score. Therefore, the focus of writing lessons continues to be on the production of grammatically perfect sentences or mere correct patterns in the test. In this situation, according to Johns (1997), "texts are portrayed to students as [being] empty jars, with predefined configurations into which content is poured" (p. 8). To make things worse, as teachers mostly choose the teaching materials seeking one definite answer in the test, students' perceptions of L2 writing are often unwittingly trapped in the wall of standardization by regimentation of ideas, instead of exploring new meanings in a variety of genres and topics. In other words, most teachers often provide students with ready-made recipes for writing, encouraging them to apply "quick templates" and "proven formulas" (Kim, 2012). In this situation, EFL students are less likely to foster their creativity, original thinking and self-expression because they are

discouraged from choosing the ingredients of writing that are adjustable to their own tastes. The memorization of skeletal expression may make a test-savvy language producer (Kim, 2012), but it fails to grow a creative thinker or language player who looks for fresh ideas for the creation of their own meaning.

In fact, EFL students in an East Asian context are mainly considered passive consumers of form and predetermined meaning in a narrowly defined literacy curriculum, rather than active explorers of functions and new meanings who apply them in their real life (Hull & Schultz, 2002; Street, 2003). Widdowson (1978), like many others in the field, problematizes the passive and single channel of teaching in that it does not allow students direct and active participation in discovering their own way of language learning. Littlewood (2000) also states that "students [in EFL context] do not want to be spoon-fed with facts from an all knowing *fount of knowledge*. They want to explore themselves and find their own answers" (p. 31). Halliday (2007) supports the importance of educating language learners as meaning-makers in terms of glossodiversity and semiodiversity in the development of varieties of English. He distinguishes the two as stated: "Glossodiversity refers to the emergence of new forms and functions in the vocabulary of varieties of English; semiodiversity, on the other hand, refers to the assignment of novel semantics to words that once expressed different meanings" (p. 47). From this perspective, while the traditional literacy instruction in EFL contexts is eager to expand learners' "glossodiversity" skills, it may fail to cultivate their "semidodiversity" abilities.

In a similar vein, Matsuda (2003) argues that writing is a process of discovering "new" in "developing organization as well as meaning" rather than "a reproduction of previously learned syntactic structures" (p. 21). Too much emphasis on the unidirectional transmission of linguistic information only passed down by a teacher hampers students' progress toward a more crucial

aspect of the learning processes by which meaning of language is co-constructed within a L2 community. This in turn directly and/or indirectly misguides EFL students toward a misconception of English writing as a way to express their linguistic knowledge in a paper rather than to share a unique message that creates the sociocultural meanings with others in the world. This looks problematic because the true meaning of L2 writing is neither fixed as a rule nor evaluated on a sheet of paper with a grade; rather it is in flux in the world where a variety of different meanings cascade (Matsuda, 2003).

Secondly, as the writing curriculum is often fixated on assessing and measuring students' linguistic competence in terms of the written final product, one of the most important procedural aspects of literacy, reflection, is often neglected both in and outside of the classroom. Even if students get some sort of teacher and peer feedback, it typically refers to the grammatical mistakes and mostly provides the strategies for fixing errors that students have made (Kroll, 1990, 2003). This kind of error-oriented feedback may teach EFL learners to know which fixed and operational rules to apply to a particular structure (form), but it is likely to fail to help them develop their ideas and thoughts that they can reflect to a particular content (meaning). Put another way, EFL students are often trained to avoid mistakes on the sentence level when they need to be encouraged to learn from the mistakes on the discourse level in an attempt to develop and reflect meaning out of revision through interaction with others.

To make things worse, the process of unidirectional feedback does not take the collaborative and bidirectional nature of writing into consideration (Vygotsky, 1978). According to Vygotsky (1978), in order to understand literacy practice as a social interaction between humans in meaning-making activity, instead of fixing students' mistakes on the sentence level, teachers need to consider how to help students develop their own voice on the discourse level,

which facilitates a reasonable and reflective thinking process at the community level. The lack of a reflective process in L2 education may not leave room for critical thinking as students are not able to dedicate themselves in deep and original thinking process (Brookfield, 2012). Kubota (2003) supports this view by arguing that the important value of writing as a critical thinking tool is often sacrificed to the wall of "rule" and "standardization" in many East Asian EFL classrooms.

Thirdly, one of the most important parts of L2 learning, integrating language and culture, has been less valued in many EFL contexts. A number of L2 scholars have argued that the connection between language and culture is two sides of the same coin, which are indispensable (Byram, 1997; Gee, 1992; Kramsch, 1996). Brown (1994) argues that "language is a part of culture and a culture is a part of a language. The two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture" (p. 164). learning a different language is meant to be accompanied by exchanges of language in consideration of different social values and cultural norms (Gee, 2000). However, English education in many East Asian countries has less focused on the value of learning multiple languacultures, which is "a key concept in the understanding of language as both a social and a cultural phenomenon" (Risager, 2005, p. 186). Without a process of fostering multicultural perspectives in L2 learning, it may be difficult to help L2 learners develop their voice and identity by reflecting other cultures upon their own culture or vice versa. According to Gee (1998), the lack of understanding of other cultures may limit the opportunities for enriching their critical and multicultural perspectives. In the same vein, Buttjes (1990) notes: "language teachers need to go beyond monitoring linguistic production in the classroom and become aware of the complex and numerous processes of intercultural mediation that any foreign language learner

undergoes" (p. 55).

More importantly, beyond the teaching methods and styles that look problematic, this educational and institutional reality shaped by monolingual perspectives often causes the ideological struggle under the name of neoliberalism. According to Gray (2000), a neoliberal ideology has attempted to "make all spheres of social life played by the rules of the market" (p, 21), and English education is not an exception in many EFL contexts, including South Korea, where the proficiency of English is considered a form of capital with high exchange value (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Choi, 2007). In fact, contemporary Korean society represented by "English Frenzy" (Park, 2010) tends to value English ability neoliberal project to maintain class status quo rather than as a means to develop individual thinking and learning. Park (2010) argues that English education in South Korea run by neoliberal ideologies structures a stable elite system that enables only few highly proficient bilinguals who have an abundance of class and social privilege. He states:

> "Such ideologies include the view of English as a necessity in the global world, English as a language incompatible with Korean identity, and Koreans as incompetent speakers of English who have persistent difficulty in successfully acquiring the language, as well as more specific circulating statements such as blaming Koreans' incompetence upon the failure of the national system of English language teaching, which (purportedly) focuses only on rote memorization and passive learning of grammatical rules while neglecting to inculcate communicative competence" (p. 28).

Neoliberal transformation and its concomitant "English frenzy" in many EFL contexts "ultimately rationalize and justify the neoliberal logic of human capital development" (Park, 2010, p. 22). This is problematic because it has failed to cultivate a student's multicultural awareness. Without this process, all other values of learning multiple languacultures (Agar, 1994) would be forgotten. In the same vein, many other L2 researchers in the field warn that language ideology shaped by the valued capital has brought some social consequences such as the

misconception of standard English and prejudices towards the idealization of hiring the native-speaking teachers prevailing in the job market (Anderson & Kohler, 2012; Auerbach, 1995; Phillipson, 1992). Kubota (2011), one of the leading scholars who illuminate problems and resistance to neoliberalism, notes an example from Japan: "Linguistic instrumentalism, which underscores the importance of English skills for work and for achieving individual economic success, has influenced language education policies and proliferated the language teaching and testing industry in Japan. Linguistic instrumentalism is linked to the notion of human capital (i.e., skills deemed necessary for the knowledge economy) and the unstable employment conditions of neoliberal society" (p. 250).

Kubota (2009) points out that regardless of native and nonnative status, EFL teachers should reconsider their role in terms of ideology construction and reconstruction. She argues:

> "We should think about who really suffers from unfair hiring practices. Of course, nonnative teachers suffer from discrimination, but those who really suffer are the students. If students work only with white native teachers, they can only receive a partial worldview. Any teacher can talk about experiences and views of the Other, but lived experiences of the Other told by those who have actually gone through them carry a different nuance and symbolic meaning. Students can greatly benefit from nonnative speaking teachers of English in understanding where they are positioned in complex relations of power and explore how they want to engage in this positioning" (Interview transcript from Non-native English Speakers in TESOL of the Month Blog)

Her argument above suggests that EFL teachers have to raise multicultural awareness of cultural representations toward standard English and develop their critical voice and identity in the cult of the native speaker in order to help learners "find oppositional views and voices that could broaden possibilities for thinking and communicating" (Kubota, 2004, p. 46).

Overall, when we consider that the original purpose of a language system in a human society was to make possible the sharing of an individual's ideas, thoughts and emotions with others in his or her social and cultural world, it is problematic to see L2 literacy solely based on

memorization of textbook vocabulary and grammatical rules delivered by teachers. This process can serve as a reference for English expressions and grammar, but it runs the risk of undermining the potential of writing for learning and thinking because it overlooks the importance of how the meaning of language is culturally shaped and the use of language is socially changed, which in turn, limits students' abilities to appreciate the value of literacy as one of the most effective and powerful tools for sociocultural interaction, activation, and exchange. While a widespread emphasis on the grammar and examination-oriented pedagogy in many East Asian EFL classrooms has been justified by the very large classroom size, standardized testing culture, and the neoliberal ideologies, this approach seems problematic because it has unwittingly depersonalized and dehumanized students in learning process. To be specific, it has failed to deepen the quality of English education by overlooking the importance of meaning-making, critical thinking, and multicultural awareness in L2 learning, which has also brought about negative social consequences.

1.1.3 Philosophical Backdrops for Literacy as Meaning-making and Sociocultural Understanding

In order to challenge the current trend of grammar-focused and examination-oriented instruction and promote the feasible status of meaning-driven pedagogies in English classrooms, one particular philosophical deliberation for TESOL teachers in preparation has to come into play first. In other words, we as L2 teachers have to ponder what it means to be a creative and effective language teacher to help learners go beyond the wall of rule and standardization. To achieve this philosophical purpose, in this section I will highlight the importance of understanding of L2 literacy use and instruction as a meaning-making process in terms of epistemological and sociocultural development of language and literacy.

To date, a number of anthropologists, linguists, and psychologists have suggested various theories concerning the origin of language (see Pinker & Bloom, 1990). Although they each have their own theory on the different ontogeny and history of language, they share the same opinion that the root lies in the specific purpose of communication among individuals as a major contributing factor for the emergence and evolution of a human language. When it comes to written forms of language, this assumption is buttressed by the fact that the skill of writing and reading is developed after that of speaking and listening as a result of a person's specific need to express and share his or her thoughts and inner feelings with others in a more visible and recordable way.

Said another way, according to Schmandt-Besserat (1996), people in ancient times would start to have a literacy system in the development of their cognitive and communicative skills along with the evolution of social structures. Therefore, it is no exaggeration to say that sociocultural evolution and development occur in and through a literacy system that allows representation and manipulation of individuals' experiences as well as symbolic interpretation and integration of social interaction with others as a form of written process (Kim, 2012). This viewpoint underlies one of the important notions of Vygotskian approach to language and human development, namely that literacy is a crucial source of developing a sense of discourse and communication in a symbolic world (Vygotsky, 1978).

In terms of epistemology, the relationship between sociocultural understanding of literacy and *knowing* is inseparable because literacy influences the state of knowledge in terms of how we perceive and understand both the meaning of words and also meaning in the world. In fact, we are involved in writing and reading everyday as meaning-making activities. In other words, while we all have different purposes and processes of writing, we interpret and document a

meaningful aspect of our lives as a form of knowledge. Therefore, although a text seems to be only limited to written forms of linguistic knowledge, it is problematic to view the text as a simple arrangement of grammatical or syntactic elements (Johns, 1997). Arapoff (1967) claims that "writing is much more than orthographic symbolization of speech, it is, most importantly, a purposeful selection and organization of experience" (p. 33). In this light, the formation and understanding of a text should be taught as a necessary process of communication to share a writer's experiences as well as to be understood as an essential product of a reader's interaction with the others.

Through this sociocultural prism, a wide spectrum of definitions of literacy has been introduced to L2 language research and teaching to examine how the development and use of literacy is refracted by the influence of culture (Gee, 1998; Brown, 1994), social nature and practice, (Gee, 1992; Hymes, 1967; Matsuda, 2003), social and historical background (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986; Lantolf, 2006), identity formation and transformation (Nelson, 2009; Norton, 2000; Bakhtin, 1981), and context generation (Halliday & Hasan 1989; Knapp & Watkins, 2005; Johns, 1997). I will provide more details in the theory section, but in brief they all believe that literacy is not a form of knowledge from a written construction built from fragments of words or sentences and designed by grammatical understanding, but rather, it is a communicative function of knowledge constructed by sociocultural influences acting on the meaning of language. Under this premise, it is important for TESOL educators to understand L2 literacy as a meaning-making process that attempts to express individual's own voice, experience, and identity which are socially shared and manifested in the dynamic cultural world of the target language and community.

1.2 Background of Research Design

In order to provide the background of the current study, I need to explain why I choose the topic of international TESOL Educators through art-based learning. Recently, there has been an increase in the number of international TESOL educators coming to U.S. graduate schools to seek TESOL certification and experience (Open Door Report, 2014). Through a two-year program, they often study functional varieties of English based on communicative, dialogic and cultural L2 instruction. I believe many TESOL education programs in U.S. are a success; however, the question still lingers: when TESOL graduates take learning home, whether they become English teachers who reflect on what they learn about communicative, iterative, and dialogic language learning and teaching (Ashton-Hay, 2009; Cahnmann-Taylor et al, 2014) or they fall into the same category of teachers of grammar and examination about which they have so often complained (Park, 2010). It is hard to measure, but when we consider the fact that international graduate students have reported an 86% probability of leaving the U.S. upon graduation (Han et al, 2015), this is an important issue that cannot be ignored.

In fact, 80% of the international participants in the current study mentioned in an interview that they have a high probability of leaving the U.S. after graduation because of wider job opportunities in their home countries. (As of the time of this writing [July 2016], half of the participants went back to their home country.) This looks like a legitimate reason on the surface, but it implies that beyond the visa and green card barriers, international TESOL educators might feel less able to get a job in the U.S. due to competition from native English teachers. In addition, when going back "home," they feel the need and the sociopolitical pressure to be the English teachers that the market wants, where English instruction is still conducted at the secondary and tertiary levels largely through the grammar/exam-oriented methods. Interestingly, the

participants in the current study were also concerned that even after going "home," as non-native

TESOL educators, they may be penalized or treated as second class in the ESOL/EFL market

due to the native speaker fallacy that believes pronunciation and speaking can be better taught by

native speakers of English. In this circumstance, it is important to examine how much of a

different and new teacher-identity develops out of creative and aesthetic L2 learning experiences.

My main concern with ESOL learners and international graduate TESOL educators relies

on how to help them, as prospective English teachers, compete with the common trend and

system of English education in their home countries. Changing the education system is not easy

because it is grounded in the sociopolitical circumstances where complex power relations exist

(see Park, 2010). However, it is still important to keep encouraging pre-service teachers to

reconstruct their pre-determined identities into new ones as creative language teachers who will

be willing to make a hole – whether it is big or small – in the great wall of "Grammar-oriented

Method" or "Standardized Test." It is not an easy step to follow, but we need to remember that

every turning point of history has required that initial step. My question is simple: What would

and should be the most important and memorable experience for TESOL educators in training in

order to foster their identities as creative language teachers who can grow active producers of L2

as meaning-makers? However, it is profound in that pre-service teachers are more likely to forget

what they absorb into their head through construction of knowledge but less likely to forget

whatever identities are stamped into their hearts through co-construction of experience with

teachers and peers. Without formation of their own identity as a language teacher, it is difficult

for them to make a long-lasting change in their future classroom and school. What I want to help

international TESOL educators, including myself, find rewarding is not the sight of the printed

diploma with the cool-looking letters and the nice frame hanging on a wall of their room; instead,

I want it to be our collective anticipation and excitement at using their meaningful learning experiences to freshen the aesthetic and creative aspects of their future classroom. I have found one promising answer to my question from a recent development in sociocultural approaches to language and literacy learning and arts-based educational research, especially through the application of poetry writing. Recently, a number of researchers and scholars have pointed out that artful practice in teacher preparation facilitates communication between students and teachers and nurtures students' success in school (Davis, 2008; Hetland, Winner, Veneema & Sheridan, 2007). According to Cahnmann-Taylor et al. (2015), the unique qualities of learning through the arts (e.g., imagination, agency, expression, empathy, respect for multiple viewpoints, and social engagement) can also apply to the TESOL field "as a way to create new multilingual selves, make new meanings, form new relationship, imagine new futures, and question what they take for granted before" (p. 6) in the English learning process.

Cahnmann-Taylor and Hwang (2016, November) further highlight that viewing TESOL teachers' identities through the metaphor of "teacher artists" or "teacher poets" can shift the traditional way of depositing grammar and vocabulary into students' accounts, which Freire (1972) referred to as monologic practices, toward viewing teachers and learners as creative and collaborative meaning-makers. In this light, the focus in my study relies on English teaching and learning as a form of artistic practice. In respect to the fact that language can be an artistic form in and of itself, it is regretful that we have given short shrift to the art of teaching and learning English in EFL contexts and have placed much more emphasis on the science of developmental L2 acquisition. While teaching scientific knowledge of language is important, we still need to consider aesthetic and creative dimensions of L2 learning processes, which may allow new ways of understanding, viewing, and feeling beyond the things science has provided.

1.2.1 Research Gap and Questions

With the theoretical and philosophical backdrops for arts-based and meaning-focused learning mentioned above, the current study brings poetry writing to the center of research design. To date, poetry in the classroom has been considered as part of the canonical works in a broad sense; therefore, poetry was mostly read and studied in the context of national literatures (Chishty-mujahid, 2012). However, poetry is now read, written and shared for various purposes from everyday discourse to social research crossing disciplinary boundaries. Hanauer (2010) argues that the scope of poetry use in research has expanded and now includes displaying the ideological underpinnings of our society as well as understanding the social actions of individuals, groups, and communities. In the same vein, many scholars and teachers seek the roles poetry can play 1) as a mentor text in content-based learning (Heard, 1999; Holbrook, 2005), 2) as a mode of social and cultural learning (Bizzaro, 1990), 3) as a therapeutic practice through self-discovery and revealing emotion (Hiltunen, 2005; Leahy, 2005), 4) as a craft and practice from the possibility of poetic techniques and strategies in qualitative and educational research (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2003), and 5) as an analytical tool in arts-based research (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2009; Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008).

While there is a steadily growing body of literature that recognizes the dynamic nature of poetry that can also apply to many L2 learning situations (Hanauer, 2004, 2010; Zhao, 2015), poetry writing is often marginalized in EFL classrooms (Connolly, 2000) that dwell in monologic education. Accordingly, there is a lack of empirical studies documenting interactions where English language learners or TESOL teachers in preparation have themselves engaged in writing poetry as well as how this art-based experience influences the construction and reconstruction of their teacher identities. In order to fill this gap, the current study examines how

and to what extent meaningful, both of the creative and aesthetic type of learning takes place among prospective TESOL educators trained as creative language users and artist-teachers through the "experience" of poetry. Beyond reading and writing poetry, the procedural aspect of literacy, revision and reflection, is also sought as one of the integral parts of this research in order to examine how the participants as meaning-makers are embedded in the English language as artistic craft in terms of interactional, dialogic, and collective meaning-making process rather than individual text production.

In this study, in order to avoid the "observer's paradox" (originally from Labov, 1972), I participated in the overall course of a poetry writing class, a research site, as a fellow poet by mutual "footings" (see Goffman, 1981), which will be closely described in the methodology section. Specifically, the research process is guided by the following three questions:

1) What do international participants write about in their poems? What do the poems' contents (topics/qualities of poetry writing) reveal about L2 leaner/teacher identity?

2) What does instruction, reflection, and collaboration look like in the context of poetry revision workshops for TESOL educators? What qualities of co-construction take place during poetry revision workshop conversations?

3) How does the nature of the participants' learning and teaching about language shift through the experience of poetry writing? How do students' perceptions of themselves as teacher-artists evolve over the poetry-based learning course as well as beyond the course?

Before jumping into the next chapter that overviews relevant theories for the current research, it may be worthwhile to first describe first what it means to be an artist-teacher in language classroom and how it provides critical understanding of L2 learning as an artistic practice since it is the most frequently used term and idea throughout this dissertation.

1.3 What is an Artist-Teacher?

Recently, there has been renewed interest among teachers and school administrators in a reconciliation of the artistic and educational enterprises as complementary partners (Daichendt, 2010). They believe creating, appreciating, and sharing artful works matters in the school and the world in which students and teachers live. Eisner (2002) demonstrates that "the distinctive forms of thinking needed to create artistically crafted work are relevant not only to what students do, they are relevant to virtually all aspects of what we do, from the design of curricula, to the practice of teaching" (p. 208). In a blossoming of the artistic rose, according to Booth (2003), a variety of titles referring to artists working in classrooms emerged such as "artist-in-residence," "artist-educator," "visiting artist," "arts expert," "arts provider," and "teaching artist." While these terms are used interchangeably, when using artist-teacher in the current study, I adopt the definition from Uptis (2005) that refers to "those teachers with substantial professional training in one or more art forms, who are otherwise active in art-making, but whose primary vocation is teaching" (p. 2).

The literature has emphasized that art-making and teaching have many things in common. For example, Freedman and Stuhr (2004) relate that the arts are believed to teach students to foster critical thinking and acting constructively in an informed manner, and collaborating in the conscious formation of competencies. Sawyer (2004) articulates that teaching is an improvisational act. Specifically, he uses a metaphor of "teaching as performance" that stems from his own experience as an experienced musician member of a comedy improv troupe to connect to his work in teacher education. He states that "conceiving of teaching as improvisation highlights the collaborative and emergent nature of effective classroom practice, helps us to understand how curriculum materials relate to classroom practice, and shows why teaching is a

creative art." (p. 1). Beyond the curriculum itself, both arts and teaching bring multiple benefits by encouraging aesthetic development and facilitating open-ended inquiry and supporting social change (Charland, 2011). Uptis (2005) reviews the literature on the influence of artist-teachers and found that there are three major basic areas for the reflections of the artist-teachers: "the political-social context of schooling, the artistic process, and the logistics associated with establishing and maintaining arts partnerships" (p. 3).

Likewise, there is a movement towards making arts partnerships in education, and the field of TESOL is no exception. Davis (2008), a major advocate for arts education, examined why our schools and teacher preparation need the arts. She identifies the unique features of learning in and through the arts that apply to learning to think creatively about second language acquisition: "a tangible product resulting in imagination and agency, focus on emotion resulting in expression and empathy, privilege ambiguity resulting in interpretation and respect, embrace a process orientation resulting in inquiry and reflection and facilitate connection resulting in engagement and responsibility" (Rieger et al, p. 103). In the same vein, many teachers and scholars have documented the positive outcomes from learning from the arts which can be applied to TESOL such as persistence, imagination, agency, expression, empathy, respect for multiple viewpoints, social engagement, and responsibility (Chappell & Faltis, 2013; Chappell & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2013; Davis, 2008; Hetland, Winner, Veneema & Sheridan, 2007). They recognize the importance of artful engagement in language learning as "a way to create new multilingual selves, make new meanings, form new relationships, imagine new futures, and question what they take for granted before" (Cahmann-Taylor et al, 2014, p. 4). This movement draws important attention to the considerations of creativity in artful TESOL teacher preparation and practice, making a connection from language teachers' identities to those of artists. The

current study seeks to examine the role poetry writing can play and how it can impact L2 teaching and learning under this consideration and movement. Specifically, the term "poet-teacher" that is similar to an apprenticed artist will be widely used in this dissertation to mean a prospective language teacher who recognizes the importance of creative inquiry, expression and manifestations in the language classroom.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to provide the solid theoretical foundation for the use of poetry in L2 learning and in TESOL teacher preparation, based on the fundamental constructs of Vygotskian Sociocultural Theory (SCT hereafter) of human learning and development, this chapter provides a literature review based on the two parts. The first part that introduces the four central ideas of SCT and their relation to the understanding of the roles of creative collaboration in L2 literacy learning and development. The second part reviews the sociocultural approaches to the understanding of literacy such as its development, use, and instruction based on the three major groups: literacy as social practice, multiliteracies, and critical literacy. Importantly, in reviewing each section, I will provide a detailed discussion of how the sociocultural lens sheds light on the potential contributions of poetry writing for dynamic meaning making processes in L2 learning and the growth of TESOL teachers' identity as poet-teachers or artist-teachers. While the first part lays the groundwork for one of the findings of the current study that will be discussed in Chapter 5, the second part supports the study findings in Chapter 4 and 6.

2.1 Sociocultural Approach to Creativity, Collaboration, and Language Play and its Significance to Poetry-based Instruction in L2 Learning

As human beings, we are all living in the world as social beings, and we are creating *meaning* from social interaction. This is a simple truth, but it offers a deep and profound proposition when it comes to learning, schooling, and education. In this section, based on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (SCT), which spotlights the importance of social interaction and

cultural intervention in human learning and development, I will discuss the sociocultural approaches to the important role of creativity, collaboration, and language play in L2 learning and development. Specifically, focusing on the four key ideas of SCT (mediation, regulation, internalization and zone of proximal development), this section examines how creative language play in collaboration that poetry-based learning offers can be a great resource to empower prospective TESOL educators' linguistic/cultural awareness, literacy development, and identity reconstruction. I begin the general discussion with a brief history of the propositions of SCT and its influence on the field of education.

2.1.1 Sociocultural Theory: Its Emergence, Assumptions, and Development in Education

The origin of SCT traces back to the 19th century when scholars and psychologists were enjoying the full bloom of behaviorism and the theory of constructivism. Influenced by Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) and Jean Piaget (1896– 1980), early socioculturalists largely investigated individuals through the study of children's mental functioning and language development (Cobb & Yackel, 1996). While sociocultural theorists agreed with the idea of constructivist theory that suggests children acquire knowledge from relations within and between people and objects, they veered away from the narrow focus on an individual's mental representations, which considers cognitive development a result of individual control and learning as an individual act (Wertsch & Bivens, 1992). One major contributor to the emergence and development of sociocultural theory was Lev S. Vygotsky (1896-1934). As an educational psychologist, influenced by William James (1942-1910) and Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), his main concern was to combine social interaction and individual cognition in the same domain. Therefore, his theory investigated the unity and interdependence of learning and development (Vygotsky, 1978). This attempt contrasted with the prevailing constructivist understanding that

viewed the relationship between learning and development as separate entities. For those

constructivists, learning was regarded as an external process and development an internal process

(Cobb, 1994). However, for Vygotsky, influenced by a dialectical Marxist approach, the

connection between learning and development is two sides of a same coin that cannot be

divorced. They are indispensable and function simultaneously. Vygotsky (1978) noted: "learning

and development go together in a dialectic relationship. Learning is not development, and

development is not learning. However, when organized properly, learning results in mental

development and puts into motion developmental processes that are not possible apart from

learning" (p. 90). Understanding this reciprocal relationship is crucial in education because it is

obvious why Vygotsky and other educational theorists influenced by his work placed the

importance of sociocultural interaction at the center of understanding the true nature of

individual development (John-Steiner, Connery, & Marjanovic-Shane, 2010). They believed that

social interaction in learning not only acts as a cornerstone for self-development, but also serves

as the stepping stone for co-development with others.

   To analogize, I created an image of an individual's structure of mental representation as

the structure of the earth's strata (see Figure 1). An individual can acquire knowledge and put it

into his or her internal inferior strata and add additional information above as an intercalary

stratum. More importantly, even though someone creates his or her own layers of strata of

acquisition as a result of individual control, there are many possibilities that those shapes will be

constantly changed by a certain kind of phenomenon. It is like the process in which geological

strata take different forms depending on the surrounding regional characteristics and are

transformed into totally different structures influenced by external forces. That is why a geologist

examines the previous and current environmental phenomena such as seismic or quake activity

to understand the inside of the earth. In this sense, an individual's overall development is subject to external influences of learning embedded in past and present interactions with people, objects and events in his or her sociocultural environments.
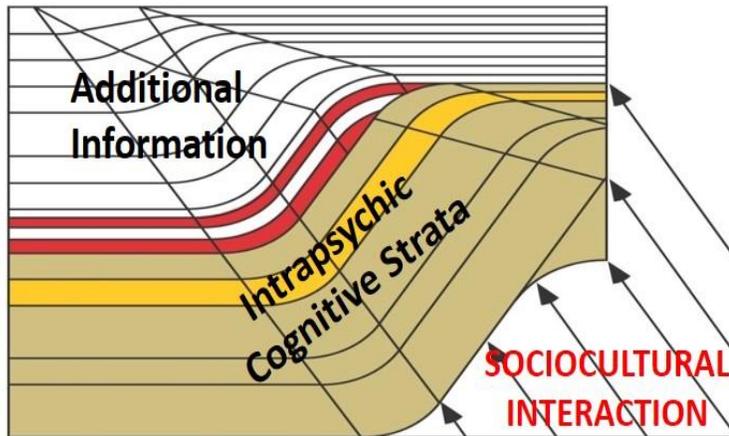
Figure 1. Individual's Internal Cognitive Strata Shaped by Sociocultural Interaction

Vygotsky believed that learning as socially mediated interaction leads to continuous step-by-step development in one's thought, language, and behavior, which can vary greatly from culture to culture (Woolfolk, 1998). Thus, he proposed that the true meaning of development should be understood as a dynamic learning process influenced by socialization and enculturation. With this in mind, in recent years, psychologists and theorists who adopt a sociocultural lens have started to examine the broader social system in which learning is happening and are drawing interpretations about an individual's thought and development based on his or her participation in a variety of environments (see Wertsch & Bivens, 1992). These researchers believe that individuals develop ways of thinking and behaving by interacting with others in socially and culturally organized activities. In other words, Vygotskian theorists not only examine the social dimension of consciousness that influences an individual from his or her interaction with others, but also trace the specific structures and processes influenced by "the

external social [and cultural] factors in which that individual life has developed" (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988, p. 6).

Since the 1920s, drawn by the work of SCT and influenced by the Bakhtinian tradition and Western cultural anthropology, post-Vygotskian scholars in education have developed Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) or Activity Theory suggested by Cole and Engestrom (see Roth, 2007). Basically, CHAT refers to "a cross-disciplinary framework for studying how humans purposefully transform natural and social reality, including themselves, as an ongoing culturally and historically situated, materially and socially mediated process" (Roth, Radford, & Lacroix, 2012, p. 23). In this light, a number of CHAT scholars in education understand students as collective entities (Putney, Green, Dixon, Durán, & Yeager, 2000; Raeithel, 1996) mediated by "all forms of learning, communicating, and acting" (Foot, 2014, p. 331). Therefore, CHAT puts the importance on mediated activity as a fundamental concept where learners as human entities employ mediational tools to learn and communicate with others in all activities.

All things considered, the theoretical lens of SCT and CHAT that magnifies understanding of one's development from conjunct individual-sociocultural interaction has a great implication for L2 learning and development because from sociocultural lens L2 teachers and students are provided with a variety of mediational tools which help them experience meaningful language learning in many situations. Recently, many L2 researchers who believe "language use, organization, and structure are the primary means of mediation" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 197) have started to adopt the unified approaches from SCT to examine sociocultural contextual influence on L2 development. In the same vein, but with more of a focus on an activity system, CHAT has also invited many L2 researchers who focus on literacy as a

crucial tool for development of social interaction into the investigation of texts "as social entity, complex and situated in specific histories, cultures, and activities" (Kim, 2012, p. 45). In this light, a L2 text is understood as a complex and specific creation from socio-cultural experiences based on activities that go beyond simple text comprehension and production.

In the same vein, Sharp-Hoskins and Frost (2012) support this view by stating that L2 literacy teachers have to "consider where texts come from, what practices surround them, why they take the forms they do, and how their conventions are produced and maintained because of the histories they emerge from which include specific cultural arrangements and activities" (p. 1). From this diverse sociocultural affordance, Sociocultural Theory and Cultural Historical Activity Theory allow L2 teachers and researchers to better understand the complicated classroom work involved in creating and understanding sociocultural meaning of texts, as well as writing as process. While the terms, SCT and CHAT or Activity Theory, are interchangeably used and grounded in educational research, I will use the term SCT in the following discussion of key assumptions of sociocultural theory as it is a broader term and "most L2 research is conducted within the general theoretical framework of SCT" (Lantolf, 2000, p. 197).

2.1.2 Sociocultural Theory: Its Constructs

In this section, I will discuss the four fundamental ideas that comprise the theoretical constructs of SCT: Mediation, Regulation, Internalization, and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Specifically, I will introduce mediation as the central concept of SCT then discuss its relation to other ideas – regulation and internalization – in the discussion of ZPD. Among the many important concepts of SCT, I choose these four as they are the key concepts that are relevant to the important role of creativity, collaboration, and language play in L2 literacy development that will be described in the following Section 2.1.3.

2.1.2.1 Mediation, Regulation, and Internalization

The term *mediation* is the central idea that constructs SCT in many fields. Vygotskian theorists in the behavioral sciences believe that "mediation involves the use of culturally-derived psychological tools, such as utterances in spoken or sign language, in transforming the relations between psychological inputs and outputs" (Fernyhough, 2008, p. 230). In an educational setting, therefore, mediation is frequently used to understand a situation where a student develops through the experience and interaction with a teacher and peers. To explain the implications of mediation, Lantolf (2000), one of the leading scholars in the field of SCT and L2 acquisition, draws an analogy between mediation and digging of a hole.

> "If we want to dig a hole in the ground in order to plant a tree, it is possible, following the behavior of other species, to simply use our hands. However, modern humans rarely engage in such nonmediated activity; instead we mediate the digging process through the use of a shovel, which allows us to make more efficient use of our physical energy and to dig a more precise hole. We can be even more efficient and expend less physical energy if we use a mechanical digging device such as a backhoe. Notice that the object of our activity remains the same whether we dig with our hands or with a tool, but the action of digging itself changes its appearance when we shift from hands to a shovel or a backhoe" (p. 199)

Just as the backhoe mediates the digging of a hole to plant a tree in Lantolf's above discussion, L2 learners require a mediational tool for effective L2 learning and development. Importantly, they do not require the same mediational tools to dig a hole. Instead, they outgrow each and every learning tool then begin to plant and eventually grow their own tree with a new language. In fact, Vygotsky acknowledged the importance of a variety of cultural and semiotic mediational tools (e.g., language, gesture, and images) in the socioculturally materialized world. Therefore, reflecting the main assumption of SCT's mediation, L2 literacy instruction and development have to be situated in particular sociocultural contexts "as a form of social action, mediated by, and also mediating, other social actions" (Kim, 2012, p. 29).

SCT tries to understand the benefits of mediation in an individual's learning and development in three general processes. The first one is object-regulation mediated by the use of objects around one's environments, and the second process refers to other-regulation scaffolded by the help of others' assistance and direction. The last process is self-regulation internalized by object- and other- regulation processes referring to independent problem-solving (Lantolf, 2000). To be specific, the notion of self-regulation is elaborated by internalization that refers to "the process of making what was once external assistance a resource that is internally available to the individual" (Lantolf, 2000, p. 198). This sociocultural understanding of mediation and regulation provides a background for one of the most important Vygotskian concepts, Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). In the following section, I will introduce the key ideas of ZPD and its contribution in L2 learning and development. Importantly, as early development of SCT mostly emerged from the examination of a child as a human entity, the following discussion dwells in the term, children. I will keep it as is in consideration of the fact that some L2 research shows that meaningful L2 instructions should consider the ways in which children acquire their first language (Plunkett & Marchman, 1993).

2.1.2.2 Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

The ZPD is an important concept in Vygotsky's rejection of the popular belief of constructivism that contends that learning follows and is dependent upon development. From Vygotsky's understanding of the reciprocal relationship between learning and development, many scholars, teachers, and researchers have formulated mediation and regulation processes (see Lantolf & Appel, 1994) based on the three cultural learning processes. The first process is from *imitative* learning, where learners internalize and copy behavioral strategies of others. The second is by *instructed* learning, from remembering the instructions of the teacher to self-

regulation. The last process is through *collaborative* learning, which involves working together with peers to learn a specific and new skill (Tomasello, Kruger, & Ratner, 1993). The idea of ZPD emerges from the concern of these three processes – *imitation, instruction, and collaboration* – in order to facilitate children's understanding and performance in an appropriate manner.

It seems that children are like sponges that unconsciously absorb what they see and hear around them; therefore, they naturally imitate or copy what other people say and do. However, Vygotsky (1987) understood the nature of imitation as "the source of all specifically human characteristics of consciousness that develop in a child" (p. 210). In addition, he argued that imitative learning is a social-relational activity essential to creative development because it is not just mimicking or parroting, but it is a complex and transformative activity in which the children create "something new out of saying, or doing, the same thing" (Newman & Holzman, 1993, p. 151). Compared with other traditional definitions of imitation, which seems to suggest mindless, automatic copying, Vygotsky's view understands imitation as fundamentally creative through a "transformative process that entails selective attention resulting in reduction, expansion, and repetition of social models" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 180). Therefore, for children, the mediation and regulation in learning first takes place in their attempt to not only imitate adults from their conscious attention, but also to formulate other semiotics around them such as language, writing, symbols, images, drawing, gesture, and other sorts of conventional signs (Vygotsky, 1978).

In this vein, Leontiev (1981) introduces the term, appropriation, to explain the process of internalization. Newman, Griffin, and Cole (1989) state: "[Children] cannot and need not reinvent artifacts that have taken millennia to evolve in order to appropriate such objects into

their own system of activity. The child has only to come to an understanding that it is adequate for using the culturally elaborated object in the novel life circumstances he encounters" (p. 62). In fact, Vygotsky was not only interested in how children imitate adults, but also in what additional knowledgeable others can support in their learning. He believed that an appropriate level and amount of instruction is needed to guide children to use what they have internalized previously in order to make an individual discovery. In this sense, instructed learning facilitates not only their internalization process mediated by self-regulation, but also the externalization process that helps children with difficult problem-solving tasks (Goodman, 1984). In other words, while children understand self- and adult- regulation through imitation and instruction, they will also reinforce the ability for independent problem solving. Accordingly, ZPD draws attention to the crucial role of teachers in the classroom (Kozulin, 2003). For Vygotsky, the most important job of a teacher "is to provide for the social interaction within the community of learners such that the learners may move from what they know to what they don't yet know" (Hawkins, 2001, p. 375).

With this idea of children engaging in imitative and instructed learning and the important role of teacher in mindset, Jerome Bruner, a cognitive psychologist, necessitates the need for scaffolding, which opens a fundamentally new approach to learning, one where it should be matched according to an individual's level of development. Vygotsky (1987) wrote: "instruction would be completely unnecessary if it merely utilized what had already matured in the developmental process, if it were not itself a source of development" (p. 212). In this vein, according to Sawyer (2006), instructional scaffolding provides "the help given to a learner that is tailored to that learner's needs in achieving his or her goals of the moment" (p. 6). In ZPD, therefore, an understanding of development should be encouraged by the sequence of how an

individual is self- and co- learning with minimal scaffolded engagement from teachers in the classroom (Ohta, 1995). Since ZPD serves as a mechanical indicator for teachers to check if learners are being educated well or not, it can be in inverse proportion to the amount of need of support and interaction from others in classroom. In this sense, the concept of ZPD is further elaborated by the role played by more advanced peers in collaboration to help less advanced peers attain a higher level of achievement (Marsh & Ketterer, 2005). Tomasello, Kruger, & Ratner (1993) understand an ontogenic view of collaboration in ZPD as how individuals "learn not from another, but through another" (p. 103), which means that students should be immersed in intersecting and/or conflicting activity systems in and through collaboration.

More importantly, as ZPD is a metaphorical zone to examine the distance between what an individual can accomplish (actual development) and what he or she can do when working independently (potential development), in L2 learning ZPD puts more attention on other phases where self-regulation is unmonitored and the leaning is fully internalized to reach the potential development. In other words, although the whole process of learning and development in ZPD seems to be linear from imitation through instruction to collaboration, English language learning becomes a cyclical and never-ending process in ZPD (see Figure 2) because it can be a better, more interactive and relative indicator of how and to what extent a EFL learner develops from a combination of imitation, instruction, and collaboration, which is elaborated by other mediational means such as self- and other- regulation, internalization, and externalization. The dialectic between internalization and externalization will be further demonstrated in Section 2.1.3.
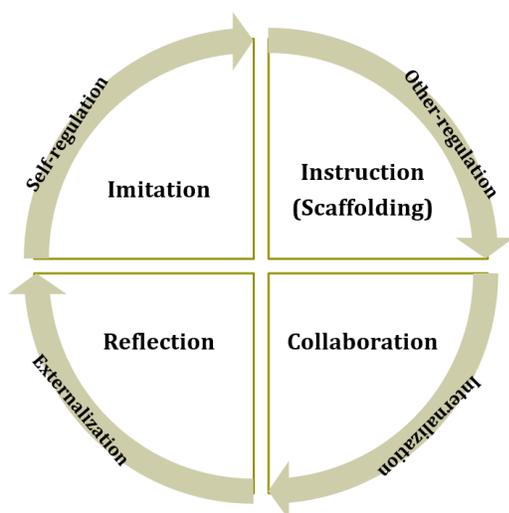
Figure 2. Cyclical Learning in ZPD

In the following section, I will closely examine this cyclical learning process in ZPD to lay the theoretical groundwork of SCT for the important consideration of creativity, collaboration, and language play in poetry-based learning as well as what happens when poetry-based learning becomes a part of ZPD.

2.1.3 Sociocultural Theory: Its Relations to Creativity, Collaboration, and Language Play in Artful L2 Learning

The holistic nature of ZPD mentioned above has an important implication when it comes to the developmental aspect of creativity because the sociocultural lens broadens the scope of analysis on cognitive development into dynamic socioculturally mediated developmental processes. In other words, SCT allows the study of creativity on both individual and social planes: as a combination of psychological and social construction that is an ongoing process, not a personal trait or final product from individual endeavors. In this vein, some sociocultural researchers have pioneered a new way of understanding on creative collaboration as an essential component to all development in a move away from a traditional understanding of creativity

(John-Steiner, Connery, & Marjanovic-Shane 2010; Moran, 2010; Moran & John-Steiner, 2003).

2.1.3.1 Creativity and Collaboration

When we consider the fact that Vygotsky's first publication, *The Psychology of Art*, was devoted to the arts, and his own interests relied on artistic processes such as those found in plays and in the theatre (Lindqvist, 2003; Smagorinsky, 2011), it is quite surprising that Vygotsky's work on creativity is often considered incomplete and that it has been largely ignored by both creativity theorists and even sociocultural theorists (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003). However, when we look at the nature and scope of traditional scientific studies of creativity and their experimental research settings, it is quite understandable why only a few studies have examined the impact of sociocultural factors upon the relationship between creativity and learning. Most general studies on creativity situate creativity as the inborn nature of the individual, which in turns, much of the understanding of creative work relies on the final product (see Kaufman & Sternberg, 2006). Therefore, "researchers have typically examined children's ability to arrive at problem solutions under contrived circumstances, working on a task alone, or under the direction of an adult experimenter in controlled conditions" (Baker-Sennett, Matusov and Rogoff, 1992, p. 94), which neglects the developmental nature of creativity from various sociocultural influences.

In SCT, however, as the true meaning of development is dependent on engagement with the minds of others, although creativity begins with the internal perception, it is further elaborated on the basis of all external experiences (Pelaprat & Cole, 2011). According to Ward (2012), an individual's ability to "make connections between objects, events and tools in learning is directly defined by how much that person can imagine experiences of others" (p. 18). In this light, creativity, "a magic synthesis and combination" (Arieti, 1976, p. 13), cannot develop without input from the external world, and creative acts are emergent as they are not

subject to individual dispositions (Sawyer, 2006). Rather, they have emerged from the collective contributions of individuals. Likewise, moving away from dichotomous thinking about creativity as either people or products, contemporary sociocultural researchers take dialectic approaches to a view of creativity from the complex interaction of the person and the environment. In other words, sociocultural theory, which believes that true understanding of learning and development cannot be manifested without considering how and where they occur on both an individual and social plane, emphasizes the developmental nature of creativity as a combination of intrapsychic, interpersonal and social processes (Wertsch & Bivens, 1992).

In fact, in order to trace the developmental nature of creativity, Vygotsky (2004) examined the role that fantasy and imagination play in early childhood as the groundwork for potential creativity. To him, the creative imagination is a synthesis of a product of unconsciousness and a process of consciousness. Therefore, he argued that creativity is internalized by subjective thinking and further externalized as realistic thinking. He believed that this sense of creativity creates the desirable tension for the creative process to exist for a higher level of development (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003). Vygotsky (2004) argued that imagination "becomes the means by which an individual's experience is broadened, because he can imagine what he has not seen, can conceptualize something from another person's narration and description of what he himself has never directly experienced" (p. 17). From this perspective, the cultural experiences that children have provide the support on which all future creations will be based because all creation is a historical, cultural and "cumulative process where every succeeding manifestation is determined by the preceding one" (Vygotsky, 2004, p. 30). Hence, in order to reinforce authentic learning, experiences based on imagination and creativity should be highlighted (John-Steiner, Connery, & Marjanovic-Shane 2010; Moran, 2010). Once imagination

is started in individual thinking from cultural experience, creativity can be further developed by social interaction. Vygotsky noted: "imagination operates not freely, but directed by someone else's experience, as if according to someone else's instruction" (Vygotsky, 2004, p. 17).

As Vygotsky viewed creativity as an evolving entity on both an individual and social plane, for him, even if someone is not creative in the actual developmental level, it does not necessarily mean that he or she is not creative. Rather, it means that one's creativity has not ripened yet. It resides hidden under the water as other forms such as fantasy and imagination and can further rise to the surface elaborated by an internal and external learning process. Vygotsky perceived creativity as a transition from internal development to external operation (Moll, 1992). With this in mind, he explored the dynamic interplay between creativity and reality through the dialectic understanding of the learning process between internalization and externalization (Ward, 2012). Vygotsky (1978) proposed four basic processes of creativity as a combination of emotion and thinking, which operates continuously at every level of development: from disassociation through alteration and association to finally crystallization.

To be specific, after the process of dissociation as the foundation of abstract thinking occurs, the material is altered or distorted under the influence of internal understandings and emotions. Then, the next process, association, unifies the altered elements, which leads to the crystallized imagination (Vygotsky, 2004). Vygotsky also called this last process externalization, which refers to the external embodiment of what has been altered and associated as the creation. He noted: "It is the crystallization of imagination that culminates and fuels the ongoing creative process. Once it has been externally embodied, that is, has been given material form, this crystallized imagination that has become an object begins to actually exist in the real world, to affect other things" (Vygotsky, 2004, p. 20).

From this perspective of SCT, mental function and social learning are firstly imitated and internalized, then externalized. This whole process influences the unique way we feel, think, participate, and view reality. In fact, internalization always accompanies the creative process because it is "not just copying what is on the outside, but rather it is a transformation and externalization of incoming information" (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003, as cited in Ward, 2012, p. 17). In other words, creativity is an essential medium to understanding development in that we imitate to express something new, which results from internalization as a creative process and results in externalization as a new creation. John-Steiner and his colleagues (2010) highlight that "the internalization and externalization dialectic is where the entire creative process exists. When it is placed in this broader theoretical framework, creativity becomes a transformative activity where emotion, meaning and cognitive symbols are [socioculturally] synthesized" (p. 22). In this light of sociocultural understanding toward creativity, poetry-based learning has a great implication for L2 learning because poetry writing facilitates an individual's creative thinking process that is internalized by individual emotion and meaning, and it can be externalized by sociocultural experiences and interactions with others.

As creativity is not an individual activity, but the creative process occurs within sociocultural interaction, Vygotskian theorists expand the scope of our understanding of creativity into collaborative action. They believe that even though every complex mental function is first an individual control, it subsequently becomes a creative collaboration (Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000). For example, Csikszentmihalyi (1996; 1999) develops a systematic approach to creativity that is divided into three categories: the individual, the domain and the field. He explains: "creativity is any act, idea, or product that changes an existing domain, or that transforms an existing domain into a new one. And the definition of a creative person is:

someone whose thoughts or actions change a domain, or establish a new domain"
(Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, p. 28). According to Moran and John-Steiner (2003), Vygotsky's
theory provides a dynamic mechanism for conceptualizing how these three components affect
each other. In fact, Csikszentmihalyi's work is deeply informed by sociocultural understanding
of creativity as a developmental and collaborative process. For him, a true meaning of creativity
cannot be understood without looking at where and how an individual's actions are performed
with the help of others and accepted in the field. To be specific, for a deeper understanding of the
creative process, it is required to explore how individual, social and cultural developments of
creativity intersect because the development of creativity is not dependent on the individual, but
it is related to "how well suited the respective domains and fields are to the recognition and
diffusion of novel ideas" (Coleman, Howell, & Russell, 2011, p. 164). This idea has important
implications for poetry-based learning in L2 literacy instruction because L2 teachers who
encourages learners' creative works in collaboration can create a platform in which learners can
not only try to challenge the current domain, but also they can make a meaningful impact in the
field.

2.1.3.2 Language Play through Creative Collaboration

In order to examine the creative process from a cultural intervention, many sociocultural
studies have examined how creativity develops through children's play to reinforce their early
literacy practices (Cook, 1997; Genishi & Dyson, 2009; Rowe, 2000). In fact, Vygotsky
theorized that imagination develops out of children's play (Smolucha, 1992). This is because
play, as part of our inborn nature, is a safe arena where feelings and fantasy can be expressed and
worked with at the child's own pace (Fein, 1987). As play helps with affective expression, the
child can then dissociate the act or thought from the learning context and assimilate it into

behavior through the use of language (Smolucha, 1992; Vygotsky, 1986). In addition, Vygotsky believed that play with language allows children to negotiate and understand the meaning that language carries mediated by collaboration with other members of the community. In this vein, there are some studies on adult learners and on the teacher's role in children's language play and learning (Sullivan, 2000; Van Dam, 2002). Vygotsky viewed children's language use in play as the main contributing factor to the development of creativity. To be specific, for him, creativity is developed in structured play from the process of what children think and plan as well as how they come to the new experience through self-regulated language use such as inner speech and private speech.

Furthermore, by looking through a sociocultural lens into the imaginative and spontaneous nature of play in children's development, some scholars drawn by Bakhtin's idea of carnival have related language play to English language learners (DaSilva Iddings & McCafferty, 2007; Sutton-Smith, 1998). They believe that language play in L2 is important because it is not rational and frees L2 learners from a rule and from legitimate *control* of others. Instead, according to Cohen (2011), "a Bakhtinian carnivalesque perspective of play and language examines *self* in the relation to the language and *actions* [emphasis added] of *others*" (p. 177). Influenced by this view, many L2 researchers underscore the important role of language play, one of the key activities of poetry writing (e.g., rhyme, metaphor and simile), in the L2 literacy classroom. According to Moll (1992), playing with language in poetry writing helps L2 learners develop metalinguistic awareness, which refers to comprehension of language as a systemic way that can be negotiated and exploited in a variety of different learning situations. In addition, beyond the linguistic awareness, language play in poetry allows "a playful learning experience from freedom to use materials and ideas in a nonliteral, hypothetical, creative, as if manner"

(Moll, 1992, p. 311). In this manner, poetry writing bears a special value for cognitive and linguistic development from its affective, aesthetic and creative play with the meaning of language. Tomlinson (1986) points out, poetry contributes far more to the development of language skills in real contexts than "a total concentration on the presentation and the practice of language items" (p. 42). With this in mind, many poet-teachers have documented the positive influence of poetry mediated by creative and emotional manipulation of expression acting on L2 learners' growth of linguistic concept and expansion of their vocabulary (Akyel, 1995; Hanauer, 2001; Lazar, 1996).

In addition to the linguistic development, in the activity of language play in poetry, L2 learners are less likely to worry about making a mistake because they might feel no pressure or less pressure to produce correct answers or final products, which allows them to have creative learning fueled by joy, rather than perceived as a burden (Hughes, 2009; Kırkgöz, 2008). Vygotsky argued that "the child's play activity is not simply a recollection of past experience but a creative reworking that combines impressions and constructs from them new realities addressing the needs of the child" (as cited in Russ, 1999, p. 61). L2 education is no exception under this premise. Language play is not a simple reply, but creative adaption that creates a new reality. Through poetry writing that creates a safe place for language play, L2 learners can integrate elements of language, experience, and other cultural artifacts into new learning situations (Russ, 2003).

In the following section, I will provide a review of the sociocultural approaches to the understanding of literacy based on the three major groups: *literacy as social practice, multiliteracies,* and *critical literacy.* While the discussion in this chapter above serves as a theoretical rationale for the importance of consideration of the sociocultural nature of creativity,

collaboration, and language play in designing poetry-based learning in TESOL teacher preparation, the following discussion of sociocultural understanding of literacy functions as the pedagogical rationale from a student perspective for incorporating poetry into the English language classroom.

2.2 Sociocultural Approaches to Literacy and its Relation to Poetry-based Instruction for L2 Leaning

Influenced by the work of Vygotsky (1978), researchers and scholars in various traditions (e.g., psychology, education, linguistics, and sociology) have developed many theories regarding the social use and cultural development of a literacy system (Bakhtin, 1986; Bourdieu, 1991; Gee, 1998; Halliday, 1973). While each takes a different focus in the definition of culture (see Perry, 2012 for review), there is a consensus among sociocultural theorists and researchers that it is important to examine meaning-making processes (e.g., abstraction, interpretation, reflection, cultural understanding, critical thinking, and collaborative problem-solving) in which people use language in their everyday lives and how they make language meaningful in a cultural and symbolic world (Kim, 2012). Therefore, from a sociocultural point of view, L2 literacy instruction can be more meaningful if a teacher encourages a complex meaning-making process and sociocultural exploration mediated by "dialogic communication and apprenticeship in discourse communities" (Vygotsky, 1978). In the remainder of this section, I will provide an overview of three groups of sociocultural approaches to the dynamic nature of literacy: *literacy as social practice, multiliteracies,* and *critical literacy*, and their relation to poetry-based instruction in an English language classroom.

2.2.1 Literacy as Social Practice

The first group extends the scope of literacy from a "context-neutral, value-free skills"

(de Castell & Luke, 1986, p. 87) and "acquisition of skill" to "contextual and embedded nature" and "a complex social function" (Gee 1990; Lankshear 1994; Willinsky 1994). This group interprets literacy through the social, cultural, and cognitive aspects of a society; therefore, for them, a true understanding of literacy has to be related to a social practice and cultural exchange. For example, Street (1999) argues that literacy represents "cultural practices with which uses of reading or writing are associated in given contexts" (p. 38). Barton and Hamilton (2000) further suggest the broad concept of literacy under the same light: "literacy is best understood as a set of social practices; these can be inferred from events which are mediated by written texts" (p. 8). This sociocultural view on literacy, thus, underlines that L2 literacy instruction should be "purposeful and embedded in broader social goals and cultural practices" as well as being "associated with different life and event domains in a social world" (Barton & Hamilton, p. 8).

Poetry, indeed, bears the proposition and nature of literacy as social practice in many aspects. As poetry writing has the potential to invite students into a complex engagement of their personal, social and cultural experiences through creative language use and multiple perspectives (Morrell, 2002; Wiseman, 2011), poetry writing often occurs with English learners' involvement in the social practices embedded within the sociocultural contexts around them. For example, based on English-learner authored poems collected over six years, Hanauer (2010) analyzes the flow of the choice of students' writing topics in poetry. The result shows that the subject matter is closely related to those of their lived experiences that evoke a unique emotion – regardless of whether it is negative or positive. He discovers that students' poems come from their various sociocultural experiences such as self-positioning and negotiating in a new culture, frustrations related to learning a new language, emotional responses to new academic classrooms, contact with American students, and homesickness. He concludes that when students write a poem in

their L2, they are more likely to "attempt to make sense of their own experiences and express them in a way that other readers may have insight into their own subjective interpretation of personally meaningful events" (p. 31). In fact, according to Hirshfield (1997), the special value of poetry writing as a social practice results from its procedural aspect to discover personally meaningful experience and negotiate a new meaning from individual-context interaction.

Hanauer (2004) highlights that poetry writing is "a process of personal discovery that involves shifting unconscious linguistic functioning to conscious consideration" (p. 48). This process of self-discovery that is at the core of poetry writing helps L2 writers in expressing personal experience, which further encourages them to be more reflective and engaged with the authentic language-learning context. In other words, from the meaningful exploration of a subject matter and language choice, poems can be beneficial in English literacy classrooms as a valuable resource to introduce and practice language items by exposing students to "authentic models – real language in context" (Brumfit & Carter, 1987, p. 15), rather than teacher-developed examples. According to Kırkgöz (2008), poems can provide "EFL/ESL students with opportunities to enrich their vocabulary [and sociocultural expressions] by presenting words not included in L2 textbooks" (p. 95). This potential of poetry writing based on authentic sociocultural experiences can help English learners actively involved in constructing their own literacy knowledge and understanding of an authentic social practice.

In addition, scholars suggest that poetry writing usually comes from the heart rather than the head so that it evokes special feelings and provokes emotions in an L2 learner's writing process (Hanauer, 2004). Griffin (1995) argues that "poetry does not describe. It is the thing. It is an experience, not the secondhand record of an experience, but the experience itself" (p. 191). Therefore, "hearing and sharing poetry with other students lets them know what other students

are feeling and experiencing and provides a common bond when conversation may be too difficult to express their feelings" (Mobley, 2000, p. 8). Through this process, students can perceive literacy as a way of conveying a special meaning, and teachers can obtain multiple truths (Spiers & Smith, 2012) from students' refined experiences and their unrefined feelings (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Prendergast and Sameshima (2009) assert that poetry deals with topics grounded in the "affective experiential domain" (p. xxii). In other words, poetry-based learning may allow teachers to directly or indirectly empathize with students' emotions by listening to their specific feeling and/or uncovering a negative emotion (e.g. pain, grief, and loneliness). This idea suggests a more meaningful L2 education in that sometimes the empathic abilities of teachers count more than their actual abilities to teach in an L2 classroom (Cooper, 2004). When poetry is seen under this light as a key connector of experiences and emotions, TESOL teachers can understand their students' emotions as an alternate way of knowing as a social process, not as an individual's own cognitive product or rationality.

Furthermore, scholars suggest that poetry may have a unique value as a different way of understanding literacy because it is closely associated with the communication process in terms of sharing one's thoughts, emotions, and experiences with others as a form of oral performance. Specifically, the attention to the rhymes and rhythms of a poem can provide the dynamic experiences of both the oral and written vocabulary of a poem. Several studies show that the act of reading, reciting and performing poetry can allow English learners to gain a better understanding of the oral function of a written mode. Not only does reading poetry aloud inspire reluctant readers to feel confident when reading (Winch, Johnston, March, Ljungdahl, & Holliday, 2006), but also writing poetry can be a great achievement as "most people feel pride in their work and want it to be read" (Ur, 1996, p. 169 as cited in Harmer, 2007).

Many studies indicate that L2 teachers with poetry can encourage learners to express "the kinds of connections to feelings and senses that they experience, ideally in small or large groups where they can discuss these responses among themselves" (Hughes, 2007, p. 2). The benefit of a poetic energy for creating such a moment is confirmed by Wiseman's (2011) poetry workshop with English learners that reveals students express their ideas, experiences and opinions in a more sophisticated way, which in turn, supports and reinforces their own literacy practices through poetic meaning-making and rhythmic devices. In fact, some suggest that encouraging students to share their poem in the workshop can amplify the enjoyment of literacy as social practice in that poetry is not a simple means of self-construction; instead, it can be a co-construction process in collaboration with others as a gateway to deep listening and critical thinking (Greene, 2007; Heidegger, 1971).

More interestingly, the nature of poetry in terms of *literacy as social practice* is not limited to just the classroom. Since poetry writing is connected to a sense of reciting, some contend that it can assist students in being attuned to the sense of audience (Brian, 2008), which may help them become sensitive to writer-reader interaction outside of the classroom. Iida (2002) supports this view by stating that "poetry can be a place where students learn to express their voice—the articulation of their personal needs, interests, and ideas—in a social context that presumes an audience—the teachers, classmates, and even the community at large" (p. 23). In the same light, Winch et al. (2006) propose that the opportunity to respond to poetic moments goes further into the community level in the form of a poetry event or poetry night. At such events, students can share, connect and create enthusiasm even without the benefit of the teacher's presence (Wilson, 2002). The experience that they gain by interacting with an audience in and outside of the classroom might be different from the one they get from the traditional

writing experience in EFL classrooms, where their work is usually only read by a professor who assigns a grade. According to Schwarzer, Haywood and Lorenzen, (2003), having audiences outside of a test situation and getting emotionally meaningful responses from them will provide English learners with a sense of writing as interactive and communicative performance, which is one of the main concerns of the sociocultural approach to literacy.

2.2.2 Multiliteracies

Another popular tenet of literacy from a sociocultural perspective is multiliteracies. This concept was originally designed by New London Group (1996) who argues that the design and re-design of literacy education driven by a variety of modes of the meaning-making process should be considered in all learning and teaching contexts. In much the same way as the perspective of literacy as social practice does, multiliteracies emphasizes the real-world contexts where people practice literacy (Perry, 2012). However, moving away from practices focusing on print words, they put more emphasis on the role of multimodality, originally introduced by Kress (2000; 2003), which refers that meaning-making happens along with a multiple-layer of communicative modes of language. Under the light of multimodality, therefore, authentic literacy learning occurs when it is embedded in "usage and comprehension skills in speaking, listening, viewing, representing, and communicating through a variety of modes such as digital, media, visual art, drama, and multimedia performances" (Huges, 2007, p.1). This view has expanded the nature of literacy from coding and decoding process of written texts to oral or visual literacy that carries certain communicative purpose.

The multimodal approach has potentially great importance for how we should conceptualize L2 literacy education and the roles poetry can play within it. In fact, understanding of poetry as a powerful medium for learning a social practice comes from its communicative and

multimodal functions. According to Hughes (2007), poetry allows students and teachers to move "beyond pen and paper… using a variety of representing strategies (including visual arts or drama, for example) [and] provides students opportunities to express themselves and demonstrate their understanding in alternate ways" (p, 22). Recently, a number of L2 teachers have adopted poetry from a multimodal approach in the development of students' language proficiency and creative engagement (Alghadeer, 2014; McVee, Bailey & Shanahan 2008; Xerri, 2012). Wolosky (2001) argues that poetry expands the nature of literacy from written mode to figures of speech because poetry is "a language of figures, in which each component can potentially open toward new meanings, levels, dimensions, connections, or resonances" (p. 3).

In the same vein, Dencker (2000) examines the relations between visual modes and poetry that "enter creatively and innovatively into interactive communications models" (p. 46). Regarding the use of poetry in the digital era, poetry as multiliteracies becomes a more accessible way to facilitate creative experiences in everyday life. Alghadeer (2014) introduces digital modalities by the use of poetic texts remade online (e.g. Twitter and haiku, Instagram and photograph poems, Prezi and virtual poetics, Poetry movie maker). He writes that "the aesthetic value of poetry, along with the interaction among its semantic, syntactic, phonetic, and typographic components, distinguish this genre from other literary ones" (p. 87). In this process, poetry becomes a creative connector with other genres in terms of the communicative function of multimodality.

To conclude, understanding poetry in terms of multiliteracies helps both English teachers and learners understand and seek the varied ways in which L2 literacy can be used for communication. Therefore, poetry as a medium for multiliteracies will provide TESOL teachers with a creative literacy teaching tool that engages learners in a process of active meaning-making

"by stretching, changing, adapting, and modifying multiple modalities" (Alghadeer, 2014, p. 95) for communicative functions.

2.2.3 Critical Literacy

The last group focusing on the sociocultural aspect of literacy is critical literacy. In this group, literacy practices and patterns are constructed by social institutions in which complex relations of power exist, which makes "some literacies become more [non]dominant, [in]visible and [un]influential than others" (Barton & Hamilton, 2008, p.8). Reflecting literacy as meaning of the word and in the worlds, Freire (1989), one of the leading scholars in this tenet, tries to understand literacy development as related to the power structure of a society than on the cognitive structure of the individual. He notes:

> "To acquire literacy is more than to psychologically and mechanically dominate reading and writing techniques. It is to dominate these techniques in terms of consciousness; to understand what one reads and to write what one understands; it is to communicate graphically. Acquiring literacy does not involve memorizing sentences, words, or syllables – lifeless objects unconnected to an existential universe – but rather an attitude of creation and re-creation, a self-transformation producing a stance of intervention in one's context" (p. 48).

Based on this stance, Freire (2001) introduces the term, conscientização (consciousness,) to define literacy as a critical reflection process, which refers to "taking the printed word, connecting it to the world, and then using that for purposes of empowerment" (Perry, 2012, p. 60). He believes that the true meaning of literacy should be understood as "the consequence of men's beginning to reflect about their capacity for reflection, about the world, about their position in the world, about the encounter of consciousness" (p. 106). Furthermore, influenced by the close relationship between language and cultural identity (see Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998), critical theorists have recently expanded the scope of literacy as a powerful way of examining the issues related to power, identity, and agency in literacy practices (Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007). Hagood (2002) supports this view by stating that "what is

central to critical literacy that focuses on identity is the influence of the text and specifically of identities in texts on the reader. The text, imbued with societal and cultural structures of race, class, and gender, marks the site of the struggle for power, knowledge, and representation." (p. 250-251). In this vein, many others working within the critical literacy perspective have examined how students are influenced by a power structure socioculturally constructed and how through critical literacy practices in the classroom influence the growth and reconstruction of student identities (Bean & Moni, 2003). They believe that an identity constructed by literacy plays an important role in the formation of agency in social practices (Dozier, Johnston, & Rogers, 2006). Moje and Luke (2009) highlight the importance of understanding this relationship by stating that "identities mediate, and are mediated by, the texts that individuals read, write, and talk about, and that a theoretical focus on identity is crucial, not to control the identities that students produce, construct, form, or enact but to avoid controlling identities" (p. 433).

The nature of critical literacy illuminates the potential contribution of poetry-based learning in TEOSL beyond the traditional definition of literacy, especially focusing on development and construction of English learners' voice and identity in the exploration of the L2 world. As discussed above, many studies have revealed that when choosing a topic through poetry, students are more likely to discover real life connections with others and the world by digging into the deeper level of sociocultural experiences and practices (Brian, 2008; Hanauer, 2010). To be specific, in the process of transferring their experiences into a unique form of language (Miles & Huberman, 1994), students often try to integrate and condense their special feelings and emotions into writing as a result of a higher order, critical thinking process and their own deliberated ways of knowing (Hughes, 2009). According to Mobley (2000), as poetry helps students to "understand words that have dual meanings and understand idioms and expressions, it

expands their vocabulary and critical thinking" (p. 9).

In fact, poetry writing as a critical thinking tool benefits L2 learners from "a process that uses the expressive qualities of form to convey meaning" (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. xii) in a variety of sociocultural contexts. Compared with other genres of writing using the scientific lens that mostly look for visible phenomena, poetry writing provides learners with a heuristic microscope that closely examines hidden aspects of human/social interaction and experiences. Thus, according to Cahnmann-Taylor (2006), poetry writing also allows learners to express the hidden meaning of the human condition constructed by power that might not otherwise be expressed. Prendergast (2009) argues that the use of poetry in all learning, teaching and researching can be a "socio-political act of resistance to dominant forms and an effective way to talk back to power" (p. xxxi). In a similar vein, Longenbach (2004) adds that "the marginality of poetry is in many ways the source of its power, a power contingent on poetry's capacity to resist itself more strenuously than it is resisted by the culture at large" (p. 1).

Drawn by a social-expressivist perspective which postulates that writing is an ongoing process of negotiation to make meaning as social expression (see Ivanic, 1998), while reflecting on their personal experiences, poetry can create a place where students can put their own voices. Therefore, critical learning can occur when poetry writing is used as an alternate way to question their experiences and situations, thereby, expressing their unique, different, and sometimes unspeakable thoughts and ideas. Ward (2013) highlights that this purposeful and critical aspect of poetry often helps L2 learners construct and develop their voices and identities that reflect who they are when living in bilingual and bicultural worlds. Specifically, poetry writing can indicate their struggles and triumphs with identity issues in the process of transforming themselves in a variety of new contexts. In light of this, there is broad agreement that the process

of writing poetry is central to revealing English learners' cultural identity (Armstrong, 1984; Bizarro, 1990) and that a poetic text is philosophically and theoretically aligned with the critical literacy that reveals language users' voice and identity shaped by a variety of socio-political and cultural influences (Prendergast & Sameshima, 2009). Thus, this critical consideration and engagement in poetry-based learning may also teach both L2 teachers and learners how to attempt to understand the cultures of others.

In conclusion, the focus on literacy as a socially-contextualized practice and as a multimodality can help TESOL teachers invite their students to participant in the meaning-making process in a social world from a dynamic engagement with other genres. Moreover, a critical approach to literacy helps teachers and students alike interpret a power structure socio-politically constructed and how identity is reconstructed by certain literacy practices. While each stance on the sociocultural approaches to literacy has its own focus on the development and use of literacy, the sociocultural nature of poetry runs across all three perspectives that are each important for creating meaningful literacy instruction in the multicultural worlds that we live in. The true meaning of L2 literacy grows from a sociocultural understanding in a target language world, and the values of poetry-based learning mentioned above may play a crucial role in watering this L2 world as sociocultural knowing, sharing, critiquing and experiencing. This is because by providing students with a poetic tool for the exploration of their autobiographical and sociocultural experiences, their voices and identities in relation to people, objects, and events can be explicated and expressed in a more engaged, critical, and powerful way.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter lays out a methodological framework based on research methodologies, research context, and a method of data collection and analysis. The first part discusses some qualities of traditional qualitative methods to build an argument for why I drew upon arts-based research to understand how poetry worked in TESOL teacher preparation as well as what I tried to learn and what choices I made to find answers to the research questions. The second part describes methodological orientations in adopting Vygotsky's double stimulation and my stance as a qualitative researcher on participant observation, which guided my research practices. The research context part describes the information of the research site and the details of the research participants, and it provides a summary of pedagogical prompts and processes of poetry-based learning embedded in the overall course of research. The last part overviews the process of data collection and analysis as well as provides my subjectivity statement adopted for the data analysis procedure.

3.1 Methodological Orientation

Qualitative research is characterized by its aims that relate to understanding the qualities of specific aspects of social life, experiences and attitudes of people. Therefore, it allows researchers to obtain culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of particular individuals or a group (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In light of this, qualitative research is especially effective in understanding a given research topic from the perspectives of participants. In fact, qualitative research is a type of scientific research, consisting of an investigation that systematically uses a predefined set of procedures to answer

the research questions. However, qualitative researchers have broadened the definition of

scientific research by illuminating an undefined set of findings "that are not determined in

advance and are applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the study" (Mack et al, 2005, p.

6). More importantly, as qualitative research particularly uses human inquiry that looks for

human experience and interaction, it allows researchers to understand a research site as a

complex and ever changing place where the nature of being, reality and knowledge of

participants are socially and culturally influenced (Barone & Eisner, 2006).

3.1.1 Arts-based Research in Qualitative Tradition

Arts-based research as an emerging approach to qualitative research fundamentally shares

the goal to understand qualities but does so by integrating the researcher and/or participants in

creative, aesthetic processes (Leavy, 2008). Recently, a large number of researchers have begun

searching the realm of science by adding art in the mix from a "focused application of the larger

epistemological process of artistic knowing and inquiry" (McNiff, 1998, p. 29). By introducing a

significant change in how we understand people and the world, arts-based research not only

broadens the definition of what constitutes "data," but it also brings about an emerging set of

methods which include tools from the literary, visual, and performing arts. Specifically, arts-

based research has been based on fiction or memoir, and researchers also associate the term

"arts-based" with the visual arts such as paintings, photographs, and films as data (Barone &

Eisner, 2013). For example, while Barone (2001) uses ethnographic fiction to explore many of

the "characters" in the case study of one high school art teacher and his former students to

engage in fundamental and essential issues in teaching as well as in educational research. O'

Donoghue (2007) uses photography taken on space and place outside of the classroom as a way

to discover how masculinities are constructed, performed, and regulated in boys in a school, and

universally generalizable to all men in a society. He argues that "doing research in and through art offers opportunities to capture and represent that which is not always linguistic" (p. 63). Instead, through alternate forms of data representation, as Eisner (1997) argues, "we can expect new ways of seeing things, new settings for their display, and new problems to tackle" (p. 8).

Moreover, other literary and performative forms such as dance, theater, poetry and music are also found in arts-based research (McNiff, 1998). For instance, McMillan (2005) chooses a particular musical work to perform that stimulates her imagination aesthetically as well as intellectually when immersing herself in the process of qualitative inquiry in education. In much the same way that she saturates herself in the sound of a new musical work, she discovers how she might share her holistic perceptions of an educational experience by describing the "what, how, when, and where of a thing—its essence and ambiance" (Berg, 2001, p. 3). In addition, the scope of artistic research has extended to understanding a different kind of subjective reality which is socially and culturally embedded (Knowles & Cole, 2008; Newham, 1993; Schafer, 1989). From this perspective, researchers have shown an increasing interest in the interpretation of social actions or human behaviors by adopting artistic research methods especially in their ethnographic work. For example, Nomi Stone (2008), a cultural anthropologist, collects her narrative and autobiographical poems on her ethnographic encounter and examination of the last cohesive, traditional Jewish community in the Middle East and North Africa. By writing poetry full of her various emotions such as faith, doubt, and longing as well as impressions on vivid recurring images, she adopts a rare look into her ethnographic experiences that resonate powerfully with questions of cultural preservation and coexistence, which other traditional prose might not capture. Kusserow (2013), another leading scholar in this field, also uses poetry in her direct contact and indirect observation with/for lost boys and girls in southern Sudan seeking

refuge from civil war. She states: "because of poetry, I not only write about obvious formal rituals, but what is underneath and beside them. I now sit with them longer, and lift them up, feel the warmth of the soil underneath, smell the matter leaves around them – I write about the light on them, the shadows that cross them" (p. 74). She further asserts that from fierce mediation, arts-based inquiry helps researchers to "uncover layers of reality and subtlety that any good thick description should include" (p. 75) to represent how human behavior becomes meaningful to an outsider and becomes valuable data.

Although the value of arts-based research "is still in conflict with conservative scholarly and political climates that emphasize traditional, scientific definitions of research" (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008, p. 11), it allows researchers and participants to explore questions and express understandings that other scientific methods or means may overlook. Since art-making itself can be a creative process that requires individuals' own way of knowing and meaning-making, arts-based research allows researchers to examine personal, emotional, experiential, embodied expressions and the participatory creation of knowledge. Barone & Eisner (2012) support this argument by stating that the process of arts-based research is guided by aesthetic features and reveals the expressive qualities of form to convey meaning. They write: "Arts based research was – and is – an effort to utilize the forms of thinking and forms of representation that the arts provide as means through which the world can be better understood and through such understanding comes the enlargement of mind" (p. xi).

Put all together, the artistic approach enables researchers to move away from a limited understanding of the world as a fixed and unitary reality (McNiff, 1998); instead, it acts as an observational and critical tool to make their thinking "clearer, fresher, and more public in rendering the richness and complexity of the observed world" (Cahnmann, 2003 p. 34). Through

the artistic lens, researchers become available to explore meaningful aspects of the social world and analyze different ways of understanding human existence, relations, and consciousness as well as to represent the hidden meanings of the human experience and condition (Glesne, 2011). Cahnmann-Taylor (2008) supports that just as scientific devices such as a microscope and a camera have allowed us to magnify views of specific subjects of interest, the arts provide a researcher with a different medium that gives rise to ways of seeing that would otherwise be invisible.

The adaptation of the qualities of arts-based research discussed above contributes to the development of my qualitative inquiry in the potential use of poetry in TESOL teacher preparation in many ways. First and foremost, it allowed me to closely examine participants' use of artistic forms and their creative learning processes in overall stages of research. To be specific, inquiring into participants' art work of poetry writing allowed an in-depth analysis of complex textual descriptions of their observation, emotions and experiences. In addition, examining interaction taken place in arts-based learning provided me with information about how the exchange of knowledge in a creative process acted as meaningful mediational tools to facilitate creative, dialogic, and interactive learning where the participants grew as active explorers of meaning. More importantly, writing my own poems alongside with the participants and in data analysis procedure helped me understand them better "through the imagination, drawing on embodied knowledge and lived experiences as tools for understanding" (Neilsen, 2007, p. 96). These qualities of qualitative observation, artistic engagement and magnifications helped me more actively engage in a given research issue of poetry-based learning in TESOL teacher preparation: how or to what extent the participants would be able to listen, understand, instruct, and care for their future students and others in the artful growth of their personal and

professional identity (re)construction. In sum, using traditional qualitative methods are useful for multiple reasons in my arts-based research: 1) it allowed me to explore the research questions from a variety of angles, both creative and scientific, and 2) the collection of data by traditional definitions played an important role in fueling my creative, divergent, analytic thinking represented by "findings" chapters that are alternately creative as well as conventionally rendered. This process served me as double stimulation, seeing the data through bifocal lenses. In the following section, I will describe some important qualities of qualitative methods that I applied to observe and interact with the participants in the current study. While the previous discussion of arts-based research lays the foundation of my research building, the following discussion serves as a blueprint to design the building process of my qualitative research.

3.1.2 Vygotsky's Method of Double Stimulation

The qualitative examination and arts-based exploration in the current research are based on Vygotsky's method of double stimulation (Vygotsky, 1978). In this model, the external help from others for an individual's problem-solving is important. While the given task serves as the first stimulus, the external support becomes the second stimulus (Engeström, 2007). In other words, through the process of other-regulation, an individual can create a new way of problem-solving by themselves and transform "the meaningless situation into one that had a clear meaning." (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 356). I adopt Vygotsky's principle of double stimulation in my research practices because it has an important connection with human agency. In many research settings, interaction usually happens in one way because a researcher often considers participants passive entities affected by the power that he or she enforces as an agent. In the method of double stimulation, however, the relationship between a researcher and research participants goes beyond this dichotomy (Kim, 2012). The agency of participants takes a more active role in

the research context by "eliciting new, expansive forms of agency" and "making masters of their own lives" (Engestrom, 2007, p. 363). Since I was involved in the overall process of research as L2 learner, participants' peer, and another preservice poet-teacher, we all as fellow poets and TESOL learners/teachers had much to learn from one another. This process serves us as a double-stimulation that helped me create a two-way street in the research site where every participant could bring something new to the interaction and exchange as the second stimulus.

Importantly, in a move away from general understandings of agency that place the locus of agency within individuals, Vygotsky (1978) underscored the importance of consideration of the sociocultural research contexts in which the participants can be object-regulated based on interaction with other people. In the model of double stimulation, therefore, it is important for a researcher to examine "how participants can use different material, semiotic, and relational resources to create 'new' mediational means and desired social relationships" (Wertsch et al., 1993. p. 343). Reflecting this idea of agency, even if participants appear to align themselves with the research purpose, their learning process cannot be free from the influence of other participants and environments. Based on this methodological consideration of double-stimulation and an interdependent understanding of agency, I took part in the research context as a participant-observer where *all* participants engaged in learning as mediators for each other.

3.1.3 The Observer as Participant in Qualitative Research

In qualitative research, participant observation has been widely used in a variety of disciplines as an examining tool about people, processes, and cultures (Atkinson & Hammersly 1994; Bowen, 2002). According to Baker (2006), there is the typology of the participant-observer's roles based on the four categories: 1) The complete participant, 2) participant as observer, 3) observer as participant, 4) complete observer (originally from Gold, 1958). Among

these different roles, in my research, I took the role of "The Observer as Participant." According

to Kawulich (2005), the observer as participant stance enables "the researcher to participate in

the group activities as desired, yet the main role of the researcher in this stance is to collect data,

and the group being studied is aware of the researcher's observation activities" (p. 6). It is often

understood that taking a role of "observer as participant" is relatively difficult than "observation

without participation" because the field notes usually have to be written at the same time of

observing participants (Merriam, 1998). However, "observer as participant" enables a researcher

to take the "peripheral membership role" to "observe and interact closely enough with members

to establish an insider's identity" (Alder & Adler, 1994, p. 380), making a researcher and the

participants as interdependent human entities. With this stance, I was involved in interactions

with the participants, hoping to conduct better observation and generate a more complete

understanding of their activities. Reflecting on the researcher's role as a mediator in terms of the

method of double stimulation, I tried to remove the dichotomous way of thinking towards the

role of the researcher and the participants. Even though I was not a member of the group of

participants as a registered student, I undertook an in-depth analysis in all classes and outside

activities as their peer, which gave me membership in the participant group.

3.2 Research Context

This study is based on an active research agenda I have had underway since 2012 as a

student and researcher in the poetry writing classes offered as a component of TESOL teacher

preparation curriculum in a southeastern United States university. Specifically, I participated in

the courses as both a participant in Fall 2012 and a participant-observer in several other iterations

of the course (e.g., Fall 2012, Summer 2013 & 2015, Fall 2014). The data from the current study

is focused on observations made in the Fall 2014 course where I was no longer a registered

student but serving in the active role of researcher. While studying the participants'
artistic/poetry productions, I also did so alongside them as well as before and after them in a
similar course as a student, which creates a two-way dynamic to studying others' art-making and
making it myself. In the overall course of research, I participated as a peer while recording
classroom sessions and at times serving as co-instructor. The figure below portrays the overall
research process and design through mapping.
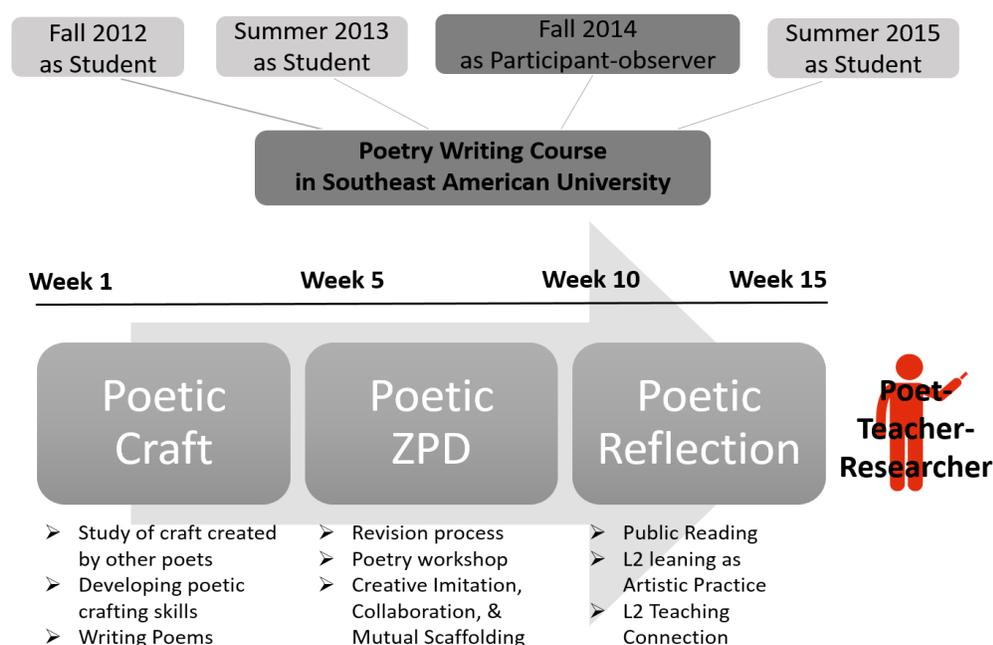
Figure 3. Research Map

3.2.1 Research Site

The course was originally designed by a TESOL faculty member holding both a Ph.D. in
Educational Linguistics and an M.F.A. in poetry writing. The main purpose of the course was to
immerse pre-service TESOL educators in poetry writing, encouraging them to regard themselves
as poet-teachers and, based on this identity, get them to create more creative and meaningful
literacy instruction in their own classrooms. The class structure was designed in the five phases
adopted by Hetland et. al. (2013)'s five essential studio structures that they found across 20 arts

classrooms they observed also relevant in other instructional domains: 1) Demonstrating craft, 2)

Time for student work, 3) Transitioning between work, 4) Critique of the work, and 5)

Exhibition. Table 1 summarizes how the course invited the participants into this arts-based

learning structure.

Table 1. Description of Five Structures of Poetry-based Learning

Phrase	Description
Studying Poetic Tools	Expand understanding of poetry and the many choices other poets have used; Read for the musical/sonic elements in poems as they work to shape the poem's meanings; Understand how the syntax of the sentence and the diction a poet employs create a crafted argument across lines and stanzas; Memorize important literary terms and employ their lessons in your work.
Developing a Craft	Practice "free-writing" to accumulate raw material for a poem draft; Attend the poetic field trips to get fresh ideas and minds; Complete all poetry drafts according to the prompts and professor's instructions.
Critique of the Work	Attend the poetry workshops for revision. Bring the newly drafted poem for discussion with others; Use language of poetic craft to describe and critique peer work.
Revising the Work	Revise the poetic drafts to the best of one's ability based on feedback from professor and peers through poetry workshops. Getting ready for portfolio that contains a specified numbers of revisions with a paragraph of annotation for each (regarding what you changed and why).
Exhibition	Prepare and present revisions of your favorite poems; Make a revision portfolio; Prepare to deliver a public presentation of your work with practiced attention to public speaking skills.

3.2.2 Research Participants

In Fall 2014, I examined the experiences and interactions of 14 international students and

two native speaker students, led by the native instructor. Fourteen international participants came

directly from China and one from Vietnam to seek TESOL certification in U.S. and acquired

English as their L2. All international participants held similarly novice experiences with poetry

and advanced knowledge of English as they completed their second and final year in the

Master's program. Some information from a questionnaire I conducted in the beginning of the

course are summarized in the tables below.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of International Participants

Variable	International Participants (n = 14)
Country of Origin	
China	13
Vietnam	1
Stay in U.S.	
Less than 6 months	3
1 year	10
Less than 2 years	1
Previous Experience of	
Creative Writing Course	0
Poetry writing in Second Language	0
Poetry writing in Mother Tongue	2

Table 3. Name, Nationality, and Major of All Participants [1]

Name	Origin of Country	Background
Chengyuan Cai	China	2 Year MA in TESOL
Kunjie Wang	China	2 Year MA in TESOL
Kexin Li	China	2 Year MA in TESOL
Zihan Lin	China	2 Year MA in TESOL
Xuanping Li	China	2 Year MA in TESOL
Xiaodan Gu	China	2 Year MA in TESOL
Qing Zhu	China	2 Year MA in TESOL
Xiao Liang	China	2 Year MA in TESOL
Yi Guo	China	2 Year MA in TESOL
Hanpin Li	China	2 Year MA in TESOL
Weikang Li	China	2 Year MA in TESOL
Lu Jiang	China	2 Year MA in TESOL
Liyun He	China	2 Year MA in TESOL
Chau Nguyen	Vietnam	2 Year MA in TESOL
Elizabeth Spaulding	United States	2 Year MA in Reading Education
Susan Beyle [2]	United States	4 Year Ph. D in TESOL
Misha Cahnmann-Taylor	United States	TESOL Professor
Yohan Hwang	Korea	4 Year Ph. D in TESOL

[1] All names used in this study are actual names and used with the permission of each participant.
[2] As a student in the previous poetry course, she participated only in the two revision workshops.

3.2.3 Activities to Grow Poetic Habits of Mind

Throughout the fifteen weeks of training, the participants were asked to study poetry-crafting books; write 10-12 drafts of poetry and one pedagogy essay regarding poetry as a metaphor for teaching and learning; attend live poetry event(s), meet with the poets, and also take field trips; and create a craft essay and "visual broadside" about a poem they admired that was published by one of two visiting writers (Ida Stewart and Sholeh Wolpé). Most importantly, they were encouraged to create a poetry portfolio to record revision processes as they occurred through feedback from the instructor and poetry workshops so that participants could perform their 3-4 poems at a poetry reading event in the community bar at the end of the semester.

The instructor of the course also encouraged the participants to be immersed in a variety of poetry-based activities; namely, an artful activity system, "Poetic Habit of Mind," which she adopted from Hetland et al's (2013) studies of visual art teachers' practices which resulted in "eight studio habits of mind." In their framework, dialogic classroom learning takes place uniquely in and through the arts (see Figure 4) based on the eight habits. "Developing craft" refers to acquiring the tools and techniques that other artists have used in the past, and "stretching and exploring" is another habit that requires emerging artists to practice and innovate on what has come before. Next, artist-teachers can "envision" what might be possible, "express" those possibilities, "understand" and "observe" themselves and others as members of an art-making community, "engage and persist" through inevitable struggle, and then "reflect" on the artistic product that was produced (Cahnmann-Taylor & Hwang, submitted manuscript, 2016).
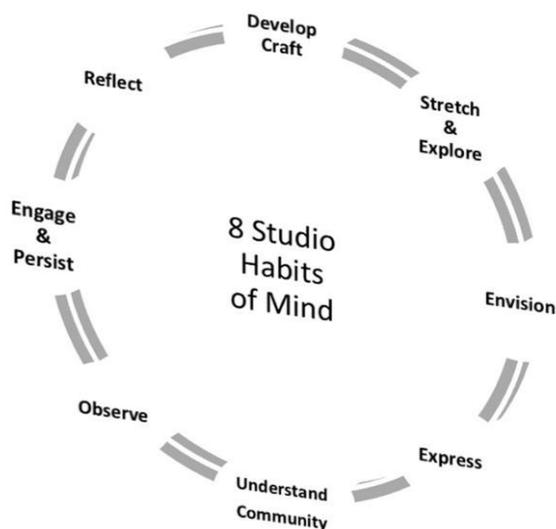
Figure 4. Eight Studio Habits of Mind based on Hetland et. al. (2013)

The table below summarizes how the participants were trained to have a poetic habit of mind through poetry-based activities along with sociocultural approaches to literacy development.

Table 4. Summary of Poetic Activities

Course Assignment	Detail	Poetic Habits of Mind	Sociocultural Literacy
Poetry Reading Event	Attend at least one live poetry event (approved by instructor) and write a one-page response.	Understand Community &Reflection	Literacy as Social Practice
Poetic Fieldtrip	Attend all fieldtrips the class takes (e.g., Botanical Garden, Special Collection Library, Meeting with the published poets)	Observe/ Engage and Persist	Literacy as Social Practice & Multiliteracies
Memorize one published poem	Memorize one published poem, 14 lines or longer. Choose a date for your recitation in class.	Express & Understand	Literacy as Social Practice & Multiliteracies
Craft Essay	Focus on analyzing a poem's craft; Unpack the poem's techniques/craft and how they relate what the poem is saying to how it is said.	Developing Craft	Critical Literacy

Visual Broadside	Make a visual art of poetry. Convey your understanding of craft visually accompanied by word.	Stretch & Explore Envision	Multiliteracies
Pedagogy Essay	Analyze how the craft of poetry informs one's teaching and/or teacher identity.	Reflection	Literary as Social Practice & Critical Literacy
Self-Evaluation	Twice during the semester, hand in a self-evaluation consisting of three paragraphs detailing your reading, writing, and class participation to date.	Reflection	Literary as Social Practice & Critical Literacy
Poetry Workshop	Attend the five poetry workshops for revision and suggestion as well as meeting with the invited poets.	Critique & Reflection	Literary as Social Practice & Critical Literacy
Final poetry reading/perform ance	Recite the best poems (3-5) in the poetry reading event in the community bar at the end of semester	Exhibition Reflection	Literary as Social Practice & Multiliteracies
Final Poetry Portfolio	Submit: Revisions of 7-9 poems with one paragraph annotation for each about the revision process; Two graded essays; Copy of memorized poem; Poetry reading response; Self-evaluation	Reflection	Literary as Social Practice, Critical Literacy & Multiliteracies

3.2.4 Research Matrix

The research design matrix is a system of rows and columns into which the components of a research project fit, including the goal, objectives, research questions, methods of analysis and anticipated conclusions (Choguill, 2005). Thus, the matrix encapsulates the research design, or what the researcher intends to do in the investigation. Table 9 showcases my research matrix for linking research questions with data and analysis in the current study adopted from Maxell's (2005) qualitative research design.

Table 5. Research Matrix of the Current Study

Research Questions	Rationale	Data Source	Data Analysis	Data Findings
What do I need to know?	*Why do I Need to Know this?*	*What kind of data will answer this question?*	*How do I analyze data?*	*Where do I represent data?*
1) What do international participants write about in their poems? What do the poems' contents (topics/qualities of poetry writing) reveal about L2 leaner/teacher identity?	To examine the topics/qualities of poetry writing and participants' perceptions of creative teacher preparation.	Questionnaire, Face-to-face interview, Self-evaluation, Pedagogy essay, Classroom discourse during poetry workshops, Poem drafts, Final Portfolios	Content Analysis based on three layers of analysis (title, lexical choice, and themes)	Chapter 4 (Thematic Analysis of Poet-teachers' Poetry Writing)
2) What does instruction, reflection, and collaboration look like in the context of poetry revision workshops for TESOL educators?	To discover how meaning-making focused discussion impacts imitation, grammar, vocabulary, authority and other classroom concepts.	Classroom discourse & Poems shared during poetry revision workshop, Face-to-face interview	Inductive & Deductive coding of transcripts, looking for analytic themes	Chapter 5 (Poetry Revision Workshop: Creative and Collaborative L2 Learning in Poetic ZPD)
3) How do students' perceptions of themselves as teacher-artists evolve over the poetry-based learning course as well as beyond the course?	To better understand what the participants take away from the experience of poetry writing and how to apply it to L2 teaching.	Face-to-face & Online-interview, Self-evaluation, Pedagogy essay, Classroom discourse & Poems shared during workshop, Final Portfolios, Follow up social media networks	Inductive & Deductive coding, looking for analytic themes	Chapter 6 (What It Means to Be a Poet-Teacher)

3.3 Data Collection

The current study collected multiple types of data to explore the participants' interactions in poetry-based learning and identity their identity growth through the 'experience' of poetry writing. The table below summarizes these data sources and the process of data collection.

Table 6. Data Sources

Data	Quantity	Collection Procedure
Questionnaire	15 participants	I conducted the questionnaire at the beginning of the semester (See Appendix A for survey questions).
Interview	10 Interviewees	I conducted an informal interview with five participants who volunteered in the middle of the semester and the follow-up interviews with five students after the course was done (See Appendix B for Interview Questions).
Poem Drafts	150 Poems	I collected all poem drafts participants submitted to the instructor, as well as instructor's electronic written feedback
Poetry Workshops	5 Workshops	I audio-recorded and fully transcribed five poetry workshops; I also took fieldnotes during the workshops.
Meeting with Visiting Professional Poet	2 Meetings	I took an audio-recording of the conversation between the visiting poet and students and fully transcribed the discourse.
Mid/Final Portfolio	30 portfolios	I copied all of students' portfolio submissions to the instructor, which contains a pedagogy essay, self-reflection, annotation for revision process, and final version of their poems.
Visual Broadside		I took a picture of participants' visual crafts and collected their essays.
Poetry Reading		I took a video-recording of their reading at the final celebration of poetry reading event at the community bar.

Since participants' poem drafts and interactions in the poetry workshops are the main bases of data in the current dissertation, I will provide more detail information of two sources.

3.3.1 Poetry Invitation

In developing craft, the participants in apprenticeship received "poetic invitations" from the instructor so that they could compose 10-12 poems throughout the semester. By "invitation" the instructor stressed the writers' choices to accept the invitation or choose to write an alternative poem. From this writing process, they were supposed to learn not only what other poets had done in the past, but also other poetic tools and techniques they could use in the present and future (e.g., figuration, line breaks, anaphora, and rhyme). Each poetic invitation is named according to the syllabus description and is briefly summarized in the table below.

Table 7. Poem Prompts[3] (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2014)

Name	Prompt	Poetic Habits of Mind
1. "Nantucket" Exercise	Based on W.C. Williams poem. (see Appendix C)	Envision
2. "Dolor" Imitation	Based on the T. Roethke poem. (see Appendix D)	Stretching and exploring
3. Poetic Meter Exercise	Exercise the meter that is the basic rhythmic structure of a verse or lines in verse (e.g., the number of syllables (syllabic), the duration of syllables (quantitative), the number of stressed syllables, or accents (accentual), and combinations of the above).	Developing craft
4. Poetic Structure Exercise (Sonnet & Villanelle)	Exercise the poetic structures such as Sonnet (a poem of fourteen lines that follows a strict rhyme scheme and specific structure) and Villanelle (a nineteen-line poetic form consisting of five tercets followed by a quatrain.	Developing craft
5. Word Problem & Science Tests	Choose a topic from the technological world that we live in, which has a scientific or nature	Understand; Stretching and

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[3] This stems from Cahnmann-Taylor's course syllabus: Cahnmann-Taylor, Melisa (2014). *Writing Cultures: A Poetry Workshop for Creative Educators*. Athens, GA: Language and Literacy Department, University of Georgia.

	theme. Learn fun facts about mathematics, biology, chemistry, earth science, physics, and more.	exploring; Envision; Express
6. Metaphor Exercise	Write a portrait of a person by drafting a 15-line exercise in which you compare (use like or as in every comparison, as element of repetition) the person to a musical instrument, an article of clothing, a food, an article of furniture, a machine, a kind of weather, a landscape, and three other comparisons of your choosing.	Envision; Observe; Stretching and exploring
7. Persona Poem	Write a poem in the voice of other objects and someone else. Speak in a first-person poem.	Understand; Envision; Express
8. Poetry of Witness	Choose a topic from sociocultural and political issues and write an interpretive poem.	Understand; Observe; Envision; Express; Reflect
9. Poetry of Place	Visit a location you do not normally visit (GA Museum of Art, Natural History Museum, Botany Greenhouse, Botanical Gardens, Barber Shop, Gospel Church Service, Jewish High Holidays Service, Fooks Foods, etc.) Spend 30 minutes selecting an object for your meditation. Then, make detailed notes on the object.	Understand; Observe; Envision; Express; Engage; Reflect

3.3.2 Poetry Critique Workshop

The first weeks of the class include several individual poetic invitations and practice where submissions were provided only to the instructor for feedback. Then, from week 5 of the semester, the participants gathered for a total of 5 classroom meetings to "exhibit" their poems to the course instructor and peers in a collaborative setting called the "poetry workshop." In each workshop that lasted from 1.5 to 2 hours, the writer's newly draft poem was discussed, praised and criticized by peers as the writer took "a vow of silence" to listen to how their newly drafted poem was received. Hetland et al refer to "exhibition," or the public display of student work, as an "overarching structure" because it is an outgrowth of all others. Even though this poetry

workshop was not a public display with non-classroom members, it was of representative of the revision process in preparation for an end of course public reading where students presented the final versions of their poems in a public café. Exhibition was practiced for five times with class members in preparation for a final public reading including friends, faculty, and the public at large. As I participated in the workshops as a fellow-poet, the design itself created a context in which the participants and I collaboratively created an interactive space for critical reflection on the participants' poetry drafts as well as built a set of discussions and suggestions for their subsequent revision.

3.4 Data Analysis

This section overviews the data analysis procedure. Especially, I will describe the coding process, which allowed me to notice, summarize and synthesize what was happening in the data. Before jumping into how I identified the main themes that embrace various views I collected, the table below summarizes an initial data analysis process and what I tried to learn from each data source.

Table 8. Data Analysis

Data	Analysis Procedure
Questionnaire	All answers were manually transferred into a spreadsheet. I put each question as a column heading, and used one row for each person's answers. Then, I analyzed them to acquire the personal and educational background understanding of the participants.
Interview	All interview data were theme-coded based on the analysis of how the participants perceived and described the experience of poetry writing, compared with academic writing.
Poem Drafts	I conducted the content analysis on participants' poems to understand the range of poetry subjects and the formal qualities of their writing over time.
Poetry Workshops	I adopted the framework of ZPD to analyze how their poetic crafts were shared, criticized, and developed through imitation, under scaffolded instruction (much like an apprentice artist), in collaboration. All transcripts

	were analyzed and coded based on how the creative interactional work influences their development as creative and critical L2 users and thinkers.
Meeting with Poet	I coded the transcripts to analyze interactions between professional poet and novice L2 writers.
Mid/Final Portfolio	I analyzed the pedagogy essay and self-reflection to see how the participants considered poetry as an L2 learning tool and learned it, and a metaphor for L2 teaching as well as a means of teacher identity growth.

For descriptive qualitative research findings, I conducted a thematic analysis that looked across all the data to identify the common issues that recurred. Based on the three research questions mentioned above, firstly in order to see what was happening inside of the poems that the participants wrote, I coded their poems based on the two layers of inductive and deductive thematic analysis (lexical choice and thematic organization). For example, in lexical content analysis by using a word frequency software program, QDA Miner Lite, I collected the word types and accumulative percentages of their use, then these words were used within all poems. In the layer of thematic organization, the poems were firstly read in order to examine what the major indicators of its meaning were, then they were grouped based on a macro level of analysis of what aspects of setting, topic, and voice seemed to dominate in all poems. Importantly, this whole process was conducted along with the analysis of classroom discourse in the revision workshops and of the interview data gathered during and after the course. In analysis of poetry workshop data, I read the analytic memos that I kept to write down my impressions during the five sequences of poetry workshops. Then, based on the framework of ZPD, I tried to discover what qualities of co-construction of meaning in terms of imitation, instruction, reflection, and collaboration take place in the transcripts of audio files. Furthermore, as pedagogy essays and self-evaluation were proposed as reflection tools for the participants to reflect critically upon their poetry writing experiences and practice, in data analysis, I analyzed their self-evaluation to

make preliminary observations of how the participants felt about the poetry-based learning, then read their pedagogy essays to examine how poetry influences their growth as L2 learners and how it offers a resource for meaningful L2 education. The following figure showcases the initial overarching ideas that I color-coded focusing on the frequency of the key words and ideas that the participants used in both their self-evaluation and pedagogy essay.
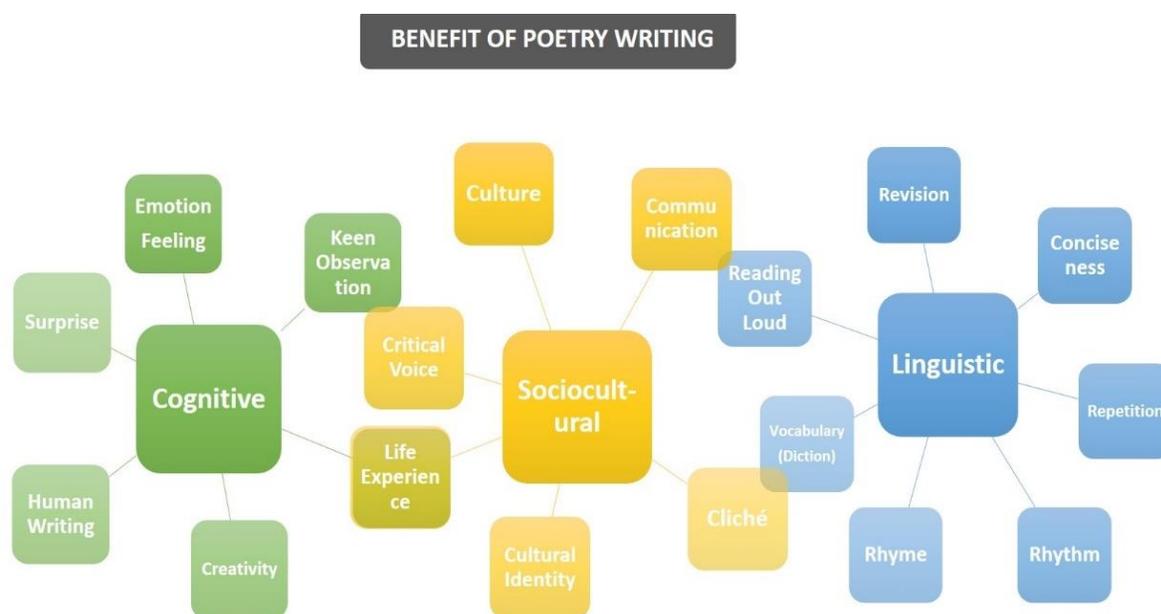
Figure 5. Color Coding of Benefits of Poetry Writing

Importantly, in the overall course of data analysis, I considered coding as a heuristic tool to facilitate discovery and further investigation of the data (Richards & Morse, 2007). The authors argue that coding is a heuristic (from the Greek, meaning "to discover") – an exploratory problem-solving technique without specific formulas to follow, which means it is only the initial step toward an even more rigorous and evocative analysis and interpretation for a report. Therefore, coding is not just labeling; it is also linking because it leads the researcher "from the data to the idea, and from the idea to all the data pertaining to that idea" (Richards & Morse, 2007, p. 137). With this in mind, when the initial themes emerged from the data, I applied them

to the whole set of data to regroup and relink them in order to discover other possible research questions. This combination of inductive and deductive analyses helped me "search for patterns in data and for ideas that help explain why those patterns are there in the first place" (Bernard, 2006, p. 452). For example, in the analysis of how they learned from the practice of poetry writing, the combination of deductive and inductive coding informed me of another important research questions: "What do they write about? What does this content reveal about L2 teacher identity? Does poetry writing provide different experiences for international participants from traditional essay writing practices that they experienced in EFL contexts? If so, how?" This process made me not only revisit the interview data, but also it created a further need for follow-up interviews.

3.5 Subjectivity Statement

In qualitative research, the term, "subjectivity" or "subjectivism" has been discussed as one of the most important issues in data analysis procedure. Ratner (2002) explains the relationship between subjectivism and objectivism in qualitative research as follows:

> "Subjectivism is often regarded as the *sine qua non* of qualitative methodology. However, this is untrue…. Of course, subjectivity can bias the researcher and preclude objectively understanding a subject's psychological reality. However, this is not inevitable. In fact, one of the advantages of recognizing subjectivity is to reflect on whether it facilitates or impedes objective comprehension. Distorting values can then be replaced by values that enhance objectivity"

With his argument in mind, in this section, I will describe how I approached my data based on my subjectivity statement. In the beginning of this dissertation, I provided some information of my subjectivity statement, which comes from my personal histories and cultural view of literacy as an EFL learner in an East Asian context as well as my professional experiences as a poet. Most importantly, I have to admit that I am not representative of all Asian

EFL students, and my personal feelings and beliefs toward the benefit of poetry writing and professional predispositions as a poet cannot support the study's credibility, authenticity, and overall quality or validity. To be specific, everything that happened in this study was not uniformly positioned, of course. However, as I conducted this research in my major advisor's class, and I took her poetry writing courses several times as a poetry-lover, I must concede that this study runs the risk of making tautological arguments of what the advantages of poetry making, and it may be read less smoothly by those who either pay surface attention to the reading poetry or find writing poetry too personal.

In addition to my personal and professional features, the participants were all registered students in the course, which implies that those who are not poetry fans perhaps avoid the course in the first place. Taking account of it, in the beginning of research, I asked them about their previous literary and creative writing experience and education/majors in their home country to contextualize participants' experiences in terms of their entry predispositions. For the same reason, I reckoned with what my participants were not willing to share their negative feedback with me upon the course as well as poetry writing since they were not entirely free from getting a final course grade from my advisor. (This will be more discussed in the limitation of the current study in Chapter 8.) Therefore, I tried to find where the points of challenge to the poetry making were hidden in the reality of this research, examining students' resistance and disappointment over universal happiness and success from the experience of poetry writing.

Overall, when listening to the data and analyzing them, I focused on the specific evidence as found in documents and transcripts in the data set, instead of finding what I expected to happen. I tried to listen to data that helped me to warrant the assertions I made as a way to keep my personal feelings, subjectivity of humanity, and literary view of L2 learning/teaching. I must

confess that my L1 identity as a somewhat accomplished poet in Korean and L2 experiences based on a love of workmanlike prose and creative pedagogy kept telling me that poetry can help students develop their L2 proficiency. However, with an epistemological point of view toward reality and reflexivity in mind, I tried to stay away from my personal view, from unwarranted or unsupported claims, and from a biased or prejudiced account, which constantly put contact lenses on my eyes to be rational and reasonable in the analysis of the data to reflect how international TESOL teachers in training perceived *or not* the influence of poetry writing on the improvement and refinement of their English knowledge as well as how it was applied to L2 teaching.

3.6 Overview of Following Chapters

The following four chapters report and discuss the results of this research. Chapter 4 showcases the findings of what international students wrote about in their second language poems, and how this textual space allowed them to reveal about L2 learning and identity. Chapter 5 describes how and what the poet-teachers in training learned from the poetry workshop sessions in terms of poetic ZPD where creative imitative learning, symmetrical instructed scaffolding, and dialogic collaboration intersect. Chapter 6 reports how and to what extent the international TESOL teachers' nature of L2 learning and teaching as artist-teachers evolved from the experiences of poetry-based learning throughout the course. Then, based on my narratives and poems, Chapter 7 discusses what poetry means to me as an ESOL learner and TESOL educator and makes a connection between my own poetry writing and one of the study themes: second language poetry as a place where non-native validity or hybridized and bilingual identities can be appreciated and valued in L2 learning process. This discussion chapter also describes its importance and application to EFL contexts, especially in South Korea. Throughout

these chapters, I will mostly use the term, "poet-teachers in training" to refer to the participants because throughout the research process, I did not consider them as research participants but as fellow poet-teachers.

CHAPTER 4

THEMATIC CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SECOND LANGUAGE POETRY WRITTING

Throughout the fifteen weeks of the course, as 15 poet-teachers in training were supposed to submit 9 poems in their final portfolio (135 poems in total) at the end. Importantly, total quantity of writing over the course goes beyond this number since the students created multiple drafts of those 9 poems with a help of the instructor's written feedback and through poetry revision workshops in which all members in the course participated. As summarized in the previous chapter, beyond poetry writing, the poet-teachers in training also wrote a pedagogy essay, personal reflections, produced a visual broadside of poetry, shared a memorized poem of at least 14 lines in English, and recited their final versions at a community bar. Among a variety of data collected in this poetry-based learning environment, this first finding chapter focuses on an analysis of the thematic organization in 78 drafts shared during the revision workshops. This class includes the final versions in their portfolio. Some of this data will be shown in the following chapters. Analysis of classroom discourse helped me to gain more in-depth understanding of the meaning of certain moments in the poems. (For the titles of all of the poems shared in revision workshops, see Appendix E.) During the process of data analysis, instead of looking for the basic poetic micro-features such as sound patterns, imagery and figurative speech, I focused on bigger themes across the poems based on a macro level of analysis, trying to understand what aspects of setting, topic, and voice seemed to dominate in a poem as well as the major indicators of its meaning. Based on the two layers of inductive and deductive analysis (lexical choice and thematic organization) of students' poems based on classroom discourse, this

finding chapter addresses what most of the 78 poems did reveal and how international TESOL students engaged in this genre of writing to reveal their voice and identity along with some of interview and essay data.

In this finding chapter, among various definitions of *voice*, I fundamentally adopted the notion of Bakhtin (1986) that views voice as intention and perspective of a writer to the reader. In addition, based on the idea of Jacobs's (1981) voice intensity rating scale (e.g., assertiveness, self-identification, reiteration of central point and authorial presence), I especially approached *voice* as "the amalgamative effect of the use of discursive and non-discursive features that language users choose, deliberately or otherwise, from socially available yet ever-changing repertoires" (Matsuda, 2001, p. 40). Matsuda (2001) argues that voice can be constructed in a different way depending on different cultures and which language a writer uses. Therefore, ESL/EFL learners use certain discursive features while writing in English that project their authorial identity or authorial presence. This idea helped me focus on how international TESOL educators' voice and identity are constructed in their poems written in English when living in a new host culture and language.

4.1 Thematic Analysis of Lexical Choice in Poems

In order to focus on how L2 writers' meaning and a distinct voice and identity were constructed in the poems, I firstly conducted a lexical content analysis. According to Yeibo (2011), lexical analysis in poetry allows to examine "specifically to the word-stock of a language from which writers make choices for self-expression according to their purpose or intended meaning" (p. 138). By using a word frequency software program, I collected the word types and accumulative percentages of their use within the 78 poems. Tables 9 and 10 below provide the list of the high frequency words and some indication of the way these words were used in their

poetic context (high frequency was defined as usage over fifty times in Table 9 and twenty times in Table 10).

Table 9. Frequency of Occurrence of Pronouns

Freq.	%	Word	Examples
312	6%	I	Where *I* will live my life happily, devoid of any pain.
			But *I* retracted my hand when *I* saw more
			I told him he was safe, and asked for the reason
			I bump my head against the bedroom window.
			when *I* get pulled over by a policeman, my parents or friends will stay by my side.
171	2%	My	A different place, where *my* heart will not be broken,
			It's out of curiosity from *my* mind.
			pretending to be a mom aren't *my* ambitions since
			it's the crack on *my* chest, on *my* heart, on *my* map.
			and the long term expectation in *my* life
136	1.5%	You	This is how *you* treat me.
			You say to me: "there are so many colors in the world,
			You dressed me like a doll,
96	1%	Me	Noises stuck my ears, reminding *me*
			let me tell *you* my impressive story, around when the crowd pushes me
			Tell *me* your purpose.
56	0.05%	Your	My dreamy eyes traced *your* every step
			Although I saw only *your* silhouette
			Your crass contact strips me
			A stone under *your* green tree crown.
50	0.05%	We	*We* are strangers.
			we watched the tide by the river blank.
			we could overcome the difficulty.
			We whispered the clues *we* found, and argued

As seen in the table above, the most frequently used word group was that of pronouns, especially first-person pronouns (e.g., I, my, me, and we) which were used 629 times. Even when taking into account poetry written in "not me" voice such as persona poem and dramatic monologue, it was still the most frequently used word group (395 times). This result is one

indication that there was a significant positive correlation between poetry writing and the revelation of writers' personal voice. Of course, one can argue that this finding is not surprising in comparison to frequency of personal pronouns in general usage in any genre of writing. However, considering the fact that the use of personal pronouns is often discouraged in the research/scientific writing under the name of "academic" way (Kirkman, 2005), this finding suggests that the use of personal pronouns in poetry writing elicits writers' tone of attachment and personality related to the subject matter in their poems.

In fact, the poet-teachers often articulated that the content of their poems came from their autobiographical memories and from life experiences that revealed their own voices as seen in the following excerpts from both the essays and interviews:

Zihan: It [poetry writing] is just a specific form to jot down subject matters I observe and important feelings in my daily life.

Lu: I know that I could express my emotions and tell my own stories which related to my real life by writing a poem. Poetry is everywhere in our lives. I also borrowed some words from [my] daily life and other subjects and used them in my poems to make my emotion more authentic.

Weikang: I learned how poetry relates to my life experience. I begin to understand that poetry creation requires life experiences, such as childhood memories, hometowns, families, friends, etc.

This result was also in accordance with the finding of the lexical analysis of the high frequency content words that is summarized in the table below.

Table 10. Frequency of Occurrence of Content Words

Freq.	Word	Examples
55	Life	Hope *life* is as the same as the transit system,

		Life is always full of opportunities
		Life won't be hard if I become an English teacher,
		Life never finds me prepared.
		Life isn't about standing at the top of the mountain,
		… the only chance and the limited *life*.
51	Eyes	I try to keep my *eyes* on the onionskin
		I looked for the *eyes* in my memory, through the windows
		Witnessing the reddish *eyes* and the crossed stiff hands.
		.. if you see my confused *eyes*,
		Pop up *eyes* like seeing an alien.
		I am a loner in your *eyes*,
		Opening my *eyes*, a different, unfamiliar place.
		Eyes opened my world.
		Remember to keep your *eyes* wide open and make a fair decision.
53	People	How do they bring hope to homeless *people* on a cold winter night?
		Like I'm standing near hundreds of *people*,
		I heard that many Shanghainese discriminate against *people* who can only speak mandarin Chinese or other dialects
		Things of a kind come together, *people* of a kind fall into the same group,
		People who grab them from the cafeteria just don't want me to get bored.
		Appreciating streams of *people* coming and going,
		So many *people* being hurt, killed, trampled,
41	World	Could they see the same full moon at the other side of the *world*?
		You say to me: "there are so many colors in the *world*,
		I am half a *world* away from home,
		making pity faces to the outside *world*
41	Time	it's *time* to notice the even smaller letters.
		The first *time* to see a donut shaped start lab,
		reflecting how *time* passes so fast;
		Quite sure this was the right choice, this *time*.
		I go back home, next *time*,
		In ancient *time*, we dominated main color of keyboards.
36	Heart	A different place, where my *heart* will not be broken,
		it's the crack on my chest, on my *heart*, on my map.
		Shall I stay just for the redness stamped in my *heart*?
		But how to follow my heart, if I have two *hearts*?
		See the *heart* behind that skin,
34	Home	How they guide lost sailors find their way *home*?
		Stars are *home*sick messages far away from falling behind

It dyes my *home*town yellow brown,
Only a glass of *home*made wine
Christmas trees were sent *homes*
"Come back! This is your *home*land!"
Going back *home* means saying goodbye to the dream.
In my dream, a place I call *home*.
Why should I leave *home* and be alone?
I have you, you have everything at *home*, but here…
I am half a world away from *home*,

34	Family	*Family* is always the top concern for a woman, a Chinese woman.
		After taking a picture as a *family*,
		Suddenly the mother runs away from her family
		Family is where the heart belongs.
22	Friend(s)	my parents or *friends* will stay by my side.
		comforting our hearts, hug us like a *friend*;
		Your ears strictly separate true *friend* from fake *friend.*
		when I get pulled over by the police, my parents or friends will stay by my side.
20	Teacher	One day, *teacher* said, "I need volunteers to translate
		Teacher bursts into laughter, and so do my classmates
		A middle-aged teacher from the right corner started,
		"*Teacher*, teach me English so I can work."
14	English	My broken *English* betray its master.
		Poor *English* and rich imagination can be a shortcut
		Stop questioning our ability to speak *English*
		Who are so good at *English*-- monolingual speakers.
		..who hardly speaks proper *English,*
13	Living & Live(s)	I am studying abroad and *living* alone
		give away my *living* environment:
		'Cause I always imagine, I *live* somewhere else, on another planet,
		I am dreaming to *live* one more day like this, one more day,
10	Alone	Why they never let the moon feel *alone*?
		I am studying abroad and living *alone*
		Why should I leave home and be *alone*?
		But I'm just one alien girl *alone*

What is interesting in this data was that compared with the most frequently used function word ("I" used 312 times), the frequency of the top common content word was considerably low ("Life" used 55 times). This finding was reasonable as poet-teachers were trained to use fresh and original language in their poems on the one hand, and it became a legitimate proof on the other hands that the placement of these common words in relation to their immediate written context revealed several core themes and concerns that seemed to be repeated across international TESOL educators' poems. For example, many key words (e.g., home, heart, eyes) dealt with the issue of close relationships with people (e.g., teacher, family, friend) and their contexts (e.g. life, living, world, time) sometimes with a more specific geographical term (e.g., Athens, Georgia). This sense of social closeness and/or environmental distance was frequently expressed through the usage of words such as broken, alone, survive, and struggle, which implies that the poet-teachers in training drew attention to their own observations, experiences, and reflections while emotionally engaged in the process of writing.

Of course, in the poetry writing genre, it is difficult to determine what is or is not drawn from the writer's own experience or direct observation. A poem that seems to be based on personal life events may well be fictional, while even if a poem is responding to a historical or political event, there is likely still some life experience in it. However, along with the interview data and participant-observations, I was able to confirm that poetry writing often comes from personally meaningful experiences and as a result of close observation of and reflection on individual-context interactions. As witnesses, ten poet-teachers each reflected on the ways in which poetry writing helped them attend to the moment and observation they experienced. For example, Xaunping reported in an interview that through the experience of poetry writing, she became more observant and careful about people, life and herself.

Xaunping: Sensitivity is the best inspiration for doing artistic things. [When writing a

poem], I push myself to "slow down" to observe little objects, incidents, people in life,

and become more sensitive about my surroundings and my own feeling[s] about the

world. I enjoy every moment in my life, no matter [if] it is happy or bitter, plain or

splendid. Writing every poem is observation and reflection about my feeling[s] and life,

and it makes me feel I care, care about something and others, which makes me happy.

This result shows the ways in which poetry writing (all acts of creativity) can enable the

"maker" to have more intensified sense of observation and being in the moments of their second

language and sociocultural experiences. Accordingly, this finding led me to the next layer of

thematic analysis which focused on questions examining the writing assignments given such as

how does the poem make use of setting, what is the argument, thesis, or subject of the poem,

what reactions and feelings does the poem evoke in the reader, and what is the world-view and

the ideology of the poem?

4.2 Thematic Organization of Meaning of Poems

A consistent theme emerged across poet-teachers' written and oral narratives: poetry

writing provided international TESOL educators with a textual space to reveal their voices which

came from their sociocultural experiences and personal reflections. Among the 78 drafts shared

in poetry revision workshops, 48% of the poems (38 poems) contained the kinds of experiential

knowledge acquired in a new academic and sociocultural life. In other words, the poet-teachers

in training wrote poems that conveyed great attention to their positions as international students

on an American campus and as foreigners in the Western world. What this means regarding the

data as a whole was that the poet-teachers reflected independently on the ways in which poetry

helped them better attend to the moments of living in a new language and culture. In the

remainder of this section, I will show how this finding was true for novice poets writing in their second language.

4.2.1 Being Lost and Out of Place

At the macro-level of thematic analysis, the first finding which emerged was the frequent use of the poet-teachers' experiences as international students on a new school campus, which often conveyed writer's anxiety and uncertainty, feeling of lost and out of place. For example, Xuanping wrote a poem which came from her experience of waiting and taking a bus in her daily life on campus.

Transit

      by Xuanping Li

      Waiting at a bus stop,
      The sun burns my skin, nerves.
      One, two, three buses turn
      Left. Each seems unwilling to load
      an important passenger.

      Hesitated to walk to that bus stop,
      the more welcoming one.
      "Insist on your choice" the stubborn one warned.
      Eating all the nuts in my bag,
      One bus patronized this stop, ultimately,
      Turing left, turning right, the driver
      so sure of where he's going.
      Strange surroundings,
      the wrong bus.

      Lacking the courage to jump off,
      I already missed the Tate Center meeting,
      I took the Family Housing not Orbit[4] to go back.
      Quite sure this was the right choice, this time.
      God, it headed to the Athens transit station,
      The wrong bus, again.

      Looking out of the window,
      People walking, driving, rushing,

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[4] The "orbit" and "family housing" are the names of specific University buses.

so sure of where they're heading.
Hope life is as the same as the transit system,
One could turn back if mess it up.
A girl's growing

In this poem, Xuanping described her experience of geographically being lost on a new bus system on campus through stanzas 1 to 3 and connected metaphorically to another emotional aspect of life in the last stanza (turning back if something is wrong). Importantly, this poem showed more than just presence on campus. It was a meditation on the fluster of being new and lost in a host culture, of making mistakes and a feeling of envy for others who seems to already "know" where they are heading. In this sense, the "wrong bus" became a metaphor for international student experience of feeling out of place. Another student, Yi, also showed her peers the alignment of this theme through her experience of bumping into a stranger in New York City during the summer break.

A Question Posted by a New Yorker

by Yi Guo

Wondering and gazing
around when the crowd pushes me
confront a woman in suit
who double toward me
when I hesitate, try to give way
but she moves to the same direction,
so both of us could not pass.

"Ex-" Before I could say anything-
"What are you doing?" she glares at me, as if
I was some ridiculous clumsy alien, her face
whiter than pale.
Right, It's New York. It's not
Georgia. Politeness is invalid.
Hostile makes the way to survive.

What am I doing? It's exactly the question
I wish to ask myself, yet
I don't know the answer.

Two blocks away from Times Square,
I am half a world away from home,
Looking for the legendary "center of the universe"
alone.

Why am I here during summer break?
The place is so much like my home, the
neon lights, busy throngs, garbage on road.
But this is not my city.

"I'm sorry." Failed to answer the woman's question
I stop and let her pass.
For one second, I wish
I was the one to say
"Give me your wallet!"
But I'm just one alien girl alone
looking for the way
to the center of the universe.

In this poem, Yi expressed her longing for home, and in the last stanza she connected the feeling of lost in the host culture and vulnerable, yet wanting to reach more of the "center." Although these were reckonings with her peripheral status, the feeling of *lost* was metaphorically articulated as an international student in a new city and country. Another poet-teacher, Qing, created a more straightforward writing about living far from home in the poem below.

Homesick

by Qing Zhu

The road lights
and cold air were walking the city.
Hats, coats, and boots
can't keep me warn.

Shivering in the air,
I sneezed, falling forward.
"Bless you." a stranger said.
He faked a smile.

The long nights were
like vampires draining my blood.
Only a glass of homemade wine

could restore my strength.
But I knew it was luxury.

The two year of working abroad,
I gave up the fight with loneliness.
Shopping, cooking, and eating alone,
was all I did off work.

I got used to the independent life,
yet I cried like a baby
locking my door.

Sending a post card
was easy for me.
But where to send my heart?
I didn't know.

Interestingly, while Qing's poem above expressed her loneliness such as shopping,

cooking, and eating alone in general, her peer, Hanpin, specifically expressed her feeling of lost

in the university dormitory kitchen making mistakes cooking for herself for the first time as she

became far from her mother.

Cooking

by Hanpin Li

Cooking is never an easy job, even for
A master chef. If you consider it a chore,
I bet the food you cook won't taste good.
Make a single slip, oops
A recipe for catastrophe.
Too salty, too sweet, overcooked. I wonder why reality
Is always sizzling with brutality
What should I do, with a burned steak?
Life's painful, when you make a mistake.
Nothing I can do, to make it edible again.
Devoured, by compunction, It's impossible to maintain
My composure. I gobbled it down, before my stomach started to complain
The steak tasted horrible,
But I deserved it 'cause I was responsible.

In this poem, Hanpin reflected with more humor on her experience of "being lost" in cooking. Interestingly, even though Hanpin did not mention during the workshop that the action in this poem was happening in a new country (after class she mentioned to the researcher that she had never cooked by herself before coming to the United States), while the poem was being discussed in the poetry workshop, her experiential voice touched upon and echoed that same feeling in her peers who may have gone through a similar process, as Xiaodan said, "I had this kind of experience yesterday." Chengyuan provided more details in his response to her poem as an international student suffering with the culinary differences between his home and host cultures:

> Chengyuan: This is an interesting poem. It reminds most of us as international students of memory because when we come here [U.S.], most of us need to find ourselves and most of us are not able to cope well. And most of our food tastes horrible. So, I think it is something we only have one chance. If we won't have another chance to fix it, if the result turns out to be horrible, we have to take it because we are responsible. Yes, I am into this poem like my story.

As seen above, poetry writing offered opportunities for international students to make personal and universal connections when living in a new country and culture, especially when living far from home. This finding illustrates that compared with other genres of writing, poetry writing is more likely to jog the memories of the writers' life experiences by touching upon a particular emotion; therefore, this kind of writing can invite its readers into a universal interpretation of personally meaningful events, echoing the emotions of those who may have had the same or a similar experience. Likewise, the voice of "being lost" in poetry often became "coming of age" making universal quality of a young adult first learning to live on one's own

and in other cultures, being far from home culture and country. This finding suggests that poetry

can offer a place for L2 writers to express their feeling grounded in the specificity of their life

experiences and emotions within a new sociocultural world in which they live.

4.2.2 Celebrating and Learning from Host Culture/Country

Those poet-teachers who expressed a voice of "being lost" in the host culture did not

always dwell on their frustration and difficulties. Instead, some poet-teachers reflected

affordance and the opportunity to articulate L2 learning and living experiences as a channel

through which they could discover new wonders and celebration of the host culture. One poet-

teacher, Zihan, revealed her emotional voice towards the different life expectations and social

norms regarding age that exist in the two different cultures, expressing that her dream is in the

host country.

I'm 25

by Zihan Lin

"I'm 25."
"Come back! This is your homeland!"

It's true. Next time
I go home, if
I get pulled over by a policeman,
my parents or friends will stay by my side.

Not like after the football game,
when I waited for 2 hours at midnight
until I found a *best* friend
to pick me up.

No more research on nutrition facts.
Healthy, yummy and savory food,
A bite of China, a sense of belonging.

Life won't be hard if I become an English teacher,
After all, I have the edge of peers
who never study abroad.

"Oh! I'm already 25."
Find a husband to settle down.
Family is always top concern for a Chinese woman.

"I'm 25."
"Stay here! This is your wonderland!"

Indeed. My dream is here.
Going back home means
saying goodbye to the dream.

Think about my kids.
Their homeland
should be pollution-free.

Education fee, medication fee,
won't bother me.
No worry about loans for my son's car and house,
No concern over my daughter's love and sex.

No headache about picking gifts for
my supervisor, kids' teachers,
on Christmas or New Year's-
fancy brands, normal brands, all embody quality.

"Yeah! I'm only 25."
Best time to enjoy the fortune I face;
enjoy the youth I have,
enjoy truth from a different God.

Go through dilemma.
Make a decision.
In my year of 25,
I hum the tune, "Que sera sera…"
chose the way to heart.

From an email interview with Zihan conducted as of the time of this writing [March 2016], it was interesting to see that she became 27-years-old now. She eventually followed her heart, teaching ESOL classes in the United States. Zihan also addressed what she learned from a happy reunion of the host culture that she witnessed at the University stadium in her different poem below.

On the Field

by Zihan Lin

*November 9. 2013, soldier Robert Owens showed up at UGA football game and surprised his family after he came back from Afghanistan.

The father was recognized by the National Guard
in contribution to agribusiness development teams
being dispatched to Afghanistan.
After taking a picture as a family,

an announcement sounds,
"Additionally,
the University of Georgia and the National Guard would like Dr. Brown and his family
to turn around, and receive a surprise."

They turn around.
Suddenly the mother runs away from her family
back to the other side of the field
before the audience realizes

it is her son come back from the Middle East.
She is too old to run fast.
She can't wait to raise her arms,
reach him as soon as possible.

She wraps her arms around her son
tightly. For 1 minute,
the audience smiles, screams, and shouts.
Mother and son sob, cuddle, and talk.

She shuffles her arms several times on her son's strong back,
tries to wrap them around her son completely.
She looks at his face, shakes her head, says something.
And she hugs him again,
In case he leaves again.
In case she lost him again.

In this poem, Zihan retold the observed moment of patriotism and reunion in a new host

culture, the culture of stadium from public witness. Interestingly, other poet-teachers also

expressed what they witnessed and learned about the host culture in many aspects of a host

society. In the poems below, while Xuanping described what she learned about U.S culture,

segregation by race, and expressed her critical voice in a metaphorical way, Wikang expressed

his emotional voice in his poem written on the same date to memorialize the tragic event

happened in the host country.

Piano Keys

> **by Xuanping Li**

> *Notes: There are 35 black keys and 52 white keys in a piano. In ancient times, the main color of keyboard is black. It changed to White in 19th century.*

> Hands jumping from my body to my fellows,
> Composing the most melodious sound.
> My name is Little Black Key,
> I was born in workers' hands,
> Being assembled into a piano with other 35 black keys.

> I meet numerous friends in the family, 52 white keys,
> Overlapping happens frequently,
> Making disharmonious sound.
> We argued who was more prodigious,
> In ancient time, black yes
> dominated main color of keyboards.

> The master turns to expert,
> We learned to behave ourselves in his hands.
> Hanging out all day long,
> accompanied each other to fall asleep at night.
> Letting alone different appearances we have,
> In ward, we have the same soul,
> Sharing the same goal.

> Someone says: daytime doesn't know the sorrow of darkness, like
> the forever burning sun never understand the anguish of the full and fallen moon.
> But you (white keys) appeared my beauty.
> You say to me: "there are so many colors in the world,
> But without you, I would not exist".

9/11

by Weikang Li

> Breathing ashes and panicking masses,
> Grieving families in a bleeding city, it's

> Not the world's end but wild humanity
> Wielded against the God. Awed people
> Pray in the streets, P.S. for peace, it's
> Not the war zone but fire door
> Broken in, stolen honor. Sirens' wail
> Wake up NEW YORK again, it's
> Not the coup d'etat but ailed politics
> Flailed in jail. A mob of screams echo
> From the burning hell, it's
> Not the crashed planes but lost angels
> Fallen from heaven. Freedom's
> Been taken since we all sinned in
> Some reason, it's
> September 11th.
> God bless you, and
> God bless America.

Put all together, these findings show that poetry writing often offered the L2 writers an invitation to draw meaning from their observations and experiences in a new sociocultural world; reflection on what they learned about the host culture and celebration in a host country.

4.2.3 Critique of Host Language/Culture

According to Ivanic and Camps (2001), "for those learning to write in a second language there may be a double demand for critical awareness: firstly recognizing the extent to which the voice-types supported by the new language are culturally acceptable or culturally alien to them, and secondly recognizing differences between voice-types associated with the range of genres and discourses to which they are exposed in the new culture" (pp. 44-45). Another interesting finding from thematic analysis of the content of poet-teachers' poems is connected to such idea in that poetry writing gave them a textual space for critical awareness-raising in the host language and culture by examining the various contextual influences on a reality that is socially and culturally constructed, which helped them project their own voice and self in their writing. One of the poet-teachers in training, Xiao, mentioned in her reflection: "Every time I wrote a poem, it is like a journey to refresh my insight to the new country and to myself, so I got to

express my experiences to some social and cultural issues that I face with." In poetry, she

expressed her culture shock by directing a critical voice specifically towards the non-recycling

culture found in the United States:

Dish Room

    by Xiao Liang

    "Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger is the primary goal of the Millennium Development Goals of United Nations. However, we seriously claim our determination to stop hunger, at the same time unbridledly waste the food."

    Dish room is a cruel world
    and I'm the numb accomplice.
    Noises stuck my ears, reminding me
    the huge rotary machine brought me the dirty plates, trash
    to clean, to toss, to throw away.
    And I saw a red, gorgeous apple, with one bite,
    I bet it doesn't belong to Snow White.
    "Here comes more",
    a banana, a hamburger, a plate of buffalo chicken wings… barely be eaten.
    People who grab them from the cafeteria just don't want me to get bored.

    I throw them as required,
    but that photo kept flashing upon my mind,
    a starved African child, waiting for
    a turtle dove to end his/her pains.
    This half eaten pizza in my hands,
    nobody cares about it here,
    In a different world, children, so many of them, even
    have no chance to know what it tastes like.
    More "trash" sent here,
    full-timers' yelling dragged me back.
    Closed my eyes, prayed for forgiveness,
    I throw them away.

    Keeping world's balance is easy,
    just let someone waste the food,
    if someone don't have it.

    In this poem, Xiao was critical of the waste and excess she was witness too on campus

and connected this critical perspective to bear on how people are generally destroying nature.

This was just one of the examples where the poets came into a voice of cultural critique in their writing. The poet-teachers also reflected their identity issues as non-native English speakers; their experiences as such often evoked negative emotions. For example, Hanpin's poem, which expressed her raw anger upon receiving rejections to her applications to U.S. academic Ph.D. programs, supports this finding as well.

Keep Your Eyes Wide Open

    by Hanpin Li

"No."
"Sorry but we do not take international applicants."
After rounds of tests and interviews, here we stand, and we heard
"Sorry you did not make it to the last round."
Oh bullshit. If you want to send us home, please come up with a better excuse.
Why we have to endure
Such unreasonable rejections, discriminations, and colored judgment.
Keep your eyes wide open,
Don't say that we are not qualified for the job.
Stop questioning our ability to speak English, I don't believe, a slight accent
Can cause communication failure. Keep your eyes wide open,
We have more potential, than your ideal applicants
Who are so good at English-- monolingual speakers.
Just keep your eyes wide open, bring the unfairness to an end.
Is this what the USA is famous for? Inequity?
We deserve equality, 'cause we have the capability.
We are overachievers, so get out of our way.
All those bullshit excuses, need to go.
Next time you see an Asian face,
Remember to keep your eyes wide open
And make a fair decision.

Expressing her experience of getting rejected from doctoral studies in poetry gave Hanpin a place to articulate her emotions and helped her share them more widely with others. This poem also gave other peers in the workshop the opportunity to laugh and co-witness, and even influenced their native-English speaking professor's perceptions as well:

Course Instructor: [Hanpin's poem] was really the flip side for the native speaker professor who reviews Chinese Ph. D applicants. I will always think now of this poem when I am at an admissions meeting where we quickly go through so many Chinese applicants. The process is not fair to anyone really--how do we get to know applicants to our programs?"

After the workshop, I had an email conversation with the course instructor about this poem and expressed my curiosity as to whether a poem is publishable if it contains a too critical voice and employs language such as swear words or cursing. She wrote back to me that "where can you swear when you can't do it in your poem? Poetry is a good place to relieve their painful emotions." Likewise, the poet-teachers' critical voices became much more amplified when it came to the social and cultural issues that they found *different* or *unfair*. Specifically, the poet-teachers frequently shared their frustration and struggle and expressed their critical voices towards the ambiguity and inequality that they experienced in a new culture and language as international students. For example, one of the poet-teachers, Liyun, offered a self-parody of the nonnative English speaker that also critiques widespread U.S. ignorance about Asian people.

Rocket Launcher

by Liyun He

Conversation starts with where are you from?
The last question I want to answer.
"Shanghai, China.
Wow, really?"
Well, I don't need to lie about an innocent question like that.

"Do you use Facebook?
No, I do not have a Facebook account.
Oh, really?"
Yeah, really.
Pop up eyes like seeing an alien.
"So how do you connect with your friends?

Well, we use Weibo or WeChat.
Even in the United States, you don't use Facebook? Oh, really?"
Yeah, I am a primitive, living in the Amazon Rainforest.

"I heard that many Shanghainese girls are Gold Diggers, is that true?
Well, they might just want to enjoy a high-quality life. Money is not everything.
Oh, really?"
Yeah, really. I love to be labeled as a greedy, snobbish material girl.

"I heard that many Shanghainese discriminate against people who can only speak
Mandarin Chinese or other dialects.
Well, it's totally acceptable if you do not speak the Shanghai dialect.
Oh, really?"

All sorts of grotesque questions followed one by one.
Interrogator in disguise.
When can the rocket launcher run out of fuel?
Since you do not buy every word I said,
why bother to ask?

In this poem, Liyun implied that there is some intelligence in the questions not all

Americans would know enough to question about the difference between Shanghai dialects and

Mandarin. Likewise, the poetry writing process was central to revealing critical voices of

international students towards the social and cultural reality that they had experienced and lived.

The analysis of the L2 students' poetry, then, can help the reader understand and even

sympathize with their difficulties and struggles in the process of transforming themselves in a

variety of new sociocultural contexts, difficulties which essentially arise from power

asymmetries and from differences with the dominant culture.

4.2.4 Adapting Poetic Eyes on Observation and Reflection

McNiff (1998) argues that poetry as an art form can be a good starting point to move

away from a limited understanding of the world as a fixed and unitary reality. Cahnmann (2003)

adds that poetry serves as a powerful observational tool to make our thinking "clearer, fresher,

and more public in rendering the richness and complexity of the observed world" (p. 34). The

complexity and creative observation that poetry offers proved correct in the poetry writing classroom. The most obvious finding that emerged from the analysis of the data was that the poet-teachers tried to integrate and condense their feelings and emotions into writing as a result of employing deliberate and "different" ways of observing and understanding the objects, events, and people around them. This finding went along with other reflections about the importance of poetry for attending to everyday living as Xiao stated in her essay:

> Xiao: Learning to be creative helps me wreck lots of settled thoughts and ideas in my mind, and to see things in a different way. In addition, this course teaches [us] to pay attention to details. I see how a subtle difference or detail that I observed would activate a poem.

Indeed, one of her peers, Chengyuan, activated his poem through this practice of close observation and emotional reflection that he employed during the poetic field trip the class took to the State Botanical Garden during Week 7 of the course. He confessed in his essay that before this visit, even though there were countless moments when he was very close to the plants, without the poetic observation habit, he had never before had the intention to observe them carefully. His poem, *One Inch*, shows that the practice of poetry writing allowed him to see things in a different way, revealing the creative and critical voice of the outsider to the greenhouse.

One Inch

> **by Chengyuan Cai**
>
> One inch is the thickness
> Of the greenhouse glass wall.
> The distance
> From hell to heaven.
>
> I squeeze every grain of sand,
> While you lavishly enjoy nutrition

From the gardeners. Because
I'm outside, you're inside.

Look at you!
As beautiful as your name: butterfly orchid.
Your petals are so charming that people
Hardly find a color to name.
Even your morbidly thin stem
Is regarded as a symbol of elegance.
Poets are writing poems to eulogize you.
I'm not even noticed, because
I'm out side, you're inside.

I don't know my name, nobody knows.
I don't know if I can survive this winter, nobody cares.
I don't know where I get my rough skin,
ugly needle leaves, and pungent smell,
Nobody notices.
That is my life.

But I know the piercing blast of winter
I know the scorching sunlight of summer.
I know what is living.
So, enjoy your fertilizer, Mr. Beauty.
I gotta go suck nutrition
From the dirty earth you've never touched.

In light of this, I also found from the thematic analysis that poet-teachers often expressed

how they discovered poetry writing had become a vehicle for giving voice to critiques of issues

to which they had not always paid attention. Liyun's poem, for example, explored her growing

awareness of and criticism toward the influence of social media on students' protests in Hong

Kong.

Be a Hero in a 4-inch World

by Liyun He

News flood.
Screens covered with the blinding title,
Occupy Central
Look at those laddish
underage girls and boys,
banners in hands and bands on heads.

Juvenile plays like knight-errant,
with swords around waist, riding his high horse,
yelling to save the miserable masses.

Fingers keep tapping on the four-inch screen.
Tictoc.
Post is ready to update.
Tictoc.
One like.
Two likes.
Thumbs up and reposts.

Those who claim to suffer from decidophobia,
unable to pick one from the lunch specials,
are absolutely assuring
what's the right path
for those 7 million people.

Virtually,
anyone can be a savior.

Xuanping, one of the interviewees, articulated how she also acquired a critical poetic

mind more open to the social and cultural reality that surrounded her through listening to Liyun's

poem in the poetry workshop: "When we read some public news, we have to think critically, we

don't need to believe everything the press said. Maybe there is another point of view like Leo's

poem, the Hong Kong, the students protesting Hong Kong. The main press always says bad

words about them. But for another point of view, we miss some." Surprisingly, Xuanping applied

this lesson to her poem below which is in the voice of a second-class citizen of society.

Who is Killing Me?

by Xuanping Li

*Note: There was news in 2012 that a property company monitor forced demolitions
despite knowing that there was a woman inside the house. The woman died because of
this.*

Roar of crashing, clamoring, collapsing
flooding my years.
Sleeping on bed at home, I

must be dreaming.
Debris of concrete blocked my breath,
no way I am dreaming.

Unscrupulous people,
Tearing down my house.
Tough act, soft talk,
I never succumbed.
Tables flattened, refrigerator squashed,
walls fell on my chest.

All I want is to stay alive.
Admiring splendid sunrise,
Listening to sparrow singing,
Sitting in front porch,
Appreciating streams of people,
Waiting my husband and children,
Baking pies in colorful sunset's shadow.

I am dreaming to live one more day like this,
But my house crashed down along with me,
Buried, decayed, forgotten in cold rubble.
Who is killing me?
Pathetic businessmen, unconcerned government
or ignorant people?
God never let this pain, unless there is a purpose.

To date, many scholars have pointed out the sociopolitical power that poetry writing

offers. For example, Prendergast (2009) argues that poetic inquiry can be a "socio-political act of

resistance to dominant forms and an effective way to talk back to power" (p. xxxi). In a similar

vein, Longenbach (2004) adds that "the marginality of poetry is in many ways the source of its

power, a power contingent on poetry's capacity to resist itself more strenuously than it is resisted

by the culture at large" (p. 1). Likewise, poetry writing can be a powerful and unique way of

representing writers' sociopolitical awareness, forged from their experiences and emotions, of

the power structure of a society (e.g., destabilizing the privileged, naming the taboo, and

embracing all classes in the society). The following poem was a good example of the

contemplative frame of sociopolitical awareness raised by poetry writing.

In a Socio-political Group Meeting: Georgia TESOL Conference Oct 23, 2014

    by Chau Nguyen

    A middle-age teacher from the right corner started,
"My adult program has to take under 18-year-old kids;
schools denied them, who hardly speaks proper English,
Does "No Child Left Behind" mean those kids should be left outside?

    Learning backward with big gapes, other educators replied
with slight headshake. The teacher shared about those kids who were denied
access to normal lives, "their parents led them to the border line
where they started walking to find on the other side,
an insecure,
unknown,
unpredictable,
unstable
world."

    Since then, they're classified as undocumented immigrants
who may pull down school average GPA with their constant
desires for jobs.
        "Teacher, teach me English so I can work."
        "You can't work here, it's illegal."
        "Please believe me, it's possible
        I'm young but strong, so I can work."

    Representative from executive board of Georgia TESOL ended the story
with a promise: a phone call to the school district. But what if those kids
are brought to the programs which they age fix,
who is to blame for the loss of school funding?

    In this poem, Chau expressed her critical perspective on discrimination against those of

mixed ethnic background and against immigrants in a more direct way. This result implies that

poetry writing helped writers bring forth their opinions on some hidden aspects of the human

condition and some of the inequalities and injustices underpinning society that need to be

exposed, opinions which would otherwise have been left undiscovered and submerged.

4.2.5 Conclusion: L2 Poetry Writing as Open Door to L2 World and Culture

    As revealed in this chapter, thematic analysis of lexical choice in poems that L2 writers

drafted suggests that there is a significant correlation between L2 poetry writing and revealing

writers' personal voice. This finding matched with that of many studies discussed in the literature review that L2 students in poetry are more likely to dig into the deeper level of their autobiographical thoughts and memories (Brian, 2008; Hanauer, 2010) as well as their sociocultural experiences (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Morrell, 2002; Wiseman, 2011). The process of this self-discovery encourages L2 writers to be more reflective and engage themselves into L2 world and culture in a more creative way. In other words, since poetry writing provides opportunities for L2 learners to express their emotions, while reflecting on their personal experiences, a poem draft will likely contain their voice and identity that might be overlooked. This finding was in accordance with the thematic analysis of L2 poetry contents. International students in this study often articulated their emotions and experiences of adapting themselves into new environments, celebrating/critiquing host culture and country by adapting poetic eyes on observation and reflection into a new L2 world.

Hess (2003) stresses that "when we read, understand, and interpret a poem, we learn language through the expansion of our experience with a larger human reality" (p. 20). This is because poetry writing not only provides students with a change of exploration of personal memory and experiences, but also it provides a keen observational tool that examines the various sociocultural influences on their L2 learning and acquisition, increasing their multicultural awareness. In a L2 writing classroom, therefore, by providing students with a poetic tool for exploration of their autobiographical and sociocultural experiences, their memories and emotions in relation with people, objects, and events can be explicated and expressed in a more engaged and powerful way, revealing their unique, different, and sometimes unspeakable voice and identity. Turning now to the experimental evidence on this implication of poetry, a number of social and cultural identities were often revealed in the poems of the international TESOL

educators as poetry writing was aligned with the second language that helped reveal their voices, shaped by a variety of sociocultural/sociopolitical experiences and personal/universal reflections. It is possible, therefore, to understand the potential of poetry writing in the L2 classroom as a unique way to encompass both an interpretive and a critical approach to studying languages and cultures since it invites both teachers and learners into a creative exploration of and critical engagement with the social, cultural, and political world that they live in. The various themes emerged from the analysis of contents of poetry and interviews lay the groundwork for what the implications from poetic techniques and strategies are for this chapter on its own and connections to what is to come in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 5

POETRY REVISION WORKSHOP: CREATIVE AND COLLABORATIVE L2

LEARNING IN POETIC ZPD

As described in the theory chapter, in every learning situation, it is worthwhile to create a

ZPD that is a developmental area to maximize the social interaction/collaboration and scaffold

problem-solving abilities in a creative way (Smolucha & Smolucha, 2012). In the poetry course,

poet-teachers in training had poetry revision workshops where they brought their poems and

interacted with each other to articulate craft decisions, reflect on them, evaluate those decisions,

and plan future decisions (See Chapter 3 for more workshop details). They had the chance to not

only evaluate the form of the poems but also honor, praise, and critique the meaning of the

language in the poems. The analysis of classroom discourse during the five poetry revision

workshops and two records of meeting with the invited poets has yielded the various ways in

which TESOL teacher identity formation was enriched within the ZPD. In this interactive

learning zone that I more specifically refer to as the Poetic ZPD (P-ZPD hereafter), poet-teachers

in training developed and learned about poetry and language *through creative (l)imitation[5],*

under symmetrical scaffolded instruction, and *in dialogic collaboration.*

5.1 Creative (L)imitation from Form to Meaning

Over the fifteen weeks of the course, the poet-teachers in training were encouraged to

imitate conventional poetic forms (e.g., sonnet, villanelle) and poetic techniques (e.g., syllabic

structures, metered and free verse lines). Through this learning process, the poet-teachers

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[5] The origin of this idea was attributed to the collective work of Melisa Cahnmann-Taylor and Hwang (2016, November) and was used the first time in a paper presentation at American Anthropological Association (AAA) conference in Denver.

discovered how to imitate 'old' ways in certain constraints to create their 'new' practices, which

I refer to as *creative (l)imitation*. For example, one of the poetic invitations was to imitate the

structure of a famous 13 line English poem, *Dolor,* written by Theodore Roethke (1943):

Dolor

by Theodore Roethke

I have known the inexorable sadness of pencils,
Neat in their boxes, dolor of pad and paper-weight,
All the misery of manilla folders and mucilage,
Desolation in immaculate public places,
Lonely reception room, lavatory, switchboard,
The unalterable pathos of basin and pitcher,
Ritual of multigraph, paper-clip, comma,
Endless duplication of lives and objects.
And I have seen dust from the walls of institutions,
Finer than flour, alive, more dangerous than silica,
Sift, almost invisible, through long afternoons of tedium,
Dropping a fine film on nails and delicate eyebrows,
Glazing the pale hair, the duplicate grey standard faces.

By imitating the structure of this model, the poet-teachers in training were asked to create

their own poem. The guidelines and directions were scaffolded by the professor (Cahnmann-

Taylor, 2014)[6] to afford rich and varied opportunities for facilitating creativity within the

constraints: 1) Take Roethke's first line and modify it to read "I have known the incredible thrill

(or another emotion) of…" 2) Then, evoke an experience through listing concrete images. 3)

Select images for their connotative as well as denotative meanings. 4) Employ sound devices,

and manage a complete, grammatically correct sentence over eight lines. 5) Write a four-line

sentence that brings about a "turn" or makes something happen through well-chosen verbs. 6)

Follow all of the rules above and below such as use heavy alliteration in two lines, a body part,

---

[6] This activity comes from Cahnmann-Taylor's course syllabus: Cahnmann-Taylor, Melisa (2014). *Writing Cultures: A Poetry Workshop for Creative Educators*. Athens, GA: Language and Literacy Department, University of Georgia.

two colors, and make sure each line has at least ten syllables. By following these rules, one of the poet-teachers, Xuanping, created her imitative poem, *Felicity*, which she brought to the workshop:

Felicity

       by Xuanping Li

1   I have known the ineffable felicity of candles,
2   Stand in their holders, glamour of flame and flare,
3   All the expression of ebullience and enthusiasm,
4   Danced in intimate romantic places
5   Lovely living rooms, restaurants, hallways,
6   The unspeakable thrill of life and death,
7   Staple of vows, promises, pledges.
8   Eternal echoes of joyful laughter and talks,
9   And I have seen tears from the corner of candleholders,
10   Brighter than white, sizzling, more glorious than pearls,
11   Smooth, virtually swift, through the hopeless cliff,
12   Shedding chunks of cloud on ceilings and carpets,
13   Witnessing the reddish eyes and the crossed stiff hands.

In this poem, even though Xuanping copied the structure of Roethke's model poem, she created her own meaning, exploring the complex symbolism of candles. Her use of language which articulates the special relationship between candles and candleholders was highly appreciated by other peers in the workshop:

Chengyuan: I think although this poem is titled "Felicity," actually it is focused on the sadness of the candleholders. I like that the author is trying to create contrast between emotions of candles and candleholders.

Weikang: I think it can be a love poem. There is, in line 6 and 7… there is a life and death struggle between… there is also the vows and the promises and pledges, so it can be romantic. I mean between the candle and the candleholder, they match each other.

Likewise, although the poet-teachers imitated the structure of a certain poem, they developed their own ideas within the limits imposed by the instructor's scaffolded direction. In this process, the poet-teachers often identified themselves more fully with the English language learning as one which they could make their own. In a post course interview, Xuanping and Zihan remarked on poetry's contribution to their sense of second language ownership and individuality, respectively: "Our poems are ourselves. Nobody is going to write a poem like yours. Yeah, they're unique." "In a poem, I can really focus on [creating] my own meaning, it's not like a fake meaning just to finish my homework and get a good grade."

Beyond modeling upon the 'old' craft, poet-teachers in training also tried to develop their own unique writing styles by imitating those of living writers such as Ida Stewart and Sholeh Wolpé who were invited to the class. For instance, after the class studied Stewart (2011)'s poem book, *Gloss*, they met the author via Skype. In this meeting, most of the questions and praise focused on Stewart's experimental use of language in her poems that are largely concerned with coal mining and its devastating environment/al and social effects from her experience especially with the mountain. Take, for example, the end of *Glossary: Tainted Words*:

Glossary: Tainted Words (excerpt)

    by Ida Stewart

    ....

moun-tain
        See maintain.
main-tain
        To keep in an existing state;
        to persevere;
        to preserve from decline;
        to uphold and defend;
        to affirm in or as if in argument;
        from the French
        hand & to hold.

After having a meeting with Stewart, one of the US-born students, Elizabeth, brought her poem that applied her experience in and wonder at the corn maze by making word-play, rhyme, and enjambment to create the unique meaning of X.

Corn Maze

by Elizabeth Spaulding

1   X marks the spot,
2   Exponentially
3   Exacerbating the struggle
4   to find the maze's end.
5   When enabled to break it down
6   into digestible bites,
7   X is ill-usive, evasive, a heap full
8   of shredded nonsense.
9   Every direction only yields husk built walls.
10   Aimlessly wandering leaves you're more
11   deeply embedded in confusion,
12   more inescapable with each misstep.
13   Crawling under,
14   scouring over,
15   breaking through
16   the path doesn't reveal the solution.
17   When, finally, you find the ladder
18   leaning to a new vantage point,
19   shucking revelations to solve for X.

20   The journey is the understanding,
21   without it, the end means nothing.

When this poem was being discussed in the workshop, while other international peers tried to interpret the meaning of 'X' in lines 1, 7, and 19, Zihan praised Elizabeth's unique style of writing in terms of *creative (l)imitation* of other poets:

> Zihan: I think Elizabeth tries to follow Ida (2011)'s style that we studied [imitation], and a more interesting thing is…. it's like her own style [creative]… so many enjambment [limitation] and so many words that start with her own expressions create the unique meaning of X.

What is interesting in this data was that even an L1 speaker, Elizabeth, like her L2 peers, was impressed by model forms, learning to imitate an expert to convey her own meaning. She wrote in her self-reflection: "Through this [poetry] course, I understand much more about the craft of writing poems that aids me in my attempts to improve the 'meaning' of my poems." Likewise, through creative apprenticeship in P-ZPD, the poet-teachers, much like an apprentice artist, understood imitation as a unique way to make the "old" become new through their own ideas, feelings and emotions and by their own methods of meaning-making in a new language. This finding that English L1 (NS) and L2 speakers (NNS) were both learning creative (l)imitation changes the advantages that a non-native speaker of English may be perceived to have beyond NS and NNS dichotomy formed by grammatical competence.

Another interesting finding from *creative (l)imitation* in the P-ZPD was that poet-teachers in training extended their understanding of the importance of studying pre-existing rules in poetry to that of following grammar and/or formal language conventions in L2 learning and writing. The conversation below between one poet-teacher and another invited poet, Sholeh Wolpé, served as a great opening for this quality.

> Xiaodan: I have a question. I have struggled in the choice to be unique, stick to myself, or try to mimic other styles of poets, and sometimes I find it difficult to compromise my expressions, ideas and feelings to the strict rules of grammar and writing a poem in a received structure.
>
> Sholeh: There's a difference between learning the craft of something and actually doing it. If you're a child and you're learning to dress yourself, you've got to learn the actions of how to do it, but later you can wear whatever you want…. So you have to force yourself to learn those things, then on the other side, you can explore things that are unique to

yourself, *so mimicking things is not a bad thing when you're learning something*

[emphasis added]. Once you learn that, then you know what to do and what not to do and

then when you express yourself, you will do it with more knowledge and more ability.

Xiaodan: … mimicking is a good thing… That makes sense. Thank you very much.

This finding sheds new light on how meaning-making focused classrooms that facilitates

creative l(imitation) can impact the ways we think of traditional grammar instructions

(Cahnmann-Taylor & Hwang, 2016). As discussed in the introductory chapter, in many global

L2 classrooms, the definition of imitation is largely confined to mindless and automatic copying

of the forms and structure of language. In P-ZPD, however, the poet-teachers started to

understand and feel why they needed to follow the rules and consider accuracy of grammar,

which was not to get a good grade on the test, but to express themselves and make their meaning

clearer to other peers and readers. In fact, although there is a common misconception that

grammar accuracy does not matter in poetry (Donovan, 2016), there were countless times in

revision workshops when the class did focus on accuracy of grammar, capitalization, punctuation,

etc. Specifically, when the poet-teachers engaged in critical reflection and making comments that

would be helpful for revision, grammatical points were frequently discussed if they caused

confusion and misunderstandings regarding intended meaning with the exception of cases where

nonstandard structures of English appreciated as intentional for more open-ended conjecture

about possible meanings. For example, Xiaodan applied suggestions from her peers and

professor in the revision of her imitative poem of Roethke's Dolor poem as seen (changes in

bold):

Desperation (excerpt)

by Xiaodan Gu

1	I have known the boiling despair of trees,
2	Sallow sallows stand still in the shadow of sad bush.
3	Dark **datura stramoniums** bloom with **death** stillness and desperate love,
4	All the draft greeneries **are** accompanied **with** the buzz of bees **and** twitter of birds.
	…

Revision:

1	I have known the boiling despair of trees,
2	Sallow **willows** stand still in the shadow of sad bush**'s**.
3	Dark **Jimson weed** bloom with death**ly** stillness and desperate love,
4	All the draft greeneries accompanied **by** the buzz of bees, **scream** of birds.
	…

She wrote in her revision annotation: "As peers [and] teacher suggested, I changed some words and syntax to make more accurate and concise meaning of this poem. I deleted 'are' & 'and' in line 3 and changed 'with' to 'by' in line 4. I also changed the word "datura stramoniums" to 'Jimson weed' because it caused confusion to my peers as it is not normally used." This data shows that from the discussion during the revision workshop about the importance of distinction between vernacular and archaic or scientific language, Xiaodan got to the vernacular version of a specific word to make her meaning more accessible to other readers.

In conclusion, poet-teachers in P-ZPD focused on the use of nonstandard English that left meanings unclear, then asked for grammar corrections, which means that they tried not to learn grammar in and of itself, but as a means to a communicative end: to know and value as readers what the writer's meaning and intentions were. Thus, it is possible to suggest that if L2 learners can engage in learning pre-existing rules of grammar and/or forms of language as a fundamentally *creative (l)imitation* (Cahnmann-Taylor & Hwang, 2016, November) process for making their meanings clear as writers and understanding the meanings of others as readers, poetry writing could be an alternative meaning-driven approach to 'functional' or 'communicative' grammar lessons. One poet-teacher, Xiao, explained in her class essay how her

practice of *creative (l)imitation* for new meaning helped her to think about her poet-teacher

identity in relation to L2 instruction:

> Xiao: Writing poetry in a certain form would actually give [my future ESOL] students
>
> more power and space to express their feeling... Most [of the] time, [a] human beings'
>
> feelings are chaotic, messy, and without any logic or rules. Poetry is an active form for
>
> them to explore this kind of feeling. The rules of writing a poem would actually provide
>
> students more zone to apply the accurate language to convey the meaning, it would be an
>
> effective catalyst for their language acquisition.

5.2 Symmetrical Scaffolding for Shared Thinking and Learning

Another important finding from the analysis of the poetry revision workshops was that

the interactions and experiences of poet-teachers served as symmetrical scaffolding for each

other. As mentioned in the literature review, in ZPD, in order to reach a potential level,

understanding of development should be encouraged by the sequence of how an individual is

self- and co- learning with instructional scaffolding in the classroom (Ohta, 1995). While the

notion of mutual scaffolding in the revision process from a perspective of Vygotskian theory

highlights the importance of the reciprocal relationship between provider and receiver as they are

becoming active partners in the given task (Guerrero and Villamil, 2002), it somewhat dwells on

the unidirectional or asymmetrical relationship (Fernadez et al, 2002) led by the 'more-advanced.'

In other words, one who provides guided support or scaffolding often takes more authority or

becomes a more advanced expert alongside the other. In terms of power structures desirably or

undesirably emerging in many cases where a teacher has power over students in assessing their

final grades or a researcher exercises power over participants by analyzing them, this dichotomy

still exists. However, in P-ZPD, the relationship between the teacher/researcher and the

students/participants was understood in a different way.

Since both the professor and I, as a researcher, participated in the poetry revision workshops with our own poems as fellow poets, all participants had much to learn from one another by "mutual footing" (Goffman, 1981). To be specific, in P-ZPD, there were many moments that the students' voices became the expert interpreters, which became the provision of sufficient support for others. The below poem written by one poet-teacher, Kexin, and its discussion offer a good example of where the teacher and students occupied mutual footing to puzzle out each new poem's strengths and then suggest revisions.

Red Leaf

      by Kexin Li

1	Why autumn's not
2	willing to present
3	with equal treatment?
4	It dyes my hometown yellow brown, but
5	gifts Athens with golden redness.
6	Late for class, I'm
7	dashing out to bus, but
8	always stopped
9	by a red leaf
10	that's lying on the ground. But
11	how many red-leaf bookmarks
12	can I pick up in Athens?
13	Shall I stay
14	just for the redness stamped in my heart?

In this poem, Kexin reflected on her feelings of struggling over where to live at the end of her TESOL degree training to return home to China to teach English or remain in Athens, Georgia, and teach Chinese. During the critique, both her peers and the professor discussed the poem's form and meaning.

Elizabeth: I love that it's talking about autumn and colors, how the vibrant colors are so different from what you think of as autumn in China. How the red leaves are trickled across campus made an impression on me.

Susan: I love the last line. I thought it was really wise that the hometown wasn't mentioned and so we know Athens, but we don't know where the hometown is, just some place that's yellow-brown in the fall.

Chengyu: What does 'equal treatment' mean?

Weikang: Maybe the 'equal treatment' means autumn's not really integrated?

Liyun: Maybe she will be more comfortable in China or in Athens…that is the central conflict I see.

Course Instructor: I think that she's asking on a literal plane why doesn't fall treat all places equally? Why don't we all get all the beautiful colors? On a literal level, "Why don't I get this beautiful red maple leaf where I'm from?" But the fact that it's in Athens, Georgia and equal treatment has been a historical issue here…then it just has this extra layer of meaning.

As seen in this conversation, each poet-teacher reflected their own interpretation and wonder towards the meaning of Kexin's poem. As they compared different interpretation, presented a question and suggested a solution, the turn-taking in P-ZPD was achieved and manifested in discursive features. This was just one of the many examples of moments where all the poet-teachers explored each new poem's possible meanings and made suggestions for possible revision. Likewise, in P-ZPD, instead of one individual taking the more advanced role, the poet-teachers all took on these roles as "sages" on the dynamic processes within dialogues, understanding the meaning of a certain word or expression, and even aiding with cultural

understanding of the poem. In this learning environment, "right" and "wrong" had no place because there was conjecture and everyone pondered meanings, thus making the course instructor a co-learner and the students co-teachers to support shared thinking and learning. Yi made an interesting argument in her essay about the ways in which "poetry writing can avoid the controversies over corrective feedback due to a shift in the teacher's role as helping students to play with language instead of giving a right answer." One year after the course, Yi wrote about the course's impact on her current Chinese-L2 instructor identity:

> Yi: I tried to find a way to connect students and give them the power to use the little bit of language they learned, and guess what popped out: the way that the teacher asked us to share our poetry. So I asked my students to stand in a circle and just say hi and tell their names in Chinese. They started to communicate with each other, trying to help the person next to them with pronunciation. In that way, I only become an organizer and summarizer of the class like what the teacher did and the students became "同学" meaning "classmate"
>
> in Chinese but literally translated to "studying together."

Uniquely, this quality of symmetrical scaffolding enriched in P-ZPD stimulated the professor's opportunity to emotionally and socially reflect and connect alongside students. For example, the professor penned her own poem as a direct result of the classroom interaction. In a response to Kexin's poem, *Red Leaf*, above, she integrated her feedback to name Kexin's hometown (Tianjin) mentioned in her poem, line 4, and reflected on the TESOL educator's role of "fixer" vs. "observer" in the final stanzas (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2016, pp. 41-42):

International Student has a Question After Poetry Class
                    for Echo(Kexin)

       by Melisa Cahnmann-Taylor

You know I broke my knee
in class last week, she says. *Fell on*,

I correct, *not broke*. I'd fussed
over the red-orange Georgia

sassafras in her poem compared
to Tianjin's more yellowed

ashes. Then she'd un-
balanced, carpeted after praise.

This week she hesitates,
then pulls the bandage, asks

advice because the sore's
still moist, puckered, her

roommate's worried.
Suddenly, she's my five

year old daughter, wincing
as I dab cotton to peroxide,

foaming the scrape's inevitable
blood, the itchy, salted
healing. *You'll be fine*,
I assure before registering

litigations, then encourage
a health center visit

to confirm the wound's
not infected. But I wouldn't go.

I'd just observe
the scab's darkening

parts, editing the skin's
new grammar underneath.

Overall, in P-ZPD, the professor and students often acquired new knowledge alongside one another as fellow poets. At such moments, poet-teachers in training shared, connected and made sense in and through language and culture all together. In this sense, teaching poetry in

TESOL teacher preparation can illuminate the ways in which the English language classroom can become a site for symmetrical and mutual learning, a two-way exchange where creative meaning-making can occur for both teacher and students/peers alike.

5.3 Dialogic Collaboration for Reflection and Revision

During a poetry workshop, there was only one rule: the poet him/herself must not speak. While the writer remained silent, his/her peers discussed the new poem, appreciating the connotative and denotative meanings of the word choice and analyzing how the craft of the poem worked in concert with the poem's meaning. In P-ZPD, therefore, another important finding was that the poet-teachers dialogically engaged in creative collaboration to reflect on the quality and possibility of meaning that the poet created in order to help him or her for future revisions. For example, when the poet-teachers had been asked to write a poem that related to early experiences with mathematics or science, Chau brought her poem titled *Parallel Lines* to the workshop, and her choice of vocabulary, Consecutive Interior Angles, in line 9 was understood and interpreted differently by members of the group.

Parallel Lines

by Chau Nguyen

1   They are a couple of stubborn lines
2   Running lives, never spare each other a sight.
3   Who cares the other side if they are still fine?
4   "They're parallel," just what Math teachers define.

5   One day, a transversal broke the ice
6   Bringing to life a quadruple pairs of angles
7   Corresponding angles are equal, and so
8   Alternate Interior and Exterior angles.

9   Poor Consecutive Interior Angles
10   Toss and turn, wonder how to win a struggle
11   For identity like other angles. "THEY'RE

12   All the same, why am I the only trouble?"

13   The real trouble is not that trouble
14   If they realize they are only angles
15   Added together making half a circle.

Even though Chau gave a literal definition of each angle in this poem before she shared it and took a 'vow of silence' during the critique, her peers and professor looked for figurative meanings. Some peers leaped to a metaphor of international student identity:

> Weikang: I notice there is capitalization 'THEY ARE'… I think for Chau and most of us here in Athens, maybe there are many foreign people around and American people, and she feels very special, for, in how to adapt to a new environment, so having this is the identity adaptation… so basically she means that she's unique to this community, so she's special, she is different.

> Xuanping: I think Chau is seeking her identity, trying to find her identity and then defend her country. In the first stanza she says they are a couple of starter lines, the parallel lines and they spare each other a side, I think she may mean we are in a different world and people may sometimes act different to each other.

The flow of discussion concentrated on the idea that angles stood for her struggles in a different culture as a foreigner until other students jumped in with other interpretations.

> Chengyuan: Quite different from your interpretation. I have another interesting guess… the title is "Parallel Lines", not angles…. When I read the first stanza, a couple of stubborn lines, two parallel lines never meet, it gives me a feeling that she is talking about a couple, two people, very stubborn couple, a husband and wife, they don't love each other and so they live their life by themselves.

Elizabeth: I see that as the parents in the first stanza and they are making their family, the quadruple pairs of angles are the children. The 'interior', she talks about the four consecutive interior angles, the middle children or the middle child.

While Chengyuan and Weikang just battled it out for Chau's intention and meaning, Elizabeth took a side. The course instructor made a suggestion for revision with regard to the ambiguity in her poem that caused so many different interpretations: "She has a couple of choices. One, to be very clear, the title is a great place to give very explicit information to tell the reader upfront. The other thing would be just to say as Ida (Stewart, 2011) would have suggested, stay with this whole concept of parallel lines and give even more of a personification, let the angles speak to another angle. Let us hear the voice of the angles." Likewise, in P-ZPD, instead of finding one right answer in interpretation, the poet-teachers searched for many possibilities and suggested revisions by dialogic collaboration. Therefore, for a writer, this kind of collaborative group-talk helped him or her learn to look forward to the depth of sharing and response to new writing and ideas because the writer *experienced* why a certain meaning or intention did not work and how it should be changed to be understood by other readers. As a proof, Chau reflected suggestions from other peers and from her professor in her revision process (Changes in bold).

There's Nothing Wrong to be Different

> **by Chau Nguyen**

1   They are a couple of stubborn lines
2   **Leading lives**, never sparing each other a sight.
3   Who cares **about** the other side if they are still fine?
4   "They're parallel," just what Math teachers define.

5   One day, a transversal **bridges the gap**
6   Bringing to life **three types of angle couples**
7   Corresponding pairs **with identical parts**.

8   **So do alternate pairs with identical parts**.
9   **Pointing at consecutive couples, they laughed,**
10   **"We have equal pairs, only you're different.**
11   **Look at you, uneven angles, aliens**
12   **From another world" – "You're sure? You'd better watch**

13   **Out there, the world of distinction. There's nothing**
14   **wrong to be different if we're special enough.**
15   **Try adding your equal angles up, hardly**
16   **Can you make half a circle. Guess what despite**
17   **our different angels, we can do that while you cannot"**

She wrote in her revision annotation: "I made use of the title to make the meaning clear enough. Additionally, I changed the language use to make the story between couples of angles understandable. According to peers' recommendations, I included a conversation in the poem, thus letting the angles raise their own voices. In the first draft, the consecutive angles suffered from their own thought that they are troublesome because they are different. However, in the revised poem, they are confident because they are more special and distinctive than others." As seen in Chau's revision process, dialogic collaboration in P-ZPD helped students mutually support each other's revision progress since they explored the possibilities and offers open-ended opportunities for them to deepen their English expertise: not just what words mean, but *changes in meaning* according to how and when they are used, by whom, and to what end. Many poet-teachers reflected on the importance of this quality for their L2 learning as well as L2 instruction in both interviews and essays:

Liyun: Like a Chinese saying goes, "we cannot make a cart by shutting ourselves in a room." We should listen to others' ideas and suggestions with open ears. The experience of workshop can prepare me for the L2 teaching. The workshop is a great method to engage students in class discussion, to get comprehensible input from others in the natural communication.

Chengyuan: What's the most rewarding part of this course is not writing poems, but listening to others' comments and revising. [Through this collaborative work], whenever I read and revise my old works, I became more skillful and sensitive to the use of words, structure, and ways of expression to convey more precise meanings. Therefore, when I teach literacy, I'd ask my students put more emphasis on revising old works, so they can develop introspecting and critical thinking ability.

In poetic ZPD, the poet-teachers might not be trying to scaffold each other's learning, but they achieved this simply by dialogic collaboration to critique and clarify grammar word choice, ambiguity, etc. during the process of understanding the author's intention and meanings. The quality of collaborative group-talk for meaning-making can therefore be a shift from the traditional understanding of editing that is often guided by a more advanced peer or is just for correctness of form to editing, which means becoming more sensitive to the integrity of meanings, searching for the best diction, and failing but then trying again based on the universal qualities shared. Interestingly, beyond the oral feedback, some poet-teachers also found the written feedback fundamentally dialogic and helpful for revision as Chau mentioned in her interview: "It's always exciting to know how different people interpret what I write because I get inspiration from their written comments. I like it because for sure other people like my peers and professor keep telling me, to show me which part of my poem is good or not and needs to be improved." Importantly, this observation during the workshop encouraged me, as an arts-based researcher, to revisit one of the poems that I wrote in a previous course as a student. As the end of the semester, I recited my revised poem below at the poetry reading night, and it gave other poet-teachers the opportunity to laugh and co-witness, which created a unique relationship between the researcher and the participants as a form of artful engagement and manifestation.

Door of Poetry

by Yohan Hwang

Trembling hand chaps the door, "Knock, Knock, Knock."
"………." Nobody answers. We crumble our poem draft,
titled Mountain, and put it into the paper-key door lock.

"Beep, Beep, Beep." Lock scowls at our paper -
"Big abstraction, Boring cliché, Bad craft."
Rejection letter crawls out: "Novice! Come later."

Sigh! We are lost in thought with our eyes shut
dreaming of a *Kapow** hunter chasing a fresh prey
at the Mountain. Creative Thoughts called *MCT**.

We insert the revision and cast our fear away.
"Clank." We shove the knob and make our entry.
Creaking of the hinges whispers on our way.

"Welcome to the world of poetry"
The door becomes open spouting its sheer joy.

* Kapow: It imitates the comic book action figure expressing surprise.
* MCT: Abbreviation of professor's full name (Melisa Cahnmann-Taylor) frequently
used in her written feedback to students

CHAPTER 6

WHAT IS MEANS TO BE A POET-TEACHER

This chapter reports the findings regarding the varied contributions the experiences of poetry writing made toward the construction of students' TESOL teacher identities as poet-teachers, and how they intended to apply it to their L2 teaching. The inductive and deductive coding analysis of students' portfolios, classroom discourse, and interviews illustrated that the poet-teacher identity emerged, as seen in the figure below, from distinctive angles (creative, unscripted, concise, communicative, and cultural teaching) as a cyclical and never-ending process.

Figure 6. Becoming a Poet-Teacher

Specifically, the prospective TESOL educators did not perceive each identity as a separate entity. Instead, they conceived the poet-teacher as someone who has multiple identities by giving each a voice and letting those voices harmonize to make L2 instruction meaningful, in

particular by breaking out of the traditional grammar and examination-oriented pedagogies in their home countries. A few poet-teachers sometimes affirmed that poetry was small, trivial, and unimportant compared to "real" courses, but all poet-teachers reaffirmed in interviews and essays that poetry is unique, unprecedented, and important for creating a *different* learning environment. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, having this kind of teacher identity plays a crucial role as an initial step in breaking down the wall of standardization and skillization that the traditional EFL system of instruction has unwittingly created. The poet-teachers in training did not argue that they can change the EFL education system with poetry, but they started to feel that poetry can impact on the improvement and refinement of EFL students' English knowledge and ability in many ways. In the remainder of this chapter, I will report on the promise of this finding based on each identity in Figure 6.

6.1 Creative Teaching: Cultivating Creativity

The first theme reveals that the experience of poetry writing helped the poet-teachers in training to recognize the importance of creative teaching in order to interact with their students in an unprecedented and a more inventive way than grammar and examination-oriented classrooms. The following excerpts show how they connected this unfolding poet-teacher identity to meaningful L2 literacy instruction, especially in comparison with a traditional EFL instruction.

> Lu: I realized that when composing a poem, we really need to be creative and imaginative. This is also important in teaching a second language. I would like my class to be full of creativity instead of the traditional rigid way of teaching rules of grammar and vocabulary. When teaching, I will shun the traditional EFL teaching method, which involves a teacher doing most of the talking while students [are] busy taking notes. I want them to write their own meaning.

Hanpin: Think about EFL education in China, I feel our English classes are mostly

grammar and vocabulary instruction, and this makes students bored to death. They have

absolutely no interest in learning English because the textbooks are boring, the classes are

boring, plus a lack of activities in class and mediocre teaching method. But [With poetry]

we can be imaginative and original and put our own ideas into our teaching by adjusting

our traditional instruction.

In the same vein, as seen in Kexin's essay below, three of the poet-teachers in training

perceived the potential of connecting poetry writing and L2 teaching as a way to liberate their

students from the standardized testing culture in EFL education because poetry invites L2

learners into a practice of writing from their experience, observation, and reflection.

Kexin: Reading or writing poetry would have more positive and profound influence on

the tired teenagers from exams. I believe that poetry writing would not only change their

attitudes toward English language but also encourage them [to] have more sensitive

feelings and critical reflection on their expressions and experiences. Thus, as a poet-

teacher, I would like to help students focus on every triggering moment of their life, not

about the scores on the test.

Importantly, the discussion about the positive influence of poetry did not dwell only on

"why," but also looked for "how." The analysis of the data revealed that the construction of the

poet-teacher's identity was in accord with his or her recognition of the importance of the use of

creative pedagogies and activities in a classroom. In other words, mindful of the importance of

creativity, the poet-teachers strived to find a way to make the L2 classroom more fun and

engaging, where new things could be tried and risk-taking is encouraged, leading to a learning

experience for their students that is possibly even exhilarating. For example, four of the poet-

teachers illustrated how poetry expanded their perception of L2 teaching as a way to facilitate playful and interactive learning experiences by combing through other teaching methods. One of the poet-teachers, Zihan, made a connection in her essay between poetry and the Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS) method.

> Zihan: Writing poetry is storytelling our feelings and is a long-term process necessary to taste [t]he joy that poets find in playing with words to express ourselves. Like poetry, making a high-quality story is also a time-consuming work. Students should revise again and again to make sure the story meets the requirement of a TPRS class. The first story created usually has the worst- many things [that] need to be fixed. We need to go over the plot of the story and meaning of poetry and continue to think for new ideas and experiences.

Even though Zihan's argument of what else it is that poetry writing, story-telling and creation have in common was not fully developed, she started to feel that the nature of poetry writing and story-telling is somewhat connected in the addition of specific, personal, lived details to writing. In fact, any kind of craft issues to which the story teller attends (e.g., plot, character development, pacing as opposed to fresh diction, rhythm, and plaiting) are similar to the craft skills that poets deal with (Harjo & Leen, 1995). I was able to find more information on this connection by listening to her in an interview.

> Zihan: I realized that crafting poems is just like crafting your stories. Both need to be focusing on the receiver. In poems it is like a reader, right? and story[-telling] is like listener. So based on the requirements, students need to craft them [poetry and story].. to make them easier to [be] accept[ed] as a second language. So, in my [future] classroom, I need to craft the [teaching] contents which definitely makes sense and I also need to craft

activity…. [though] more repetition about some specific words or structures that I want to
teach.

In the same vein, another poet-teacher, Xiao, explained the benefit of this artful
partnership between poetry and creative L2 teaching strategies that engages learners with
inventive and jointly productive language learning. She noted this quality in her essay in terms of
improvisation and creativity.

Xiao: We could create drama with poetry and teaching English through dramatization and
improvisation. Teachers could choose poems with strong emotions, feelings, attitudes or
ideas, and invite students to interpret the poems with non-verbal communicative aspects
of language (body language, gestures, and facial expression). This process involves
students physically, emotionally, and cognitively in the language learning process, and
enables students to explore and feel the linguistic aspects of the text without
concentrating on the mechanics of language.

Put together, by adopting various interactive activities from multiple genres and methods,
the poet-teachers in training perceived the connection between poetry and L2 teaching as a
necessarily creative way to make a classroom where a teacher can meet students' needs and
increase their motivation. These findings may help us to understand why and how poetry writing
can help L2 teachers move from a scripted banking approach where a teacher considers students
"as empty containers to be 'filled' by deposits of information" (Lim, 2014, p. 133) to an
improvisational and artistic practice of teaching (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2008) as
Qing stated in her essay:

Qing: As poets play with words to make their poems more powerful and effective for the
readers, teachers [should] play with different strategies to create an effective class for

students. There is no one perfect teaching strategy. Teachers should try to find the creative strategy that can best serve their students goals and can benefit their students the most.

6.2 Unscripted Teaching: Seeking Surprise

"Poets are dedicated to providing great discoveries and inspiration for every aspect of our lives. For us, as language educators and emerging poets, it is no doubt that poetry and language education are closely related to each other because we seek for that unexpected moment of learning."

As one of the poet-teachers, Wiekang, mentioned in his essay above, another important feature of the new TESOL teacher identity that I found nourished by poetry writing was the importance of cultivating the moments of "surprise." Cahnmann-Taylor and Hwang (submitted manuscript, 2016) argue that learning to become an artist-teacher means learning to see 'what is' and imagine 'what if' and 'what might be.' This has an important connection to L2 teaching because there is no way to predict everything that will occur in the classroom no matter how well teachers' scripted plans and/or intentions are developed. Through the experiences of poetry writing, the poet-teachers learned about the importance of an unscripted lesson based mainly on two methods – developing a fresh meaning and playing with a form/structure of poetry – in their attempt to surprise readers. Firstly, the poetic habit of cultivating surprises frequently resulted from the process of searching for creative and fresh diction and avoiding clichés and familiar word couplings, when describing the ideas and subject matter that they were writing about. One poet-teacher, Liyun, explained in her essay how poetry writing can help L2 students learn from this practice, especially in extending their vocabularies.

Liyun: Word choice in poetry is quite different from the word choice in formal academic writings. For example, normally students will learn the most frequent word, laugh, first. But there are different ways of laughing in poetry. Words like sneer, guffaw, giggle, smirk all contains the meaning of laugh. Using these words rather than the basic word, laugh, can help the poet to convey more surprise to readers. [In poetry writing], L2 learners can see and learn those low frequencies but meaningful words in authentic contexts.

Other poet-teachers, like Weikang and Chau, made the connection between avoiding clichés in poetry and keeping their practices of English teaching fresh and surprising.

Weikang: To avoid cliché is another indispensable feature in writing poetry, because clichés go hand in hand with norms and conventions. In language instruction, we also should aim to avoid cliché in teaching our students such as mechanical memorization and grammar tests.

Chau: If a poet invests time and energy in observing and finding "ripe subjects" from very common objects, he/she can successfully overcome using cliché and produce authentic and fresh meaning. Similarly, if a teacher appropriately takes avoiding cliché into consideration, he/she can prevent himself/herself from teaching what has been already taught, but can design suitable lessons that effectively cater to students' true needs.

As seen above, the effort to use fresh diction and stay away from clichéd language in poetry writing helped the poet-teachers in training realize the importance of surprising their students in the L2 classroom. Interestingly, the importance of seeking "surprise" was cultivated not only by the choice of language and subject matter but also by the act of playing with the

structure of a poem. One of the poetry crafting skills frequently discussed in the classroom was enjambment which refers to a sentence without a pause beyond the end of a line (Boisseu, Wallace, & Mann, 2012). The course instructor often pointed out the importance of enjambment in class; for example, she mentioned in the workshop that "I think each line ending and each line beginning is the opportunity to bring the reader's attention in a new way, that's why we need enjambment to think about off-rhyme and slant rhyme, even internal rhymes." The following excerpt shows what Qing learned from this poetry writing technique and how it influenced her own practices of L2 teaching.

> Qing: Enjambment helps a line end surprisingly which could make the line have a different meaning. The poems become more engaging with these surprises because they inspire readers' curiosity to find what is going to happen. As for teaching, it may not be a wise choice to use the same way to teach classes every day. If teachers keep doing this and do not make any changes, they may end up losing students' interest and motivation. To avoid that happening, teachers are encouraged to teach in a more creative and flexible way to help students get surprised and be more likely to concentrate on their study.

Including Qing, four of the poet-teachers in training considered that they learned how to cultivate the moments of "surprises" for both readers and students by learning how to use enjambment to play with lines that freshen up the poem and open up multiple possibilities with unexpected ending words. Interestingly, Elizabeth further integrated this poet-teacher identity into the design of lesson plans and the school curriculum.

> Elizabeth: Writing lesson plans and teaching within the constraints of a school district's curriculum and required state standards is very similar to writing poems with strict meter, or a poem that has end-stopped every line. You can feel stifled or frustrated by the

difficulty of fitting the pattern, like you're trying to force yourself into an unfamiliar

contortion, and frustration can mount. There is such rigidity and predictability, making

the poem or lesson seem old, worn, or boring. However, when you use enjambment, you

weave in elements of flexibility and uniqueness. Strict requirements to teach specific

standards and use specified curriculum could conjure those same feelings of confinement

and boredom. However, when you weave in elements of surprise, novel resources and

tools, and your unique teaching style, you find, like enjambment in poems of strict meter,

that you can still find yourself in the midst of the constraints.

Kowit (2011) states: "poetry is too elusive and surprising to be plotted in advance" (p.

62). This applied equally to the practice of L2 teaching as the poet-teachers pointed out in their

essays. Three of the poet-teachers made an explicit connection between poetry writing and

approaching L2 instruction in terms of unexpected and fresh ways of teaching. The following

narratives show how they learned to enrich their English classrooms by surprising one another

and pursuing what is not yet known in order to accomplish something unexpected in both their

professional and personal relationships.

Xuanping: We go into the classroom expecting certain outcomes from the lessons we

plan, but in the end, some of the most incredible results are unexpected. Like in poetry

writing, the poem you end up with may not be what you had expected- and all the better.

We experiment in order to surprise ourselves, to find out what we don't know, to clarify

what we're trying to discover.

Elizabeth: How bland and boring our job would be as a poet and teacher if everything

was plotted, calculated, and predictable! The unpredictability of precisely how students

will interact with the content is what is so refreshing and enlightening.

Chau: In poem, if you say everything, if it is too straightforward, it's not interesting anymore. I found that it's important in everything. In your relationship, sometimes you surprise your wife or your husband, it's good. And now when you're teaching, sometimes you surprise your students with new thing and new knowledge. It's also very interesting and I found it one of the most useful things that I learned.

Overall, the analysis of poet-teachers' interviews and essays revealed that the practice of playing with words and lines in poetry writing helped the poet-teachers cultivate the moments of "surprise" not only in the finished poems but also in their future L2 classrooms. Robert Frost says: "No surprise for the writer, no surprise for the reader." If this is a famous mantra in creative writing, then why not for TESOL? No surprise for the TESOL teacher, no surprise for the ESOL students (Cahnmann-Taylor & Hwang, submitted manuscript, 2016).

6.3 Concise Teaching: Applying Less is More

Another significant finding of the emerging poet-teacher identities was the importance of concise teaching; this was fundamentally derived from two of the poetic techniques, "less is more," a popular and powerful idea for teaching with short and provocative text, as well as "show, don't tell," often employed in various literary texts to enable the reader to experience a writer's emotions and feelings rather than just reading the writer's detailed exposition or full description (Warren, 2011). When it comes to poetry writing, the first technique helps writers use deliberate word choices in a limited poetic format and space, and the latter helps writers not say too much in a poem, encouraging them to conserve energy while delivering meaning that can still be fully appreciated.

During the poetry workshop, one poet-teacher in training, Chengyuan, asked the course instructor about the difference between telling and showing in poetry: "I know we are trying to

write a poem by showing not telling, but when I'm writing this poem, I'm telling a story, not to show a poem. So, how make the difference between [the] two?" The instructor responded: "That definition has plagued writers for centuries. But I think poetry is just the absolute compression of language, so it's weighing every word." In fact, throughout the fifteen weeks of the course, the poet-teachers were trained in how to compress their thoughts and meanings into fewer words and more condensed expressions. Qing reported the benefit of this practice in her essay as seen in the following excerpt:

> Qing: Using succinct and refined words, a poet leads his readers to look, listen, smell, and feel everything in the world that he created. On this journey, too many words can be a big distraction, which weaken[s] readers' spirit of exploration and sense of achievement. A refined way of showing our expression contributes to both [a] challenging and interesting adventure. Only a few words are adequate to guide readers' to follow the poet's footprints.

As seen above, the poet-teachers realized the importance of "less is more" that is to not state the obvious, but to show enough that readers can gather a strong impression of their poems' meanings. Seven poet-teachers discussed what they learned from "less is more" in relation to the practice of concise teaching in their future L2 classrooms in their essays.

> Qing: Students are readers for teachers' instructions. It is not wise to tell students all the information they ask for. First, students may become so dependent on the information from their teachers that they forget they have enough information to solve problems on their own, which would not foster their independent thinking and critical thinking.
>
> Elizabeth: Giving too much information may cause confusion and misunderstanding. Students have limited attention spans, especially younger kids. A class without clear and

succinct instructions will end up increasing students' Affective Filter and decreasing their

motivations. Therefore, to build an efficient class, teachers are expected to give more

concise instructions and provide more opportunities for students to explore and work on

their own.

While another poet-teacher, Xiao, argued in her essay that the power of this habit of "less

is more" can even be applied specifically to the grammar lessons, Xuanping applied this lesson

to the practice of EFL teaching as a whole, focusing on the current situation in her home country

in general.

Xiao: [Like poetry writing], teachers do not necessarily use a wordy explanation to

persuade students [of] the importance of grammatical structures. They can just simply

provide students with sufficient input and examples, students will work out the

significance of grammatical structures themselves. Indeed, less is more.

Xaunping: Learning to write poems is the process of using less words to convey more

meaning. The short condensed lines could better express event, emotion, and meaning

than long explanatory articles. From this process, I learnt less content could convey more

things. As a future EFL teacher in China, I would strongly insist on this teaching belief.

Chinese students' lives are totally disasters. They are fed with all kinds of knowledge in

the classroom. They spent almost every minute remembering knowledge, even though

they do not fully understand it and it always keep students being "hungry" about

knowledge. I think this is the best illustration of "less is more."

In conclusion, Robert Browning, a famous English poet and playwright, argues that we

need to summarize what we intend to say in writing poems and make our poems as concise as

possible (Mock, 1998). The findings discussed in this section support his argument in that the

poetic habit of "less is more" and "show, don't tell" can help L2 teachers to choose concise ways of creatively presenting their teaching ideas and contents in order to avoid ambiguities that may confuse and overwhelm students, possibly leading them to get bored and/or lost on the long and never-ending road of L2 learning.

6.4 Communicative Teaching: Connecting Writing with Speaking

In developing a poetic craft, poet-teachers in training studied the writing devices designed to create special music and sound (e.g., rhyme, repetition/patterns, alliteration, line-breaks, onomatopoeia, assonance, and consonance). Trained by this writing practice that makes rhythm, six of poet-teachers pointed out the potential of poetry as a communicative and performative way of L2 learning and teaching. The following excerpts from their essays show how they connected the power of the rhythmic devices of poetry to their future practice of L2 teaching, especially focusing on how it could be employed to challenge the traditional EFL context that lacks opportunities to practice oral and communicative English.

> Liyun: Involving poetry-related activities in EFL classrooms is a good way to improve L2 learners' oral competence. In traditional language classes, students' development of oral competence is usually in a laissez-faire condition. Therefore, in EFL settings, learners have limited access to expose to authentic English conversation. However, poetry is a language art that applies those natural rhythms of spoken language. Teaching poems not only requires learners to read those poems, it also requires students to read them aloud.

> Kexin: For intermediate and advanced L2 learners, what weakens their oral competence is not the pronunciation of English phonemes, but is their intonation, stress, rhythm, syllables, and voice pacing. Traditional L2 oral activities pay more attention to the accuracy of the pronunciation of each word. But involving poem-related activities in EFL

classrooms permits teachers and learners to notice those forgotten aspects. Teachers can teach the idea of stressed and unstressed syllables as reading aloud poems can let the learners experience a regular pattern alternating between stressed and unstressed syllables, which makes the sound more natural and rhythmic.

This finding suggests that the musical aspects of poetry writing can be a powerful literacy teaching tool in L2 classrooms because it reinforces learners' attention to the sound of language and patterning of linguistic elements, which cannot be found as easily in other literary genres (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2009; Reilly, 2012). In the same vein, Cahnmann-Taylor et al (2016) show the example of how Chinese students in a poetry course changed their understanding of the English word "Morning" as the two syllables and two different words (Mor-Ning) to one sound system by stressing the word correctly while studying meter in English poetry. The following three excerpts provide a more persuasive illustration of how the musical nature of poetry writing and reading aloud changed the essence of the teacher identity as an artist for the TESOL educators.

> Elizabeth: In order to create sonic dancing in poems or in the classroom, creativity and conscious attention to sound must be made by the poet and teacher. Both good poems and quality teaching require an artistic hand, allowing meter, end stopped lines, rhymes, rhythm, and enjambment to work together to create something incredible and enjoyable to those who experience and feel it.

> Xaunping: Chinese EFL learners sometimes still sounds having a strong accent not because of the inaccurate pronunciation. They just transfer the Chinese intonation and stressed pattern to English. The pause in the poems is also a great opportunity for learners to experience the pacing of spoken English. End-stopped lines, emjambed lines, and

caesura let learners to experience different rhythm of language to convey the feeling and build the mood. Different from other reading activities that only require students to do silent readings in class, reading aloud those lines and hearing the resonance of those sounds enables learners to experience the beauty of the spoken language.

Chau: Although giving students lots of freedom to learn by themselves, language educators should keep in mind that we should control the rhythm of their learning. Maybe the rhythm here is not exact the same it in a poetry, it means language educators should pay more attention on their reflection on the certain kind of knowledge.

In conclusion, the practice of using musical devices in poetry writing helped the poet-teachers in training to recognize the importance of making a connection between writing, reading and speaking in English language learning. They also grew to believe that this connection can help L2 learners understand writing as an essential product of their interaction with the readers and audience at large. Zihan reported in her evaluation that this was a different impression from the one she got from the traditional writing experience in EFL classrooms where the students' target audience is only limited to a professor who assigns a grade. Therefore, it can be suggested that immersing L2 learners in poetry writing may gradually and intrinsically shape their artistic perception toward L2 writing as a communication tool through a newly acquired sensitivity to the continuum of writing, reading, and speaking.

6.5 Cultural Teaching: Cultivating Multicultural Awareness

How poetry writing helped the international TESOL students reveal their cultural identity and sociocultural voices is already discussed in Chapter 4. Similarly, another finding in the construction of the poet-teacher identity was the importance of cultural teaching increasing multicultural awareness. Five poet-teachers illustrated in their essays that poetry writing served

them as a cultural learning tool for examining how the meaning of a certain word or expression

is culturally shaped and socially used in the target language community. The following excerpts

show how they learned about Western culture from the experience of poetry writing and why it is

needed in L2 education.

> Lu: In order to express myself appropriately [in poetry], I searched the internet to learn
>
> more American culture to make the content of my poem more understandable. I
>
> understood that learning how to write a poem is a part of learning how to learn a target
>
> language. Culture and language is so close that we cannot only learn of one of them and
>
> ignore the other one. I did learn a lot of basic poetry knowledge, literary words, and
>
> sociocultural contexts by exploring the meanings of famous poems, which will contribute
>
> to my understanding of the Western world and improve my comprehension of English. I
>
> learned a lot of cultural phrase[s] and typical expressions in English.
>
> Xiaodan: Poetry is a significant part of culture. I remember Western culture courses I
>
> took during college, simply learning the knowledge of culture would be dull and flat.
>
> Learning culture though poetry interpretation and improvisation would involve every
>
> students' participation and enable this process [to] be vivid and impressive.

Even in the poetry workshop, there were many moments in which the poet-teachers

learned about the culture of others from interpreting the meaning of a poem. For example, when

the class discussed Weikang's poem, *Old Cloth Shoes*, below, the specific culture of China was

discussed, shared, and learned.

Old Cloth Shoes
by Weikang Li

Last pair of cloth shoes was sold in cold weather
Before an old shop folded, in an inconspicuous corner,
I was told by grandpa, that each pair of cloth shoes had

Its untold story, all the old to be told.

When I was walking through dark night streets
Wearing my cloth shoes, and wondering
My cloth shoes' story, I heard a little boy's sobs.
Cries turned louder, as I saw him wandering,

I told him he was safe, and asked for the reason
"I lost my loved cloth shoes while I was chased by a dog."
I looked down at this feet, red with cold in such a season
Ice in his eyes, his face, faded and taut

I removed mine, and gave them to him,
The air of anxiety vanished, the flare of dim
Light became whiter. Wearing my cloth shoes,
He left in the left lane, I began to learn the sooth-

Sayer wasn't always right in telling stories,
At least, the little boy had his cloth shoes story
To tell and share, to earn and own
My story, I'd start from this moment I carry.

The conversation about the multiple possibilities of meaning in the poem that he created allowed the native speaker teacher and the other U.S born peers to learn about the parts of traditional Chinese culture related to cloth shoes as seen in the conversation below.

Yi: I think the metaphor is the old cloth shoes stand for memory with grandfather in his personal story.

Susan: I'm not sure about the title "Old Cloth Shoes" and then the fact that the story starts out talking about the last pair of cloth shoes. I get the impression that this is new for me, to say they have cloth shoes and so I'm really coming to this poem as an outsider. But I get the impression that these are shoes that are not worn anymore, that this is a very old fashioned type of clothing and that this [is] actually not the story of the speaker then maybe but the story of the grandfather?

Course Instructor: Cloth shoes, it's an unusual thing now in contemporary society…there are leather shoes and there are cloth shoes but we rarely call them that, but does anyone think they have some insight about the cloth shoes in this store and they're not sold anymore…do you agree with Susan's read? Are these the grandfather's shoes? Are these the speaker's shoes, how old is the speaker? Where are we in time?

Chengyuan: Actually, I think the old cloth shoes is traditional for Chinese people. It's from old tradition of helping others. So, this tradition has been passed over generation by generation. So, we need to pick up this old tradition and help others.

Kunjie: We have a typical black color of cloth shoes, everybody knows that.

Course Instructor: They don't sell them anymore?

Kunjie: They sell them but we don't buy it.

Course Instructor: But do you believe that this younger person would have bought the last pair and given them to another younger, poor person?

Qing: It depends on the size of the shoes.

This conversation may not be compelling proof of cultural learning in and though poetry, but it shows that sharing poetry could at least create a place where a certain cultural expression or perception was learned about, shared, and exchanged. In fact, three poet-teachers identified poetry in their essays as a way of increasing their multicultural awareness and more importantly as a powerful tool for encouraging cultural engagement in their future EFL classrooms where, at present, the importance of cultural aspects of language learning is mostly neglected. For example, Yi noted in her essay:

Yi: I gradually learned to appreciate the beauty of the clarity and sometimes bold way to express in English poems. It made me think that the difference probably is a good

example of cultural difference and a starting point of bringing awareness of students'

identity as a Chinese. Students who stay in one culture normally don't realize their own

cultural identity until they have [been] exposed to something else. Like poetry, we see the

difference between classical western painting which pursue for "photo-like" effect and

classical Chinese painting using simple lines and colors to sketch the impression of a big

picture. The difference indicates and even influences the way we think. Through poetry,

we open a window to see a different way to think and act. By asking students to write

poetry in English, it inevitably requires them to see the world differently, and express

their thoughts and feeling a way in which considered "wrong" in their own language

context. This *experience* [emphasis added] is valuable to know another culture as well as

reflect on their own cultural identity.

This finding is also closely related to the philosophical understanding of Dewey's "Art as

Experience." His approach to the arts focuses on *experience*. Dewey (1934/2005) argues that as

the product of the artist is experienced by the perceiver, the real art cannot be made from this

experience and *life* of both a producer and a perceiver. To be specific, by introducing Matisse's

quote that says "when a painting is finished, it is like a new-born child. The artist himself must

have time for understanding it" (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 111), he highlights that the artist

"assimilates material in a distinctive way to reissue it into the public world in a form that builds a

new object" (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 112).

All things considered, the component of poetry that is cultural in nature allowed the poet-

teachers as artists to *experience* the similarities and differences and to be more sensitive to the

importance of helping L2 learners learn about different aspects of a target language and culture,

increasing multicultural awareness. This poet-teacher identity is especially powerful in a

classroom where the educators are bilingual themselves and desire to become multicultural language teachers that care about their students' culture. According to Maynard and Chanmann-Taylor (2010), "poetry can provide important insights, summing up for both insiders and outsiders alike the 'essential' gist of our most dearly held, often tacit cultural assumptions by displaying writing about difference and similarities with no easy, determinate answers, and by engaging in the tension between community insiders/outsiders" (p. 10). In this sense, poetry writing can be a creative and effective way to invite both L2 teachers and learners into the specific culture of self, others, or both in a target language community.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION: WTITE AS WHO YOU ARE

This chapter provides a discussion of how the qualities of artistic engagement and magnifications helped me more actively engage in a given research issue of poetry-based learning in TESOL teacher preparation. Based on my narrative and my own poems crafted during this empirical project, it discusses how the arts-based representations were manifested in international students' art work of poetry writing and were connected to one of the study themes: the value and validity of non-nativeness in L2 learning. This chapter lays the foundations of educational implications of this dissertation for the field of TESOL/TEFL in general and in Asia/Korea in particular that will be closely discussed in the following conclusion chapter.

On the Way Out of the Writing Center[7]

by Yohan Hwang

Teacher's red nib
scours, teases, and commands:

> *Write as natives write.*
> *Speak as natives speak.*
> *Think as natives think.*

It pokes me. But how
I can be what I'm not?

I need to ink my
정체성 (Jung-Chae-Sung)[8] somewhere.
I tap at Poetry's door where:

> *I write as I write.*

---

[7] This poem was written and revised during Fall 2014 in the time of this research.
[8] "Identity"

> *I speak as I speak.*
> *I think as I think.*

In the early years of my graduate studies in the United States, I could feel a bit thankful that my English writing skill had gradually improved because I had to write for *survival* in a new academic context, but as a previous EFL student raised with the habit of passive learning of grammatical rules, I was always concerned about perfect grammar and had to fight to write the way native speakers do. As a result, I frequently went to the writing center on campus, looking for a native speaker who could "fix" my paper's grammar and forms. The tutor's corrections were very helpful indeed, so much so that they not only kept my language from being deficient, but they also helped me learn about the formal conventions of academic writing. However, on the way of out of the writing center, while reviewing the so many red marks the tutor put on the rough draft, I felt tired of forcing myself to adhere to the rigid rules of grammar of mindlessly copying how native speakers write. I needed some place to take a rest, so I sat down in front of the building and wrote the poem above.

While getting a K-12 education and my undergraduate degree in South Korea, I had never thought about writing a poem in English. Even though I had written more than 80 poems at the time in my native language, considering myself a creative writer, most of the English courses that I experienced limited my creative thinking process in L2 writing. I can place the blame for my creative writing incompetence in English upon the failure of the system of EFL education, which focuses only on rote memorization and on passive learning of scripted grammar for a better score (Park, 2010). However, beyond the teaching style, it was neoliberal ideology, driven by capital with a high exchange value rather than a unique way of developing my thoughts, that made the English language incompatible with my Korean identity, which resulted in just following the rules in order to be seen as a native speaker of English on paper. Of course, there

are many conventional rules in writing a poem that must be followed and correct grammar

matters, but as revealed in the findings of this dissertation, poetry writing was a "different"

experience. Especially, it allowed me a different type of freedom that I seldom was allowed to

exercise in South Korea because poetry asks me to pursue alternative hybrid identities,

embracing my L1 identities in and through creative L2 uses. In many EFL contexts, it is still true

that teachers are making extreme efforts to make their students be more "native-like" (Auerbach,

1995; Phillipson, 1992). Anderson and Kohler (2012) warn that this approach and pedagogy are

unwittingly getting rid of learners' original cultural and linguistic identities, which is too

valuable to be forgotten.

    As of the time of this writing [July 2016], I have returned from the U.S. to my home

country, South Korea, for one year, and I am now teaching "University English" courses at

several universities as a lecturer. I return to find that "standard English" is still the unquestioned

norm to which English departments aspire for their students. Park (2010) explains this situation

in terms of the "The English Frenzy" and "Neoliberal Governmentality":

> "English is a particularly apt index of the entrepreneurial self, because, as a foreign
> language, it can never be fully achieved to the standards of a "native speaker"; thus, the
> task of securing good English skills is also an endless one, iconically capturing the
> essence of the neoliberal ideal of continuous self-development. The anxiety generated by
> this perpetuity motivates parents' investments in their children's English language skills,
> for it is often believed that early exposure to English will allow the child to break away
> from the cursed body of the non-native speaker doomed to a life lacking in human capital
> (p. 27).

    In Korea, the levels of "native-like" aspiration in teaching English rely on written

proficiency as well as spoken, and even the dramatic height of surgery. Specifically, for better

English pronunciation, tongue operations have been a trend in South Korea for several decades

(Choe, 2004), which is often forced on children at an early age by their parents who might

believe that the tongue is the one that speaks English. Of course, overcoming our natural

pronunciation difficulty such as "R/L" and "P/F" distinction is important for better

communication; however, as mentioned in the introductory chapter, the aspiration for standard

language pronunciation has often gone too far, resulting in what Park (2010) would call "English

Frenzy." He states that such ideology for English learning is "rooted in one's becoming of a

neoliberal subject, whose anxieties over one's lack of valued linguistic capital and aspirations for

social advancement through English translate into the project of self-fulfillment" (p. 27).

The drive and even lunacy to have native-like accents is everywhere in contemporary

Korean society where the English education industry is spending 15 trillion won ($15.8 billion)

per year (Jeon & Choi, 2006). In this ultra-competitive setting, when students are making efforts

to improve their English speaking and writing skills in the classroom, they frequently find that

their first cultural and linguistic backgrounds turn out to be obstacles that stand in the way of the

goal of being "native-like," which often causes their original identities to be disregarded or

unvalued. This issue has to be reconsidered because, as discussed in the previous finding

chapters, L2 learners' first language, past experiences, and cultural background are what make

them unique and significant, which serves as a means to critically reflect upon their own culture

and foster multicultural perspectives (Agar, 1994). This is one of the most important reasons of

L2 learning as Pavelenko (1997) argues that "the process of successful L2 learning necessitates

reconstruction of one's linguistic, cultural and social identity, or at the least the development of

new ones" (p. 80). In the same vein, Courtivron (2003) notes in her book, *Lives in Translation:*

Bilingual Writers on Identity and Creativity, that "you can never sidestep the question of identity

when you learn to live in a new language" (p. 4). From the analysis of thematic organization of

poetry written by the international students, I saw that poetry often became a mechanism for

second language writers to exorcise negative and/or painful emotions and turn their frustrations

into a more positive feeling and outlook toward their identities as non-native speakers of English.

For example, one of the poet-teachers in training, Zihan, vented her frustration as a non-native

speaker of English in a phonology class, which provides alternative ways to view nonnative

speaker's sound systems.

Physics of Sound -Non Native Speaker's Linguistic Homework

> **by Zihan Lin**
>
> The diagram is too cool for me to understand,
> *Sinusoid, millisecond, frequency of sound.*
> This is science,
> Familiar to me in high school, now
> we are strangers.
>
> Put it aside, save me from a glimpse.
> Sinewaves, like snakes.
> Cover it with textbooks, as if
> I cunningly escaped from tangling with homework.
>
> I am sensitive to the sound spectrum's
> delicateness, unique.
> Like water sleeves for *Tsing Yi**;
> going through time and space is sweet and soft singing.
> I don't wear a calculator on my sleeve.
>
> I can't figure out the sound spectrum.
> But I can speak English.
> Play with it, rock it, make fun of my Chinglish.
> I can't make every sound right,
> Well, not a big deal-
> the accent is the postcard of identity.
>
> ** Water sleeves: actress's long sleeves in opera.*
> *Tsing Yi: one kind of actress role in Beijing opera.*

This powerful poem draws attention to the extent to where there is tongue surgery to cut-

out non-native sounds; to the violence against children to become what they are not to "fix" an

identity which should be loved and praised. In fact, sharing this poem encouraged other

international peers who had experienced similar issues to appreciate the unique value of being a native speaker:

> The researcher: I love "The accent is the postcard of identity" because every postcard looks different but valued as is.

> Chengyuan: I think even though you make a wrong sound, it is not so important because it is identity as where all international students will kind of speak as a native speaker... so this is identity...could help us to understand ourselves well.

> Xiao: I don't think it's a shame to admit that we are foreigners. Maybe we have accents but, I mean, we're in the process of being...so we can just keep trying and admit that we are learning and we can do better, we can grow.

Likewise, poetry served the second language writers as a place to understand and appreciate non-native value and validity in L2 learning. Beyond the subject matter, the professor in the poetry course often told the students during the workshop: "Sometimes poems benefit from non-standard English because being in the voice of a non-native speaker is more interesting." As revealed in this dissertation, poetry writing provided international students with both interpretive and critical eyes to observe people, events, and environments while living with two languages and cultures, which was often conveyed through their unique viewpoints on ambiguity/inequality and cultural identity/triumph. Therefore, it can be suggested that poetry writing can invite L2 learners as human entities to reveal their voices and emotions in L2 writing as who they are. Through this process, poetry writing can give them a different experience of L2 learning as Chengyuan indicated in his essay: "Each time when I was planning a new poem, I was provided a chance of reviewing my experiences and emotions, which further clarified my identities as non-native speaker and made myself become more 'me.'

Bly (2008) highlights that the artistic leap can bridge the gap between conscious and unconscious thought in any great work of art. He further argues that "the real joy of poetry is to experience this leaping inside a poem. A poet who is "leaping" makes a jump from an object soaked in unconscious substance to an object or idea soaked in conscious psychic substance" (p. 4). I come to poetry as the great work of art, not simply following someone else's rules and just filling the words in the five-paragraphs of a paper. Instead, by following this "leaping" to reveal my own voice and identity, I come to poetry truly filling the world from my past/current experiences, cultural backgrounds and even with my first language, which makes me and my writing unique and special. I find that poetry is the only literary genre where non-native value and validity of L2 learners can be appreciated in the process of knowing what their meaning and intentions are as well as where their hybridized and bilingual identities can be praised and loved in the process of revealing their voice as who they are.

My Current Story and Poems

Now, I am planning the lessons plans for my upcoming English classes in Korea from August 2016. As an EFL instructor, I hope to help my students come to L2 writing as a place where they can develop as productive meaning-making rather than as reproductive users, creating their own meanings in L2. Just as the poems helped me to arrive at this point, I deeply ponder how I can be a teacher who invites students to view the study of the form/structure of English as a fundamentally creative process that manifests future possibilities (Vygotsky, 2004). In addition to this, by understanding EFL learners' refined experiences and unrefined feelings, I want to be a teacher who engenders new connections and relationships in the classroom, exploring their emotions, identities and sociocultural experiences. Now looking back over the past two years that I was involved in this empirical research, I truly enjoyed the process of

becoming a poet-teacher-researcher. The analysis of poetry-based learning in TESOL teacher

training helped me rethink and recast what is possible to which Koreans will go to "sound" and

"look" native and the ways where the L2 education in many Asian EFL contexts should go

further. Poetry is the literacy answer and my brave choice in this poetic journey within an

English education system of South Korea.

10 Pounds Love (Hwang, 2013)

by Yohan Hwang

Bilinguals frequently report feeling a higher emotional weight in their native language
and experiencing reduced emotion when using their second language (Pavlenko, 2005)

I don't know how to measure *love* in pound.
Many times I've used *love* in English expression
I need an emotional scale to weigh *love* instead.

I've never made *love* lighter, desperate, dead,
but I experience less resonance in English emotion.
I don't know how to measure *love* in pound.

because in South Korea, we allow kilogram to be measured.
10 pounds of love are enough? There's no answer to this question.
I need an emotional convertor to weigh *love* instead.

All over the world, love's color is red
but we all have different redness in our perception.
I don't know how to measure *love* in emotional rebounds.

Convertor teaches me 4.3 kg is equal to 10 pounds
Well, it was not heavy enough to seed my affection
I needed an emotional convertor to weigh *love* instead

I feel much more from 사랑해 (sarang-hae)[9] you said.

Vivid smell of *love* still lingers on my impression.
I don't know how to measure *love* in pound.

I need 사랑 (sarang)[10] to weigh your *love* instead.

---

[9] "I love you"
[10] "love"

Please Do Not Say a Period

by Yohan Hwang

A text message vibrates in the dead of night: We are done.
 I hear echoing silence from a period and voice of drop.
From the letters *we*, you and me have come down to none.
From compressed lips, we're choked to full stop.

It is not just punctuation you put at the end,
a strangulating mark that squeezes my spirit to death.
Please, for me, don't hide its little tail that I can hold;
Please, for you and me, don't draw our last breath.

It's not just rounded-marks nailed down by hammers,
but a tiny sink that drains and rinses your affection.
The drainage hole's clogged by memories we share,
Please, for us, do not unclog my confession.

If you put a single dot in Korean letters, 님(Nim), "a lover,"

it comes down to 남(Nam) which means "a stranger."

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

The current study documented and analyzed the experiences and interactions which international graduate TESOL students had themselves while writing, sharing, critiquing, and revising poetic crafts in a poetry course. In this investigation, the aim was to examine the variety of ways that poetry may offer a rich resource for meaningful L2 education and to illuminate possible contributions poetry-based learning can make toward the art of international TESOL teacher preparation. The results of this study provided many insights on "why" poetry-based learning matters and laid the foundation stone for "how to use" arts in the L2 classroom. Based on the brief summary of the research findings discussed in the previous chapters, this final chapter concludes the current dissertation in two parts. The first section discusses some implications of poetry-based learning and meaning-making focused pedagogies in L2 education, especially in East Asian EFL contexts. The second part presents several limitations of the current study then suggests a number of possible future studies using the more natural and controlled experimental set up.

8.1 Pedagogical Implications

Firstly, this study revealed that poetry served L2 learners as a powerful medium for evoking their emotions and voices through self-discovery and personally meaningful experiences, which impacted on their L2 identification by giving them a special feeling of writing with pride, accomplishment and freedom. Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) demonstrated that "if I *feel* [emphasis added] physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry" (as

cited in Buckingham, 1989, p. 194). Corey (2005) adds: "poetry is more than words on a page, it is the interaction and experiences sparked by those words on the page written by a particular human being. In this context, student writing becomes a complex process of understanding, accepting, redefining and loving self (p. 3)". Such quotes proved true in this study. The experience of poetry writing certainly gave international TESOL students/educators a different sense of feeling than mere writing because they followed not someone else's rules, but rather what came from their emotions coming from their autobiographical memories and life experiences. This finding has a significant implication for L2 writing instruction in many EFL writing classrooms that put following grammatical rules front and center and where students are generally objectified by a grade. As poetry often contains students' personal and emotional voices, teachers who encourage poetry writing may have a better understanding of "who they are, what their beliefs are and why this is to… [which] views students as subjects in negotiation with language and the material conditions of existence, not merely as objects" (Gradin, 1995, p. 118).

Secondly, as revealed in Chapter 4, poetry writing usually carries L2 writers' various reflections from sociocultural experiences and the keen observation of objects, events, places, and people around them. This finding is valuable for EFL educators because it implies that poetry writing may be originating from English learners' memories of meaningful moments and practices in their life schemas, instead of from the memorization of vocabulary and grammatical structures. As L2 learners engaged in poetry writing are more likely to observe, explore and develop language choice mediated by sociocultural experiences, in contrast to traditional EFL writing classrooms where L2 learning is often decontextualized, English learners will likely get numerous opportunities to observe real activities and events that are important in English language communities. In addition to this, it will also give English teachers a tool to participate

either directly or indirectly in the events in which their students are embedded. Through this reciprocal process, poetry can invite teachers and learners alike, as human entities, to explore the meaning of language influenced by sociocultural awareness and experiences. In other words, the humanistic sensibility built up in and through cognitive, sociocultural, and linguistic engagements may change the perceptions of EFL teachers and students alike have of language teaching and learning as varied meaning-making processes closely connected with the various domains that they see, hear and feel in the sociocultural world in which they live.

Likewise, this finding can extend EFL teachers' knowledge of writing as a significant sociocultural learning tool in that poetry is both intrinsically and subtly associated with sociocultural awareness. In other words, L2 students in poetry writing can learn language through the expansion of their experiences with a larger human reality via sociocultural exploration. Here emerges an important agenda for a meaningful L2 writing pedagogy for both teachers and students. Since poetry can enhance a learner's understanding of the meaning of a particular content and personal knowledge along with the values of the target language community, poetry-based learning can easily look at issues related to a specific culture and readily incorporate various sociocultural aspects of both L1 and L2. This would maximize cultural learning in the L2 classroom, thus cultivating cross-cultural and multicultural awareness, which is a fundamental element of gaining true fluency in L2 learning. For instance, through the classroom activities using English poetry, EFL students can start to perceive more efficiently the cultural differences between the two cultures and languages. All of the sociocultural learning values of poetry mentioned above are closely related to its potential contribution to creating "translanguaging," which refers to an approach to the practices of bilinguals that "are readily observable in order to make sense of their multilingual worlds to maximize communicative

potential" (Garcia, 2011, p. 140). If poetry-based learning can increase multicultural awareness, EFL teachers can carve the creative moment of sharing bilingual and translingual expressions in terms of biliteracy (Escamilla et al., 2013), "opening up the pedagogical space in ways that legitimate the intelligence, imagination, and linguistic talents of ELL students" (Cummins, 2009, p. xi).

Thirdly, the concept of Poetic ZPD as one of the research findings revealed how meaning-making focused discussion as well as communicative and dialogic collaboration in a structured activity can impact imitation, grammar, vocabulary, authority and other classroom concepts in many global EFL classrooms. According to Vygotsky, both the communicative function and process always happen within a specific activity system, which includes an individual's use of mediational tools and resources that facilitate collaboration with other people. In the framework of P-ZPD, students developed a poetic craft using the scaffolded instructions of a more-experienced poet-teacher and creatively imitated a certain poetic language and form based on an existing design to create their own meanings. Importantly, when their poetic crafts were shared and discussed, as they interacted each other to articulate craft decisions, reflect on them, evaluate those decisions, and plan future decisions, they became more sensitive to the meaning rather than the form of the language because they tended to "play" with the meaning of language by searching for the best diction, perhaps failing but then trying again.

Likewise, L2 writers in poetry-based learning can understand writing as a meaning-making process while making their meanings clear as writers and understanding the meanings of others as readers. In this sense, poetry writing could be an alternative meaning-driven approach to 'communicative' lessons. More importantly, one of the results of this study revealed that in this interactive learning zone, teachers and students had much to learn from one another in the

sense that a teacher can become a co-learner and a student can become a co-teacher. This data suggests that "multiple footings" (Goftman, 1981) can be achieved through poetry-based learning that facilitate the meaning-focused discussion, which in turn creates dialogic engagement and meaning-exchange in the classroom beyond text comprehension and production. In fact, many poet-teachers in training reported that dialogic intervention and creative collaboration for meaning-making in P-ZPD was a different experience from a learning situation with a teacher who mostly looks for errors in grammar and syntax and takes a position as the most knowledgeable person in the discussion or classroom. Instead, they participated in the study of the form/structure of language and understood the acquisition of English vocabulary and grammar as a fundamentally creative process.

According to Vygotsky (2004), "If human activity were limited to reproduction of the old, then the human being would be a creature oriented only to the past and would only be able to adapt to the future to the extent that it reproduced the past. It is precisely human creative activity that makes the human being a creature oriented toward the future, creating the future and thus altering his own present" (p. 9). This discussion of the importance of creativity has great implications for TESOL teacher identity formation to include creativity training. When creative interaction mediated by creative (l)imitation and instruction that facilitates someone's new way of thinking is successful in at the actual developmental level, outcomes can become the most meaningful on the potential developmental level through the enhancement of each person's mediation, regulation, and internalization processes for new meaning-making. In light of this, poetry-based learning can serve as a situated, socioculturally-mediated/-mediating activity, where L2 learners develop their meanings, engaging in the power of creative, collaborative, and dialogic learning, communicating, and acting. The principal theoretical implication of these

results for the EFL classroom is that poetry-based learning can mutually support individual's progress and can be developed as a creative developmental space in the L2 classroom where language teachers also become more advanced L1-L2 learners alongside their students, seeing new perspectives and ideas, and appreciating new meanings of language. It does not always have to be poetry. If the EFL teacher incorporates authentic literary and artistic materials that can encompass social, cultural, and psychological aspects of English language learning and creates a learning space driven by meaning-making processes in collaboration, it can help EFL learners identify themselves as collaborative artists in creative multilingulism (e.g. what might be), rather than merely assisting second language reproduction (what is).

Lastly, some people might intuitively feel that writing poetry cannot benefit language learners other than providing a fun activity for them, but as discussed in this dissertation, it can be, in fact, a practical way for English learners to engage in a safe and comfortable learning space where students can experience the power of creative, dialogic, and interactive learning. In order to maximize this potential of arts-based learning, the role of an artful teacher is important as someone who can provide creative intervention and facilitate dialogic collaboration in many learning situations. As revealed in Chapter 6, this study illuminated the varied contributions the experiences of poetry writing made toward the construction of TESOL teachers' identities as poet-teachers and also the implications for L2 instruction in terms of creative, unscripted, concise, communicative, cultural teaching. The results also showed that the teacher identity as artist can be transformed when individuals collaboratively engage in creative processes where both teachers and learners experience mutual growth and artistic development. Importantly, those who acknowledge the significance of creative and artistic engagement in a classroom may assist their students in developing the same positive attitudes. One of the participants, Chau,

wrote the message below after she came back to her home country in a post-course interview conducted via email:

> "I'm currently part-time English teacher at a junior - senior high school and part-time English lecture at a university in Vietnam. In my opinion, the creative training strongly affects my teaching methodology. Besides traditional teaching periods, I frequently involve students in creative projects and activities. For example, my high school students are currently incorporated in a PSA [Project Management Online] project. Under a big theme, they have to decide the minor theme and devise a story for their own PSA. Creativity is super important here since I'm not the one who provides students with any restricted ideas. What I did is to provide them with extra reading, with class discussions, and also time for group discussion. I encouraged original and impressive messages as well as call for actions in their PSA. I never put too much emphasis on the language itself but through creative learning activities, I want to enhance their participations and also motivations."

8.2 Limitations of the Current Study and Implications for Further Research

This section discusses several limitations of the current research with regard to its scope and methodology and presents the need for further investigation based on some questions that this research has raised. Regarding the limitations of the research context, since most international participants were Chinese, the potential threat to the validity of this study is whether I gathered enough insights from international students from other countries. Further, more culturally diverse studies using students from other Asian countries would be worthwhile and interesting. In addition to this, although all of the international participants were novices with regard to experiences with poetry, they held advanced knowledge of English as they

completed their second and final year in the Master's program in the United States. Therefore, further research should be undertaken to explore how poetry-based learning can be applied to the various proficiency levels of L2 students, for example, with neophyte and/or beginner L2 learners to see what poetry's "logic" allows various levels of L2 writers more room or not. The most important limitation of the current study, as mentioned in the method chapter, lies in the fact that the participants were all registered students in the poetry writing course. This may have created some obstacles to listening to their true voices. For instance, when writing the pedagogy essay, their voices stressing the connection between poetry and L2 teaching may have been overemphasized because they were not fully free from the constraint of receiving a course grade from the professor. More research is required to determine the efficacy of poetry writing in L2 learning in a more natural setting.

Moreover, in order to provide more definitive evidence, further research using a control group would be interesting so that it would be possible to make a comparison with the experiences of other students who are participating in a different course, one which follows a more traditional discussion-based structure and writing pedagogy. In addition, because of its scope and methodology, the findings of this dissertation may not be sufficiently legitimate reasons to convince everyone who wonders to what extent English language learners feel their academic writing skills and English proficiency increase through the experience of poetry writing. Further work needs to be done, such as collecting pre- and post- writing samples, to establish whether poetry actually influences the development of L2 writing skills beyond the issue of sociocultural learning and identity (re)construction.

Notwithstanding these limitations, this study offers some valuable insights into the potential that poetry-based learning has in the L2 classroom and into the unique contributions

made by the cultivation of artful practice in English classrooms and by the development of artist-teacher identities during TESOL teacher preparation. Even though some may still argue that the direct connection between arts and L2 learning has not been made clear or that its implications are impractical, as revealed in this dissertation, it is a truism that language learning becomes more effective and meaningful when L2 learners immerse themselves in thinking both critically and deeply about the meaning of the L2 and also in the authentic context in which that meaning changes and evolves by way of sociocultural understanding and interaction. The results of this study revealed that the role of poetry in English language classrooms is not to simply provide the language skills and transfer the linguistic knowledge from textbooks and teachers to students as has been practiced in many traditional L2 instruction in EFL contexts. Rather, poetry can serve as a meaningful path for English learning and acquisition, inviting students into the meaning-making process and into sociocultural experiences, connecting them with others, and integrating them into the L2 community and culture.

In addition, the study revealed poetry-based learning positively influenced non-native TESOL teachers' own emerging identities as artist-teachers and led to its application within their L2 teaching practices: the importance of creative, unscripted, concise, communicative, and cultural L2 teaching. These results serve as a basis for future studies that could enrich the sociocultural and arts-based learning aspect of L2 instruction and writing pedagogy, serving as a meaningful signpost for where foreign and second language education should go in East Asian countries where it is common for English education to mostly dwell on developing scientific knowledge of L2 acquisition; for example, what would it mean to include and present other forms of art such as the visual arts, music and performance arts in English classrooms? I want to close this dissertation with one poet-teacher's articulation which made a great connection

between poetry and dance as artistic teaching forms.

> Yi: Poetry is like dancing on a stage. We could express anything we like in our dancing; we could choose any form of dance, classic or modern, eastern or western. However, always remember that there is a stage. Be careful not to fall. We could never write a poem that look like an essay. In Chinese educational system, the stage is even smaller, for testing is the purpose for most learning. However, a master dancer's performance should not be limited by his/her stage. Even though teachers need to ensure the students could do well in all kinds of tests, the way to achieve the goal could be creative. Grades are important but grades are not everything. It is always the theme, the subject matter, the imagery, and the emotion in the poem attracts us. Form only contributes less part of it. After all, the students will have a broader stage in the future eventually.

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APPENDIX A

WELCOMING QUESTIONNAIRE

First and Last Name: _____
Program/Department/Semester: _____
(e.g. MED-TWLE, Language and Literacy Education, First Semester)

1. Please list the languages you speak, read, write, and undertand in order to strongest to least strong.
      a. Most dominant or "native" language
      b. Other languages:
      c. Explain:

2. If you were born outside of the U.S., (if not, skip to Question 4), how long have you been in the United States or English speaking countries? Explain.

3. What is your TOEFL score in a writing section? (If you don't feel comfortable indicating the score, feel free to skip this question)

4. From which university did you graduate before UGA and with what degree(s)?

5. Did you take creative writing courses in your previous schools?
    a. If "yes," could you please tell me the name of the course and describe your experience?
    b. If "no," could you briefly characterize your previous English learning experiences in school? how would you describe your previous experience learning English language and/or literature?

6. Why did you choose to enroll in this poetry course?

7. Please tell me how you feel about participating in creative courses in language education (e.g. theatre for reflective practice, poetry for creative language educators, etc.)

8. Have you ever written poems before taking this course in any language? Please explain:

9. How do you feel about reading and/or writing a poem in a first or second language?

10. What do you perceive will be your biggest challenges of this course?

11. Do you think you can improve your composition skills in general through poem writing?

12. What connections, if any, can you see between this course and professional responsibilities?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESITIONS

Previous Writing Experience

1. How did your previous English and writing class room look like?
    a. Had you had experience writing poetry or in a poetry writing workshop before?
    b. How did you feel about the traditional and/or grammar-oriented lessons?

2. Difficulties on Writing
    a. What is the biggest concern/problem when you write in English?
    b. What do you want to improve when you take a Writing course?
    c. What is writing?

Poetry Writing Process

1. How do your experience the process of poetry writing and reading?
2. What about your revision process?
3. How do you feel about the feedback (oral and written) you receive in class?
    a. Can you think of any specific feedback you have received on a poem from your peers and Misha that has been helpful?

Poetry Workshop

1. How do you feel about participating in poetry workshop?
    a. How would you describe the classroom atmosphere, particularly in terms of poetry workshop?
    b. How is the balance of roles in the discussions? Do you feel you have more authority in the discussions?

2. How do these relationships compare with those you are experiencing in other classes?

Extra Questions

1. If possible, can you explain the attitudes held toward creative writing course from your own perspective?
2. What connections, if any, can you see between this creative writing process and academic writing?
3. How does this poetry workshop help you to see [or not] such potential?

APPENDIX C

POETIC INVITATION

NANTUCKET **IMITATION**

> NANTUCKET
> by William Carlos Williams
>
> Flowers through the window
> lavender and yellow
>
> changed by white curtains –
> Smell of cleanliness –
>
> Sunshine of late afternoon –
> On the glass tray
>
> a glass pitcher, the tumbler
> turned down, by which
>
> a key is lying – And the
> immaculate white bed

In this exercise, your goal is to write a clear word picture of an outdoor place, using concrete (not abstract) words to create literal images and a particular **tone**.

PRE-WRITING

1) First, you must make a list of ten phrases, not sentences, that evoke the place you have selected. Everything has come to a halt, and there are no people in your **scene**. Include in your list the details that you **see** when you conjure that place. Don't worry about the order of the items in your list for now. Simply make as detailed a list of things you see as you can.
2) Second, review your list and **put your items in an order** that suits you. **Re-Number** the items in your list.
3) Third, working with a partner, **read your list aloud** twice, explaining nothing. Read slowly. Your partner will try to imagine the scene with the items in your list. Now your partner must try to paraphrase what she sees, including any items which she finds confusing or puzzling. Again, don't explain or tell your partner what you mean.

4) As your partner gives her paraphrase, **make notes** about what your partner did or did not **see** from your list.

5) Trade and listen to your partner's list, repeating the instructions above.

<center>DRAFTING & REVISING (25pts total)</center>

1) When you've reviewed your list, choose a direction which you will use throughout your poem: from far to near; from near to far; from high to low; from low to high. Do not try to move in a horizontal direction. <u>All of the items in your list must move your reader's eye consistently in one direction</u>. (2 pts, direction)

2) Review the items in your list and decide <u>which ones work best</u> in the direction you've selected—use more than one sense (2pts, best sensory details)

3) To help focus your tone, choose <u>two adjectives that you will use twice</u> in your exercise. (2pts, two adjectives repeated)

4) Remember that the most important words in the poem are those you place at the <u>beginning and ends of lines</u>. (2pts; line endings/beginnings)

5) Use <u>punctuation</u> carefully, employing it to guide your reader.

6) For this exercise, you are to <u>use phrases, not complete sentences</u>. (2pts, phrases)

7) Your purpose is to evoke a particular place, conveying a particular <u>atmosphere and mood</u>. (2pts, mood)

8) Count your syllables carefully. <u>No line will have more than ten syllables</u>. (2pts, syllables)

9) You will write <u>ten lines in five couplets</u>, separating each couplet with an extra space. (2pts, ten lines, 5 couplets)

10) <u>Title your exercise with the name of the place</u>, as in "Nantucket. (2pts, place title)

11) Submit your exercise according to "Manuscript Preparation" instructions in the syllabus. Check spacing, placement of your name and the name of the exercise, the title of the poem. (2pts, mss guidelines)

12) Kapow (3pts, impact on instructor)

Read to several friends and ask them to tell you what they see. Revise for clarity.

APPENDIX D

POETIC INVITATION

DOLOR IMITATION

Take Roethke's first line and modify it to read "I have known the incredible thrill (or another emotion) of…" Then you must evoke an experience through listing concrete images. Select images for their connotative as well as denotative meanings; employ sound devices, and manage a complete, grammatically correct sentence over eight lines. Write a four-line sentence that brings about a "turn" or makes something happen through well-chosen verbs. Follow all the rules above and below. Poem must have the following:
1. One word title, an abstraction to be grounded in the poem
2. Use first line structure from Roethke
3. Use objects to convey a sense of place
4. Use heavy alliteration in 2 lines
5. A body part
6. 2 colors
7. Each line at least 10 syllables
8. 13 line poem in total; 8 lines then 5 lines, starting the "turn" with "And"
9. Manuscript guidelines followed?
10. Kapow

Dolor
By Theodore Roethke

 I have known the inexorable sadness of pencils,
 Neat in their boxes, dolor of pad and paper weight,
 All the misery of manilla folders and mucilage,
 Desolation in immaculate public places,
 Lonely reception room, lavatory, switchboard,
 The unalterable pathos of basin and pitcher,
 Ritual of multigraph, paper-clip, comma,
 Endless duplicaton of lives and objects.
 And I have seen dust from the walls of institutions,
 Finer than flour, alive, more dangerous than silica,
 Sift, almost invisible, through long afternoons of tedium,
 Dropping a fine film on nails and delicate eyebrows,
 Glazing the pale hair, the duplicate grey standard faces.

APPENDIX E

WORKSHOP DETAILS & LIST OF POEMS SHARED IN POETRY CRITIQUE

	Workshop 1	Workshop 2	Workshop 3	Workshop 4	Workshop 5
Date	October 2, 2014	October 9, 2014	October 16, 2014	October 20, 2014	November, 20 2014
Topic	Word Problem &Science Tests	Metaphor Exercise	Persona Poem	Poetry of witness	Poetry of Place
Chengyuan Cai	Digital Era	Almost Perfect	A Dandelion Seed	Advertiser	One Inch
Kunjie Wang	Tide	Mirror	Drowning man	A Disabled Boy	Tide
Kexin Li	Poor Fish	Red Leaf	Phantom's Mask	Sorry for the "AUNT"	Swan Song
Zihan Lin	Linguistics Homework: Physics of Sound	Treat me like a kid ----Second Language Learner	I am 25	On the Field	Dew of the Sea
Xuanping Li	Felicity	Transit	Piano Keys	Who is killing me?	Random Thoughts
Xiaodan Gu	Tears and Onion Cells	Foreigner of Fecund Imagination	Tornado	Weeds on the Edge of Swamp	Lavender
Qing Zhu	Star Lab	Homesick	Dispensable	Three Colors	Fennel
Xiao Liang	The Museum of Nature History	New Mother	Little Grey Bug	Dish room	Angel Trumpets in the Greenhouse
Yi Guo	Inertia	The Moon and the Sea	The Earth	A Question Posted by a New Yorker	A Ginkgo Poet
Hanpin Li	The Infinite Universe	Cooking	A New Life	Keep your eyes wide open	Turn

Weikang Li	Cellphones	Old Cloth Shoes	Lotus Flower	9/11	Symphony
Chau Nguyen	Parallel Lines	On Bumping My Heard against the Bedroom Window	Why do I love such women?	In a socio-political group meeting: GA TESOL Conference – Oct 23, 2014	Simply, I'm Rosemary
Liyun He	Philosophy of Math	Rocket Launcher	Memory	Be a hero in a 4-inch world	Nature
Lu Jiang	Cardioid	Growing	A soldier's monologue	At a Coffee Shop	I Want to Tell You
Elizabeth Spaulding	Corn Maze	Mother Nature	Recycling	Final Farewell	Rosmarius Officianlis-
The Researcher	13.1	I'm Sorry but I am the One You Want	-	They	-