# The Impact of Social Bonding and Socioemotionality in Adult Language Learning: Blending Applied Linguistics and Neuroscience

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## Abstract

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This mixed methods study examined the perceptions and socio-emotional experiences of L2 adult language learners through survey, autobiographies, poetry, and interviews. The focus of the study was on gaining more understanding of L2 learners' socio-emotional relationship with the English language and the L1 and L2 experiences that shaped that relationship. The participants of the survey were international/multilingual adult students placed in advanced English courses, either at the college level or just below the college level (level 5 in the International & Academic English programs) in a public university in the Northwest United States. Findings suggest that the majority of the participants had negative emotional experiences with English language acquisition in their home countries which resulted from socio-emotional pressures and stress from both L1 community members and their internal self-perceptions. In

addition, the majority of participants also reported difficulties integrating and creating L2 attachments when study abroad brought entry into the L2 community. In analyzing those members whose L2 language learning in their home country paired with positive emotional experiences, non-traditional informal learning methods of entertainment and L2 social bonding were explored as main contributors. The study supports previous research showing that memory encodes with emotion, and extends this notion to suggest that adult English language learners will already have an established relationship to the English language due to their past experiences with learning English, which will heavily impact their socio-emotional experiences and perceptions in the L2 community and classroom. Ramifications include encouragement of emotionality writing in both the L1 and L2 with reflection to build awareness in both instructors and L2 writers, as well as pedagogical methods that encourage play, humor, service learning, self-expression, story-telling, and L2 social bonding.

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# CHAPTER 1

# SOCIO-EMOTIONALITY IN ADULT ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

## Epigraph

As an English language instructor for upper level L2 genre writing courses during my early teaching career, I had a chance to observe and interact with international/multilingual (I/M) students as they participated in L2 emotionality writing—poetry, autobiography, personal letters, and descriptions. I was amazed to find that students often reported negative emotions such as emotional disconnectedness or strong ambivalence towards the English language and recounted memories of L2 social isolation. One writer, a Korean-English bilingual, wrote a poem, offering insight into this emotional experience.

Alienation

Excluded because of my foreign culture.

Memories of my old country will be in my heart forever.

Different language and culture.

As time goes by, I miss my home even more.

However, there is no way to translate my feeling.

That increase my loneliness

This writer was not alone. As a teacher-researcher, I became deeply curious about these emotional responses and their connectedness to the second language itself. As a result, socio-emotional adult language learning became the center of my research as I moved into my doctoral teaching assistantship. There, I was inspired by expert L2 pedagogues David Hanauer,

Suhanthie Motha, and Sarah Benesch and began developing materials and curriculum specific to socio-emotionality for multilingual first year composition courses, which I have taught for the past four years. These materials and conversations produced powerful stories and emotional insight that needed to be shared with the TESOL community—as empathy, awareness, and mutual pursuit of understanding deeply impacted our classrooms. With a background in relational psychology and social neuroscience, my goal became to investigate socio-emotional health and pedagogy in TESOL practice. The term international/multilingual (I/M) individuals will be used to describe the participants in this study, as both holding international identities (not American born) and using multiple languages in daily life. The majority of I/M participants described English as a second language (multilingual individuals who spoke English from birth were not included in the data). The terms *multilinguals* and *international students* are also used occasionally in this dissertation, in consistency with their use in the literature.

## Overview of Chapters

The following dissertation is organized into six chapters. The first chapter broadly overviews the literature, allowing Chapters 2 and 5 to offer a more in-depth literature review according to each chapter's content. Also, because one of this study's main goals is pedagogy, four of the six chapters include specific pedagogical implementations for future experimentation.

Chapter 1 introduces the issue and serves to broadly overview the literature associated with three main areas of study: socio-emotionality in second language studies, emotion theories in SLA, and brain-based pedagogies. Chapter 2 presents a hybridized theory called "Language Attachment Theory," by offering a more detailed review of the literature, synopsis of selected data from the study, and pedagogical implementations. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology chosen for the study, overviewing the theoretical framework, research procedures, research site,

tool, and data analysis process. Chapter 4 presents data from surveys and autobiographies, synthesizing the data into two categories of student-participants: the "dutiful" and the "subversive." Chapter 5 addresses the poetry and interview data, dividing the analysis into four case studies. The last chapter, Chapter 6, summarizes the study's research findings, discusses the implications of these conclusions for the field and offers additional pedagogical implementations.

## Socio-Emotionality in Second Language Studies

Aspects of socio-emotionality have been studied through the history of second language studies (Krashen, 1982; Ehrman & Dörnyei, 1998; Norton & Toohey, 2001; Pavlenko, 2005; Schumann, 1997), but most recently, the field of second language acquisition has experienced an affective turn in research, congruent with interest being shown to emotion in the neurosciences and psychology (Pavlenko, 2013). Particularly, new hypotheses and theories have emerged from each of these fields, with overlapping themes suggesting the impact of social interaction on language formation (Lee et al., 2009), language evolution (Syal & Finlay, 2011), and language acquisition (Kuhl, 2007).

This study marks an effort to integrate and extend existing avenues of research in SLA such as those explored in Aneta Pavlenko's *Emotions in Multilingualism*, in which she asks: "What are the emotional bonds that tie individuals to their languages?" (2005, p. 22) by approaching this question in a new way—mainly, through the investigation of the nature of social bonding with L1 and L2 attachment figures in regard to their impact on the emotional experiences and perceptions of L2 learners. As Holliday (2005) reminds us, the process of learning English can often be difficult, a "struggle for identity while wishing and trying to take part in an educational venture in which [L2 users] learn to love and hate at the same time" (p.

176). This ambivalent fight between love and hate has been reported on in numerous studies addressing second language learners' emotional experiences of frustration, sadness, isolation, and confusion (Chamcharatsri, 2012; Hanauer, 2010; Horner, Lu, & Matsuda, 2010); however, the field has yet to investigate the social bonds and quality of the L1 and L2 human relationships that influence L1 and L2 affect socialization.

Cozolino (2014), in his chapter on sociostasis, reviews studies supporting regulation of the brain through relationship. He describes the brain as a "social organ of adaption" which "can be properly understood only as part of a matrix of relationships;" humans, as social animals, "regulate each other's internal biochemistry, emotions, and behaviors via conscious and unconscious mechanisms of communication across social synapse" (p.243). In this important text, he draws on numerous findings from the field of psycho-neuroimmunology that correlate positive social connectedness to physical health (i.e., reduction in blood pressure, stress hormone levels, autonomic and cardiovascular reactivity, and the risk of illness). In addition, he synopsizes sociostasis through findings on the neuropsychological responses to loss or separation from loved ones, calling attention to psychological and physical symptoms of anxiety, depression, gastrointestinal problems, and high blood pressure. His work, though not specific to second language acquisition in students, draws attention to foreign language anxiety and separation from home country. For instance, in reviewing findings from neuropsychology, Cozolino (2013) remarks, "while a regular dose of voluntary solitude can make an important contribution to emotional balance and self-awareness, imposed isolation can be painful, debilitating, and even worse. Isolation, loneliness, and depression have been shown to have a synergistic effect in diminishing well-being that results in reduced autonomic regulation, cardiac health, and immunological functioning" (p. 249). These interpretations support the need for

understanding students in the current study as well as the importance of the work of others investigating emotions experienced during English language study abroad (Bawa & Watson, 2017; Hanauer, 2010). Though I/M students learning English abroad do not experience permanent separation from loved ones, recent research from Hanauer (2010) evaluating their poetry reveals blends of emotional and psychological responses similar to those described in Cozolino's descriptions of grief (i.e., anxiety, anger, fear). In addition, Hanauer's analysis adds emotional experiences of embarrassment and marginalization that describe "a series of subjective understandings that would direct an individual to avoid social interaction" (p.128). In the poem beginning this chapter by a study participant, themes of loneliness, alienation, and exclusion join those repeated across L2 studies, in which foreign language, accent, race, and language learner status isolate multilingual individuals in American contexts from community involvement (Bawa & Watson, 2017; Hanauer, 2010; Motha, 2014; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008).

Thus far in L2 affect studies, research has explored emotions of fear (Chamcharatsri, 2013a) love (Deweale, 2008), or anger (Deweale, 2004), contributing important new knowledge in these areas. Other important areas have been addressed in emotion studies such as affective vocal prosody (for review, see Pavlenko, 2005) and cross-linguistic differences in emotion words (see chapters in Pavlenko, 2006); however, the research is still narrow in scope, leaving much of the entirety of the L2 affective experience left uncharted (Pavlenko, 2013).

## Theories of Emotion in SLA

That said, what has been done, particularly in the last two decades, has transformed SLA, broadening research avenues and our conceptualization of the L2 learners' emotional world both theoretically and pedagogically. Benesch (2013), inspired by Sarah Ahmed, whose theories of emotion centered on how emotions circulate between bodies and "stick" to concepts, conducted a

"sticky objects" study (p.57), exploring the emotional connections student make to objects in the classroom. In this groundbreaking work, objects were found to hold emotions; for example, dictionaries were both objects of hope, promising to increase learners' vocabulary, and objects of disappointment, evoking anxiety because of the time it takes to use them and shame about not using them (Benesch, 2013). In 1995, Norton (Pierce) extended our conceptualization of the relationship between the language learner and her social world by offering a theoretical rendering of social identity construction. In her landmark publication, she offers the notion of investment, which "presupposes that when language learners speak, they are not only exchanging information with target language speakers but [are] constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world, thus [making] an investment in the target language an investment in a learner's own social identity which is constantly changing across time and space" (Norton Pierce, 1995, p.18). Throughout her work, Norton Pierce encounters the emotional experiences of social bonding in the L2 community, focusing on the resulting impact on identity. She reported on her participants' ability to gain capital through various social networks and remarks on the impact of social acceptance on the identity and self-perception of the individual. Her findings corroborate social neuroscientific studies documenting the brain's experience-dependent plasticity (Buchweitz & Prat, 2013; Mechelli et al., 2004; Meltzoff, Kuhl, Movellan, & Sejnowski, 2009), which show the brain's ability to change structurally throughout a lifetime. Through a qualitative lens, Norton Pierce shows the changes that occur in identity as participants acquire social strategies that display various forms of capital. Similarly, neuroscientific studies show changes on a neural level that occur in response to experiences in social learning and language acquisition.

In addition, genetic science, which offers our understanding of the underlying processes of genetic transmission, only connects 2% of our genes to our body's construction (Cozolino, 2013). While template genetics form our brain's general structure, "*epigenetics* is used to describe the guidance of genetic expression by experience…in effect, the strands of genes are like immensely long keyboards, and experiences determine which notes will be played, [and consequently], the nature and quality of intimate relationships impact this process" (p. 41). The nature and quality of intimate relationships and the emotions that result may be more substantial in shaping not only our identity and our brain structure, but also the epigenetic responses our bodies have to the environment. Moving beyond emotions to a study of the relationships that impact those emotions is particularly relevant for L2 pedagogical practice, as teacher-student relationships and student-student relationships have powerful implications for how affective reactions are socialized into the learners.

Theories of motivation from applied linguistics offer avenues through which we can understand affect socialization. Zoltan Dörnyei's (2001) *Motivational Strategies in the Classroom* carefully outlines appropriate relational strategies for teachers including: sharing personal stories; showing care for your students' progress; listening and paying attention to them; and offering them trust, acceptance, and availability. He also pays special attention to offering strategies for teachers to facilitate student friendships in the classroom, such as using small group tasks, encouraging extracurricular activities, playing small-group competitive games, and sharing of personal information among the learners. These strategies, which result from a long history of research on motivation in L2 learners, corroborate findings showing healthy relationships to be a basic, fundamental condition for creating motivation (p.43). Theories of motivation in SLA, when applied to pedagogical research and practice, become

pragmatic explorations into the human beings that facilitate, regulate, and initiate those emotions and motivations.

## Brain-based Pedagogies in Education

Over the last two decades, educational psychology has focused on blending brain-based research with classroom practice (Berninger, 2002; Materna, 2007; Sousa, 2006; Sprenger, 2008). Much the work has focused on the K-12 classroom (Hoy, 2017; Jenson, 2005; Smilkstein, 2003; Sousa, 2006), though others have tackled learning strategies for adult brains (Materna, 2007; Rogers, 2002). There is significant overlap in pedagogical strategies across the literature for children and adults. For example, Sousa (2006) recommends K-12 pedagogical strategies such as using art and music to stimulate memory and recall and manipulating sensory experiences within the learning environment. In applying brain-based studies on memory to adult learners, Materna (2007) makes a similar suggestion. She explains that when a memory is created, the memory need not be stored to a single cell. Depending on the learning medium (i.e., kinesthetic, visual, auditory), the memory can potentially be stored in several cells throughout the brain, due to the fact that each medium of learning relates to a different storage area in the brain (p. 27). Here Materna is recommending "multisensory learning" to the adult context similar to Sousa's (2016) recommendation of multi-sensory engagements (i.e., music, art, environmental ambiance). Additional recommendations that bridge both the child and adult learner include: calming practices such as breathing and meditation, movement and active learning, and teaching brain-based study strategies to learners regarding nutrition and healthy sleep (Jenson, 2005; Materna, 2007; Smilkstein, 2003; Sousa, 2006). In reviewing this literature, it was fascinating to note that across texts, brain-based learning practices for children and adults often overlapped,

showing that brains, regardless of age, often respond to similar pedagogies. In other words, although developmentally, the brain matures at different levels, there appeared to be overall pedagogies that stimulated learning and motivation that were not age specific (i.e., calming practices, movement, and music).

Relevant for the current study was educational psychology's approach to the subject of emotions and adult learning. Particularly salient was the attention given to the brain's treatment of emotional stimuli. To synopsize, as the brain receives and filters numerous stimuli, it systematically prioritizes emotional data, sending it on to be processed at higher cognitive levels (LeDoux, 1996; Materna, 2007). Positive emotional stimuli transfers through the middle brain, limbic center to the neocortex, often called the thinking brain. However, negative emotional stimuli filters down into the primitive brain, the brain stem, in order to attend to survival rather than higher order thinking. For this reason, emotions are given significant attention in brain-based adult learning, with scholars promoting de-stressing class activities, such as sharing of opinions and personal experiences, and greeting students by name (Materna, 2007). In addition, teachers are encouraged to consider the emotional needs of their adult students and to remain aware of the multidimensional lives most adults have beyond the classroom. Therefore, the impact of emotion on the brain in terms of learning potential is significant, in that positive emotions (i.e., challenge, familiarity, and safety) signal processing in the neocortex for higher order thinking, and negative emotions (i.e., high stress, threats) signal processing in the primitive brain for survival response such as fight or flight. Within educational psychology, these brain-based pedagogies offer an integrated perspective for understanding and developing TESOL curriculum.

## Purposes of this Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the nature of relationships and socio-emotionality with composition students in the university setting. By researching how second language learners experience emotion and human interaction, TESOL pedagogy can more fully understand how to further integrate the relevance of social bonding into the language classroom. Understanding the language histories associated with learning English as well as the socio-emotionality of these stories, instructors can better address foreign language anxiety and learning issues in the classroom that may be a result of these past experiences (Cozolino, 2013). The goals of this study are: 1) to understand the socio-emotional and interpersonal nature of English language learning in home countries 2) to broaden the field of second language acquisition's knowledge of this socio-emotional and interpersonal nature of language learning through a neuroscientific lens 3) to offer specific pedagogical implementations for future classroom research. This study hopes to contribute to sociolinguistic, pragmatic, and applied linguistic scholarship.

Based on the goals stated above, this study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between L2 socio-emotionality/social bonding and adult second language learning? Does socio-emotionality and human bonding have an impact on an adult language learner?

2. Do patterns exist between adult language learners' perceived language learning histories and specific human beings who influenced their acquisition? If so, what is the relationship between these socio-emotional connections and the learner's identity formation and affect socialization in the L2?

3. What interdisciplinary perspectives from neuroscience and psychology exist that can be integrated into second language studies to further understand socio-emotionality and human bonding in language pedagogy? What pedagogical innovations and implications could result for future classroom research?

## Significance of this Study

What is the role of human relationships and socio-emotionality in language learning? This study expands the conversation of affect and emotion in SLA and composition studies by focusing on human relationships and the socio-emotional aspects of language learning. Rather than investigate the emotion itself (Dewaele, 2010; Pavlenko, 2006), this study aims to understand the human interactions that create those emotions and the subsequent memories that form in the language. In relation to the field of TESOL, the study may encourage instructors of second language to pay attention to the issue of socio-emotionality in language learners and to respond pedagogically. This study attempts to offer innovative pedagogies for teacher-researchers to experiment with within their classrooms.

# CHAPTER 2

# LANGUAGE ATTACHMENT THEORY:

# THE POSSIBILITIES OF CROSS-LANGUAGE RELATIONSHIPS

Globalization in higher education has brought with it growing numbers of students whose home language is not English. Many of these students come to higher education believing that their English skills are sufficient to participate in the academic community, but on arrival, are disillusioned by the fact that their English test scores can be high while their ability to interact within the composition course is severely limited. Bakhtinian theory and findings from social neuroscience shed light on this phenomenon. For Bakhtin (1987), every word is already embedded in a history of expressions by others in a chain of ongoing cultural and political movements, so that "when we select words in the process of constructing an utterance, we by no means always take them from the system of language in their neutral, *dictionary* form. We usually take them from *other utterances,* and mainly from utterances that are kindred to ours in genre, that is, in theme, composition, or style" (p. 87). Bakhtin is ascribing a social nature to language, which he calls "interindividual," one in which the writer mirrors others with whom he or she feels a "kindredness" or relational bond. Remley's (2016) discussion of mirror neurons also comes into play here, as he explains the dynamic nature of speaker and audience response. "As a speaker positions him or herself closer to that reality and shared experiences of the audience he or she mirrors that audience and the audience understands that mirroring, eliciting empathy and favor from the audience" (para. 11). Adding the understanding of mirror neurons to Bakhtin's theory generates a more interactive component to language, one in which the writer seeks to align with the audience and the audience with the writer. A word becomes more than the

concept or the symbol it represents. A word becomes imbued with a neural network of words, meanings, emotions, and contexts, which this chapter argues are best constructed in human relationships. The human element engages the brain, as the language of the writer is shaped through the social world and the kindred voices that world offers.

But what if a language or even a word is learned devoid of this social "interindividual" context in which audience and speaker interact, such as in the case of many of the L2 writers in our composition courses? As part of this doctoral IRB-approved mixed-method study, I read and analyzed 77 language autobiographies written by I/M students in my composition courses. From these narratives, a common theme emerged: English as a second language had been mainly studied for test achievement, with methods such as textbook memorization and cram schools that emphasized grammar over communication. As noted by Peter Khost (2016), high stakes testing and test prep worked to suppress creativity, engagement, and curiosity in these students, and in many of their EFL contexts, there was a lack of opportunities to interact in English in cross-cultural communication (Chen & Yang, 2014). In light of these findings, it is not surprising that second language studies have found that research participants often report less emotional connectivity in the L2 (Chamcharatsri, 2012; Dewaele, 2008; Pavlenko, 2005) as well as difficulty understanding the social and cultural context of language (Rintell, 1990). Findings from social neuroscience offer a framework for analysis of this phenomenon. Research on memory formation now integrate what Bakhtin theorized, mainly, that the emotions, social context, and human interactions that occur during the encoding of memory will become part of the fabric of that memory, which can be stored in multiple areas of the brain (Cozolino, 2002; Schumann, 1997). When someone whose L1 is English hears a single utterance, for example, "San Francisco," both implicit (unconscious) and explicit (conscious) memories and emotions

associated with that utterance could be present because of past exposure to the word in social contexts. The song "If You're Going to San Francisco" by Scott McKenzie, the American TV series *Full House* (Franklin, 1987), support for the LGBT community, or a past trip taken there could all impact recall of this utterance for an American L1 English speaker. There is a complex neural network connected to this concept, which causes resilience in learning. Because the frames of reference are robust, the term is deeply embedded in memory. However, many L2 writers lack this type of heteroglossia due to lack of emotional experiences and social engagements in their L2. Moreover, students in my study who considered their early English learning environments to be "stressful," "pressured," or even "traumatizing" often re-experienced negative emotions when producing English. Those whose language acquisition was primarily a process in which words are taken from "the system of language in their neutral, *dictionary* form" (text memorization) rather than from "other utterances" (Bakhtin, 1987, p. 86) often lack certain types of L2 language fluency, ones that are socio-emotional and socio-cultural (Rintell, 1990). Moreover, many associate English with feelings of anxiety, stress, and low self-worth.

Department leaders, composition instructors, and L2 writers in expository writing programs search for avenues to mitigate these types of issues, but have found traditional ESL pedagogies insufficient to bring students to this next level of language use. It is in this problematic area that my contribution, the theory of "language attachment," offers insight. Language attachment theory holds that human bonding is central to language acquisition in both infants and adults, and it seeks to reframe and extend existing pedagogical practices in composition accordingly. These relationships are in no way meant to bring L2 writers closer to a native speaker model, but to benefit both L1 and L2 English writers through development of

cross-cultural repertoires able to rhetorically respond in a globalized world. Language attachment theory emerged from my interdisciplinary work with the University of Washington's Language and Rhetoric program and the Institute for Learning Brain Sciences (ILABS). Relying on support from both departments, I developed language attachment theory and am currently testing its application in the composition classroom.

Beginning with a review of neurological language development studies and behavioral psychology's well-known "attachment theory," this chapter will interweave understandings of how human engagement has been found as the catalyst for both changes in neural activity leading to language acquisition— "the social gating hypothesis" and the formation of behavioral patterns, *attachment styles,* in human relationships. Following the review, the chapter will describe language attachment theory in detail, showing how the social attachments created in a language impact the brain, emotions, and expressions of the bilingual writer. Support for this theory comes from a range of studies on the bilingual brain (Pallier et al., 2003), behavioral and relational psychology (Cozolino, 2013), and cross-linguistic differences in emotion (Pavlenko, 2006). The chapter ends by situating language attachment theory within the field of composition as a clearer frame with which to pursue a set of pedagogical practices aiming to accomplish the following goals:

1. Encourage intercultural understandings that reduce isolating behaviors
2. Support socio-cultural and emotional fluency in L2 writers
3. Promote bilingualism and global e-connection as a norm in the classroom.

This theory could be beneficial for both aiding department leaders and composition instructors as they deal with overall issues of diversity that emerge in the classroom (Horner, Lu, & Matsuda,

2010) and as they work to internationalize the field of composition (Schaub, 2003). The chapter concludes with a call for researchers to investigate this new avenue of thought, particularly in its application to composition classroom. The term *cognition/cognitive* is used broadly in this chapter, to encompass its use across both the fields of cognitive psychology and social neuroscience.

## Literature Review

Patricia Kuhl, co-director of the University of Washington's Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences (ILABS), posed the "social gating" hypothesis in 2007, as the result of her work on language acquisition in the infant brain. I will briefly recount some of the history of her hypothesis to offer a clearer understanding of its context. In 1992, Patricia Kuhl, Karen Williams, Francisco Lacerda, Kenneth Stevens, and Björn Lindblom were trying to understand why and how an infant's brain could acquire any global language from birth to 9 months. Their study was built on the understanding that the infant brain had a sensitive period for language, in which the phonemes of any language could be discriminated and potentially acquired (Kuhl et al., 1992). According to these cognitive psychologists, the infants were conducting "statistical analysis" on the phonemes of their first languages by paying attention to and retaining the ability to distinguish the phonemes they heard most frequently. With age, infants lost their ability to distinguish between less frequent sounds. Understood linguistically, between 6 and 9 months, a shift occurs in the learners to begin to normalize the input of a target language's phonetic identity due to the regularity of those specific sounds, and with this shift, the brain optimizes toward the language being heard and used, saving energy by no longer retaining that "global" ability to acquire any language in the world.

Curious if an environment could be created where infants did not lose this ability, Kuhl,

Tsao, and Liu (2003) designed two experiments. The first tested 9 month-old American infants, who had only been exposed to English. They separated the American infants into two groups—a control group that only heard more English and a test group which was exposed to a live-L2 Mandarin tutor as the source of L2 input. Findings showed that infants in the test group did retain the ability to distinguish the phonemes in both English and Mandarin, even showing performance levels equal to Taiwanese infants that had grown up hearing Mandarin only. In addition, the window of time for having this phonetic distinguishing ability, normally "6 to 9 months," was extended in this "bilingual" group. The other group, the control group only exposed to more English, as expected, did not acquire the ability to distinguish Mandarin phonemes. However, the social element—the live Mandarin tutor—was yet to be understood. Did the medium of language exposure impact language acquisition? Would infant brains respond similarly to videos or audios of Mandarin?

Therefore, the second experiment evaluated when an infant brain would be triggered to perform statistical analysis on the phonemes in a new language. American infants only exposed to English were recruited and grouped into three separate groups. Each were exposed to Mandarin twelve times over a four-week period. Group 1 listened to audio of the Mandarin tutors. Group 2 watched videos of the Mandarin tutors. And Group 3, she explains in her 2010 TED talk, had what we might think of as "Mandarin relatives visiting for a month" (Kuhl, 2010). As shown previously in this same study (Kuhl et al., 2003), the live-L2 tutor, who played, read stories, and interacted with the infants caused those infant brains to respond to the new language. Groups without this social engagement showed absolutely no acquisition of Mandarin phonemes; whereas both English and Mandarin phonetics were maintained in those participants who had

exposure to a live Mandarin tutor, creating the possibility for a future English-Mandarin bilingual.

From this study, among many others, Kuhl (2007) posed the "social gating hypothesis," which holds that social interaction opens the brain to perform the internal work of phonetic analysis of a new language. In this article, she claims that language is gated by the motivating properties (such as attention and arousal) inherent in social interactions (p. 114), and her hypothesis, if correct, would hold that the degree of social interaction and engagement with the tutor would correlate with language learning. Conboy and Kuhl (2011) confirmed this correlation by expanding their tests to include both phonetic learning and word learning as well as added measures for specific interactions, and found that, indeed, increased social engagement, (i.e., shown through shifting eye gaze from the tutor's eyes to the newly introduced toys) showed greater learning as interpreted by ERP brain measures of phonetic and word learning. What is groundbreaking about this study is that infants exposed to Mandarin via video or audio-only showed no evidence of learning in their ERP measures. Also, their behavioral test scores from the head-turn analysis did not differ from the infants in the control group who heard no Mandarin whatsoever. On the other hand, those with human engagement not only had the period for global language learning extended but also performed equivalently on the recognition of Mandarin phonemes as same-aged infants in Taiwan who had listened to Mandarin for 10 months. This leads us to question what this means for our L2 composition students that have studied English in contexts that use memorization and textbook recordings over L2 human interaction to teach the English language. It also requires composition instructors to revisit human attachment in more detail, as few would argue against its significance.

While the social gating hypothesis powerfully argues the centrality of social interaction for language learning, it does not deeply investigate the nature and impact of the human relationship on socio-emotionality. However, a complementary theory to Kuhl's exists from behavioral psychology, one that has revolutionized psychotherapy and has contributed to studies on metacognition and mindfulness. Attachment theory, first formulated by psychologist John Bowlby and extended by Mary Ainsworth and her colleagues, poses that relationships are the basis of human survival (Bowlby, 1988), and that our initial bond with our caregiver (usually mother) impacts our behavioral patterns of relating and emotionality (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978). More recently, as attachment theory has been integrated with neuroscience, affect regulation and emotional attunement have become increasingly more important as factors that shape the overall socio-emotional development of a person (Schore, 2003). Although attachment theory is not a theory of language in itself, our understandings of the simultaneity of language encoding with memory and emotion render it helpful in our conceptualization of affect and social bonding in language acquisition.

Here, I will briefly synopsize the historical research leading to the two main concepts from attachment theory referenced here. First, attachment theory connects human survival to the ability to secure an attachment to another human. Beginning post-WWII, London hospitals were witnessing high infant mortality rates. The hospitals used strict sterilization practices meant to safeguard infants against infection, but Bowlby, who was working there at the time, began to develop theories of maternal deprivation and attachment, theorizing a correlation between touch and infant survival. His work began to impact hospital protocol. Nurses, who were previously instructed to touch the infant as little as possible to avoid exposure to germs, were now instructed to hold, talk to, and engage with the infants. These new protocols increased infant survival rates

dramatically and lead to the practices used today. In 1969, Bowlby published his foundational work, *Attachment and Loss*, which argues that attachment to a mother is a determinant of survival and overall normal health in an infant.

After Bowlby's initial theory connecting infant-mother bonding to survival, attachment studies proliferated, showing a second main contribution—mainly, that repeated sets of patterned behaviors in children and adults could be linked to a person's initial bond with their primary caregiver (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Holmes, 2014; Riley, 2011). One famous experiment called the "strange situation" tested the nature of the bond and linked certain behaviors to it (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Though there are different variations of the experiment, the main purpose is for a caregiver to leave their child briefly, allowing the child to experience a brief period of distress, and then return to comfort the child. The child's response to the caregiver's departure and return is categorized into an attachment style. These behavioral, emotional responses offer insight into how the caregiver attaches to the child on a daily basis, with later studies emphasizing self-awareness and emotional regulation as correspondent to socio-emotional health (Holmes, 2014). To synopsize, the attachment styles for children are divided into two types: secure and insecure. Within the category of insecure, there are four subdivisions: insecure, avoidant, insecure-ambivalent, and insecure-disorganized. The first category, secure attachment, was attributed to caregiver-child affectional bonds in which the caregiver responded to the child's needs, made eye contact, and offered affection or space accordingly. Secure attachment was characteristic of children who were comforted easily, returned to play and displayed signs of exploration and curiosity. The second category, insecure-avoidant attachment showed caregivers who were emotionally distant or rejecting and children whose coping strategies included avoiding their own needs for attachment (e.g., ignoring caregiver's departure/return, avoiding eye contact). The

next category of insecure, insecure-ambivalent, was characteristic of caregivers that were emotionally enmeshed or inconsistent with the child. These children often demonstrated ambivalent behaviors such as clinging to the caregiver but not accepting or responding to their comfort. The final category, insecure-disorganized attachment, is rare and was added to classify erratic caregiver-child bonds, in which the caregiver is frightened or frightening and the child responds with self-soothing strategies such as disassociation or self-harm (e.g., rocking in fetal position). These initial attachment categories have been extended and applied to adult relationships (George & West, 2012) as well as teacher-student relationships (Riley, 2011). According to Bowlby, the initial affectional bond with the caregiver produces internal working models of attachment, "relatively fixed representational models," that are used to predict and relate to the world (Holmes, 2014, p.63), and though Bowlby (1969) wrote about attachment as lasting from "the cradle to the grave," even he questioned its malleability (p. 208).

As attachment research continued, results showed that pedagogical and therapeutic strategies that used healthy human bonding could heal insecure attachments in both children and adults, students and teachers. In fact, the evidence showed the ability for bidirectional changes in attachment (Cozolino, 2013, 2014). In other words, healthy, securely attached infants might experience abuse or neglect as teenagers and reverse to an insecure attachment style, just as insecurely attached infants could experience a healthy attachment in adulthood that reprograms their attachment style to be secure. This evidence corroborates with that found in Gorzelsky et al. (2016) and Clark (2016), where neuroplasticity is being documented in adults who have acquired a skill (e.g., jugglers, stroke victims, taxicab drivers). In addition, mindfulness or metacognitive practices have been thought to impact attachment, as pausing to think about thought processes fosters a space to reflect on the emotions, bodily reactions, and memories that enter a present

moment/activity. Metacognitive practices which promote a compassionate, curious, and non-judgmental stance towards the self, have been said to heal insecure attachments, as individuals learn to develop a secure attachment with themselves (Snyder, Shapiro, & Treleaven, 2012). In each of these movements toward social bonding, whether in relationship with the self or another person, the language used during these interactions encodes into memory, imprinting into linguistic socio-emotional development of the individual. And even though this resonates with infant language studies (Kuhl, 2007) and primary language acquisition studies (Lee, Mikesell, Joaquin, Mates, & Schumann, 2009) in their argument for the power of human interaction, these conclusions have not been readily extended to secondary language acquisition in adults.

In regard to second language acquisition, researchers have more often restricted their analysis to infants, offering explanations about why infant brains are much more "plastic" than adult brains. For one, the infant brain's sensitivity to phonemic discrimination ends around twelve months, as plasticity is traded for speed, optimization, and specialization (Kuhl, 2007). Second, the neuropeptides or hormones that orchestrate human affiliation and bonding, are at incredibly high levels in infancy, but decrease with age. More specifically, adult language learners have one hundred times lower levels of opiates in their brains than at the time of birth (Lee et al., 2009). Although both Kuhl and Lee et al. (2009) offer thorough evidence for the vast differences neurologically and linguistically between infant/adult and first/second language acquisition, their important contributions-the interactional instinct and the social gating hypothesis (Kuhl, 2007)— correspond with research from the social sciences and neuropsychology that suggests that regardless of age, the human relationship—social bonding and attachment—contains transformational qualities that may have the power to shift what was thought to be set behaviors (Cozolino, 2013, 2014; Riley, 2011). This overlap merits further

investigation into extending their work for the adult language classroom. In fact, much of the research from neuropsychology also acknowledges that individuals who gain awareness of their cognitive processes can have agency over their future behaviors and personal development. This concept is echoed in Irene Clark's (2016) chapter as she discusses the ever-changing connectomes (map of neural connections) within an individual and the potential that person has to gain consciousness and agency in shaping and performing their own various identities. Discussions such as these regarding neuroplasticity led me to question whether human relationships could increase the brain's propensity for second language acquisition in adults while addressing issues of emotional and socio-cultural fluency in L2 writers.

## Language Attachment Theory

Language attachment theory posits that L2 acquisition in adulthood and the resulting changes in neural plasticity this requires could be fundamentally built upon the brain's optimization towards attachment as a survival mechanism, and that even though adults no longer depend on attachment for survival, human bonding may hold residual power in respect to language acquisition and use. Studies of international adoptees adopted post-critical period offer an interesting perspective on whether or not social bonding has the power to impact brain plasticity for language. Pallier et al. (2003) gathered fMRI data on a group of Korean-born adults who were adopted between the ages of 5-8, post-critical period, into French families. Though these Korean participants had lived in orphanages in Korea before their arrival, so that exposure to Korean should have been extensive (infancy to five years of age), they reported no memory of Korean (L1). They had become native-like in French (L2), the language of their adopted families. When tested with control groups (monolingual French speakers), they performed

equally. When shown Korean symbols or played Korean audio against other foreign languages, their brains showed no distinction. fMRI data imaging showed no Korean ability. It appeared that the second language had completely replaced the first language. Though this study focused on language attrition not the impact of attachment on language, it is likely that the majority of these adoptees had experienced one or more social separations with their native language attachments, creating insecure attachments. However, as they developed social bonds with their L2 French families, these relationships were likely powerful enough to trigger their brains to accept French at this dramatic level of fluency. Reasons their brains chose to delete its first language, Korean, can only be hypothesized, but emotion and painful memory recall has been documented in similar cases of trauma (Pavlenko, 2005). At its extreme, language attachment would help explain deletion of a first language, but could also help explain structural reorganization in the adult bilingual brain in terms of shared conceptual mapping as well as other features of bilingualism found in behavioral and cognitive studies such as the bilingual brain's propensity to acquire theory of mind (i.e., predict the mind of another), flexibility of thought (i.e., implement a new rule quickly after performing a habitual task), and enhanced cognitive control, which was shown to protect against the onset of dementia later in life (Bialystok, 2009; Bialystok Craik, & Luk, 2012; Buchweitz & Prat, 2013). These features of a bilingual brain would, according to language attachment theory, be evidenced in bilinguals who had experienced social bonding in the L1 and L2.

In addition, language attachment theory also integrates concepts on how relationships and the brain interact to influence learning ability and identity formation. In his text, *The Social Neuroscience of Education*, Cozolino (2013) describes how human relationships have been found to build and rebuild brains by reviewing neuroscientific studies showing how healthy

human bonding can reshape behaviors that were once thought to be set. Specifically, Cozolino addresses some of the anxiety studies that Bazerman (2016) discusses. He describes studies in which insecure attachments, stress, and high levels of anxiety negatively impact the brain to impede learning and compares these studies to those showing how emotional attunement, play, and story-telling build human bonds that stimulate the brain for learning. He offers educators the concept of the "tribal classroom," one that is salient for a composition setting in which students have various language resources that can be explored in writing. His notion of the tribal classroom resides on the basic premise that "the more the environment of a classroom parallels the interpersonal, emotional, and motivational components of our tribal past, the more our primitive instincts will activate the biochemistry of learning" (p. 239). The tribal society showed characteristics of small groups, equality and fairness, shared responsibilities, and democratic decision making as opposed to industrialized society's large groups, individualism, competition, and dominance hierarchy. Also, in these small communities, in which human connection is central, the learner is put into a fabric of social, emotional, cultural, political experiences that offers a multiplicity of classroom voices from which to shape L2 learners' experiences of their second language. Likewise, valuing the multiple perspectives inherent in linguistically diverse students enriches the composition setting and stimulates learning and cultural competence. Language attachment theory uses these frameworks within the context of composition and applies them to L2 writers in hopes to ameliorate some of the cultural, emotional, and social isolation commonly reported on in L2 literature (Motha, 2014; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008; Toohey, 2000).

Language attachment theory also maintains that memory, emotion, and the body are interconnected and engaged with others even when physically or temporally separated. Studies

on memory and the body, such as those cited in the text, *Emotions in Multilingualism* point to what Corbett (2016) refers to as embodied cognition, the understanding that cognition is intrinsically social, shared among other bodies and just as much biological and physical as it is mental. In connection to second language acquisition, language attachment suggests that the language used (L1 or L2) during the encoding of the memory becomes part of the network of neural synapses associated with its recall. Studies on cross-linguistic differences in L2 writers support this, showing swear-words, terms of endearment, shame, anger, and frustration to be experienced differently (and often more intensely) according to the language used most for encoding that emotion (Dewaele, 2010; Pavlenko, 2005). It is not surprising that researchers most often found that the language used between caregiver-infant (L1) reportedly was the writer's preference for emotional expression in writing, though exceptions have been noted. Some of these exceptions include when expression of a particular emotion is not socially acceptable in the L1 (e.g., fear in Thai, Chamcharatsri, 2013a), cases where the emotion expressed was emotionally disturbing in the L1 (Pavlenko, 2005), cases in which one did not wish to assert an identity they associated with their L1 (Koven, 2007), and cases where the L1 would not address the writer's desired audience (Pavlenko, 2005). Many of these studies aided Pavlenko (2005) in developing the theory of language embodiment, which is specific to multilingual individuals. Similar to embodied cognition, language embodiment holds the view that the words of a language can invoke both sensory images and physiological reactions. Integrating arguments from Paradis (1994), Pavlenko explains that because primary language acquisition greatly involves the limbic system and other brain structures such as the amygdala, language acquisition generates emotions, drives, and motivation that become part of a process of affective linguistic processing. The result is this language embodiment, in which sensory

representations, desire to produce a message, and autobiographical memory become integrated into the language itself. This language embodiment, she argues, normally does not occur in second language acquisition, in which a decontextualized classroom develops word meanings through "definition, translation, and memorization" rather than through a "consolidation of personal experiences channeled through multiple sensory modalities." Another reason Pavlenko offers for language embodiment not occurring in the L2 is that the limbic system can only be involved in language production when a speaker has a need or desire to produce a certain message (Paradis, 1994), and in many L2 language classrooms, "utterances are elicited from learners who, on top of being unwilling interlocutors, focus on the structure rather than the meaning of the messages," a process that only creates language learning anxiety and connects that anxiety to the L2 (Pavlenko, 2005, p. 155). This exactly describes both my experiences with I/M students in composition courses over the past ten years, as well as, the research reported here.

Over the last two years, I have engaged in an IRB-approved mixed-method study of I/M students in composition courses. The study surveyed 103 students (my former students included) on their language attachments in English, their perceptions of the English language, their comfort level in emotional expression in English, and their L2 language learning histories. The study also collected and analyzed classroom assignments from I/M students who took the survey. These participants were former students from my own composition courses from the past five years, and the documents I collected from them included translingual poetic writing (52 participants) and in-depth language autobiographies recounting language learning histories (77 participants). After using grounded theory to analyze themes in these collected documents, five writers (all former students) were recruited to be interviewed as case studies. These case studies

furthered understanding of findings from the survey and document analysis by providing a more detailed description of L1/L2 rhetorical choices, the impact of language attachments on emotional expression in L1/L2, and autobiographical memory and emotional experiences in the composition course. Though a complete review of the findings is beyond the scope of this chapter, Pavlenko's theory of language embodiment emerged as prevalent pattern within participants. Specifically, survey results suggested that English and negative emotions were most often paired, with explanations of the English education as "stressful" or "pressured" given as descriptors of its acquisition. Also, nearly all preferred the L1 for emotional expressive writing, and a surprising 37 % listed that they had no close friends with whom they used English. The theme of language attachment was explored in more depth during the interview and document analysis with case studies. Autobiographical data were divided into two main categories, depending on whether the student's primary, early connections to the English language were described with more positive or negative descriptors. The majority of these language autobiographies described their early English learning experiences more negatively, a finding that corroborated the survey results showing English to most often be paired with negative emotions. These autobiographies portrayed "dutiful" students, those who often described learning English in cram schools, boarding schools, and schools that focused on exam preparation. The anomalies were four autobiographies whose narratives described their early English learning experience more positively and discussed L2 socio-emotional connections made before studying abroad. Two of these were via human connection using the common L2-English (a Filipino nanny and a Norwegian online gaming friend). The other two were socio-emotional connections made with TV series characters with whom the students felt bonded due to watching numerous hours of the series and memorizing portions of the script. These four "subversive"

students report trying to find a "better" way to learn English than the methods used in their classrooms. It is important to note that the other writers (termed *dutiful*) may have had bonds not discussed in their autobiographies as well as stories that began positively but turned to have more negative descriptors than positive. It is also important to reiterate that this data reflects early connections to the English language, rather than post-study-abroad connections (though the survey seems to report on "lasting" negative attachments to the English language even after moving outside the home country). In addition, these results only represent a small set of I/M participants in university composition courses. If the study were duplicated in another region and university, the results might differ. However, the insights gained from this participant group asks us as instructors and researchers to consider the language attachment history of an L2 learner, especially when we notice anxiety associated with the English language.

Though some may argue that having embodied cognition in language learning is not important for L2 writing development in academic settings, my findings suggest that L2 writing and rhetoric benefit from an embodied approach. Moreover, survey results pointed to a pattern showing that nearly all L2 learners who reported no close friends in the L2, desired to have one. From this evidence and the theories offered above, language attachment theory suggests that when bilingual brains have had L2 exposure through human connection and bonding, L2 writing increases in complexity, emotionality, the use of translingual rhetoric, and overall embodied cognition in writing. The goal, then, in addressing the L2 writers in our composition courses who lack socio-emotional and socio-cultural types of L2 language fluency, is to offer language attachment figures—caring L2 speakers who are willing to bond with the learner, at least for the duration of a language learning episode. These need not be native speakers, and can be classroom conversation partners. Moreover, for mainstream students whose L1 is English and

whose L2 is not particularly developed, language attachment pedagogies could function as a kind of empathy training, which may solve diversity issues that stem from negative, stigmatized views of the ESL student and encourage more cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity. In addition, translingual writing approaches become more important rhetorical moves as language attachments require composition students to develop their repertoires for addressing various types of cultural audiences, a much needed skill as writers participate in today's globalized social medias (e.g., the 2011 "Twitter Revolution" in Egypt).

The insights of language attachment theory are not new in and of themselves. It is a hybridized theory specific to reviving language pedagogies that rest upon human bonding and relationship. It is grounded in interdisciplinary work among the fields of neuroscience, psychology, and composition studies and is a response to globalization in higher education, which has caused an increasing number of linguistically diverse students and created the need for researchers and practitioners to better understand the bilingual brain in a composition setting. What is new about language attachment is 1. The position that adult language learning be situated inside of human attachment and 2. A reframing of composition pedagogies for this framework. Again, unlike Kuhl's Mandarin tutor, language attachment figures need not be a native speaker, but could be anyone with whom the L2 was the primary language used for interaction.

## Pedagogical Implementation

Throughout this dissertation, I offer pedagogical implementations in order to emphasize the action research aspect of this work, underscoring the practical implications of each section. This chapter begs the question, What can a writing teacher do to encourage language attachments and social bonding in composition classrooms? This question has fueled my teaching over the

last few years, and here, I offer a teaching technique not as a vetted pedagogy, but as a potential direction for investigation. This pedagogical practice evolved as a response to the theory of language attachment, which supports human-to-human interaction as the most effective form of instruction. I consider this technique one of the most valuable to come from this study, due to the positive feedback students have reported.

As a composition instructor, the most effective implementation of language attachment theory is to intentionally design long-term pairs or groups. These were administered in a 10-week first year "multilingual" composition course, where student self-select enrollment as they identify themselves as "someone who can read, write, and think in more than one language." The composition course met twice weekly for two hours. For the first two weeks of class, I observed student interactions, looking for signs that two or three students could be long-term friends. Signs include those Cozolino (2013) designates as stimulating for learning: laughter, play, and/or emotional attunement during story-telling or conversation. During these first two weeks, I also required autobiographical writing and classroom introductions that I used to pair students based on similar interests. During the quarter, students were required to spend a lot of time with their language attachment. They interviewed one another outside of class for a primary research skills assignment. They peer-reviewed one another's papers. They also watched and analyzed films from their home cultures as part of a cross-cultural assignment, and as Meade (2016) mentions, grades were deemphasized in favor of engagement. As a result, some students who were interviewed six months after the course, reported continued bonding outside of class which resulted in positive emotional experiences with English. For example, one of my case studies, Shun (pseudonym), a Chinese-English speaker reported severe anxiety when using English, explaining short "freezes" or "blanks" during conversations in English due to stress. In

discussing memory and emotion, he attributed the strict, pressured educational methods used to teach English in China as reason for his anxiety when using English. Shun's stress prevented him from feeling curiosity and creativity when using English. During my course, I paired Shun with Min (pseudonym), a Korean-English speaker. Their friendship lasted beyond my course to a weekly meeting at a pub, where they discussed their families, romantic relationships, future plans, and school. In our interview, Shun explained that talking to Min in English (their common L2) allowed him to practice his English in a non-academic, non-pressured environment, which he believed was therapeutic in reducing his anxiety. This long-term bond significantly impacted his cognition and experience of writing in the L2. As a result, Shun was a more relaxed writer, which added to his sense of self-confidence and enhanced his emotional connectivity to the English language. Shun also reported feeling more capable, a theme that echoes Khost (2016) in his discussion of self-efficacy. In Shun's case, the language attachment figure Min becomes the pedagogical means by which the English language becomes slowly more embodied for Shun. As his anxiety decreases, he finds himself laughing, feeling sadness, and connecting emotionally as he expresses himself through writing poetically and autobiographically. He explains that he has never experienced English or writing this way, and laughs, as he tells me that he may not want to be a math major anymore.

## Conclusion

This chapter argues that language attachments are both the practical means by which composition instructors can offer L2 writers more embodied rhetorical repertoires as well as a helpful approach through which L1 English writers can develop cross-cultural repertoires for addressing various types of cultural audiences who use World Englishes (Schaub, 2003). In addition, the chapter argues that some understandings from primary language acquisition and

infant brain studies can aid our conceptualization of secondary language acquisition, particularly in positioning human bonding as a foundational element to adult language learning. Next, premised on these arguments, I offer language attachment theory as an example framework with which to explore new pedagogical investigations in the composition classroom. This framework works to provide a more Bakhtinian experience of language for the L2 writer, where embodied cognition and writing intersect, moving students closer to socio-emotional and socio-cultural fluency in the L2. Language attachment theory functions not to assimilate L2 learners into moving closer toward the inner circle of native speakers (Kachru, 1990), but to encourage all students to question the internalized ideology of the native speaker, its assumptions, and the impact these have on the learner. Language attachment also grounds itself in findings that report that healthy human bonding can rebuild and reprogram the brain, especially in instances where students display insecure attachments or bilinguals have negative emotions encoded with the English language due to past English education practices. In addition, through the cognitively transformative avenues of bilingualism and human relationships, this contribution has the potential to help both L2 and monolingual English writers by promoting social bonding as a means to globalizing the composition classroom. These integrated perspectives are particularly important, as globalization in higher education is increasingly demanding that the teaching of English composition and rhetoric appeal to more global audiences, in which multilingualism, new media, and World Englishes have become part of our everyday interactions.

# CHAPTER 3

# METHODOLOGY

This mixed methods study investigates the impact of social bonding in second language acquisition by exploring elements of affect socialization and emotional expression through the methods of survey, narrative inquiry, and interview. To review, the research questions for this study are listed below:

1. What is the relationship between L2 socio-emotionality/social bonding and adult second language learning? Does socio-emotionality and human bonding have an impact on an adult language learner?

2. Does a pattern exist in adult language learners' perceptions of their language learning histories as being connected to specific human beings? If so, does this correlation influence identity formation and affect socialization in the L2?

3. In exploring socio-emotionality and human bonding in language pedagogy, what new perspectives from neuroscience correlate with second language studies? What pedagogical innovations and implications could result from these interdisciplinary intersections for future classroom research?

Questions 1 and 3 are taken up in data Chapter 4, and Chapter 5 addresses Question 2. These questions arose as a response to reoccurring patterns that emerged through teaching English to speakers of other languages in upper level writing courses over the past six years. Teaching journals, conversations with other faculty and students, and informal, supervised teaching research provided data that resulted in the beginnings of a grounded theoretical analysis regarding a perceived relationship between emotional expression in the L2 writer and L2

language attachments. These questions were further refined as reading and research in the fields of social neuroscience and psychology offered more positivistic explanations and data that broadened and gave insight into what the qualitative patterns were showing. From a pragmatic theoretical perspective, mixed methodology allowed both the quantitative and qualitative sets of questions in the study to be asked. The quantitative aspects of survey gave numerical data on questions such as 1. how many of these upper level L2 writers would say they have an L2 language attachment? or 2. how many of these L2 writers would describe their English language learning experiences positively/negatively? The qualitative aspects of document analysis and interview allow a theoretical perspective consistent with the study's view of the human as an agent who constructs social meaning through interaction. Thus, though this study might initially appear QUAN-qual, emphasizing quantitative over qualitative, due to the design sequence of the survey occurring first followed by the document analysis and interview, the methodology of this study originates from a primarily qualitative approach and takes a QUAL-quan approach. The survey, though first in design, was a pragmatic response to questions originating from patterns occurring in the qualitative data collected informally over the past six years within the research site.

This chapter is structured in four sections. The first section focuses on the theoretical framework of mixed methodologies. The second section describes the participants and the elements of quantitative and qualitative research tools. The third section presents the research tools and how they were used to gather data. The fourth and final section offers the research analysis framework.

## Theoretical Framework

This study aimed to gain an understanding of the impact of social bonding on language learning in adults by examining the amount of L2 social attachments in L2 writers, the nature of these relationships, and their perceived impact on learners' language use and emotional expression when writing creatively. In this study, "words [are] used to add meaning to numbers and numbers [are] used to add precision to words" (Dörnyei, 2007, p.45). Through a qualitative lens, this study sees writing as a social act that can occur within a particular situation and is influenced by varying dimensions—personal attitudes, prior experiences, and contexts (Hyland, 2009, p.26). Quantitatively, the study collects data on a larger sample size to gain insight into this particular group of fluent bilinguals in reference to their language preference for emotional expression, L2 social attachments, and emotions toward the L2 community. In combining methods, a researcher can obtain data on both the macro and micro, giving a more comprehensive vision of the interplay of both the broader social context and the individual. Often methods are differentiated as either inductive/data-driven or deductive/theory driven. Riazi & Candlin (2014) explain:

> In a deductive or theory-driven approach, we begin from a theory or theoretical framework and derive a hypothesis from it; we may then be able to provide evidence for or against the hypothesis by observing the phenomena under review and by collecting and analyzing appropriate data. The outcome of such deductive research will either strengthen the theory by verifying the hypothesis or weaken its explanatory power if the evidence and analysis do not support the hypothesis. In contrast, inductive or data-driven

> approaches to research begin from inspection of the data, seeking meaningful patterns and generating hypotheses which may then, in the case of well-designed large-scale research projects, generate further theory…a mix of these two research methodologies provides a more comprehensive understanding of the object of study. (p.136)

This mixed methods study developed from both a theory-driven approach and a data-driven approach. Data collected through a participatory action research paradigm was used to develop this study's written prompts and assignments, which were originally developed to solve issues L2 writers were having in emotional expression. The data that resulted from these assignments resulted in more research on theories related to social bonding and language learning in the fields of social neuroscience, psychology, and applied linguistics. Hence, a theory-driven approach was combined to offer quantitative data on a subsample of a larger population for further in-depth research on the amount of social bonding in the L2.

As a mixed methods theorist, I designed this study consistent with major characteristics of pragmatism as delineated in Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009), that is, "the rejection of the dogmatic either-or choice between constructivist and positivist paradigms, and the search for practical answers to questions that intrigue the researcher" (p.86). In this vein, the practically-oriented mixed methods researcher can investigate important questions through "mixing methods in ways that cannot be adequately addressed with a single approach" (Riazi & Candlin, 2014, p.142). The purpose, then, of this mixed methods approach is to combine quantitative research, which is essentially normative (explaining an issue with respect to certain criteria), and qualitative research, which is essentially interpretive (aiming to understand the issue's contextual components), in order to present a more comprehensive picture (p.158). In addition, the purpose of this pragmatic mixed methods approach could be defined as "developmental" because the

results from one method are used to help develop or inform the other (p.144). For this reason, during data analysis Chapter 4, survey data is not placed in a separate section, but rather strategically throughout the interpretive data, as the numerical data informs the qualitative findings.

## Research Site

A prominent, public four-year university in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States was the research site for this study. As a leading university in addressing the increasing multilingual populations in higher education, the university had various composition courses focusing on L2 writing development. From the English Department, these included multilingual sections of first year composition, multilingual writing studio courses, and a preparatory multilingual writing course for incoming freshmen. From the university's International & Academic English Programs (IEP), which offered non-matriculated I/M students developmental English courses, these included genre writing, applied academic writing, and academic reading and writing. This study focused on gaining L2 writing participants from both the English department's writing courses as well as from the top-level (level 5) writing students in the International & Academic English Programs.

## Participants

The participants in this study were I/M writers from both matriculated and nonmatriculated English writing courses. From this larger pool of participants, a smaller pool of L2 writers (all former students in writing courses I taught) offered their written class assignments for further document analysis. From this qualitative data, five case studies were chosen (based on common themes emerging from the document analysis) for further interviewing and analysis.

Remaining consistent to a language attachment framework, the study selected participants with whom the researcher already had the social bond of teacher-student relationship. Participants had varying majors and varying amounts of time spent in an English speaking community, but all documented proficiency that placed them into college-level or college-bound writing courses and could be considered high-level L2 writers.

## Research Tools

In this study, survey, written prompts, and interviews were used as research tools to collect varying kinds of information regarding emotional attachments, emotional expression, and L2 writers' perceptions regarding their language acquisition experiences. The design is a sequential explanatory design (Weisberg, Krosnick, & Bown 1989), in which qualitative data is collected from a sub-sample of survey respondents, to provide more explanation for some of the response patterns revealed by the survey. The interviews served as a third layer of descriptive data, as patterns from both the survey and written document collection were assessed and integrated. The following section describes the survey question types, the writing prompts, and the interview questions.

### Survey

Survey was used as a tool to gather factual data on the existence or non-existence of L2 social attachments in fluent bilinguals. As Weisberg et al. (1989) point out, sometimes in surveys, facts cannot be distinguished from beliefs, as was the case in this study. For example, participants' differing beliefs about what constitutes a "close friend" may vary, thus the fact of "having a close friend" rests upon the respondent's conceptualization of a "close friend." Thus, the survey was only able to assess the perceived existence of a "close friend," but included a

follow-up open-ended question in order to gain descriptive data on the nature of the friendship and thus perceptions of attachment. The survey consisted of six questions regarding L2 social bonding and L2 emotionality. The survey was administered through both paper surveys and an online survey form. The survey mainly questioned a larger population on questions that offered insight into the statistical frequency of language attachments in these L2 writers, L2 emotionality, the nature of their socialization into the English language by their home society and the English society. Questions included:

1. What is your home language?
2. What other languages do you speak?
3. Do you have any close, intimate relationships (dear friends that you share your feelings, thoughts, and life with) with whom you speak only or mostly English? In other words, do you have any close, special friendships with anyone who you mainly communicate with in English?
4. If yes, please explain your relationship.
5. In your experience, is it difficult to make friends with people whose first language is English?

   Yes, it is difficult.

   No, it is not difficult.

6. What adjective best describes your English education in your home country

   Stressful

   Fun

   Pressured

Relaxing

The overall goal of this survey design was to measure frequencies of the existence of L2 emotional attachments in these L2 writers at this level of achievement and fluency (Richards, Ross, & Seedhouse, 2012). It also sought to test the emotional valence attributed to past English language learning experiences and to "merged/converge" this data with data found in the qualitative research data during the analysis and interpretation stages (Creswell & Piano Clark, 2007). The survey design was guided by research questions that arose through a six-year teaching career within the research site, in which the researcher analyzed writings and relationships (or lack of relationships) through an action research paradigm (described below) meant to address issues of emotionality in L2 writing. Questions 1 and 2, primarily functioned to screen the participants in multilingual courses to be sure they do not consider their home language as English. Because multilingual courses in this university setting were selfselected courses, some students were L1-English speakers with an L2 in another language, while others were bilingual or trilingual from birth. Because this study focused on I/M individuals who did not consider their home language as English, this question was necessary to parse out only the survey participants who did not claim English as an L1. Question 3 focused on the existence or non-existence of close friendships in English, with Question 4 requesting further descriptions of these relationships. Question 5 sought to assess whether participants considered making friends difficult in English, which was a follow-up to the goal of assessing relationships in the L2. The final question had a somewhat different goal, in that its aim was to understand quantitatively how many would describe their learning experiences using more positive or negative adjectives. This was important to assess, as appraisal theories of emotion interpret past experiences to create

affective schemes of "likes" or "dislikes" toward concepts (Schumann, 1997). Therefore, in this final question, the survey sought to gain an understanding of the appraisals participants had formed in connection to the English language, as a concept.

**Development of the Writing Prompts: Action Research Cycle**

Before presenting the two writing prompts used for this study, it is necessary to describe the development of these prompts and the context in which the writing took place. Both the poetry and autobiographical data used in this dissertation were collected retroactively. Therefore, writers of poems and autobiographies in this study were students in my composition courses, responding to prompts as part of a class assignment. Each prompt was developed as part of an action research project I had been conducting at the time on developing emotionality in L2 writers. Therefore, because this dissertation study collected data retroactively from assignment prompts being used in class as part of an action research cycle, I will briefly recount the action research cycle taking place at the time as well as the development of these writing prompts.

True to the pragmatist approach, in my role as a teacher-researcher, my line of inquiry was specific to understanding issues emerging from my context. I was responding to a pattern I noticed in my students, mainly a lack of and need for emotional connectivity to the English language (e.g., "I feel like a machine when I use English"). According to Burns (2010), action research "involves taking a self-reflective, critical, and systematic approach to exploring your own teaching contexts" (p.2). Because action research is a cyclical process in which the researcher has long periods of exposure to the research site, over the last six years I concentrated on staying in the research site mentioned above, teaching multilingual writing courses in both the International & Academic English programs and the English Department. One of these courses was a 200-level course, while all of the other courses were first year composition courses (10

courses) or level-5 writing courses in the International English Program (5 courses). Action researchers define a problem or issue to be explored, develop a plan, implement the plan through action, observe the results, and then reflect on the outcome, only to repeat the process again with the intention to "intervene in a deliberate way in the problematic situation in order to bring about changes and, even better, improvements in practice" (p.2). In this way, changes emerge out of a response to research data and the research is applied to a "real world" setting. My research study is portrayed as follows:

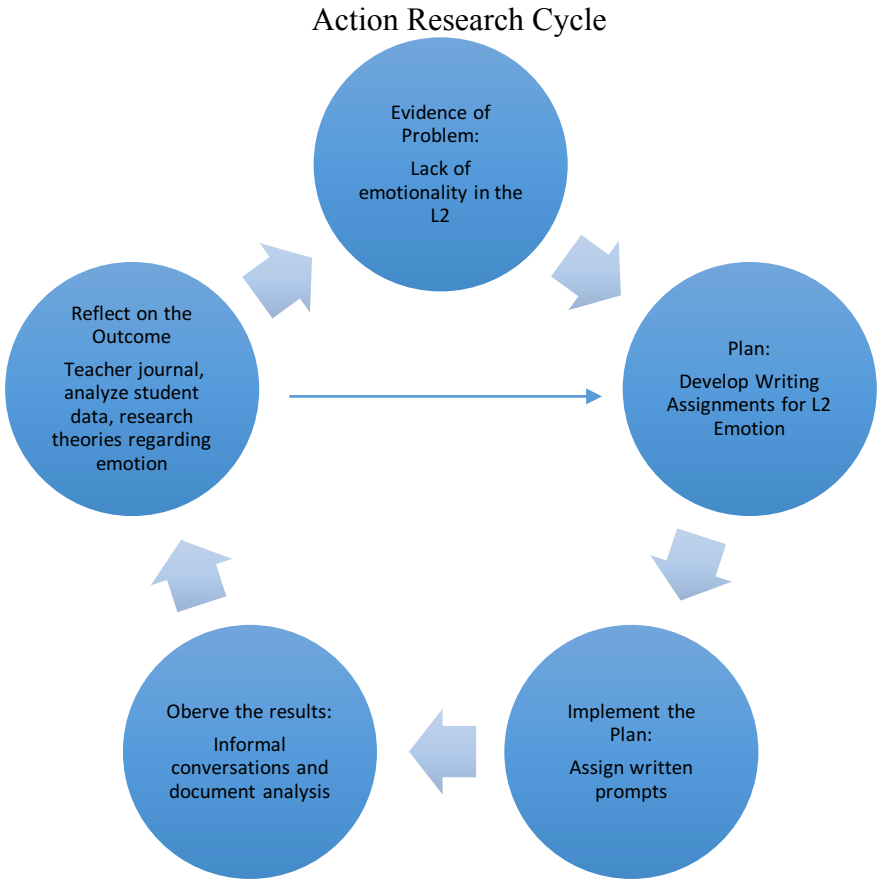


*Figure 1*: Action Research Cycle

This action research plan offered L2 writers what Hanauer (2010) describes as "meaningful literacy," and specifically asked writers to "share [their] heart" through their writing. Though many variations of the same assignments emerged through this process, the two main genres

used were poetry and autobiography. In his text, *Poetry as Research: Exploring Second Language Poetry Writing*, Hanauer (2010) argues that researching poetic writing serves two goals. First, it allows "the participants involved personal insight," and second, it utilizes the poetic expressions "as qualitative data that gives insight into the understanding and perspective of these participants" (p.81). Autobiography as research allows the researcher to analyze both the participants' narratives as language learning histories as well as to consider the way in which these narratives have been "shaped by social, cultural, and historical conventions as well as by the relationship between the storyteller and the interlocutor (Pavlenko, 2002, p. 214). Merging both autobiography and poetry in the context of a student-teacher relationship provides the researcher a more holistic understanding of the emotive experiences of the participants.

**Poetry Prompt.** The poetry prompt developed in response to researching theories on emotion in language learning during the reflective stages of my action research. A study by Chamcharatsri (2013a) was particularly relevant, as he aimed to explore emotions which were uncommonly expressed in his L1 culture (i.e., fear in Thai). His study expanded the understanding of L1 as the commonly preferred language of emotion (Deweale, 2010) as his Thai-English participants had various preferences for using their L1 or L2 to recount stories of fear. Pavlenko (2005), as well, reported on other instances when bilinguals would prefer emotional expression in the L2 rather than the L1, offering examples such as the L2 chosen for diaries, secrets, or expression of emotions too difficult to mention in the L1. These various responses to emotion in the L2 led me to investigate story-telling of emotions uncommon in the participants' L1, as more research was needed in this area.

Beyond emotionality, the action research cycle encouraged me to create prompts that would allow students to investigate their own identity across languages and experiment with

translingual approaches to writing. Koven's (2007) study was particularly influential in this regard. Her study of "The Self in Two Languages" investigated the identities of Portuguese-French bilinguals through three approaches. First, she recorded bilinguals telling the same story in each language to members of their same culture. Next, she interviewed them about their feelings and experiences across languages. Finally, she had members of their culture listen to the recordings of each language story and explain their perspectives on the speaker. The results of this study showed that the same speaker experienced different "selves," depending on their context. Though this finding was the main contribution that Koven focused on, I noticed that the participants in her studied reported on a heighten awareness of rhetorical choices as well as a deeper understanding of their identity in each language. Therefore, I created a prompt that would aim to increase this awareness in my students. Similar to Koven, I asked them to tell a story in two languages and perform a self-analysis on their own experiences during the exercise. In addition, I included a poetic assignment, which invited translingual writing approaches (taught previously in the course), in order to give L2 writers even more flexibility in poetic expression and build a classroom space that "valued all of the language resources" (Fahim et al., 2016). The following prompt was given as a class assignment across multiple sections my writing courses. The writings from these prompts were approved for retroactive collection and use for the current mixed methods study. Therefore, these writing assignments both reflect the writing assignments created in the action research cycle (shown in the figure above) and the writing assignments used in the current research study.

> *Prompt:* In class, you were asked to free-write in two languages about an emotion not normally expressed in your family/home language.

Part 1: Answer the questions: What do you notice about your writing process in each language? What do you notice about your identity or personality as you write in both languages? Are there any differences in your expression of emotion? Why or why not, do you think?

Part 2: Using your free-writing assignments for help, compose a poem about an emotion you do not normally express in your home language. You can use translingual approaches if you like.

**Autobiographical Prompt**. This second prompt resulted from researching theories presented in studies of language autobiographies (Pavlenko, 2001; Schumann, 1997). For example, in the Pavlenko (2001) study of published works by L2 writers, she analyzes how L2 writers gain ownership of the L2, reinvent their own identity within their bilingualism, and powerfully offer readers new perspectives on identity and language. Reflecting on her work, I found the genre of "language autobiography" instrumental in allowing student-writers to practice emotional expression through autobiographical memories, story-telling, and literary devices such as dialogue, character development, description. In addition, as elements from studies connecting play to increased learning surfaced throughout my research and class discussions (Cozolino, 2013; Dörnyei, 2001), I introduced the autobiographical assignment with self-exploration and play as the guiding goals. Autobiographical narratives have been acknowledged as "a legitimate source of data in the hermeneutic tradition, complementary to more traditional empirical approaches" and were found to be fascinating pedagogically for offering L2 writers practice in L2 emotional expression (Pavlenko, 2002, p. 213). Below is the prompt used across various

writing courses in the action research cycle. The writings that resulted from this prompt were approved by the IRB for retroactive collection and use in the current research study.

> *Prompt.* In class, we have taken time to analyze and understand the genre of autobiography. We have explored a few different autobiographies by bilinguals and discussed how crossing languages and cultures can impact our identity.
>
> With many writing tools in your pocket (dialogue, description, rhetorical grammar devices), you are ready to write your own language autobiography.
>
> Please write a language autobiography, in which you share your experience about crossing languages and cultures. Feel free to use the examples we have seen in class—Karen Ogulnick, Helen Kim, Manuel Munoz, and Amy Tan—as models for genre analysis and production.

**Interviews**

Interview methodology has a long history of significance as a tool for studying human perspectives, but according to Gubrium and Holstein (2003), the complexity of interviewing has increased as the postmodern world has recognized the value of the individual experience. "The interview is being conceptualized as an occasion for purposefully animating participants to *construct* versions of reality interactionally rather than merely purvey data" (p.32). This theoretical perspective of knowledge construction as socially created allows for the type of data gathering and analysis needed for the research questions presented in this study. In terms of social bonding studies, active interviewing provides an in-depth data set that not only thickens

description of a phenomenon but allows interactional dynamics to be part of the ever-changing reality shaping that occurs within language use.

After document analysis and coding of the poems and language autobiographies, seven participants were contacted and asked to participate in an interview. These seven were chosen based on the prominent themes found in the written data that had not been explored at length in previous research. Four poets/autobiographers chose to participate, and one other participant who had only written the autobiographical assignment also chose to participate in an interview. These participants were invited to participate in a 45- to 60-minute interview reflecting on their writing experiences, language attachments, and emotional expression in their L1 and L2. An audio recorder was used to record the interviews, thus reducing threats of validity to the study (Maxwell, 2005).

Two interview structures were used and often blended, depending on whether the participant was chosen based on their poetry writing or autobiographical writing. The questions were semi-structured and investigated participants' experiences expressing emotions in their writing, their socio-emotional experiences, and their general language learning histories. Questions asked are listed below. Not all questions were asked and answered for each interview.

**Case Study Interview**

**Part I**

Could you start by helping me understand your early family situation? Where you lived and so on? And what your education for learning English was like?

(2 to 3-minute warm-up)

Can you tell me a little more about your writing? (Specific questions asking for more information about the writer's meaning/use of words or phrases.

Are there any emotions that you notice are expressed differently between your first language and English? Where did you first observe these differences?

Can you remember specific times or stories of when you had to express your emotions in English?

I'd like to go through each category and see if you can remember specific stories, people, or TV shows/films that taught you about these aspects of the English language.

Culture: What have you learned about your L2 culture? And how did you learn it? How has this influenced you?

Emotions: What have you learned about expressing emotions in your L2 culture? Where did you observe or learn about this? How have you personally been influenced by this?

Humor: What have you learned about humor in your L2 culture? Where did you learn it? How have you incorporated your own sense of humor into the L2?

Socially Appropriate Behavior: What have you learned about how to act or speak in a way that is socially appropriate in your L2 community? Where did you learn this? How has it influenced you?

**PART II Social Attachments in the L2**

Can you describe your friendships and close relationships in which you had to use English to communicate?

What instances of emotion can you recall from these interactions?

How do you think these moments influenced your English language learning?

**PART III Socialized through media**

Are there any TV programs or movies that you have watched that have influenced your English ability? What are they? And what kind of knowledge have you learned from these sources?

Are there any other types of media that have socialized you into new ways of feelings, thinking, or understanding? If so, please describe them.

**Additional Questions for Poetry Interview**

Could you tell me more about your poem?

Could you talk more about the differences between your first language and second language in the poem?

What have you learned from L1 and L2 society about the topic your poem addresses?

Can you remember specific stories or memories regarding this topic?

## Research Procedures

Participants were invited to the study through three ways, depending on the research instrument. For the survey, students were approached either through an email invitation with a

version of the online survey or through an in-class invitation with distribution of the paper version of the survey to interested parties (Appendix D). According to IRB stipulations, all participants received an information statement with the survey (Appendix E), so that participation was taken as informed consent. For the collection and analysis of written documents from course assignments, this study was granted a waiver of informed consent from the IRB, as written work was used for coding patterns and themes across the population only. After coding for themes, case studies were selected and students were invited via email to participate in an interview (Appendix F). Due to the need to perform four of the five interviews via skype or phone call, participants were given a detailed information statement to read and invited to ask clarification questions before consenting to participate in the interview. Therefore, participation in the interview was taken as informed consent (as delineated in the IRB protocol). Additionally, all students whose writing was used in the formal report, granted permission for its use.

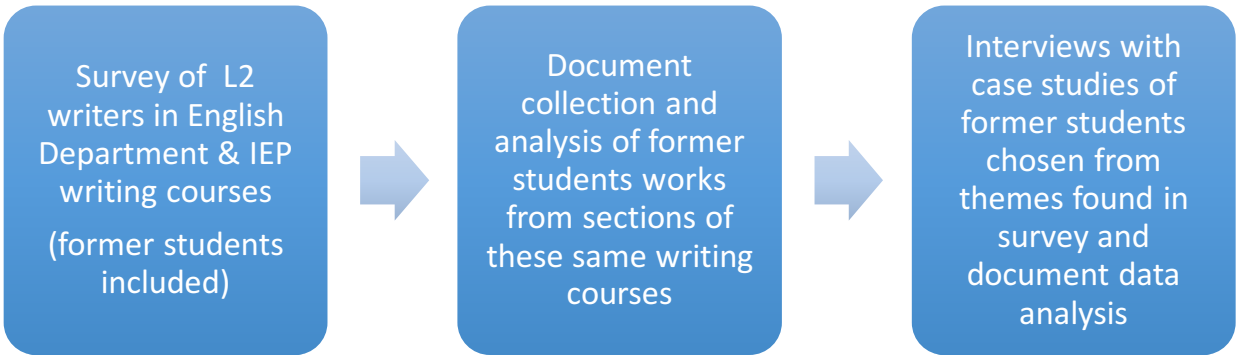


*Figure 2*: Research Procedures

**Data Collection**

103 surveys were collected both in person, during and after class visits to writing courses, as well as through online participation. In order to gather rich qualitative data which could offer thick description, I collected data from former students (a subset of my survey participants) to be

case study participants because I had had extensive hours of observation and interaction with them through class meetings, one-on-one writing conferences, office hour visits, and team work observations. In addition, I had collected and read two drafts of their autobiographical tales as well as various other genres of writing. Therefore, collecting poems and language autobiographies written in my own previous writing courses brought with it a slightly ethnographic view of the data in that the writings were unable to be seen as isolated from the context in which they were produced, the human beings whom I had grown to know, and my own position as their previous teacher. This collection approach explicitly assumed an interpretive approach to the data, as the researcher only constructs theory through acknowledgement of their own past and present interactions with people, perspectives, and research practices.

These autobiographies and poems had been collected via educational technology systems such as canvas and catalyst, as students had used these for assignment submissions. Following analysis, interview data was collected through online interviewing via skype (3 participants), phone interviewing (1 participants) and in-person interviewing (1 participant). All interviews were recorded with an audio recorder. While this collection method offers the positive aspects of extended familiarity with the participants, it also acknowledges that all of the documents written and interview responses were aimed at the same audience (me, their teacher). Thus, the data collected does not offer perspective into how the same participant might differently convey their personal history, beliefs, and perspectives to someone else in another context. Research reflexivity demands awareness that the research/teacher was the creator of the writing prompts as well as the administrator of the interview, causing the participants involved to present themselves

(or not present aspects of themselves) according to their perception of our socio-cultural relationship.

## Data Analysis

In mixed methods studies, Creswell and Tashakkori (2007) explain that inferences from both strands are "integrated to provide a fuller understanding of the phenomenon under study. Integration might be in the form of comparing, contrasting, building on, or embedding one type of conclusion with the other" (as cited in Riazi & Candlin, 2014, p. 148). In addressing the written data and interview data, grounded theory best provided a manner of elaboration and modification of the existing theory of language attachment, which seemed explanatory but not fully developed (Schram, 2006). By playing additional and ongoing instances of qualitative data against the theory of language attachment, the analysis focused on gaining a fuller understanding of the impact of social bonding in relation to the L2 writer. Grounded theory as a tool of analysis complements the theoretical perspective used in this study. Emerging from the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967), grounded theory combines two contrasting and competing traditions in sociology, Columbia University positivism and Chicago School pragmatism with field research (Charmaz, 2008). Likewise, this mixed methods study draws on a more positivist background in social neuroscience blended with a qualitative pragmatism informed by symbolic interactionism. This theoretical perspective assumes that society, reality, and self are constructed through interactions, particularly language interactions, and thus, allows human beings to be seen as active agents.

### Qualitative Data

For analysis of the written documents, I chose a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2008). Since these documents were collected retroactively, I had previous familiarity with the writing, having read each piece twice before when the writers were my students. However, since the documents were from my past six years of teaching and I was revisiting the work as research data, I first re-read the materials alongside class photos to reacquaint myself with the participants, their stories, and our previous interactions as teacher-student. Next, I performed a first round of initial coding, remaining consistent to Charmaz's recommendation for the initial round of coding to refrain from using new wording or categorical words outside of those in the text. Following this analysis, I completed a second round of coding, in which data was organized into a spreadsheet with more refined codes. In a third round of analysis, this data was organized into a more refined coded spreadsheet and analyzed adjacent to the survey data. Interview transcripts of case studies followed the same analysis procedures, with the qualitative data charted into spreadsheets that could easily be compared across each data type.

**Quantitative Data**

For the survey, questions assessed categorical, nominal variables such as first and second/additional language, presence or absence of an L2 language attachment, existence of difficulty in creating L2 friendships, and descriptor of English learning experience. The more difficult question regarding whether responders had a "close" friend in English was followed by open-ended questions meant to gather more descriptive data. This design was constructed due to the difficulty and variability in definitions of a "close friend." Answers to these open-ended questions were coded and then grouped accordingly (Weisberg et al., 1989). The survey goals centered around understanding the prevalence of L2 language attachments in this population. Mainly, the survey used Excel spreadsheets to quantify the data into single variable statistics.

## Fluency Assessment

Fluency in English was not tested individually as part of this study, but selection criteria (high-level English courses) assumed the university testing and assessment criteria necessary for class membership. In the International English Language Programs, this includes testing and assessment for reading, writing, listening and speaking, using university-developed materials from the testing and assessment team. For university courses in the English department, this included admissions requirements of a 92 TOEFL iBT, 580 paper based TOEFL, or 7.0 IELTS.

# CHAPTER 4

## RELATIONSHIPS & SOCIO-EMOTIONALITY IN L2 ACQUISITION

In my ten years of teaching English language to I/M writers, I have repeatedly become aware of a powerful socio-emotional dynamic between my students and the English language, particularly due to an autobiographical assignment that became a standard in my courses regarding students' narratives about learning English. In these narratives, many students shared with me the experience of severe "anxiety" when using English, or "feeling like a machine" in English, or even, "hating English." This emotional aspect of English language learning, through my own research and practice, resurfaces as having great weight for the field of TESOL. Aspects of these negative emotions have long fascinated researchers. For example, Krashen (1982) developed the affective filter hypothesis, which encourages the lowering of anxiety for the enhancement of acquisition, and Norton and Toohey (2001) explored the emotional impact of L2 community rejection or integration. More recent understandings from social neuroscience and education invite the need for a more contemporary integration and deeper analysis of the socio-emotional subjectivities of L2 learners in higher education. Though research by Hanauer (2010) on the poetic identity of L2 writers begins to address this, there remains much to be investigated in regard to the neuro-socio-emotional relationship I/M students build with the English language and the nature of their desire for this language (Motha, 2014).

Aneta Pavlenko, in her 2001 study, reports that "In many cases, immigration or even a temporary journey make the L2 learners' and users' prior subjectivities incomprehensible to their new community" (p. 324). Conversations with department leaders, teachers, and program directors have shown the truth of this statement. We, in the TESOL community, have not gained

a clear understanding of the perspectives and subjectivities of English language learners in American post-secondary classrooms and their past experiences and associations with the English language. With globalization in higher education ushering in greater numbers of I/M learners from abroad, this study sought to gain an understanding of the socio-emotional nature of English language acquisition. This study evolved as an effort to understand the presence and "stickiness" of negative emotions to the English language itself (Benesch, 2013) but also more broadly explored the students' narratives in terms of the impact of social relationships on language learning.

In the following sections, the data is presented chronologically and thematically, with survey results presented throughout, in conjunction with the qualitative findings. In keeping with the QUAL-quan methodological design, the autobiographical data is given precedence, with the quantitative results presented as a numerical perspective of the topics being discussed. The sections are divided into two categories, reflecting the self-descriptions of the students (who, in most cased, tended to see these categories as non-overlapping):

1. Traditional Education in Home Countries: The "Dutiful" Learner
2. Non-traditional Education in Home Countries: The "Subversive" Learner

Within the first section, the chapter will discuss the narratives of dutiful learners, including the impact of L1 culture on acquisition as well as socio-emotional aspects of their English output. The second section will discuss the narratives of the four subversive learners, offering more detailed analysis of each learner's narrative. Rather than present the survey results as a separate section, the analysis blends the survey data into the appropriate thematic sections. This presentation of the data best fits with the research design, due to the fact that the same population was being studied across methods of data collection (i.e., writers of the autobiographies were a

subset of the same population who took the survey). The majority of autobiographies (73) were taken from first year composition courses, with the other eleven autobiographies originating in an upper level English course, resulting in a total of 84 for the primary data analysis and coding. However, in analysis, seven of the studied autobiographies turned out to be from multilingual writers who were bilingual or multilingual from birth (i.e. Indian student who spoke English in his home in India, Mexican-American student). These autobiographies offered a connection to the English language distinct from that shown in the body of work from I/M student writers, who were not born in communities where English was a primary language. Therefore, for the sake of consistency and clarity, these participants were not included in the coding and analysis. I/M participants whose language at birth was not English were included and comprised 77 in total. The goal of the analysis was to focus on those whose first language was not English. To accomplish this goal in the survey, the first two questions of the survey functioned to identify I/M students who self-reported English as a second, not-home language, so that from-birth multilingual individuals were not included in the survey data as well.

The data is organized in conjunction with the two main types of narratives that emerged, negative and positive emotional associations with the English language. However, some autobiographies also seemed to fall along the continuum between the two, with descriptions of both offered throughout. These were coded by marking descriptions and adjectives related to the English language, English teachers, or English tests, and then, placing them on an excel chart for comparison in columns—negative, positive, neutral. Results showed a significant pattern of references to negative socio-emotional aspects in English language acquisition, but it was in studying the anomalies (those that described their English language learning positively) that language attachment theory emerged as a substantial framework for pedagogy. For clarity, the

primarily negative emotional narratives are discussed first, and labeled the "dutiful" narratives, followed by the positive emotional narratives, which are labeled "subversive" narratives.

**Traditional English Education in Home Countries: The "Dutiful" Learner**

To begin with, my analysis of the 77 autobiographies produced a large category of references to the traditional English educational system in the writers' home countries. Fifty of the 77 autobiographies mentioned traditional methods of language teaching to include rote memorization, recitation of the textbook, repetition of a tape recording, additional weekend coursework, and grammar memorization. In these 50 autobiographies, the traditional English education was described as "strict" and "exam-oriented," and often included punishment for imperfect recitation. In addition, when students achieved high test scores, it often produced a false confidence in English language ability that later caused disillusionment when applying the language in context. Here are two examples to demonstrate (participant names are pseudonyms in compliance with IRB approval):

> During the years in elementary and middle school, my understanding of learning English was all about learning vocabularies and grammar and preparing tests, and my purpose of learning English was just about getting a high score on tests…This is the typical case of learning English in China, which is learning for tests but not for using it practically - Mei

> At the very beginning, I just passively followed the traditional education system to memorize those words and grammars and I did well. For most Chinese students, we only get so called exam-oriented education. In English classes, the only thing we do is sticking

to textbooks and practice those questions for exams. As the result, even I could get full scores in English exams, I was not truly learning this language since we barely spoke.

- Chanpu

"Barely speaking" produced a large category of occurrences—from participants explaining the lack of speaking practice in the traditional education system to participants explaining the classroom culture of showing respect and obedience through listening rather than speaking. Writers explained lecture based courses in which note-taking and listening were the main skills taught. Phrases such as "I just follow the teacher's mind," or "instructors put [a] muzzle on students to prevent delaying lectures" offered thick description of I/M students' perceptions of classroom expectations between students and teachers in their homes. Additionally, writers described their initial entry into English study as a mandatory course, which was "not fun" and "forced." During teen years, many associated English study with lack of sleep, lack of free time during the weekends and summers, and forced separation from their families.

Survey data had similar results, with data showing 60% of participants choosing negative descriptors to describe their early English language learning experience. Negative descriptors included: *pressured, stressful, harsh, nervous, lack confidence, test-oriented, cultural shock,* etc. Twenty-four percent described learning English as a positive experience, using descriptors such as *fun, neat, hobby, relaxing, and useful.* Fifteen percent of survey respondents chose not to answer this question, and one survey respondent described his experience as "structured," which was categorized as "neither" positive or negative.

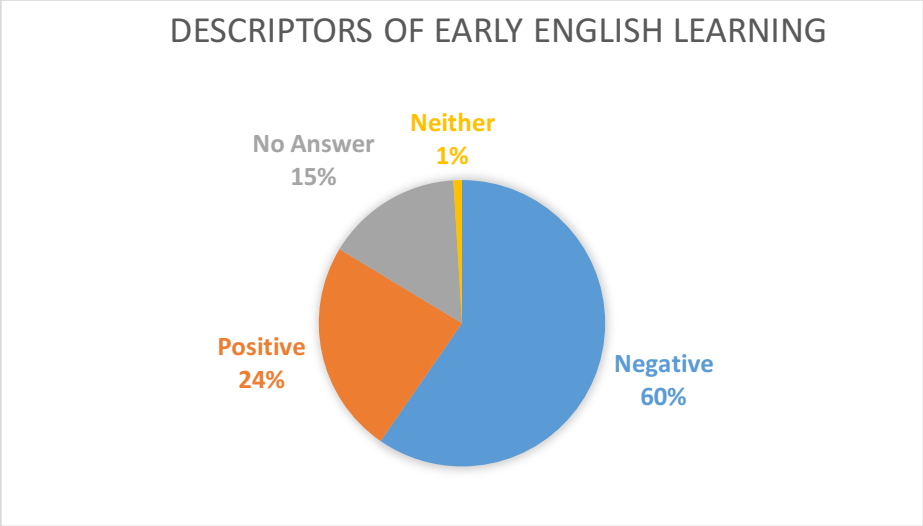


*Figure 3:* Descriptors of Early English Learning

Survey results corroborated findings in the qualitative data. Of the 77 autobiographies, the majority (73) explained unpleasant socio-emotional responses to English in early learning. These past emotional experiences seemed to have continual impact on many students (though not all), causing anxiety or hesitation toward English. Those whose learning experiences of English followed methods of memorization and recitation often perceived English as "boring" or "painful." These "dutiful" learners continued to fight for English acquisition despite their negative emotions toward the systemized methods of memorization and recitation. The dutiful "struggle" but, "don't give up" through the "hell" of learning English.

Another finding from these "dutiful" narratives was that these negative socio-emotional links to English often related to past narratives with L1 attachments (parents/friends from students' home language). For example, writers might recount narratives of shame, humiliation, or embarrassment caused by an L1 figure in relation to English. Note the following sample excerpts:

> As my parents realized how much academic competition our generation was facing, they found a key middle school and tried every possible way to get me into it. To be honest, I was not happy with it because I felt like being forced to an environment that I knew didn't belong to me at all, and it turned out that I was right. The first day I went to my English class, my English teacher Mrs. Zhoa gave us a little pop quiz on the IPA. I literally knew nothing about it. No one ever taught me in the elementary school. When we got our quizzes back, Mrs. Zhoa said to the class, "I couldn't believe some of you didn't know how to write the IPA. That is like the basic thing you need to know. Didn't you learn it?" I couldn't feel more embarrassed at that moment. However, the nightmare just got started. Mrs. Zhoa was a very strict teacher and she talked to you with no mercy. There was a vocab quiz in every class and we had tests for reading, writing, and grammar almost every other week. The worst thing was that your classmates could see the score you got on the test. You had no privacy. Studying overnight was as common as drinking water. However, no matter how hard I studied, how much effort I put into it, I was never going to bring myself to the same level as my classmates were because I lost at the starting line. -Jia

Jia, a dutiful learner, begins with her parents' experience of trying in "every possible way" to attain entrance for Jia into a "key" middle schools. "Key" middle schools refer to more expensive, more competitive schools that suggest a child's future success. In this case, Jia's feelings of embarrassment and hopelessness at failing the IPA quiz become intertwined with her own self-image and its relationship to her testing ability in the English language, but these feelings did not originate in isolation. The L1 figure, Mrs. Zhoa, is described as "strict" and "with no mercy," and her tactics of posting public scores induced shame for Jia who was "never

able to bring [herself] to the same level." Beyond Mrs. Zhoa, who insists that learning the IPA in middle school is "a basic thing you need to know," Jia explains her other L1 attachment figures—her parents. Though subtle, her narrative portrays her parents' efforts for her to be able to compete as connected to her feelings of unhappiness, pressure, and peer-to-peer competition. English as a subject becomes hidden in the background of these characters and the emotions that she is experiencing.

Many of the dutiful autobiographies such as Jia's include emotional themes of shame, embarrassment, and public humiliation used in conjunction with English language learning. In some cases, the emotion experienced within the social dynamic became intertwined and associated with the language, as writers, such as Ling, explained and explored within their autobiography.

> One day in the English class, I was asked to pronounce the word "rubber", yet I pronounced "rabber" instead. In the beginning, the teacher patiently asked me to repeat after her, however, I still insisted my wrong pronunciation. After several times she got upset and threw the chalk on me and yelled at me "stupid" in front of the whole class. At that moment, I wished I were an ostrich so that I could bury my head then nobody could see me. This humiliating experience haunted me for a long time. With such prior knowledge about myself, I subconsciously rejected learning English by skipping the tutoring school which is designed for providing extra help to students who are either interested in English or did badly in school." - Ling

Here, the writer insightfully points to her own subconscious rejection of English as a response to this social interaction. The haunting memory of being humiliated in front of her classmates becomes encoded to the study of English itself. Schumann (1997), an appraisal theorist who

studies affect in language learning, details how human interaction and response translates into appraisals of items, people, and ideas, causing "likes" or "dislikes" as well as facial expressions that display an affective experience connected to the appraisal. He explains:

> Through experience in the world, individuals accrue idiosyncratic preferences and aversions, which lead them to like certain things and dislike others.... These appraisal systems assign value to current stimuli based on past experience. Thus stimulus situations are appraised according to accrued history of an individual's preferences and aversions. (p. 2)

Ling's experience of shame in pronouncing "rubber" becomes linked to English pronunciation. Though years later, a woman in her twenties, she still finds herself hesitant to speak in English courses and re-experiences subtle elements of emotional negativity when called on or asked to work in groups with her classmates.

In conjunction with appraisal theory, Schumman also discusses two systems which motivate humans to create these value systems of appraisal: homeostatic and sociostatic regulation. While the homeostatic system applies to value placed on hedonic conditions (i.e., staying warm or cool, feeding, breathing), the sociostatic system is motivated by the human drive to seek attachment and affiliation through social relations (beginning with mother and extending to a larger network) (pp.2-6). Applying this theoretical framework to Jia's and Ling's narratives, the teachers' responses ("I couldn't believe some of you didn't know how to write the IPA" and "stupid") produced humiliation and embarrassment in these students, emotions that became part of the students first appraisals of the English language. Moreover, though not specifically

explicated in these examples, it is likely that these instances of humiliation became tied to self-perceptions of low-self confidence in English (Cozolino, 2013).

**L1 Culture and Perceptions of English**

L1 attachment figures such as parents, grandparents, and teachers, emerged as having a powerful impact on writers' English language learning. First language cultures often perceive English as "a key to access great education, well-paid jobs, and upper class life" (Ling). Cultural responses (including intimidation) and praise often add to student-writer's initial motivation for English language study. One writer refers to "the praise from mom" as reason for his excitement to learn English in elementary school while another writer refers to threatening remarks from his parents.

> "I started learning only because of it was part of the curriculum, and I was told by my parents that if I do poor in school they will send me to the countryside where my grandparents resides, and start farming like them. The six-year-old me did not quite understand what it meant, but it was intimidating enough to motivate me to do something that I did not know what it was. It was really the pressure from school, the pressure from parents, and the pressure from everyone who was older than me that took me on the first step of this journey of learning that to some degrees changed my life." -Li

Though this threat to be "[sent] to the countryside" in childhood was not a common finding, it was common for students to be sent away for a time during their adolescence to learn English. Parents were described as understanding their child's success in life as linked to their English performance. L1 communities were often portrayed as providing pressure toward English

language acquisition, due to the L1 cultural perception of English ability as linked with money and future success for the entire family. In one-on-one conferences, one Korean male student explained that for men, this type of pressure is immense, as they are expected to provide for their parents in their old age and family members. A Chinese male student also brought this topic to my attention, explaining that the male only-child status in China has with it immense pressure to provide for the entire family. The following excerpts from autobiographies offer further description in this regard:

> When I was still in kindergarten, I could always hear friends of my dad saying that "Your dad is really good at speaking English. You must be able to learn it very well in the future!". They said that simply because my dad worked in an American company in China where all staffs must be able to communicate with each other in English fluently. That was my first exposure to the word English and America: English seems like a language that has higher status in the world. People who can speak this language are considered better than those who can't. Thus, I must learn English in order to get into a big company like what my father did. This idea somehow become my motivation to learn English well (maybe because I can earn more money in this way). – Fung

This theme of the L1 culture's associating English with wealth was prominent in narratives. This theme was often coupled with various other perceived expectations (choosing a major that may not be personably desirable, paying parents back, or relieving parents of their burdens). For Min, the L1 cultures in his family and the families of his other Asian friends seemed to expect high financial success from their children. He writes:

> I don't have about how American parents are about educating their children, but almost all Asian parents are very conservative when raising their children. I've talked to my

> friends from China, Taiwan, and Japan, and I came to a conclusion that all Asian parents are alike. My parents and many other Asian parents have super high expectations from their children because of the huge amount of money that they spend on their children by letting them come to America and study. I don't think many American students realize how much money international students are paying each quarter to attend [university name]. We are paying almost $12,000 every quarter, which adds up to about $36,000 every year just on the tuition. My parents are expecting me to become a person who makes lots and lots of money (at least that's what I think of them) so that I can have a better life, and pay them back again. Having said that, telling my parents that I want to be a news reporter or an actor is not an ideal thing. -Min

For Min, these figures are particularly real to him, as he feels the need to pay his parents back. His own personality, which was lively and charismatic, felt his fate and the fate of most Asian I/M students was to dutifully follow career trajectories that promised high incomes. When he brought this up with me in an informal after-class conversation, his tone did not hint at sadness but simply addressed the topic as a fact of life. In fact, he laughed about his desire to do stand-up comedy or become an actor, explaining his plans to study business.

For others, it was not the money in itself that served as a primary motivator, but the connection that money had to gaining approval from their L1 attachment figures or to fulfilling a desire to pay parents back for the emotional sacrifices made in order for them to be able to study. Four of the autobiographies truly detailed this L1 socio-cultural connection to English, expressing a dutiful, committed stance toward English that was linked to a deep love for family and a desire to contribute to their family of origin. The following two by Hua and Bo are offered below:

> Nowadays, my parent has run their business over twenty years. When I asked my mother if she likes her job, she always said no. She seldom smiles these years as she always burdens with tons of responsibilities. I still remember my mother's biggest dream is to become a college student since she was always the top three percent of students in her high school, And every time when she talks about this, her eyes are bright and her pride showed on her face. Nevertheless, with the limitation of financial conditions in family, she was forced to drop out from school and go to work. She spent her whole life on taking care of family. Before marriage, she worked for earning money for younger brothers; after marriage, she worked for us, my brother and I. Therefore, she regrets about her life and tried to construct smoother paths for us so that we are able to choose whatever we like to do…. If someone asked me what is my dream, I would definitely say that I wish someday I were able to bring my family to travel around the world. I want my parent to take off all the burdens that are exhausted them over these years and to show them how broad and beautiful this world is. –Hua

Hua expresses deep appreciation for her mother, with a desire to "take off all the burdens" that have exhausted her hard-working parents. Her language autobiography shows that she perceives English and studying abroad as the means to make this dream a reality. She even explains that her choice of study, economics, was chosen because the potential financial income would help her to achieve her goal to relieve her parents of their life burdens. Though implicit, Hua carries with her the experiences of her mother into her own life trajectory, displaying a collective approach to resolving and caring for the burdens of her family. English is only the means by

which she studies in the U.S., becomes admitted to a financially successful major, and eventually sees those she loves experience happiness.

Bo, too, had witnessed his parents' sacrifice and desired to express his love for them. Bo had extreme determination, working extensively on class assignments and visiting office hours often in order to reach highly developed and edited writing. Unlike most of the participants in this study, who arrived in the U.S. in middle school or afterwards, Bo arrived in the U.S. at six years old. Bo's family used Vietnamese in the home, but he was exposed to English at school. Like Hua, for Bo, his parents' stories of sacrifice blended with his own, and he viewed his family and their suffering as extensions of himself.

> I chose to go to college because I don't want people to look down on my parents and I for not knowing how to say a word in English correctly. I chose to go to college to show that immigrants are human and just because we speak in different languages does not mean we are not capable of being successful in a foreign country. My father never thought that his decision to leave Vietnam to give his children a better life would cost him the chance to hear his father's last words. I want to show my parents that their son understands the hardships and sacrifices that they have made in order for him to chase his dreams and he will never ever take that for granted. I wasn't born in rich family, but I was born in a family that gave me all the support and resources I ever needed to be successful. I want to be successful not only because I want to accomplish the goals that I've set out for myself but also because I want to live out both my dreams and my parent's dreams. -Bo

This excerpt from Bo's narrative is highly emotional, as he describes his deep gratitude to his parents for emotionally difficult sacrifices they made for his success. His goal, not unlike Hua, is to "live out both [his] dreams and [his] parents' dreams." Though the narrative prompt is about

learning English, the narrative, for Bo, is about his love for his parents. Bo co-experiences the grief and humiliation of his L1 attachment figures, empathizing so much that their pain is, in fact, his own. This desire to alleviate their pain becomes coupled with his conceptualization of the English language. Regardless of whether or not learning English is pleasant, learning English is an act of loyalty and love that he will dutifully perform.

Aspects such as parental expectations, cultural expectations for family contribution and care, and individual desires to succeed, impress, and show love through monetary contributions offer further insight into the pressure and stress felt by many of these writers who describe English language learning as a "struggle," a "hardship," a "challenge," "torture" and "a kind of hell." Emotional descriptors from the dutiful autobiographies include "painful," "humiliating," "embarrassing," "discouraging," "boring," "frustrating," "nervous," "anxious," "scared," "awkward," "afraid," "annoying," "lifeless," and "exhausting." These emotions seemed to be wrapped into fulfilling a duty, as compulsory education demanded English courses be part of the main curriculum. For this reason, the "dutiful" student best described these narratives. As Ru explains:

> Live to death; learn to death. Though I find myself unable to interpret this old Chinese saying properly in English, I am hoping that it was meant in the good way. But looking at the world around me now where teenage children are deprived of their time of happiness for exams and tests, institutionalized in mind-training camps they call schools to learn to death, I can barely say that I know the true meaning of that saying any more. This world around me has been like this for years, and decades that few people could tell when exactly this "fashion" began. – Ru

Ru accurately describes this theme of duty that became central to the qualitative analysis. Though the "dutiful" narratives were apparent early (elementary and middle school) in the autobiographies, learning English, despite that pain of learning "to death," became an even more prevalent theme as student-writers reflected on exam preparation. This preparation happened not only in their high school courses, but also in additional summer English schools away from home and weekend English schools.

**English Output: Socio-emotional Aspects of Writing and Speaking**

Preparation for the TOEFL and SAT exams, in particular, were commonly discussed in terms that marked the time as separate from the rest of the English language learning experience, with students referring to "that time" in their life as "a painful memory," or "most trouble time." Students regularly started a new paragraph for this section, devoting time to the TOEFL or SAT as a completely new, often terrible time of their English language learning. In narratives, it was not uncommon for parents to pay extra for learners to be placed into courses above the learners' current level, only to experience feelings of inadequacy, pressure, and low self-worth. The Inverted-U learning curve aids in this analysis, as it attests to the learning power of mild to moderate states of arousal (Yerkes & Dodson 1908). Anderson (1976), who applied it to classrooms, developed the understanding that some anxiety stimulates learning, but that high levels of arousal will have a freezing effect. More recent research investigating the relationship between the amygdala and hippocampus confirmed this same Inverted-U pattern in the biochemistry of each structure (Baldi & Bucherelli, 2005). The amygdala functions to accentuate small differences in input to heighten awareness of specific aspects of the environment (orientation and attention) while the hippocampus inhibits responses, attention, and stimulus input (Cozolino, 2013). The amygdala remains central for the emotional and somatic organization of experience, whereas the hippocampus functions for conscious, logical, and

cooperative social functioning (Tsoory et al., 2008). Increased anxiety and fear increases amygdala response in navigating emotional regulation, social relatedness, and learning ability; however, to achieve high potential for learning, moderate states of anxiety (i.e., challenge) correlate with increased learning. When states of anxiety and fear enter into high levels of arousal, primitive neurological responses of survival (i.e., fight or flight) are signaled. In dutiful narratives, exam preparation was often described with negative affective responses (i.e., dizziness, sweating, mind going blank, freezing), pointing to levels of anxiety being too high for optimal learning. These biological responses point to an imbalance in states of arousal conducive to acquisition, an aspect of the complexity of anxiety in language learning that Krashen (1982) initially observed in his affective filter hypothesis. The following excerpt by Biyu offers descriptive data regarding this experience.

> The situation got worse when I got in touch with TOEFL. In my ninth grade summer, my mom sent me to learn TOEFL so that I might have a chance to study abroad if would fail in the college admission exam. That's my most horrible summer. The whole sequence of class was compacted, starting at nine and ending at six with one-hour lunch break, which means I need to highly concentrated for almost eight hours. And every part of course content was above my level. When we were listening to the academic materials, the recording was like someone was performing the mantra to make me sleepy. In the reading class, I felt dizzy when I saw an entire page full of english letters. And my writing made me so embarrassed and inferiority since most word were form the Anglo-Saxon! I can't come up with any fancy words! What was worse, I couldn't find any peer in class. Most students were enrolled in university and the rest were in high school. As soon as professor threw out a fancy word, they could tell the meaning and the usage. I

was stressed to stay with them in class and unable to follow their pace. – Biyu

Biyu's excerpt explains a psychosomatic response to English summer camp. She was placed at a level above her own, a ninth-grader in class with peers in university and high school. She describes dizziness, inferiority, embarrassment, and stress as internal experiences. Beyond her 9am-6pm work day, she was a teenager away from home and alone for the summer. The common theme of TOEFL or SAT exam preparation being described as the "most horrible" time found its way across dutiful narratives, with extended periods of cramming resulting in feelings of hopelessness and anger.

In addition to these negative descriptions of emotional responses to cramming, writers also offered metaphors related to "fighting with English." For one, English was "Voldertmort," the villain in Harry Potter, that needed to be "beat again and again." For another, English was a "jungle" in which the writer was "destroying thickets" and figuring out "survival." Still another explained that when compared the L1, where the writer felt like "a top character" in a Gongfu novel, switching to English made the writer feel like "a little baby swinging a stick and trying to win a fight."

These dutiful narratives portray an L2 relationship in which the user must fight, struggle, and survive. They are marked with negative experiences connected to their English language acquisition, which they bravely conquer as evidenced from their presence in American post-secondary classrooms. Benesch (2013), whose "sticky objects" studies were outlined in Chapter 1, analyzes the concept of stickiness as connected to specific objects (i.e. dictionaries, cell phones). Here, the analysis calls to broaden the concept of stickiness as connected to the concept of English itself as well as specific words within the language. Emotions can not only stick to physical objects like cell phones, they can stick to concepts, people, and languages like English.

Blending this theoretical perspective with aspects of appraisal theory, which holds that likes and dislikes are formed early in life through homeostats and sociostats (Schumann, 1997) as well knowledge regarding the simultaneous encoding of memory, language, and emotion (Vidrine-Isbell, 2016), we realize that past experiences in English language learning will certainly impact students socio-emotionality and language performance in American universities. Through analysis of language autobiographies, language teachers can better understand a student's background and associations with English, and pedagogically, the field of TESOL can strive to respond to the socio-emotional nature of English language learning.

For the L2 community, the socio-emotional complexity of English language learning narratives has yet to be understood. Areas including emotional bonds with L1 attachments, L1 social perceptions, aspects of developmental psychology from childhood through adulthood, language policies in countries of origin, and politically charged dynamics between country and citizen remain understudied and outside of teachers' pedagogical frame. This study, for example, uses a simplistic and binary framing for the data in terms of "negative" or "positive," but this framing reflects the present lack for more specifically addressing the complexity of emotions within the human experience. Emotions in the brain are more akin to mixing paints to achieve a color than to isolating a single emotional experience across the human race. Take for example the experience of your teenager jumping out to scare you when you enter your home. This single experience of surprise may likely involve within you a mixture of fear, anger, and amusement. At this time in the study of emotions, there remains an impossibility to justly account for all the elements that result in a single, affective experience. Therefore, narratives labelled "dutiful" evidence emerging patterns of socio-emotional negativity, while those labeled "subversive," detailed in the next section, offered patterns of socio-emotional positivity.

## Non-traditional English Education in Home Countries

Four of the 77 autobiographies, represent "subversive" learners who found a "better way" to learn English while still in their home country. These narratives contained descriptions of English that were much more positive than those described in the above data. "Beauty," "effortless," "fun," "awesome," "passion," "funny," and "happy" were indicators that these anomalies had emotionally connected with English through more positive methods that they believed subverted their traditional educational system. In all four of the narratives, writers described emotionally connecting to people or fictitious characters in the L2 while in their home country. Cozolino (2013) offers a review and synthesis of research showing how emotional attunement, story-telling, play, exploration, and humor have been shown to stimulate learning. Elements of each of these are evidenced in the four writers' accounts of their non-traditional, "subversive" experience learning English. For clarity, the following sections will present each of the four students' narratives before engaging in in-depth analysis.

### Mohammed

Mohammed, while in his home in Saudi Arabia, knew from a young age that he wanted to study abroad; however, he was "not very keen on studying books and taking ESL courses" and thought he could "find a better way." Though traditional school methods were not appealing, he was interested in video-gaming, particularly a game called "World of Warcraft," and spent "endless hours playing with classmates." One summer in junior high, he decided to transfer his World of Warcraft character into an English server and became friends with a Norwegian gamer who had previously lived in the United States. Their only way to communicate was English,

therefore Mohammed began practicing English in order to write through the game or chat on Skype with this fellow gamer. He claims:

> my English improved dramatically, and I believe that that summer was a turning point in my life. I really liked the language, and was able to see its beauty, therefore, I was able to learn it effortlessly, and whenever I played World of Warcraft or any other game and found a new word, I wrote it down and look up its meaning, and later, at the end of every week, I used to check what new words do I have in my notebook. Even though I used that method for a mere 3 months, I ended up with more than 700 words."

When high school years brought his math and English exams, he once again looked for a "fun" way to improve his reading skills and chose to read Harry Potter. His "fun" methods allowed him to succeed at the language, as he states, "Eventually, my barely-hard work paid off, and I had the great opportunity to take two college courses in [a nationally renown] University after I passed the national exam, and then was able to receive a scholarship to come and study in The United States after graduating high school."

**Commentary**

Mohammed's narrative exemplifies what Dörnyei (2001) explains as activities which teachers can do to stimulate motivation in the classroom. "Make task content attractive by adapting it to the students' natural interests or by including novel, intriguing, exotic, humorous, competitive or fantasy elements" (p.77). Here, Dörnyei points out multiple layers of motivational techniques, all of which are encompassed in Mohammed's "World of Warcraft" English learning experience. However, the concept of using online gaming to learn English or incorporating it into a classroom assignment might strike some as absurd. Some scholars and practitioners might be reluctant to use humor and fun in the classroom perhaps because these are often associated with

lack of professionalism. Dörnyei, too, is perplexed by this reluctance and discusses the fact that researchers of motivation tend to ignore humor in theoretical discussions (p.41). However, Mohammed's self-induced language learning strategy was effective—competing in a fantasy game with a teammate from a new country presented various levels of novelty, intrigue, and fun.

In understanding the neuroscience of human relationships, Cozolino (2014) reviews the process by which humans acquire self-awareness as a result of interaction and interrelationship with family and community. Beginning with the infant-parent bond, he highlights the symbiotic union with caretakers as well as the role of the mirror neuron system in developing affect regulation and theory of mind (i.e., ability to predict the actions of others based on observations). "Humans have developed complex neural networks dedicated to receiving, interpreting, and responding to social information to support their social and physical survival" (p. 367). Though not a second language researcher, Cozolino aids our understanding of the foundational elements of human interaction for developing interconnection and self within a community. It follows that language (first and second) should serve its user as a means for self-expression, communication, and connection in a social network. Therefore, narratives such as Mohammed's, though perhaps surprising in terms SLA pedagogy, appear to be perfectly in conjunction with the naturally occurring functions of the neural networks for language learning. In first language environments, self-awareness (Cozolino, 2014) and language (Vidrine-Isbell, 2016), emerge as a human gains a sense of membership and interrelationship with their family and community; therefore, Mohammed's entry into a gaming community and his knowledge of himself as a "gamer" would seem to naturally result in acquisition of a new language as well as new form of self-identification and awareness in response to his new social world.

**Wu**

Wu, a Taiwanese woman, grew up with a hired, live-in helper from the Philippines, whom she called "aunt." Their only shared language was English. Wu describes her early childhood as full of Disney movies, Bible stories from a Christian academy, and conversations with her aunt. Though both her family and her Filipina aunt only spoke nonstandardized versions of English, Wu was compelled to chat with her aunt about her day and the films she watched. She would follow her aunt around the house while her aunt completed chores. Her aunt would share traditional Filipino stories with her during her early years, and Wu would explain the cartoons she watched to her. Even after getting older, Wu still explains her excitement to see her aunt every day when she picked her up from school so that she could talk to her about her day.

During her childhood, Wu watched her favorite Disney films repeatedly, learning the English words to the songs and dancing to the music. As she recalls:

> *The Little Mermaid* was the first Disney movie I watched. Even though I did not understand the meaning of most dialogues in the movie at that time, I learned its songs very quickly. I always rewound the tape to the song "Part of Your World" and listened to it over and over again. Then, imagined myself swimming with colorful fishes like the mermaid did and sang around in the house as if it was the mysterious undersea world. Since then, I had always been dancing and singing when I finished watching movies. Every time the Taiwanese family heard me singing another song from the Disney movies, they told my mother: "Wu's English is improving!" To me, I was simply enjoying being a flawless princess in my imaginary world. But in fact, I was already learning English with endless passion.

Wu's passion subsides somewhat, after being transferred to a traditional Taiwanese school at the age of 11. As she describes, "All the classes were taught in Chinese, including English classes. Our English teacher explained vocabularies and sentences in Chinese. I was not used to it and did not like the English classes since there were no fun stories anymore. I started refusing to do any English homework the teacher assigned me because I found it too tedious. My mother quickly noticed this problem and knew that I was not learning English happily." Her story continues as a battle back and forth between practicing "those cramming methods I used [in Taiwanese high school] for the entrance test to memorize" and fun methods such as "reading stories again" and "listen[ing] to many Western music and look[ing] up song lyrics." In the end, when Wu finally came to the U.S. to study, she joined two university affiliated social groups: one, which allowed her to volunteer teaching English as part of a literacy program and another, which allowed her to travel with a student group to study tolerance in a European country.

She ends her autobiography with a current story about her difficulty trying to understand the American English sense of humor from her boyfriend Tom, a fluent Chinese-English bilingual.

> Tom always got the American jokes immediately when we were watching movies. Sometimes, I paused the film and asked him which lines was he laughing about. I also rewound to scenes where I did not understand what the movie characters meant and looked up what they said on the Internet. It then dawned on me that I was using the same method to learn English again. I used to watch a lot of Disney movies when I was little and often rewound to parts that I wanted to listen to again. From my language learning experience, watching movies has been one of the most useful and effective way to learn English. On the other hand, cramming and simply memorizing English words without

using it in conversations did not help me learn English effectively. By finding movies that truly interest me, I felt more motivated to understand the usage of the language. It felt awesome when I knew the meaning of a vocabulary when I heard it the second or third time. Scenes in the movies would come up in my mind when I heard people saying the same slang I learned from the movies. I started learning English with passion again and these experiences have become invaluable reminders for me to be more aware of learning English in the American culture.

**Commentary**

In reviewing brain literacy for educators, Cozolino (2013) explains that music in the context of learning not only stimulates a wide range of emotions but also evokes memory recall and visual imagery. Due to the fact that visual, semantic, sensory, motor, and emotional neural networks all contain their own memory systems, multichannel learning also increases the likelihood of both storage and recall (Materna, 2007). In fact, in another review of neuroscientific literature related to how the brain learns, Meltzoff et al. (2009) explicate how learning that is organized across sensory, physical, emotional and cognitive networks will more likely be generalizable outside of the classroom. Wu, who as a child enjoyed kinesthetic learning through singing and dancing, as well as creative story-telling, thrived in English, as she had multichannel learning across various neural networks and memory systems.

In addition, her desire, as child, to connect to her Filipino nanny and her desire, now as an adult, to laugh and understand jokes with her boyfriend should not be underestimated in terms of motivation and socio-emotionality in English. For humans, learning is social, and many affective processes are also social. These affective bonds between loved ones in English play an important part in placing the language as second to the person being communicated with. For

Wu, when the focus was on the language itself (grammar, vocabulary, testing), learning seemed to be inhibited. However, when the focus was on connecting with a loved one, enjoying a song, or engaging in a story, the English acquisition became more implicit and more robust. Much like primary language acquisition, for Wu, language learning was an indirect result that occurred as she prioritized meaningful relationships, fun, and play.

**Boqin**

When Boqin was a child in China, he delighted in the praise he would receive from his parents, teachers, and neighbors for his ability to say "hello" or introduce himself in English. His desire to learn English connected to his desire to receive admiration from his L1 attachments. In the fourth grade, he began watching an American TV series called *Heroes.* He recalls that "the setting and the background of the series satisfied my fantasy of superhero and super power. That when I deeply immersed in TV series. I started to repeat and memorize the lines in videos because I thought some lines are cool to say, even though sometimes I didn't understand them. I also memorized words that look funny and I surprisingly found that I didn't forget them the next day." He begins to compare the English he experiences in the TV series with the English he encounters in his school textbooks. "Real English conversation is livelier," he remarks, "And English speaker has different tones, unlike the boring repeated tone by our English teacher." Boqin decides to stop learning English from his traditional school system and instead decides to take his own route to English—TV series. He explains:

> Since then, I began to learn from TV series and movies instead of from teachers in school. After *Heroes*, I watched more and more series such as *Glee, Breaking Bad, Fringe* and so on. Step by step, I mastered the real way to speak English, using correct expression in different context and changing my tone under different moods. I kept the

> habit of watching TV series until high school when I first realized the benefit of this habit. When my classmates were having trouble memorizing the TOEFL vocabularies, speaking like a native or understand the listening materials, I surprisingly discovered that I had no trouble with all these tests at all! Watching tons of TV series, which most people considered as entertainment, actually worked as a useful education tool which helped me build up my vocabulary foundation, speaking skills and listening skills."

Similar to Mohammed, Boqin attests to his methods working, as he discovers his ability to understand English during testing allows him to succeed and gain entrance into a competitive university.

**Commentary**

"Cool heroes," "funny" words, and "praise" from L1 attachment figures—these were the emotionally motivating factors characteristic of Boqin's language learning. Boquin, as a child was led, much like Wu, by his desire to connect to a primary care giver. He recounts his mother's admiration and his delight in receiving it. For Boquin, if English was the cause for this response in his mother, then English was the emotional link to being delighted in by one of his most important attachment figures. The conceptualization, English is parental delight, morphed into English is "cool," as he explored his own interest in heroes, superpowers, and fantasy. English as a subject to be learned becomes secondary to understanding characters, narrative, and "cool" phrases that could become part of his developing self-concept. Ushioda (2010) explains self-concept as the degree to which language learners see themselves as wanting to embrace an inclusive double identity as bilingual/bicultural or the degree to which they wish to maintain a solely L1 identity. In Boquin's case, this self-concept is more multifaceted, as his L1 culture has

attached certain positive perceptions to the English language that Boquin wishes to include in his L1 identity. In addition, his interests and his understanding of what is "cool" shape his own acquisition of phrases that help shape his identity and self-concept as "cool." Acquiring English is only the means through which his other desires (of attachment/ "cool" self-perception) are addressed.

Boquin finds himself pleasantly surprised that he has "no trouble with all these tests at all!" By pursuing his own needs of self-esteem, he inadvertently achieves language acquisition. Motivation theorist Abraham Maslow offers his hierarchy of needs pyramid as a frame of analysis to assess student motivation. Self-esteem, the fourth level of need, represents the need for an individual to regard themselves (their achievements, their success) highly, as well as feel self-confidence and self-respect (Atkins, 2011). Social recognition also plays a role in the development of self-esteem and self-worth, which we see noted in the social atmosphere of testing scores as well as Boquin's own family. Both self-esteem and self-perception develop through engagement with Boquin's L1 culture, and for him, it is his home culture (not the L2 culture) that has reflected his worth in terms of English acquisition. While Motha (2014) notes the complexity of the intersection of empire, race, and English for the English teacher, Boquin (in his home country) concentrates on only the benefits (power, prestige, success) that the English language has delivered to him.

**Chunhua**

Chunhua, a Chinese-English bilingual, begins her narrative by explaining that her first memories of English were not recitation, but wanting a Snoopy pencil sharpener from her teacher in a Saturday English class in the third grade. She admits that initially this kept her "happily" studying English, but that through the years, "increasing scores" and getting a "better

ranking" became her primary reasons for studying English, and thus making English "stay in the classroom." She explains that "back then, English was simply a mandatory curriculum like math, not a language." For Chunhua, everything changed when someone she "was really into" tells her he is leaving to study in the U.S. As she processes his absence, she begins to wonder about his life in American high school and begins to look for films to learn about his life. The first film she finds is High School Musical, which she watched with Chinese dubbing. She describes herself emotionally as "amazed," and "fascinated" by cultural differences between her home culture and the American culture.

She recounts:

> Firstly I watched the version in Chinese dubbing, which really helped me understand what's going on but I found the Chinese dubbing a little strange after a couple times. Then, I looked for the original one with Chinese subtitle. Hearing the conversations and the songs in its original language was a totally different experience. At that moment, I wish I could understand everything they say without the subtitle; moreover, I wanted my school life to be like in the movies. I watched a dozen times of High School Musical. And finally I found myself saying some of the lines along with the character. A door was opened and the language flowed into me, I felt like. Just as the lyrics of the song repeatedly sang in the movie, "this could be the start of something new, it feels so right to be here with you". I need more movies and drama series, I knew. I finally started my different approach of learning this language, and it did feel so right.

Chunhua continues to explain her fascination and submersion into American TV series. She is intrigued, like Boqin by the differences between his L1 and L2 culture, and asks her parents to

send her to high school in the United States. In preparation, she decides to make her English "more colloquial" and continues her TV drama methods of study.

> I started watching my first American drama series – the Desperate Housewives in the summer. I spent almost the entire summer on my computer watching this drama. I remembered it was a rather sunny summer. I sat in the sunroom with half opened drapes and have my electronic dictionary on the coffee table. Each day, I spent hours with this drama. Although it came with Chinese subtitle, I still looked up and saved new vocabularies in my electronic dictionary every time encountered a new word. I wrote down interesting sentences and phrases in my notebook. I went back and listen to the hard sentences over and over again. I still remember each main character's voice. Bree had a high pitch voice; Susan had lower and coarser voice. I remember that the breeze brought the delightful scent of grass into the sunroom and I had to turn up the volume a lot when the gardener was there. I remember the lemon and mint flavored ice cream. And I remember the great cool feeling when the ice cream touched the tip of my tongue and melted while I looked up a new vocabulary. I finished those six available seasons in only one month. And I decided to watch it again, but this second time I watched it with only English subtitle. It was a little challenging at first. I needed some time to understand each sentence, but the characters all spoke really fast. I had to pause the show a lot to let myself understand the previous sentence and then proceed to the next. The situation did get better after a couple weeks. I did not have to pause as many times, and I did follow the conversations better. I was really happy, because my English was improving. I am happy because I felt that I was peaking into some real American families' lives although the real life could still be different and maybe less dramatic. I went on finished this drama

series again. Since then, I never stopped watching drama series. For now, I have watched the Breaking Bad, Suits, The Big Bang Theory, Two Broke Girls, The Vampire Diary, Grey's Anatomy, and Criminal Mind."

## Commentary

Chunhua's narrative begins with a pencil sharpener, an extrinsic reward (Cameron & Pierce, 2008), that would only motivate her through elementary school to learn English. However, when Chunhua's pursuit for English shifts because of desire for social attachment with a love interest who has moved to the United States, we notice a parallel shift from learning for scores to learning for fascination and curiosity. Her drive, social, personal and attachment based, was powerful in terms of listening practice. Chunhua claim, "Since then, I never stopped watching drama series," offers a socio-emotionality and delight in her new educational technique. Also, fascinating about this narrative is the fact that Chunhua unconsciously creates an ideal classroom atmosphere.

Chunhua's vivid and pleasant description of her enjoyment of the characters paired with a beautiful room, sun, and ice cream parallels suggested descriptions for teachers when creating a learning environment: lighting, temperature, an attractive environment, and safety (Sprenger, 2008). Interestingly, all are present in Chunhua's informal classroom. According to Meltzoff et al., (2009), the emergent field of informal learning is founded on the fact that much learning occurs in natural social interactions that take place outside of school (i.e., home, digital media, gaming, zoos, museums).

> Informal learning venues are often highly social and offer a form of mentoring, apprenticeship, and participation that maximizes motivation and engages the learner's sense of identity; learners come to think of themselves as good in

> technology or as budding scientists, and such self-concepts influence children's interests, goals, and future choices. A recent National Research Council study on science education (83) cataloged factors that enliven learning in informal learning venues with the long-term goal of using them to enhance learning in school. (p. 288)

Beyond the classroom, Chunhua uses informal techniques to enhance her own learning of English. She creates socio-emotional connections with the characters, noting the intonation of their voices and her concentration on their lines. Like Wu, she recounts her love of music and dancing in *High School Musical*, drawing attention to her personal connection to the lyrics: "A door was opened and the language flowed into me, I felt like. Just as the lyrics of the song repeatedly sang in the movie, 'this could be the start of something new, it feels so right to be here with you.'" Chunhua allowed herself to fantasize about life like the movies, a fantasy that also encapsulated a love interest that never developed because of his move to the United States. She enjoyed "peaking into some Americans lives" through drama, and this entertainment brought her a sense of curiosity, hope, and adventure which tied to her perception of American culture as well as the English language.

## Collective Analysis & Discussion

These four subversive writers on the surface could be seen as young adults watching too much TV, playing too many video games, or not studying hard enough; however, when analyzed through a framework of learning in the context of socio-emotional impact and motivation theory, these methods of language acquisition are quite rational. In all four of these narratives, the learner's focus was not on English as the objective, and socio-emotional impacts were important.

This was also true for many dutiful students, for whom learning English was the means to achieve other goals related to their L1 attachment figures, but their outlets for studying English did not include sensory-emotional venues. In both cases, whether to pursue L1 social attachments or to develop L2 social attachments, desire for human connection regularly overtook desire to achieve a test score.

All of these four "subversive" students chose more sensory-emotional mediums to acquire English, and only two recounted social bonding with a live English speaker—whose L1 was also not English. For Mohammed, video-gaming and play led to emotional connection with a Norwegian friend. For Wu, story-telling and emotional attunement with a Filipina "aunt," as well as dancing and singing to Disney led to her positive descriptors for English. For both Chunhua and Boquin, their L1 attachments (a teenage crush and a mother respectively) led to a deeper pursuit of English study.

Though L1 relationships may have served for motivation to learn English (e.g., Chinese mother pushing Chinese daughter to study English for her future success), L2 relationships were not prevalent in I/M students at this English speaking university. In narratives, as well as in survey results, social bonding and friendship were not as common as expected. For example, see the survey results below for the question: Do you have any close, intimate relationships (dear friends that you share your feelings, thoughts, and life with) with whom you speak only or mostly English? In other words, do you have any close, special friendships with anyone who you mainly communicate with in English? If yes, please explain your relationship.

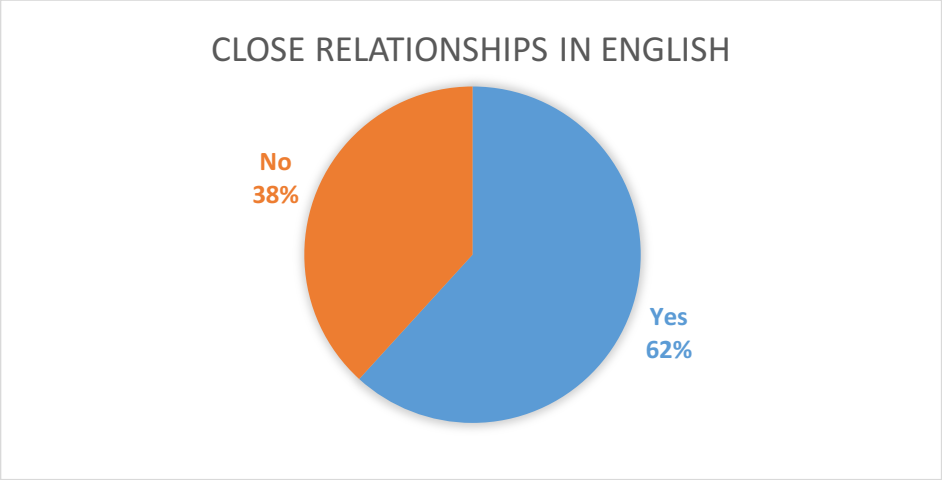


*Figure 4:* Close Relationships in English

Students answering this question were currently living in the United States and attending university at the time, so it was expected that immersion and integration into English would be present (as it was for 62% of respondents). Explanation of these relationships included cousins who had been born in the U.S., in-laws, roommates, romantic partners, and dear friends and teachers who had visited the participant in their home country. Though these 62 % represent the majority, the 38% that answered "no" represent a significant group of I/M students in classrooms that have not created socio-emotional connections across their languages post-entry into the United States. In 77 I/M students' autobiographies, only four reported socio-emotional connections to English pre-entry to the U.S. (and only two of these four were with a live human speaking English).

This finding also correlated with the survey results in which 46% of students reported difficulty making friends with people whose first language is English. It is intriguing, as well, that 27% did not answer this question. As explained clearly in the survey's information statement, "If you feel discomfort at any time, you can choose to skip any question if you would prefer not to answer or choose to stop taking the survey" (Appendix E). The rather significant

number of non-respondents causes speculation at the possible emotional discomfort induced by the question.

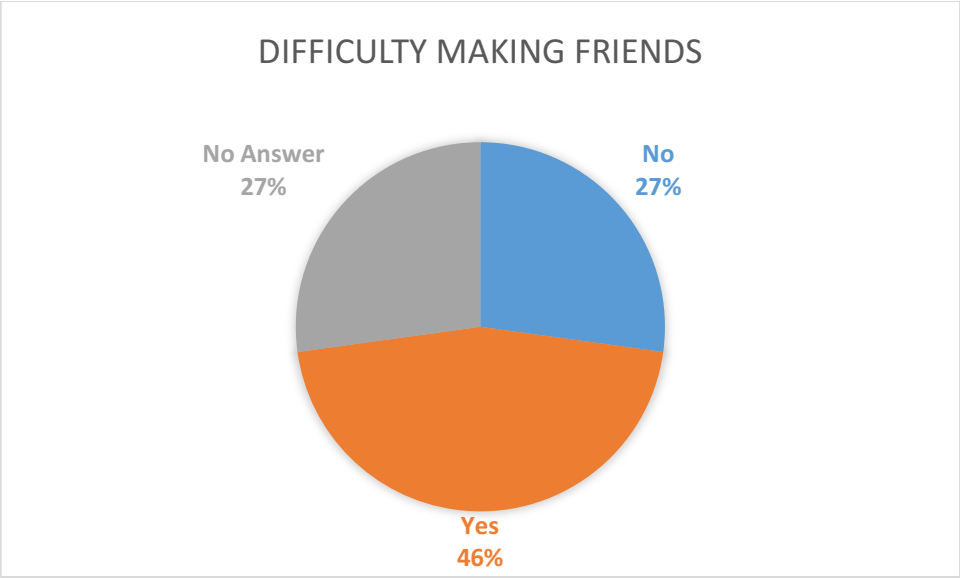


*Figure 5:* Difficulty in Making Friends in English

For most of those who responded, making friends was difficult. Narrative excerpts point to lack of confidence, shyness to speak for lack of practice, and understood perception of ESL learners from mainstream students. Research shows that there is a lack of opportunity for speaking practice and cross-cultural relationships in home countries (Chen & Yang, 2014). For subversive students, like Boquin and Chunhua, it was a TV series that served as positive socio-emotional methods for learning English. Opportunities for live, real-world speaking practice were limited. Therefore, the data shown here, in which only 2 of 77 participants had L2-English friends in their home country, further aids our understanding of the actual lack of L2-English connections available to English language learners, pre-entry to American universities. This lack of exposure and practice expands our understanding of the difficulty of some I/M students to speak in class, make friends with L1-English speakers, and talk in small group discussions.

## Concluding Remarks

The two categorical divisions of dutiful and subversive, though helpful, cannot perfectly depict each autobiography. The individuality of stories uniquely described teachers, parents, and community members from both the L1 and L2 community in positive and negative light; however, as may be the nature of narrative, autobiographies did tend to polarize characters into one or the other, offering their own voice as protagonist in their language journey. Time and word count also play into the construction of an account, as L2 writers often may not detail all of the positive or negative experiences faced when studying English. This analysis, therefore, was only able to delve into the data presented in the text, creating the possibility that writers did not include stories that may have influenced these results. However, as research on emotion and memory show their linked nature (LeDoux, 1996; Materna, 2007), these study results assume that emotional relevant narratives were recounted in the memory recall process. In other words, because the nature of memory in narrative is to recall emotionally significant occurrences, the study assumes that writers chose to include narratives emotionally prominent in their English language learning experiences.

The data presented here supports the argument that pre-entry learning experiences directly influence positive or negative associations with the language being acquired. Because the survey was not a representatively large population (103 respondents), this mixed methods study should not be generalized to all I/M student populations at American universities. More data across various locations in English speaking universities is needed. Additionally, the majority of participants in this study were from Asian countries, therefore, English language learning experiences from students from other continents may vary widely. That said, this

chapter can conclude that teachers of English who are aware of language learning histories will have more pedagogical awareness of their students' appraisals of English, and thus, teachers will be able to respond pedagogically to negative emotionality with the English language. These pedagogies will be further discussed in the following two chapters as avenues for further research. The adult brain is malleable, particularly when relationships serve to build trust, encourage laughter, and offer stimulation (Cozolino, 2013). Pedagogies that take into account the socio-emotional nature of language acquisition may be particularly impactful for students such as the ones found in this study.

This chapter presents both descriptive and quantitative data about a small group of I/M students in an American university, whose narratives and survey responses reveal the processes by which they came to describe their English language learning as a negative or positive experience. Though not generalizable beyond this university group, the data in this chapter extends the notion of socio-dynamics or emotion-based studies normally studied in second language acquisition, to include a more focused view of the attachment figures or relational characters within language learners' stories as well as the value of sensory-emotional learning techniques. The data here draws much needed attention to those human characters that impact the emotional experiences and desires of the I/M students studying English. Across both dutiful and subversive narratives, English as an object in itself was desirable only in the context of relationships and the emotions that ensued. These narratives recount powerful limbic experiences of love, fear, and shame that encode with English language use, to produce dispositions to English. The fact that a large number of students from both the survey and the autobiographical data experienced English negatively certainly highlights the need for further studies such as this one in other settings. If findings parallel the ones noted here, even more

impetus should be given to researching and developing pedagogies of healthy attachment and emotionality in the English language classroom.

# CHAPTER 5

# AFFECT SOCIALIZATION IN SECOND LANGUAGE POETRY WRITING

In 2013, a well-known applied linguist, Aneta Pavlenko wrote a powerful chapter entitled "The Affective Turn in SLA." In it, she briefly overviews the historic movements in research throughout SLA, attributing the most recent turn in SLA research, the affective turn, to an emphasis on understanding emotions across various disciplines. After highlighting approaches to emotion across the sciences, she poses a call, asking future researchers to further examine affect socialization in language acquisition. Affect socialization, she explains, is the "spontaneous, natural socialization that shapes the affective repertoires of the multilingual" (p. 5). This line of inquiry poses complex questions—what are some of the socially constructed affective elements that are absorbed when learning an L2? What outward displays of emotional expression can be observed through L2 writing that show the manner by which the language learner inherits the L2's modes of feeling, expressing mood, and processing affect during the acquisition process? These questions can be seen as interdisciplinary in nature due to the influences psychology and the neurosciences have had on the affective turn in SLA. Thus, in the current study, as an interdisciplinary applied linguist, I approach this research using an integrated lens regarding social attachments and language acquisition, which includes what I have been calling the language attachment theory. Here, I report on exploratory data which seeks to explore affect socialization through L2 poetry writing, offering a cross-disciplinary analysis of the findings.

## Affect and Emotion

Different schools of thought have defined affect and emotion distinctively. Within SLA, researchers often use the terms interchangeably. However, it may be helpful to understand the terms' historical use and their connections to different theoretical backgrounds. The study of the terms *emotion* and *emotional expression* is often traced to Charles Darwin. In his text, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1896), he studies muscles in the face and makes observations about the actions associated with a wide range of emotions (i.e., suffering, reflection, joy, modesty, depression) in humans and animals. From this text, the theoretical paradigm sometimes referred to as the "basic emotion approach" emerged, in which emotion is defined as the outward showing of an internal state, an inborn instinct that is universal. Though basic emotion theorists are few now due to understandings of socialization and neurobiology in emotion studies, the term *emotion* often carries with it this historical sense.

The term *affect,* on the other hand, is often distinguished as the internal experience of the human, with terms like *arousal* and *valence* used in conjunction to describe the internal networking process of an experience. *Affect,* for instance, could be associated with neurotransmitters and their resulting hormonal responses, with affect having a tendency to emphasize a degree or level of arousal. Affect, in a sense could be felt, but not externally expressed, but emotions would be visible, a form of observable output. Though these represent historically, slightly divergent meanings, it is more common in the literature to see overlap in the meanings. For example, the contemporary neuroscientist Antonio Damasio (2010), explains emotion broadly as the execution of an action or movement; however, for Damasio, these actions/emotions may vary from facial expressions to releases of molecules in the endocrine

system and may or may not be felt. Within the current study, affect socialization will be defined as the way in which humans in a specific group use emotion (output) to socialize the inner affective experience (pre-output) that occurs within a person in response to a stimulus.

## Literature Review

Recent studies on mirror neurons further our conceptualization of the process of affect socialization. Mirror neurons, also called empathy neurons, are neurons that facilitate cognition of movements and behaviors that are observed in another. The brain of the observer performs or practices mentally what it observes in another (Rizzalota, 2005). In this way, before performing the same task being observed, mirror neurons offer a sense of how to perform the task through a mental visual mirror (Remley, 2016). Remley notes the connection between mirror neurons and socialization, stating that "they contribute to persuasion in that an audience wants to mirror some aspect of the speaker or the speaker may want to resemble some aspect of the audience as a way to assimilate with it more. As the speaker positions him or herself closer to that reality and shared experiences of the audience he or she mirrors that audience and the audience understands that mirroring, eliciting empathy and favor from the audience" (Remley, 2016, para. 11). Mimicking behavior has been found in newborns, as early as nine minutes after birth. Infants will mimic the facial expressions of their mothers and likely have the ability to perceive the emotions of an interlocutor (Meltzoff & Moore, 1983; 1989; 1992). Developmental psychologists posit that in early infancy, the mother's affective state regulates the child's affective state. This is theorized to be due to the fact that the child is developmentally unable to understand itself as a separate entity. This caregiver-infant attachment provides a base from which the developing brain learns to regulate its own affective experiences through affect regulation. Schore (1994) explains the neurobiology of this emotional development, showing

how the self originates as a human develops healthy affect regulation—an achievement that can only result through bonding and attachment. Applied to language acquisition, this bond with the caregiver can be considered the first main source of affect socialization in language that a human experiences.

Human bonding, then, offers a legitimate entry into studying affect socialization. If affect is socialized in the L1 through observation and shared experiences with a mother, it follows that affect socialization in the L2 would likely require observation of emotional expression in another L2 speaker in order for the brain to practice a shared experience with another member of the L2 community. Many studies have been conducted to investigate emotion in multilingual individuals (Dewaele, 2010; Pavlenko, 2005; Rintell, 1990), but social attachments have not been a main area of investigation. However, recent L2 studies have begun to use poetry writing to investigate L2 emotional expression and poetic identity (Chamcharatsri, 2013b; Hanauer, 2010). These studies have offered pedagogical implications, which invite more socio-emotional assignments such as autobiography and creative writing as a means to develop emotional connectivity to the second language. Other L2 research studies have investigated the expression of specific emotions not commonly expressed in the L1 society (i.e., fear in Thai, Chamcharatsri, 2013a; love in Mandarin, Dewaele, 2008), showing differences in cross-linguistic L2 speakers. Still, other studies have measured the affective valence of particular words in multilingual individuals, often showing the L1 to have higher levels of impact (Caldwell-Harris & Ayçiçeği-Dinn, 2009; Dewaele, 2004;). Using these findings as support, this study directly investigates L2 affect socialization through poetry and interview, exploring in depth the nature of how L2 writers engage in emotional expression and the origins of how these writers were socialized into these affective experiences.

## The Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate affect socialization in the L2 through the use of poetry and the theory of language attachment. The sequence of the data collection process was as follows: in-class free-writing in L1 and L2, written self-reflection and metacognitive analysis of emotional expression in both languages, a written prompt for composing a poem, and case study interviews. There were 52 participants, all former students, who, over six years, were part of various multilingual sections of first year composition (FYC). The multilingual section is a self-selected course, open to students who identify as someone who can read, think, and write in more than one language based (at least in part) on their interest in the course content. The course is titled "Emotion and Identity in the Multilingual Writer" and offers writing assignments that engage the various language resources in the classroom. A composition course is required for all undergraduates, so participants had majors other than English. The majority of the 52 participants referred to English as their second language; however, three of the 52 poets in the study expressed difficulty ordering their languages as first, second, or third. One participant was born in an environment where three languages were spoken daily, while the other two participants, used more English than their heritage languages, but self-identified with their family's nationality. Though these three poets were not omitted from the overall coding of the themes that emerged in the poetry data, they were not chosen for in-depth interviewing, as the goal of the dissertation was to focus on participants whose home language was not English.

Within IRB stipulations, all documents from the FYC multilingual courses were approved for analysis and then coded for themes. After coding and analysis, four of the 52 participants were interviewed about their experience writing the poems as well as their

experiences of affect socialization in English-speaking societies. Because these participants were former students, I had knowledge of their language backgrounds from a language learning autobiography assignment done previously. In addition, I had met with these participants during our course for two 20-minute conferences to discuss their lives, their future goals, and their writing. The four writers whose poetry is used in this data chapter were contacted to gain permission to show their work and interview data below.

This data was approached using grounded theory, in which "theory is derived from and grounded in data. . . If an existing theory seems appropriate but somehow inadequate relative to a topic of inquiry, then this theory may be elaborated and modified as the researcher plays additional and ongoing instances of data against it (Charmaz, 2008, p.100-101). Within this framework, using an exploratory, pragmatic paradigm, I sought to use language attachment theory as a baseline for exploring instances of affective experiences, relationships, and written poetic expression. Though this study does not approach affect socialization from spontaneous data collection methods (Pavlenko, 2013), it does approach the topic through allowing writers self-reflection on the topic, writing in both languages with self-analysis, and adequate story-telling and discussion within interviews to recount their perceptions on the topic.

**In-class Free-writing**

In class students were first given a lesson on translingual approaches in which poems by bilingual writers were read and discussed in groups. In addition, the students had read and discussed various research studies (Chamcharatsri, 2013a; Koven, 2007) about bilingual writers who told stories in both languages. The researchers in these studies then analyzed the two versions of the stories, offering an analysis of the bilingual person. In the last 15 minutes of

class, students were invited to free-write in two of their languages about an emotion not normally expressed in their family. As a bilingual, I also free-wrote during this time, and then used my own free-write to model self-analysis and metacognition in front of the class. Because the content of the free-write could likely be sensitive, students were not required to share their free-writes. However, in an effort to practice analysis and metacognition, students were required to do a self-analysis of their own free-writes for an online homework assignment.

**Writing Prompts**

After class, students were asked to complete an online written homework assignment with two parts (reproduced below). In the first part, they were asked to analyze the in-class free-writing and reflect on their emotional expression, identity, and metacognitive writing process in each language. For part two, they were asked to construct a poem about the emotion they wrote about in the free-write. Having been made aware of translingual writing approaches, they were invited to write the poem with any of the language resources they felt were appropriate.

*Prompt:* In class, you were asked to free-write in two languages about an emotion not normally expressed in your family/home language.

Part 1: Answer the questions: What do you notice about your writing process in each language? What do you notice about your identity or personality as you write in both languages? Are there any differences in your expression of emotion? Why or why not, do you think?

Part 2: Using your free-writing assignments for help, compose a poem about an emotion you do not normally express in your home language. You can use translingual approaches if you like.

These documents were analyzed and coded using grounded theory, which "captures the *abductive* logic through which [researchers] explore the social or natural world through practical

engagements with it, derive working models and provisional understandings, and use such emergent ideas to guide further empirical explorations" (Atkinson & Delamont, 2008, p. 300). The findings showed themes related to L2 affect socialization, which included acquiring affective repertoires that allowed the expression of homesickness and acknowledgement of personal achievements. In addition, themes such as differences in cross-linguistic emotional expression and differences in a culture's sociolinguistic approaches to human bonding were also discussed.

**Interview**

Following the analysis, four participants whose writing exemplified these themes, were asked to participate in follow-up interviews. The interview questions were semi-structured, giving participants an opportunity to reflect on their writing experiences as well as their life history in regard to their language learning. The interviews questioned writers about their emotive experiences while writing, their cross-cultural understandings in completing the assignment, their memories of emotional experiences in the L2 English, their perceptions of poetry as a translingual writing assignment, and their perceptions of affect socialization in English. After re-reading the poem, the interviewer asked L2 writers to reflect on their poem:

- Could you tell me more about your poem?
- Could you talk more about the differences between your first language and second language in the poem?
- What have you learned from L1 and L2 society about the topic your poem addresses?
- Can you remember specific stories or memories regarding this topic?

The interviews were conducted in English, transcribed, and grounded theory was used in analyzing the data. Information from the interviews allowed for a thick description of themes found in the larger data set, connecting micro and macro perspectives of the phenomenon (Hesse-Biber, 2011). The following section offers poems and interview data from four out of 52 participants.

## Findings

The findings section is separated into four case studies, each focusing on themes found within the data which have not received extensive attention in the field thus far. These themes include: rhetorical choices based on connections between emotion and memory, homesickness, friendship across age difference, and modesty. Other themes found in the data included: expressing love, anger, dissatisfaction/expressing "no," alienation, boldness, and expression of feelings (in general). Though these themes are also important findings, the scope of this study focused on exploring themes of participants who were willing to participate in further interviewing. Six participants were contacted, the four cases featured were the willing respondents from this search. Participant names are pseudonyms in compliance with IRB approval.

### Iseul

Iseul, a Korean-English student, moved to the United States to live with her aunt in junior high. She was placed into an ESL program initially, but soon moved into mainstream classes. In high school, she was a determined student, taking as many Advanced Placement courses as possible. In response to the prompt, she chose to write a poem about a phenomenon she experiences as a bilingual, one in which words that mean the same thing in Korean and in

English give her different impressions because they connect to different situations. For the purpose of analysis, this phenomenon was thematically coded “rhetorical choices based on connections between memory and emotion.” She discusses this experience poetically through translingual writing approaches in order to choose between her languages for the words that best describe her experiences.

I am a ten-year old girl
I walk into my apartment in Korea
where the refreshing breeze blows from open window
and the smell of the boiling kimchi-jjigae makes me smile

What I feel here
is not "coziness"
but “아늑함"

I am a twelve-year old girl
I walk into my first class of middle school in America
where people I do not know speak the words I do not know
and those foreign words make me dizzy

What I think here
is not “I am scared”
but “무섭다"

I am a twelve-year old girl

I walk into my English class

where my teacher would pat on my back covered in sweat

saying, “Don’t worry. You will feel better” and I did.

What I feel here

is “better”

not “좋다.”

When I hear a word

the word becomes my one and only memory

Language is not only a language

but my childhood memories

but my family

but my pain and pleasure

that a translator cannot replace

The poem employs translingual approaches in order to offer the reader the experience of having memories and words connect depending on the poet’s context. In her interview, Iseul explains:

> there might be words in Korean and English but depending on how I learned the word it approaches me differently. So I sometimes think of the word to the situation I was in. like I think I'm a little sensitive to sensations. Like, I think of smell or the feelings that I had in that situation and that gives me different feelings and impressions of the words so that even if the words are the same in Korean and English, it's just different for me.

Her memories seem to be encoded in the language; initially, her memories are in Korea, making the Korean words fit best. But, when she recalls a memory that occurred in the United States, the English word fits best. This resonates with findings in neuroscience which point to emotion and memory being linked to one another, so that "what fires together, wires together." This exemplifies the relationship for neural networks in the brain as relating to memory formation and learning (Cozolino, 2013).

In the interview, Iseul explains that she initially learned a lot of English vocabulary using an electronic dictionary. In this method, she would think in Korean and then directly translate it into English. However, she found that this method often led to her using awkward phrases that did not fit the situation and was not as beneficial for helping her remember vocabulary as other more socially driven experiences. She notes:

> I was finding it hard to find the right words to say because sometimes that word in English is not direct translation, it's not the same thing. When you actually say it, it applies to a different situation. And that small differences, it makes a lot of difference in real world… so that was the problem I always had in here, in school and in other places.

Iseul is forthcoming in her relationship to language as "not only a language but my childhood memories, but my family, but my pain and pleasure that a translator cannot replace." She shows

the importance of her affective social experiences and memories to move her beyond the study of language for the sake of the language.

As years pass and she moves into an English context, English ceases to be direct translation, but lived experiences, shown through her use of the word *better*. In describing the word *better* and 좋다 in her poem, she explains:

> those two words mean the same thing, but when I think of those two words, I think of different memories, although they mean the same thing. For example, when I think of the word *better* I think of that 7th school when I was sweating so much, but then that teacher like tried to comfort me, and it worked. And when I think of *better* in Korean, I think of memories in Korean or something I heard from my family here in Korean. It just gives me different impressions.

In recalling this memory, the English word fits the experience, because in that moment, Iseul hears and then feels "better" not 좋다. The experience of the word *better* holds with it this kind teacher, the touch of encouragement, and the acknowledgment that life in this English context will get easier.

L2 affect socialization happens spontaneously, here in the moment that Iseul's feeling is seen and empathized with through another human being. The language, though not the focus, becomes embedded within this memory of engagement with another human being. The teacher acts as a language attachment figure— a caring, playful, L2 speaker that is willing to share in the experience of the learner. Her use of the word *better* holds with it release of fear, calm, and the sense that Iseul is no longer alone, but seen and cared for within her new social context. Beyond a dictionary translation, the English language becomes texturized, embedded in the comfort of a

human presence.

**Thu**

Thu is a Vietnamese-English speaker who came to the United States during high school. In her autobiography, she explains that the catalyst for her success was a former teacher who told her that she would not win academic awards in the school district exams. This event upset her, causing her to work diligently in elementary school to disprove the teacher by taking third place in the entire district. After coming to the U.S., Thu used English to form friendships with others from a variety of nationalities such as Korean, Thai, and Chinese. Through these friendships, she learned about both the culture and language of each country and shared Vietnamese phrases and cultural norms with others. She explores one of these cultural differences in the poem "Homesick," in which the writer explains her first experience with this emotion within an English context. Thu expresses poetically how she begins to feel and understand "homesickness" in a new way, however, this emotional experience of homesickness causes her to respond not as the L2 culture might expect, but in a way that her home language culture would approve of—a smile instead of tears.

In the past,
When I was in Vietnam,
I did not understand what homesick (nhớ nhà) means.
They never ask me if I am homesick when I am away from my home country (quê hương).

Then one day, I heard it from my parents.
They asked me once if I am homesick,
Who should say no?

No which means you do not have a childhood,

No which means you are forgetting your root (cội nguồn),

So there is “Yes”

I feel missing my house,

The place I have lived for fifteen years,

The place I was sharing my joy of love with neighbors,

The place where my relatives are.

However,

Moving on!

The future is waiting for me.

People are watching my steps,

They would laugh at me if I fail

The language is hard for me

The culture is keeping me down

But hard work will be paid off

The bright future is what I am looking forward.

Therefore,

Don’t judge if I do not say I am homesick,

My heart feels that missing piece from the past.

Crying is not how you show you’re homesick,

Smile and be proud of who you are.

Thu's poem divides its content into two separate sections, connecting to the emotional experience of homesickness. Each section has two stanzas. The first stanza is used to introduce her experience of homesickness, her parents' inquiry into this emotion, and the author's own acknowledgment of her sadness. The second section is used to explain the socialized, affective response that her Vietnamese culture promotes, "crying is not how you show you're homesick, smile and be proud of who you are." In her interview, Thu elaborates on this more:

> normally, people don't talk about homesick in daily life because they ignore it. In Vietnam, you don't tell anyone your emotions…people don't express their emotions to anyone because they don't want to be not strong but a person who will stand up and be proud of themselves. They don't want to be weak…in Vietnam, we don't tell parents we love you or anything like that.

For Thu, the emotions associated with homesickness—sadness, tears, heartache—are ones which her home language and community have already socialized her into. The response is to smile, be proud, and show strength. Though she is experiencing homesickness for the first time in English and the poem is written primarily in English, the English society is not the audience which the last stanza seems to address. For her, it is the Vietnamese community who are the people who might judge her, who watch her steps, who have taught her to show homesickness without tears.

In referencing her word choice in the poem, Thu explained that the Vietnamese word "nhớ nhà" holds more of the emotions of homesickness than the English word. She describes a great aunt, with whom she talked with most and felt closest too as a child in Vietnam, and her feeling of being home when her aunt would visit her in the U.S. For Thu, it appears that affect

socialization did not relate to her experience of homesickness in the L2 community, but to the people for whom she felt homesick—her L1 attachments who still lived in Vietnam. This finding, which is consistent with studies showing greater emotional valence in the L1 (Pavlenko, 2005; Deweale, 2010), makes sense in light of language attachment theory, as the theory holds that human bonding will result in an embodied experience of language, one in which emotive responses connect to the language used when emotional memories were formed.

When asked about her experiences of being socialized into feeling or behaving certain ways, Thu explained her observations of her L2 community's expression of emotion toward their loved ones, as well as her own attempt to "try" this L2 tradition in her L1 society.

> Thu: During the holiday, like in Vietnam, the children don't give any money or gifts to the parents. But in here, people do it for Mother's Day or other days, and then, so I can express my emotions in the gift I get them. But not saying it out loud, the action that I do.
>
> Interviewer: so you will buy them some presents?
>
> Thu: yeah.
>
> Interviewer: how do they respond? Are they surprised?
>
> Thu: They aren't surprised. They just say why did you waste money on us? I was just showing my emotion. I can imagine they would be surprised and be proud of me, but they say 'why did you buy me a present? It's so expensive. Don't buy anything. Go return it. And I'm like…nooo…so I think it make my emotion go down. That's why the Vietnamese don't really express emotion because the person doesn't show any response to us so we really don't do anything. Like that.

Interestingly, the desire Thu shows here—to express love to parents, is a theme that has repeatedly emerged in my last six years of teaching. Five of the 52 poems in this study showed participants' desire to use language to express their love and gratitude to their parents.

**Nari**

Nari is a Korean-English bilingual who moved to Canada in the 8th grade. She began studying English as a child in elementary school, and her family also sent her to after-school tutoring and English courses while she was in Korea. Because her Canadian school did not have an ESL program, she was placed in mainstream classes, where she was successful. Both her new neighbor, a young Canadian girl, and her after-school tutor "Sally" (pseudonym) befriended her, giving her the opportunity to engage socially in her L2. Nari's poem exemplifies a common theme from the poems in this study, that of more age equality in the English language. L2 writers expressed surprise that first names were used regardless of age difference and that the English language only offered "I" and "you," pronouns, which do not change between interlocutors due to age. Nari's poem expresses her socialization into the feeling of age equality, and her gratitude for the friendship she made with her former English tutor.

**Just call me Sally**

I would have been saying *aneyongheegasaeyo* instead of saying byebye
I would have been bowing every time instead of waving my hands high

You are 8 years older than me.
Thought too old to become bestie

But you said, “Just call me Sally”

Since then we became besties like breads and patty

I would have taken forever to talk to you if we were in Korean school

I would have tried to show as much respect and would have called you Mrs. Benderkool

But you said, “Just call me Sally”

Since then we became besties like gum and jelly

This poem was written with five rhyming couplets, using playful language that offers the slang “besties,” showing knowledge of current lingo within the language and culture. The visual the writer uses juxtaposes her society’s expectation for her to bow and use appropriate greetings with the L2 society’s openness to waving her hands high in the air. In the interview, the poet explained that she chose pseudonyms to replace the true person’s name and did so for the sake of her rhyme scheme. As Mrs. Benderkool is replaced with the first name Sally, the poet senses a closeness through this shift in language, allowing her to feel that Sally is not too old to be her best friend. Her poem displays her closeness to this person, a woman eight years older than she, and she attributes the ability for this closeness to her L2 society’s treatment of age.

In the interview, Nari explains that Sally not only helped her as a tutor would with homework and writing essays but that she also taught her games like spoons, spent a lot of time with her, and they “hung out together.” Nari’s playful personality shows in her poetic recounts of the parts of herself that she would not have shared with Sally in an L1 context. Nari’s hands are

waving high, she is a "bestie," and they are like gum and jelly—two words that have connotations of stickiness, candy, and the delight of a child getting sugary treats. Their bond allowed Nari to be playful, childlike, and feel heard. In her interview, Nari expands on this saying, "she listened to my stories, she paid attention to what I was trying to say…She wasn't ordering me. I was much younger, but still she respected me." Nari, socialized into English's familiarity between age groups, was able to establish a language attachment, which resulted in positive language learning experiences that will make English words like "spoons" and "besties" become embedded in her memories of her emotional attachment to Sally Benderkool.

**Biyu**

Biyu, a Mandarin-English speaker, had only been in the United States for one year, before writing this poem. She grew up studying English as child in a small town in China, with most of her English teachers being Chinese natives. These English classes emphasized grammar, structure, vocabulary, reading and writing, with less emphasis on speaking. She recalls having one interaction with an English speaker in China during a volunteer program, in which she hosted a visiting American student from Beijing for a weekend during her hometown's spring festival. In her interview, she reports, that even now, she has not had much contact with American people, and in her language autobiography, she reports on struggling with negative emotions such as anxiety when speaking English. Paradoxically, her poem represents a surprising theme that emerged from multiple I/M women writers in the study, a theme of using English to express boldness and/or a movement away from being modest. These L2 writers seemed to find that their L1 society's belief in modesty opposed their L2 society's belief in self-

confidence. In English, they noted more confidence and boldness in self-expression. The following addresses this socialization into English more precisely:

My parents always told me to be modest,
as if I need to efface
myself so no one will notice and be jealous
Negate appreciation and minimize my achievement
I wish they can be proud of me
Gold is ultimately shiny
one day I will told the world
I am excellent, I am the best

-Biyu

This eight-line poem offers both the complexity of a critique of the poet's L1 society as well as an experiment with the L2 to practice a kind of boldness the author associates with the L2 society. First, she critiques the Chinese society's display of modesty as "negating appreciation" or "minimizing" achievements. In her interview, she explains that "our [Chinese] understanding of modest is really different from its true meaning in English. Our modest is do not appreciate ourselves, but I think we should be modest, but acknowledge our value." In her experience, being modest also meant she needed to "efface" herself for the sake of others. She remembered stories from her childhood that demonstrated this:

> When I was young, someone say I am beautiful like snow white but I am very glad to hear that. Like I agree. And my grandparents say no, you are just an ugly duckling…but

> like that's just a way to be modest, but my grandparents, they just be polite to say that. They may not really think that.

In another story, she explains:

> my friend's parents will, they say your daughter will study well and achieve high scores" and I am very happy and I want to talk more about my achievements but my parents just cut it down and say no, no, your daughter will get better. Or like that. just praise the other. Like no, no, your daughter is better.

Both of these stories express Biyu's L1 socialization into feeling "modesty" as well as feeling her value was ignored. In the fifth line of her poem, we sense the power of her desire to show her worth and have her parents express pride in her achievements. Her statement "I wish they can be proud of me" points to desire in the sense explored in Motha & Lin (2014) as both a lack and a pursuit. As a lack, "we desire what is missing" (p. 334), which for Biyu is her family's spoken acknowledgement of her beauty and her intellect. As a pursuit, her desire is manifested in her drive toward using English to express her worth. It is this longing, this desire that creates a fascination with the American culture's way of expressing boldness, something she has understood through portrayals of Americans in Chinese films. In her interview, Biyu explains that she was not socialized into displaying boldness by Americans. In her year in the United States, she has lived in the dorm with a Chinese roommate and has not "[gotten] in touch with many American people," but has understood this American way of boldness from Chinese films and from stories told by her Chinese friends. She notes that these instances have led her to believe that Americans acknowledge their strong points, something she has desired to do within her own L1 society. She begins to experiment with this boldness in line six, "gold is ultimately

shiny," implying that just like gold, her own true value will ultimately be visible. She moves from this statement to affirm her own worth, using English to say "I am excellent, I am the best." During the interview, when asked to talk more about her word choice "I am excellent, I am the best," she acknowledged that these were lines from American characters portrayed in Chinese films she had watched.

> Interviewer: So, I was curious because in your poem you start out talking about your Mandarin culture, but then at the end you use English to express more Americans' ways of thinking. So can you tell me a little bit more about the end of your poem, when you say "I am excellent. I am the best."
>
> Biyu: Well, in the movies I see, we have expressions like "I am the best" "I am excellent" and we do not have certain expressions like this. So I feel normal to write "I am the best" in English and not in Mandarin.
>
> Interviewer: Can you think of the names of the movies where you heard that or the TV shows?
>
> Biyu: I don't know why I feel like American people will say that. That's like the way we perceive Americans. Like that culture is like this. It's our definition of Americans like they are proud they are that way in our culture. We perceive Americans like this. So, even if American is not like that, we perceive American like that.
>
> Interviewer: So your idea of hearing Americans say "I am excellent" "I am the best" are those from Chinese movies that you have seen where there are Americans in the movies or are they from American movies that you have seen?
>
> Biyu: I think it's more from our Mandarin productions. It's the way we picture Americans like that.

Interviewer: So when you are watching a Mandarin movie maybe the American characters will say "I am excellent" "I am the best"

Biyu: yes, uh-huh

Interviewer: Can you think of any of these movies' names?

Biyu: hmmm…No, I can't tell which exactly

Interviewer: Gotcha. Have you ever noticed this—in anyone that speaks English—have you ever noticed this kind of statement? Have you ever heard any Americans not be modest?

Biyu: American people? I didn't get in touch with many American people, so I am not exactly sure what they think.

The emotions of boldness and confidence shown here are particular to her perception of the L2 society, and her expression of boldness feels much more accepted in the L2 context. In the case of boldness, the L2 offers liberation and encourages her to act in more daring ways than appropriate for the L1 society. This was a common theme among women writers in this study, though Biyu was explicit about explaining that the Chinese way of modesty was equally displayed between men and women. When asked why she chose this theme for her poem, she articulated, "in our culture, we always ban our strong points so no one will know what I am good at. So I want to present myself to the world." Though English people had not socialized her into this expression, the awareness of the stereotype of a confident American, allowed her to practice boldness in a new language.

## Discussion

The aim of this qualitative section of the mixed methods study was to investigate L2 affect socialization through poetry writing. What emotions were expressed through poetry in English (the common L2) that were not commonly expressed in the participants' first languages? Previous studies on emotions and L2 writers called for more exploration into poetry in the L2 classroom as well as investigation into L2 affect socialization (Chamcharatsri, 2012; Hanauer, 2010; Pavlenko, 2013). This study responded to these calls by providing an analysis of common themes that appeared in creative writing by conducting follow-up interviews with former students. In some cases, the amount of social bonding that occurred in the L2 influenced the writers' awareness of how to express these emotions in English (e.g., Iseul & Nari); however, in cases like Biyu's, the way the L1 culture presented the L2 culture was the dominant influence. For example, because Biyu had not socialized with Americans during her year in the United States, she understood Americans to be bold from her L1 culture, thus to complete the assignment, she imagined the affective stances of the L2 culture from her L1 culture's perception. Still, in other cases (e.g., Thu), emotions experienced in the L2 culture were responded to in English, but the content portrayed values from the L1 paradigm.

In addressing the connection between social bonding and participants' stance on using English for emotional expression, Iseul and Biyu offered two examples that portray high and low levels of L2 socialization/bonding. Iseul, the participant who had spent the most time in an English community, spoke about expressing emotions through each language, depending on which language (L1 or L2) connected to the memories she had formed in those environments, while Biyu, who had no close relationships in the L2, preferred expressing emotions in Mandarin and experienced anxiety with the L2. In reference to those participants in the study with the

most exposure to L2 social interactions and thus the opportunity to mirror others, more slang, playful language, and identity contemplation appeared thematically in the poetry as well as the interview transcripts.

Hanauer (2012) discusses the need for "meaningful literacy" in language teaching, and he promotes the use of poetry as a personally significant written task. Poetry, he argues, can be used as research to explore poetic identity formation and emotional expression in language learning. Furthermore, Chamcharatsri (2013b) claims that "emotional expression is part, if not *the* heart, of language teaching," and advocates literacy educators using emotional expressive writing to "help students capitalize on their ability to express emotions and become ready to use the resources they have in the language classroom" (pp. 155-156). This study advances both of these arguments, adding the dimension of language attachments, social bonds in the L2, as avenues for L2 researchers to investigate emotional expression in second language writing. As multilingual writers reflect on their own desires in English language learning, it is beneficial for them to consider who their L1 and L2 attachments are and how these attachment figures have influenced their emotional and social demeanors.

The themes explored here—memory and emotion as rhetorical choices, homesickness, friendship across age groups, and modesty—were only some of the repeated themes that emerged in the data. Initially, four additional themes were chosen for analysis (expressing dissatisfaction, love, anger; inability to say "no" to someone older); however, writers of those poems were unable to participate in the interview process. Thus, the themes explored here were pragmatically chosen based on participation. Themes explored elsewhere in the literature that also appeared in this data were love (Deweale, 2008), alienation (Hanauer, 2010), and anger (Deweale, 2004). Additional themes that emerged that have not been explored thus far in second

language literature are: “the inability to say ‘no’” or express dissatisfaction. A final theme which emerged is one which has repeatedly arisen in my years of teaching experience in this setting and spurred my initial steps into this field of research—the lack and desire for emotional connection to the English language. Statements such as “I feel like a machine when I speak English” or “I just memorize and take tests. I feel nothing” began my journey to research L2 writers through developing writing assignments that addressed these issues. The class assignments and writing prompts used in this study are the results of those implementations, which were action research based. Research-practitioners interested in exploring practical solutions to emotional disconnection in English are encouraged to use or modify these assignments as well as create other emotion-based assignments within the same set of goals—to increase socio-emotional fluency, comfort, confidence, and academic community involvement.

In summary, this study begins to explore a new line of inquiry, L2 affect socialization, within the established research on affect in language learning (Arnold, 1999; Pavlenko, 2005; Schumann, 1997). Though research on specific emotions proliferates (Chamcharatsri, 2013a; Deweale, 2004, 2008; Panayiotou, 2006), studies that examine relationships, specifically socialization into a new language are few. From such study, researchers can investigate not only the emotional experiences of multilingual individuals as they cross languages and cultures, but also understand the development of language as a form of socialization. Through this lens, we acknowledge how relationships and language interact to shape who we are and how we feel. In this study, from Iseul and Nari, we understand that higher levels of positive L2 socialization influence the number of memories made in the second language, and thus, the moments of laughter, engagement, and comfort experienced in these moments inadvertently socialized them into feeling in English. From Biyu, we notice a common theme within the literature—hesitance

to integrate; yet, we also learn that L1 cultures shape the perception of the L2 culture's affective stances, indirectly teaching what is acceptable in another language. We learn from Thu that the cultural, emotional norms from a home country may take precedence in the L2, where the L2 is used to translate L1 values. Because studies on L2 affect socialization are few, more are needed for a clearer understanding of the developmental process. Studies that gather spontaneous moments of L2 affect socialization (i.e., recording long-term living arrangements of language learners) have yet to be done, as well as studies that integrate interview data from those interacting with the learner (i.e., English teachers, homestay parents, L2 romantic partners). For teacher-researchers, studies that experiment with social bonding activities in the classroom or study online educational collaborations would bring practicality to how language learners engage relationship and develop emotional engagement cross-culturally.

The study presented here informs educators about the interplay between socialization and language for adult learners in the classroom, drawing further attention to the importance of community building in the classroom. Additionally, the study exposed the fact that perceptions of L2 affective norms exist within students, whether or not they are placed there by the L1 or L2 society. From Chapter 4, we learned that in this group of students, L2 integration may not have been as prevalent as imagined for students enrolled in an American university. Moreover, we learned that socialization and emotional connection were not common features of English education in home countries, thus emphasizing the need for pedagogical response.

## Pedagogical Implications

As a TESOL community that works to create learning environments that promote awareness and agency (Benesch, 2013; Motha, 2014), we call for further exploration of emotion, multilingual identity, and self-confidence in the language classroom. Here, I offer three practical

pedagogies for language teachers to explore. The goal of these pedagogies is to provide students an opportunity for a deeper emotional engagement, examination of their own internal world, and connection to others using the L2. These pedagogies call on the student's intrapersonal, interpersonal, and metacognitive skills, asking them to evaluate their own sense of self, emotions, and inner makeup and discuss their findings with a partner.

**Pedagogical Practice 1: Linguistic Relativity**

Students who hold more than one language within themselves may not have had the opportunity to explore the concept of affect socialization as a part of linguistic relativity. In other words, do students agree or disagree with the belief that when a person acquires language, they also gain socialization into the language's culture, learning how to feel and think about the world. Introducing students to readings, blogs, lectures, or films that engage the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis can be a fun, curiosity-building activity (See Appendix A for lessons). The goal is for teachers to use the content to stimulate discussions in which students evaluate their own stories and those of classmates as support or disproof of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.

Next, students are introduced to the term *affect socialization*, which refers to the process in which a multilingual individual acquires understanding of an internal feeling through the linguistic lens of a new language. For example, a Polish-English bilingual explains that there is no direct translation for the word "frustration" in Polish, and that her experience of frustration has been influenced because of her socialization into this feeling (Pavlenko, 2005, p. 53). Students can read and engage published stories such as those published in Pavlenko (2001), and share their own stories of socialization or learning English without much socialization. Students can then self-reflect on their own multilingualism: Has their language learning experience or identity become an integration of multiple cultural, social components or not? Students are asked

to explore how they experience emotions and their own identities in their languages through writing an essay on the topic. Depending on the level, this assignment can be extended to include secondary sources and primary sources (interviewing fellow classmates). According to student evaluations and reflections, this assignment often stimulated self-confidence, self-awareness, and L2 friendships (particularly when interviewing fellow classmates as primary research was assigned). Note that in these language learning courses, L2 friendships refer to multilingual students who used their L2 (English) to communicate (e.g., a Russian-English speaker became friends with Spanish-English speaker).

**Pedagogical Practice 2: Cross-Language Narrative Writing**

Similar to the poems collected for this chapter, another fruitful example was cross-language narrative writing. In this pedagogical practice, students read autobiographical essays by multilingual writers and discuss the content in light of their own experiences as well as the genre and rhetoric (see Appendix B). After this, students use their knowledge to complete one of two assignments. The first is for students to complete a personal argument essay, which argues an original claim that results from critically analyzing their own narrative (translingual approaches are invited). The second option is for students to write an autobiographical narrative in two of their languages, and to use analytical research skills (Koven, 2007; Prior, 2011) to perform self-analysis on the differences and similarities that exist between their languages. From these self-analyses, students begin to experience awareness of how language, culture, and identities intertwine and/or compartmentalize within themselves.

In past implementations, I found that a student's linguistic background, particularly how and if their development of self occurred within a language, often determined the manner in

which they completed the assignment. For example, a Korean student who had come to the United States in childhood completed his story first in English, and then in Korean. His stories, which were about visiting Korea and awkwardly trying to express respect through Korean honorifics, were analyzed and compared in a reflection. Here, the student wrote about his increased formality and an odd impulse to see the event from a Korean point of view when writing in Korean. He explained that his English version was easier to write, as the topic was about not feeling truly part of his home culture. This self-reflection was shared with classmates, some of whom shared similar experiences of no longer feeling a link to their heritage languages due to extended time in the United States.

To contrast, some students did not experience difference between the L1 and L2. For example, another student when completing this assignment, wrote easily in his L1, Chinese, a story about expressing love, but he went through the process of direct translation into English for his L2 version of the story. When interviewed later, he described that he only used English for school work and that his friends, community, and relationships in the United States were with others who spoke his L1-Chinese. In addition, he had spent most of his life in China and was new to the US, here only to complete university and then return to life in China. Therefore, for him, his awareness was that his identity was more singular than multiple and that he would simply translate his mind into English for academic and professional purposes. Teachers can notice how a student's linguistic background impacts their identity and provide a space for their students to self-reflect on the extent to which their L2 has been incorporated with their understanding of self.

**Pedagogical Practice 3: Cross-Language Poetic Writing**

Finally, one last practice is to allow students to explore translingualism as a way to promote integration of multilingual identities and self-confidence across languages. For instance, simply teaching students citation methods for resources in languages other than English acknowledges the value and presence of their multilingualism. In addition, teachers who encourage students to use all of their linguistic and cultural resources to complete classroom discussions and assignments socialize students into an academic atmosphere that challenges English-Only ideologies. In addressing emotion through translingualism, students might read and discuss code-mixed or code-meshed poetry, stories, or letters. For instance, the author Rhina Espaillat writes a poem incorporating her L1 into her L2 (see Appendix C) in order to give readers a glimpse of her linguistic autobiography. Students can read and analyze expressive writings like hers in groups, creating their own definitions of translingual writing and exploring their own experiences in comparison with the writer. After discussing the author's works, students discuss their own experiences in class discussion. Some recounted stories of feeling similar to the authors, while others explained the pressure from their parents to learn a language that no one around them spoke. These discussions and engagements with texts ask students to explore their own linguistic backgrounds and experiences within their languages. Through recounting stories, students gain heightened awareness of when, where, and how their languages traverse and who were the main characters and relationships that influenced their acquisition. Recognizing these instances of overlap, blending, and cross-over, aids students as they make decisions about whether or not to work across their linguistic resources in writing.

## Conclusion

When learning a language, each multilingual person brings stories, memories, and histories of the people, cultures, and societal norms within that language. Some have engaged those deeply, allowing their language to seep into them, transform them, and evolve their sense of self and their affective experiences. Others have stayed at a distance, preserving their L1 identity, while still others have abandoned their L1 (Pallier et al., 2003), choosing to create their identity in the L2. Pedagogical steps that promote self-analysis, emotional expression, and community discussion and connections are an important part of practical classroom application. In understanding L2 affect socialization through poetry, this chapter suggests that affective socialization in the L2 may not always occur, even in students living and studying in American universities. Moreover, the study notes that in this participant group, the language in which a memory formed directly influenced perceptions of affect. These findings suggest that allowing students to investigate their own movement across languages through pedagogies that encourage L2 socialization will contribute to building self-awareness, confidence, and positive emotional experiences in their language acquisition.

These practical classroom practices bring to consciousness the development of one's affective connection to language, the relationships that have socialized writers into L2 cultural experiences, and the memories and emotions that have attached to the English language during its acquisition. These explorations not only bring awareness to the writer but to the teacher, who must consider their students' language use, language study, and the impact of social bonding on emotional expression and affect experiences. Through continued research affect socialization and expressive, emotive writing, the TESOL community might extend CLT methodology beyond "communicative" to "relational." With this shift, the affective turn in second language

acquisition, which has centered mainly on research, will continue to produce upgraded, influential teaching methodologies that directly impact our students' socio-emotionality.

# CHAPTER 6

# LANGUAGE ATTACHMENT PEDAGOGY

> Man's desire finds its meaning in the desire of the other, not so much because the other holds the key to the object desired, as because the object of desire is to be recognized by the other - (Motha & Lin, 2014, p. 58, citing Lacan).

In this study, learning English had meaning for participants only in the context of its value as recognized by the other. Whether it was a mother's praise, a love interest's story, or a nanny's care, the English desired was only desired in a network of attachments and bonds. These could be first language members or second language members who saw English as necessary. To desire, to long for, to lack, conjures up emotions so primitive as those in our infancy. To desire a mother—because she is gone, because she meets our needs, because she tells us that we are loved is somehow engraved throughout our entire neural network. Though through development and maturity, this drive for connection and relationship appears differently in adolescence and adulthood, the "other" nevertheless influences the brain's ability to learn and the objects desired. Specifically, in the area of language, the presence of the "other" triggers the brain to open and engage (Kuhl, 2007).

From infants to adults, survival is just as much emotional as it is biological. The fact that John Bowlby was able to save lives by having nurses touch, hold, and talk to infants instead of following their strict sterilization practices to avoid contact shows an incredible link between life and socio-emotional interaction. Moreover, findings from current social neuroscience are pointing to the conclusion that this link continues to pervade the neural network of our brains throughout life, creating responses that either turn brains on or off to learning. Human

interaction, socio-emotional health, and neural plasticity become intertwined with communicative language teaching, as we find ourselves more with stories and faces of human beings than with grammar books or testing assessments.

This is not to argue against other important factors in language acquisition such as language use or age of acquisition. To be clear, this study does not argue that socio-emotionality contains more validity or strength than another factor of acquisition. The intention of the study is to isolate and further investigate the area of socio-emotionality and language relationships because this area had previously been grouped together with other factors of acquisition. Socio-emotionality and human bonding cannot act as the singular factor of acquisition, but pedagogically, these two factors have unexplored potential that this study aims to initiate. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the main purpose for this research is to specifically impact second language pedagogy.

Stories of isolation as shown in the poem that began this dissertation are not few in I/M students coming to the United States (Hanauer, 2010). And while some instructors might see social bonding activities as the job of student life organizations, homestay families, or social clubs, this study suggests that it is the next step in extending communicative language theory. Batzer (2016), in his article "Healing Classrooms: Therapeutic Possibilities in Academic Writing," argues for creating a classroom space, which rests upon Hooks (1994) belief that "the possibility for growth and change arises from an engaged pedagogy, one which is founded on a teacher's deep interest in the personal experiences of their students" (Batzer, 2016). In practice, Batzer created a composition course, in which he and his students free-wrote at the beginning of each class for 10 minutes about topics important to them. Batzer used prompts such as What's bothering you today? Whom do admire? What has made you angry most recently? Not only

would Batzer collect and read these journals daily, leaving his students with a single question or comment in reply, he would also provide time for his students to share their writings with one another. For the formal, academic writing assignments, Batzer encouraged students to use themes within their journals to initiate their own lines of inquiry in research—making the way for projects on institutionalized discrimination against Sikhs and Muslims in airports and university policies for the disabled. These projects functioned to create personal connections to global concerns to which the students felt compelled to contribute. Beyond healing and therapy, Batzer's article highlights a teacher's movement toward creating equality in the classroom through socio-emotional bonding, which he argues produced healthy transformation.

Batzer's work brings up an important issue of counseling psychology in the classroom, which most agree should not be taken on by untrained teachers acting as psychologists. Pedagogies that engage emotionality and bonding lend themselves to a therapeutic counseling perspective, which puts teachers in a difficult place. However, many teachers I have spoken with, especially in the K-12 systems in the U.S., have explained that they have long been in this place, having to make calls to Child Protective Services, connect students to suicide services, and listen to hard stories regarding divorce, death of a loved one, disease, and disability. In response to this dilemma in using social bonding and socio-emotionality in the classroom, I would argue that community support is one of the top recommendations given by psychologists, and that a classroom community is one of many places for students to receive safety and belongingness. Teachers can always advocate for their students by connecting students to resources and trained professionals that can further assist with socio-emotional healing. Fear of not being trained as a psychologist can be combatted by knowing where to send students that might need one. Using socio-emotionality in the classroom does not mean all students will enter into writing as a

therapy session with the teacher becoming the psychologist. When and if these situations arise, teachers should take steps to further extend a student's support circle with trained professionals. Socio-emotionality and bonding in pedagogy means a higher likelihood for activating brains, encouraging engaged, self-led projects, and providing an embodied language learning process. These advantages outweigh the limitations and fears that teachers may have regarding the issue of counseling psychology in the classroom.

## Summary of Findings

This study offers two main conclusions. First, it supports previous research (Chamcharatsri, 2013b; Hanauer, 2010), emphasizing the importance of emotion pedagogies in a language classroom. Second, it suggests that human bonding may likely be central to language learning and calls for further research on relationship building in language learning classrooms. In Chapter 1, the focus is primarily on reviewing scholarship broadly on topics related to socio-emotionality, second language studies, and brain-based pedagogies. Next, Chapter 2 offers language attachment theory as a neuroscientific frame through which to consider social bonding in L2 composition, arguing that brain-based pedagogies that center on social interaction are likely to address socio-emotionality in the language learning process. This chapter specifically reviews brain research and attachment theory literature, using these studies to support the language attachment theory framework. Chapter 3 presents the methodology of the dissertation research, including an overview of mixed methodology as well as a brief explanation for each of the methods employed (survey, narrative inquiry, and interview).

Chapter 4 is a data chapter, which blends autobiographical and survey data together in order to demonstrate the finding that L2 attachment figures were few within the studied population of highly fluent students. The chapter divides students into two groups, the dutiful and the

subversive, reflecting the reported emotional experiences of the language learners. Within each group, human attachment figures (both L1 and L2 attachments) were explored, as well as overall data regarding emotional descriptors of students' language acquisition experiences. The data suggests that the majority of students had negative experiences acquiring English in their home country as well as difficulty making friends with English speakers. Anomalies were also analyzed and these narratives were presented as case studies. Chapter 5 is the second data chapter, presenting poetry and interview data for four participants. This chapter investigates the themes these authors address as well as proposes pedagogical implementations for instructors interested in using translingual, emotive writing in their classrooms. Finally, the goal of this chapter, Chapter 6, is to present the main findings of the entire dissertation study as well as situate these findings as contributions to the field. Chapter 6 also addresses future areas for teacher-researchers to study.

## Contributions to the Field

This study mainly contributes an interdisciplinary perspective to the field of TESOL, which blends findings across various fields as means to innovate current pedagogical practices. For much research within the field of social neuroscience, pedagogical implementations remain a small section within published works. As a response, a body of knowledge referred to as brain-based pedagogies has developed, but this body of research is often found within K-12 systems and is generalized to educational psychology (Beringer & Richards, 2002; Cozolino, 2013; Materna, 2007; Sousa, 2006). The current study seeks to blend relevant findings across fields to offer a varied perspective on qualitative data, while inviting experimental classroom practices to future instructors.

Within the field of SLA, affect and emotion have been topics of substantial interest, with researchers calling for more research regarding affect socialization (Pavlenko, 2013), L2 emotion pedagogies (Chamcharatsri, 2012), and L2 poetry in research (Hanauer, 2010). This study specifically addresses these calls through Chapter 5 by eliciting L2 poetry (Hanauer, 2010) on emotions uncommon in the writers' L1 (Chamcharatsri, 2013a). The study, then uses a neuroscientific analytical lens to examine L2 affect socialization through the writer's poems and interview data. The findings from this chapter suggests that affect socialization occurs across languages and varies depending on individual differences in expression and acquisition experiences. For example, this chapter shows that L1 attachments and culture could influence L2 affective experiences and expressions, as writers would translate their L1 cultural emotional responses into English (Biyu & Thu). Likewise, L2 attachment figures were also referred to as sources of L2 affect socialization, particularly by participants who had experienced new affective experiences while immersed in the L2 culture (Nari & Iseul). More research gathering data in spontaneous settings (non-classroom) is needed to further understand L2 affect socialization; however, this study offers entry into a new aspect, L2 affect socialization, of emotive writing studies. In addition, this research extends Bowlby's concept of attachment to language, contributing to the field a new critical lens that can be applied to data analysis.

While within TESOL studies, emotion has been studied extensively (Dewaele, 2010; Pavlenko, 2005; 2007; Rintell, 1990), the study of the actual individuals/relationships related to the emotions language learners experience, has not been a topic in itself. As a researcher, I found it strange that though the social aspect of language is pervasive throughout the literature, the actual study of the individual bonds or relationships had yet to be explored. Chapter 2 of this dissertation contributes this theoretical direction, making a case for language attachment as a

theoretical perspective. Chapter 4 follows by applying the perspective to qualitative and quantitative data, showing data that reports on both the lack of L2 attachment figures in L2 language learning and the emotional experiences of I/M learners of English. Both chapters contribute an argument for the impact of socio-emotional bonding on the language learner and expose an existing lack of L2 friendships within this group of participants' stories.

Finally, and most importantly, this dissertation contributes innovative and experimental pedagogies to the field of TESOL. Chapters 2, 4, and 5 all end with chapter specific pedagogical approaches that require further research or are offered as vetted pedagogies for addressing emotion, social bonding, and identity formation in the composition course. This chapter ends with a similar emphasis on pedagogies of attachment and emotion, which resulted from the overall pedagogical engagement and response to the work done here.

## Pedagogical Implementations

Because pedagogical innovation is the main purpose of my research, I have offered pedagogical implementations throughout the dissertation according the chapter's content. Here, however, I hope to more broadly encompass pedagogies of social bonding by offering new practices which I would call on teacher-researchers to explore. The following practices have only been experimented within my current courses, as they have emerged from this dissertation work, and are not vetted pedagogies. I offer the field these for further research and modification. These practices are specific to composition, but could be adapted for other language courses as well.

**Promoting Bilingualism in Composition**

Though the term *multilingual* is most used within L2 and composition studies to encompass both the bi- and multilingual individual (Pavlenko, 2005), brain studies in cognitive psychology and neuroscience, mainly use the term *bilingual*, even in cases where their research participants may have more than two languages. These studies have shown consistently that bilingual brains are different from monolingual brains (Bialystok, 2012; Buchweitz & Prat, 2013). As reviewed in Chapter 2, the bilingual brain shows not only structurally different changes but also creates different routes for execution of various tasks (Kuhl et al., 2013). Behavioral and cognitive studies on bilingual brains show a propensity to acquire theory of mind (i.e., predict the mind of another), flexibility of thought (i.e., implement a new rule quickly after performing a habitual task), and enhanced cognitive control, which was shown to protect against the onset of dementia later in life (Bialystok, 2009, 2012; Buchweitz & Prat, 2013). Encouraging our "monolingual" students with some foreign language ability to advance their L2 through cross-cultural relationships could help them engage and empathize with the position of language learning as well as positively impact their brain development. As their brains develop bilingually, they may also develop the ability to predict the mind of the other (possible implications for empathy training) as well as develop greater flexibility of thought—both of which could offer a different route challenging English Only ideologies. Promoting relationships (via online networks or cross-campus language partners) within foreign language courses are possible directions for teachers to consider. Rather than American high-school students taking a required foreign language course in which mostly books and grammar/vocabulary tests are used, new cross-language relationships could be used to have students create videos, skype, and share lives across languages.

**Language Exchange Partners**

For a composition instructor in a mainstream composition course, where the majority of students speak English as their first language (but have often had some foreign language courses in high school), pairing students with language partners outside of the classroom is effective. If the institution has a language exchange program, the instructor can require that students sign up for a language partner. In this case, a language exchange program coordinator sends an introduction email giving participants each other's contact information. The language partners then meet casually outside of class to develop a relationship on their own, ideally speaking part of the time in each language or depending on participant's ability, simply gaining familiarity and practice with World Englishes. Also, social networking sites like ePals function to connect instructors or students globally to create language partners similar to the one described above in the language exchange program. In both scenarios, the ePal takes the place of the old "pen-pal," offering connections beyond writing letters. Studies on ePals and other technology-enhanced multimedia instruction networks like it connect language learners via video chat, email, and discussion boards to truly become involved in each other's lives (Chen & Yang, 2014). These language exchanges are the most fertile ground for addressing language diversity issues because they rely on the power of human relationships to challenge hegemonic perspectives. No longer is an "expert" English speaker helping the non-expert. Both parties assume an expert position (their L1) and a language learner position (the desired L2), fostering empathy, cross-cultural understanding, and possibly, life-long global friendships that could unite the United States and the globe.

Even monolinguals in our composition courses who "took high school foreign language but can't speak it" would be pushed to create language exchange partners. These partners could

be used to complete assignments in our composition courses as well as requirements from other language courses. If successful, the implications for language attachment practice could extend to reform language policy in K-12. In the future, students could come to a composition course with already established language attachments from early years of foreign language study. Though this seems challenging, it is actually quite likely, as younger generations who live abroad are using technology such as ePals, video-gaming, facebook, and twitter to build relationships cross-culturally in their second languages. Policy makers may need to catch up with these tech-savvy methods to enhance language learning. Instead of the high school foreign language requirement emphasizing test achievement, the passing criteria would be to establish a social bond and communicative ability in a second language through a global technology-enhanced multimedia instruction network. Foreign language teachers would design courses with other teachers globally, creating assignments that situate the relationship as central. If multilingualism became pervasive, the impact could be substantial—languages that had been isolated from the public sphere would be valued, and Americans who may have been previously "monolingual" when leaving the K-12 system, may experience the benefits of having communicative ability and cross-language relations in two languages.

**Writing Center Tutor-Student Bonding**

The second implementation I have tried is requiring composition students to visit our writing and research tutoring center, which provides free tutoring to matriculated students. Rather than randomly choosing a tutor, students are required to read through the writing tutors' bios and choose three tutors that have similar disciplinary interests to their own. The student is then required to make appointments with these tutors and bring in a piece of work from our

composition course. After reporting on their experiences through a homework assignment, they choose one or two of the tutors as their language attachment, being careful to bring in their assignments to the same person. I encourage students to keep this writing tutor throughout their years at our institution, explaining the value of social bonding for language acquisition as well as the concept of transfer into future disciplines. Securing a language attachment who is also a writing tutor in their future discipline, offers students a social means for facilitating "transfer" to their discipline of choice. Writing tutors with matching disciplines act as sponsors for promoting transfer of writing skills from one discipline to another, and though not the primary focus, writing centers might also be interested in the possibilities of tutor-student bonding, particularly building connections throughout the global network of research.

**Teacher-Student Bonding**

A third implementation already well established as a practice in composition are teacher-student conferences. One-on-one or small group conferences (one teacher with two or three students) provides a space for honest engagement and authentic conversations. Group conferences are an interesting avenue for research, as recent social neurocognitive studies are showing increased stimulation and brain activity in the presence of a second learner (Kuhl, 2014). Most composition programs require one-on-one student conferences, but depending on the class size and the writing program's policy on class cancellations for conferencing, placing the responsibility of language attachment on the instructor could lead to quick teacher burnout. Some composition programs, like Stanford University's require their composition lecturers to have three 30-minute conferences with each of their students per course. However, composition instructors at Stanford have a maximum class size of 15, which serves to lessen the

demand. Teacher-student bonding has been studied in depth within education (Noddings, 2013; Riley, 2011), but within the context of composition and L2 writers, more research is needed. Within the literature, Nel Noddings' influential work on the ethics of care provides a helpful foundation for teacher-student engagement practices as well as theoretical understanding relating maternal care to the classroom (Noddings, 2013).

**Service Learning Courses**

The fourth implementation was a service learning composition course, which our writing program offers. In this course, multilingual students (domestic and international) volunteer in the local community. These students used their experiences as sources of data for written assignments. Many composition students served as literacy tutors in after-school programs for children, often teaching their L2 (English) to both native and nonnative speakers. In this role as English expert and tutor, many composition students whose L1 was not English, reported feelings of fear at first. However, as the course went on, the children they tutored expressed feelings of admiration and amazement at their ability to communicate in two languages. As a result, the analysis of the final reflections in the service learning course showed a pattern in which there was a positive shift in confidence as well as ownership of the English language (Fahim, Vidrine-Isbell, & Zhu, 2016).

**Metacognition as Bakhtinian**

The fifth implementation is in reference to modifying current metacognitive practices towards an analysis of the socially constructed nature of language. As mentioned earlier, students can be encouraged to access the variety of associations that they have when recalling a particular concept (Horner, 2016). In addition, the cultural, political, social, and emotional contexts can be

accessed providing a more multifaceted discussion on the topic. As students engage a particular concept or genre, they might also share information from different discourse communities they are part of (differing languages included) that give the concept a layered, multi-dimensional perspective. For example, in approaching the concept of gender in society, students might offer films, you-tube videos, personal experiences, cultural complications, or academic perspectives regarding the topic. With their long-term pairs, potential language attachments, students can exchange these socio-cultural, emotional experiences (i.e., show each other videos, share stories, or explain cultural nuances or beliefs). In this way, metacognition is a means to access the cultural, emotional, and social dimensions of a singular concept in a Bhaktinian sense, providing students an opportunity to link metacognition to their social interactions. In this way, metacognition is extended from individual reflection to critical reflection about social constructs inherent in language.

## Future Areas of Research

Each of these pedagogical implementations have been experimented with in my current courses; however, within each, there still needs to be concentrated investigation on one particular pedagogy. In structuring courses as research, it has helped to create an action research cycle in which lack of cross-cultural relationships is constructed as the problem and materials/assignments aim to ameliorate the problem through a single approach (i.e., writing center tutors-student writer relationships). In addition, practical pedagogies could be developed that link theory to practice (e.g., theory-based strategies for ethical care in teacher-student conferencing).

Language attachment as a theoretical framework is in its early stages of investigation, and the implementations discussed above would all need more research to produce a more stable

theory from which to base pedagogical implementations. Therefore, future research could continue to investigate language attachment through the following questions: What is the nature of human relationships in L2 socio-emotional learning? What are the existing emotional connections made to the L2 via the L1 attachment figures and their impact? How to we navigate the problem of neuroplasticity in adult language learning and the question of attachment and socio-emotionality in adult language learners? How could metacognitive practices play a part in addressing language attachment? Future studies could examine these questions by researching human bonding and language acquisition late in life. In addition, interdisciplinary researchers of cognition and writing might look at the role mirror neurons in infant-mother bonding and use this evidence to further instate imitation pedagogies (Clark, 2016). In referencing transfer, compositionists might explore social bonding between their students and the attachment figures of their future disciplines, to examine how professionals can serve to facilitate transfer from writing within the institution to writing within the workplace. Finally, in composition studies of metacognition, aspects of attachment and mindfulness may be helpful avenues of inquiry in connection to pedagogical practices.

## Concluding Remarks

Language pedagogy among multilingual students continues to grow across the United States, and with diversity and immigration issues at the forefront of our current political world, we must seek to explore classroom practices that promote welcome and acknowledgment of linguistic and cultural difference. Often, new experiences through human-to-human relationships can help remodulate the brain to recognize out-group members in new, less negative ways (Molenburghs, 2013). In addition, understanding the existing socio-emotional connections L2 learners have to the English language can aid teachers in developing pedagogical responses

appropriate for making these students feel welcome and less anxious in the English classroom. The goal of these pedagogies is to create a safe place for community within the classroom, where learners feel acceptance, curiosity, and personal engagement with the course content.

Though this study primarily addresses I/M students, the implications intend to help both L2 and monolingual English writers. By promoting social bonding as a means to globalizing the classroom, both types of writers can engage in cross-cultural relationships that impact their global awareness. Perspectives that view human relationships as cognitively transformative are particularly important as globalization in higher education is increasing the demand on composition instructors to teach rhetorical appeal for more global audiences, in which multilingualism and World Englishes are part of everyday communications. Attaining a clearer understanding of pedagogical effectiveness and the impact of relationship on language learning would aid the field in assessing how to integrate a socio-emotionally healthy approach.

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Appendix A

## Linguistic Relativity Lessons

Introducing students to the concept of linguistic relativity through the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, can be a fun, academic topic that allows for self-reflection on identity in language learners.

According the encyclopedia of identity, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is explained as follows: The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis asserts that humans' use of linguistic communication relates to their specific cultural norms. Edward Sapir developed and published the conceptual framework for this hypothesis in the 1920s. In 1956, Benjamin Lee Whorf published his work developing this hypothesis based on his work using the Hopi and English languages. Sapir and Whorf's ideas have been commonly known as the *Sapir-Whorf hypothesis*, which has also been referred to as *linguistic relativity*. This hypothesis counters notions of universal and objective meaning and use of language. This hypothesis further posits that language frames human expression instead of human expression framing language. In other words, the grammatical structure and function of language shapes human thought processes and the manner in which humans perceive reality. The relevance of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis for identity formation is that it challenges the commonsense notion that a preexisting identity creates and shapes language; rather, the hypothesis argues that identity is formed and informed by language.

Both media and scholarship have approached this topic from various angles, as humans have often been curious about whether knowing a new language can have the power to change one's perception of the world.

Teachers can consider mixing scholarly and popular sources that explain and challenge students to argue the validity of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis in light of their own language learning experiences. Students can practice argumentation using their own autobiographical data as well as readings from the course to enter into this conversation.

Sources:

Encyclopedia:
Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis. (2010). In R. L. Jackson (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Identity* (Vol. 2, pp. 651-654). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Reference. Retrieved from http://go.galegroup.com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/ps/i.do?p=GVRL&sw=w&u=wash_main&v=2.1&it=r&id=GALE%7CCX1700600221&asid=ad7171614adc75a9cfafd5b8238806dd

Scholarly/Academic: Choose select chapters from these books.

Pavlenko, A. (2005). Bilingualism and Thought. In Kroll, J., & Groot, A. M. B. (Eds).,*Handbook of bilingualism: Psycholinguistic approaches*. (p. 433-453) Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

McWhorter, J. (2014). *The language hoax: Why the world looks the same in any language*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

Ogulnick, K. (2000). Learning Language/Learning Self. In *Language crossings: Negotiating the self in a multi-cultural world* (Language and literacy series (New York, N.Y.)). New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University.

Media/Film:
Levy, S., Levine, D., Ryder, A., Linde, D. (Producers),Villeneuvue, D. (Director). (2016). *Arrival* [Motion Picture]. United States: Paramount Pictures.

Blog Post:
http://www.npr.org/blogs/health/2013/12/30/258376009/how-language-seems-to-shape-ones-view-of-the-world (Links to an external site.)

Audio Lecture/ Radio Lab:
http://www.radiolab.org/story/91725-words/

Primary Data Research:

Students can be invited to write their own language learning autobiographies, which they can later use as a source of primary data. Encourage interviews with others across languages, and teach multilingual students how to present translated material as research data. Students can gather interview data from classmates, members of their L1 society, or members of the L2 society to approach the topic from various perspectives that account for cultural and linguistic diversity.

The writing skills taught by using Sapir-Whorf hypothesis included:

Prompts for assignments included: genre analysis, rhetorical analysis, personal argumentation, academic research argumentation, online class discussions, summary/direct quote/paraphrase practice. Below I will include three, but if you would like additional prompts, please contact me at bonniv@uw.edu.

**SAMPLE PROMPT 1**
Online Discussion Board

Prompt: Group Reading Analysis, Summary & Paraphrase Practice, and Response Work

*The handouts shown here were part of in-class lessons leading up to this assignment.

Step 1: In class, your group was assigned one source to closely read and annotate: http://depts.washington.edu/owrc/Handouts/Close%20Reading.pdf

Step 2: After you have each read and annotated the source, meet as a team and evaluate it. You may meet online (with a shared google doc) or on campus. At your meeting, discuss your annotations and thoughts about the content of the article. At your team meeting, complete all of the remaining steps together.

Step 3: Next, use the summary and paraphrase lessons from class: http://depts.washington.edu/owrc/Handouts/Quoting%20Paraphrasing%20Summarzing.pdf

Work together to write a summary of the source:
http://depts.washington.edu/owrc/Handouts/How%20to%20Write%20a%20Summary.pdf

Step 4: Next, choose a section of the source that your team found interesting and write a paraphrase of the author's concept: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/619/01/

Step 5: Follow the paraphrase with a thought provoking question for other groups to answer.

Step 6: Post your group's summary + paraphrase + question to the online discussion board

Step 7: Respond to at least two other group's posts/questions.

**SAMPLE PROMPT 2**

Rhetorical Awareness & Genre Analysis Homework

Three-part homework assignment for this week, based on in-class lessons focused on genre analysis, rhetorical awareness, and gathering primary interview data. For in-class lesson guide, see textbook: Hobmeier, A., Wachter-Grene, K., Boulware, T., Campbell, L. Day, K. Gillis-Bridges . . . Bawarshi, A. (Eds.), *Contexts for Inquiry: A Guide to Research and Writing at the University of Washington*. Boston, M.A: Bedford/St. Martin's.

**Part 1:**

Please read the following assignments & answer the questions below:

Submit your answers below online, and be able to access your answers for in-class discussion.

Read the pages p.433-436 & two sections of your choice (color, objects/substances, number, space, time, personhood) in Chapter 21 by Aneta Pavlenko on Bilingualism and Thought.

Pavlenko, A. (2005). Bilingualism and Thought. In Kroll, J., & Groot, A. M. B. (Eds)., *Handbook of bilingualism: Psycholinguistic approaches*. (p. 433-453) Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

Then, read the blog post about the same topic:
http://www.npr.org/blogs/health/2013/12/30/258376009/how-language-seems-to-shape-ones-view-of-the-world (Links to an external site.) (Links to an external site.)

Next, answer the questions below:

What are the differences in the genre of an academic article and a blog post?

What are the conventions/rules that each genre follows?

How do the examples and the language the person uses change to meet the audience's expectations?

*Instructor note: instructors can mix and match sources in this assignment so that students compare film/blog, encyclopedia/Radiolab, etc.

**Part 2:** Read "Language Crossings" and write down your answers to the questions below:

Ogulnick, K. (2000). Learning Language/Learning Self. In *Language crossings: Negotiating the self in a multi-cultural world* (Language and literacy series (New York, N.Y.)). New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University.

Questions about Rhetorical Awareness & Genre:

1. What type of publication is this? Where is it published? By Who? What are the values of the audience who will read this article?

2. How does the writer employ **style, tone, and conventions appropriate to the demands of a particular genre and situation? How does she move away from these conventions?**

3. What does the writer do to **demonstrate the ability to write for this audience?**

4. How does the writer show an **understanding of her audience through various aspects of the writing (mode of inquiry, content, structure, appeals, tone, sentences, and word choice)?**

5. **What writing choices show that the author's writing is** strategically pitched **to that audience?**

**Part 3:** Interview your assigned partner about their language story. Write down about five questions you would like to ask your partner regarding their story learning English.

Some examples are:

1. How would you describe the education system that taught you English?

2. Do you like English? Why or Why not? Give five adjectives describing your feelings about English?

3. Why did you study English? Was it your choice?

4. Describe a typical day in your English class from when you were young.

5. What specific moments do you remember from your past that you associate with learning English?

After you have completed the interview, transcribe selected sections and upload them to our class website. You should have submit at least 1.5 pages of transcription single spaced.

**SAMPLE PROMPT 3**

Major Paper 1

Prompt: Making an Argument

GENRE: THE PERSONAL ARGUMENT

So far in class, we have explored a variety of texts and research dealing with the issues surrounding language use, bilingual thought, emotion, and identity. For your first major paper,

develop an original complex claim, support it with evidence. Please use the more formal argumentation organization which we have discussed in class:
http://depts.washington.edu/owrc/Handouts/Argumentative%20Paper%20Format.pdf

When you include primary evidence (evidence from your personal experience or interview data from the experiences of other bi- or multi-linguals), it can only be used as one evidence section in the argument format. The other evidence sections should include secondary evidence that employs paraphrasing and/or summary correctly. Remember to synthesize texts after annotation to join the academic conversation.

This will be a 5-7 double spaced/ 3-4 single spaced academic paper, in which we revisit our previous knowledge and experiences to produce a complex claim about language. That is, you will create a comprehensive argument using the readings, your experience (if you like) and research on the topic to make a focused and reflective argument. SAMPLE Questions to consider when framing your argument include:

Sample questions:

Do you agree or disagree with the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis?

Does the emotion of (choose one emotion) translate from your first language to English?

Does learning a language change your identity?

For this paper, you need to choose to address a particular audience: multilingual students, university faculty, immigrant communities, language policy makers, scientists, fellow researchers – essentially, an audience for whom you think your argument will be the most meaningful.

*The purpose of this assignment is twofold:*

1. To draw on our work over the last several weeks in order to best examine the complex relationships between language, thought, and identity.
2. To articulate your own understanding of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, as well as analyze the stakes surrounding this issue.

*A successful paper will:*

- Demonstrate a competent understanding of the stakes present in the texts and articulate one with explicit stakes for the main argument

- Include multiple texts and sources to make a focused and thoughtful complex claim, which is sustained throughout the paper with effective, related evidence and argumentation.

- Consider how your own research contradicts, complicates, or supports the arguments in the essays we have read.

- Appropriately address an academic audience that you specify

- Demonstrate an organized, logical flow of thought and argumentation

**Final Thoughts:**

This sequence has proven successful for scaffolding rhetorical awareness, reading and synthesis skills, and developing complex claims. It integrates brain-based pedagogies such as narrative and story-telling, personal identity investment, and student-led projects (Cozolino, 2013). From a rhetoric and composition perspective and the Writing Program Administration (WPA) outcomes, we find genre analysis, rhetorical practice, and reading and analysis of complex texts. In addition, this scaffold acknowledges linguistic and cultural diversity in the classroom and seeks to engage students as experts in academic conversations regarding multilingualism.

Appendix B

## Cross Language Narrative Writing Lessons

Studying narratives across languages is another productive topic for multilingual students to approach academic writing in a manner that engages their own stories and identities. In this appendix, instructors introduce students to narratives by multilinguals and encourage students to practice skills such as genre analysis and rhetorical awareness on the pieces of writings.

Sources for multilingual narratives include:
Amy Tan: Tan, A. (1990). *The Joy Luck Club* (1st Ballantine Books ed.). New York: Ivy Books.

Manuel Munoz: Munoz, M. (2007, August 01). Leave Your Name at the Border. *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, p. A19.

Helen Kim: In Danquah, M. (2000). *Becoming American: Personal essays by first generation immigrant women* (1st ed.). New York: Hyperion.

Gloria Anzaldua: Anzaldúa, G. (1999). *Borderlands = La frontera* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.

Reading, analysis, and class discussions should allow students to discuss content, personal responses, organization/structure, and rhetorical strategies.

**Reading and Response Assignment:**

Step 1: Read and Annotate Selected Sections from the chosen article

Step 2: Meet with partner (online or in person) to discuss their understanding of the author's claims and personal experiences and thoughts in connection to author's ideas.

Step 3: Together with partner, students will write a paraphrase of section they found interesting and post it online along with one well-thought question.

Step 4: Together, respond to at least two other group's online posts.

Allowing three spaces for engagement--alone, with partner, and online class discussion usually increases comfort level with the content and primes students for public engagement during class discussion. Also, online engagement with others (sharing likes/seeing who commented on your post) helps to build class community.

**Narrative Writing Assignment:**

Following this analysis, students are encouraged to perform their own genre analysis of one of the above models, and then, to write their own narrative. Depending on the genre chosen, these narratives can have elements of argumentation or resemble more of a creative, autobiographical narrative.

Teachers can design this assignment in multiple ways, two are included below:

First, teachers could allow this assignment to be an informal personal argument essay (much like Amy Tan's), where the students are creating an original claim from their narratives. This focuses more on developing writing outcomes such as argument development, claims, and nuanced writing. I have used this format for English 200 level courses.

Second, teachers could allow this to be an opportunity for students to write an autobiographical narrative in two languages and compare their identity, writing style, and self-expression across their languages using research analysis skills found in Koven (2007) and Prior (2011). For this assignment, students will need to read excerpts of the above mentioned research articles and consider how researchers analyze narrative before applying these critical thinking skills to their

own narratives. The goal would be to rhetorically analyze their own writing across languages to gain more metacognitive knowledge of their identity and writing in each. From these self-analyses, students begin to experience awareness of how language, culture, and identities intertwine and/or compartmentalize within themselves. I have used this format for English 100 level courses.

Prompts for these two activities are presented below:

**Prompt: Genre Analysis & Personal Argument Essay**

Read and annotate Amy Tan's essay "Mother Tongue," trying to highlight the main claim, support for the main claim, sub-claims, support for the sub-claims, and any hedging you notice.

1.Write a one-page single-spaced analysis explaining the structure, the evidence that supported the author's main ideas, and the conventions of this genre, the personal essay. In addition to analyzing the argument, use the questions below to analyze the genre.

Sample questions:

What is the tone?

Does the author use dialogue?

Does the author use descriptions that appeal to the 5 senses?

How do small anecdotes function in the essay to prove the author's point?

The aim of this assignment is to demonstrate understanding of the following outcomes displayed in the author's writing. How does the author's writing…

- The writing employs style, tone, and conventions appropriate to the demands of a particular genre and situation.
- The writer is able to demonstrate the ability to write for different audiences and contexts, both within and outside the university classroom.
- The writing has a clear understanding of its audience, and various aspects of the writing (mode of inquiry, content, structure, appeals, tone, sentences, and word choice) address and are strategically pitched to that audience.
- The writer articulates and assesses the effects of his or her writing choices.

PERSONAL ARGUMENT: Using your one-page analysis, begin to design your own personal essay. What could your life argue for or against? What characters and places will you describe? What anecdotes will support your claim?

The aim of this assignment is to demonstrate your ability to display the following outcomes in your own writing: Does your writing…

- The writing employs style, tone, and conventions appropriate to the demands of a particular genre and situation.
- The writer is able to demonstrate the ability to write for different audiences and contexts, both

within and outside the university classroom.

- The writing has a clear understanding of its audience, and various aspects of the writing (mode of inquiry, content, structure, appeals, tone, sentences, and word choice) address and are strategically pitched to that audience.
- The writer articulates and assesses the effects of his or her writing choices.

**PROMPT: CROSS LANGUAGE NARRATIVE**

Write a story in two of the languages you speak (one of the languages you choose needs to be English). You will write for 10 minutes in one language, and then again for 10 minutes in the other. After we write, students put each narrative side by side. Next, they take out a new sheet of paper for a metacognitive analysis.

Take these stories and analyze them using metacognitive analysis. For this metacognitive practice, think about your rhetoric, your self, your own identity and how it changes or does not change.

Students are given about 10 minutes to jot down initial thoughts for their metacognition. For homework, go home and write a one-page single spaced paper, in which they analyze their self and their writing in each language.

Here are some questions to guide the metacognitive writing practice:

What do you notice is different between the two languages?

What do you notice is similar?

Did you feel different writing in each language?

Which language do you prefer to express the story? Why do you think?

How does your tone, word choice, and style show your identity and position to your audience in each?

Appendix C

## Cross Language Poetic Writing Lessons

Exploring creative writing with multilinguals provides a space where students are able to engage emotion, art, and writing within the context of their L2. Showing students that multilinguals might use code-mixing or code-meshing to express a multilingual identity might be an important step in the process of language pedagogy. The sources below are creative writing pieces and creative academic pieces, in which writers engage multilingual topics.

Rhina Espanaliit “Bilingual/Bilingue”

Lydia Kim “I miss you”

Vershawn Young “Your Average Nigga”

Amy Tan “The Joy Luck Club”

Juan Guerra “Double Agent”

Following discussion and analysis, teachers can invite students to create their own creative writing piece, discussing a topic of their choice. Consider allowing multimodality (video or art) to be enmeshed with the writing to allow students with various resources more liberty.

**Prompt for Creative Writing:**

For this assignment, consider two of the above readings as creative writing pieces from multilinguals. You will notice other languages than English mixed into the publication. You may decide as you create your creative piece that would you also like to use all of your linguistic resources to express yourself. This expression is welcome. In addition, you are free to

incorporate art, music, video, or any other artistic mode that helps your design. The only requirement is that you must use at least 150 words in your creative writing. Sample genres include: poetry, story, letter, play writing, and song. Following this assignment, our class will hold a public reading, in which students will be asked to show their work in a community setting.

**Public Reading**

Because this assignment often results in meaningful work for students, instructors can offer a public reading or community sharing event as part of the course. Students should be encouraged to share, but allowed to choose a segment from another class writing assignment to read if they feel their creative piece should remain confidential.

Appendix D

**Language Attachment Survey**
**Recruitment Email**

Dear Student,

Hi, my name is Bonnie. I am doing research at the University of Washington about people who speak more than one language. I am writing to ask if you would participate in a 5 to 10-minute survey about your language experiences in English. The research study is about how social connections and human bonding impact language learning. Would you be willing to complete the survey document attached to this email and send it as a reply email attachment to me?

Participation in the study is absolutely voluntary, and if you find a question on the survey that you prefer not to answer, you can skip it. Please see the attached information statement for greater detail before completing the survey.

After analyzing the results of the survey, I will select a small number of interview participants from the results. If you say that you would be interested in being interviewed at the end of the survey, I may write you again to ask you to participate in a forty-five to sixty-minute audio-recorded interview which can take place in person, over the phone, or via Skype.

I hope this message finds you well, and I wish you all the best in your future. I am so very grateful for your participation, and I believe this research could greatly help those teaching and learning English in the future.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Vidrine Isbell

Appendix E

**Language Attachment Survey**
**Detailed Information Statement**

The purpose of this consent is to give you the information you will need to decide whether to be in this survey or not. Participation in this survey is voluntary. This survey is only one part of the overall study. The overall study's purpose is to gather data from students of English about their language abilities and their language learning histories in order to understand how human interaction influences or does not influence learning a language.

After I analyze the survey results, the second part of the study will be on a small group of case study participants who took the survey. Students who volunteer to be interviewed in the survey may be asked to participate in a 45 to 60-minute audio-recorded interview via Skype or in person at a mutually convenient time.

The survey will take about 10 minutes and will ask about your learning experiences. For example, it will ask about your comfort level with expressing emotions in English and about your relationships with people who you only or mostly communicate in English with. Some may feel that these questions invade privacy and therefore may cause stress. If you feel discomfort at any time, you can choose to skip any question if you would prefer not to answer or choose to stop taking the survey. You may refuse to participate or stop at any time without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Your names will only be used by me, the researcher (Bonnie), who is conducting this research. If you choose to include your name in the survey, I will protect privacy by replacing real names with pseudonym in written research reports. Links between the survey results and the names will be destroyed in January of 2026.

Government or university staff sometimes review studies such as this one to make sure they are being done safely and legally. If a review of this study takes place, your records may be examined. The reviewers will protect your privacy. The study records will not be used to put you at legal risk of harm.

If you think you have been injured in any way, contact the investigator right away. She will refer you for treatment.

Please note that no system for protecting confidentiality is completely secure. For example, if you participate in an interview later, your audio recordings and video recordings could be accidentally seen and heard by someone besides the researcher.

Results of this survey may impact the future of language teaching practices and participants may experience more awareness and self-reflection about their own language experiences and identity.

If you have questions, complaints, or concerns about this research study, you may contact the researcher Bonnie Vidrine Isbell at bonniv@uw.edu or phone at 1 985 778-4583. For questions

regarding your rights as a research participant, complaints, or concerns, you may contact the UW Human Subjects Division at hsdinfo@uw.edu or 1 206 543-0098.

Appendix F

## INTERVIEW INFORMED CONSENT FORM

### The Impact of Social Bonding on Language Acquisition

### University of Washington

**For Interviews**
Researchers: Bonnie Vidrine-Isbell

**Researchers' statement**

We are asking you to be in a research study. The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether to be in the study or not. Please read the form carefully. You may ask questions about the purpose of the research, what we would ask you to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear. When we have answered all your questions, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent." We will give you a copy of this form for your records.

### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The overall study's purpose is to gather data from English language learners about their language abilities and their language learning histories in order to understand how human interaction influences or does not influence learning a language.

### STUDY PROCEDURES

You are being asked to participate in a 45 to 60-minute audio-recorded interview via Skype or in person at a mutually convenient time. The interview will ask personal questions about the social relationships and experiences that have influenced your language learning. For example, it will you to remember stories from your life and describe people who have influenced you to learn English. It may ask about the kinds of cultural, social, and emotional elements of language that you learned from social interactions.

### RISKS, STRESS, OR DISCOMFORT

Some may feel that these questions invade privacy and therefore may cause stress. If you feel discomfort at any time, you can choose to skip any question if you would prefer not to answer or choose to stop the interview. You may refuse to participate or stop at any time without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

### CONFIDENTIALITY OF RESEARCH INFORMATION

Your names will only be used by me, the researcher, who is conducting this research, and I will protect privacy by replacing real names with pseudonyms in written research reports. Links between the pseudonyms and actual names will be destroyed in January of 2026.

Government or university staff sometimes review studies such as this one to make sure they are being done safely and legally. If a review of this study takes place, your records may be examined. The reviewers will protect your privacy. The study records will not be used to put you at legal risk of harm.

If you feel you have been injured in any way, contact the investigator right away. She will refer you for treatment.

Please note that no system for protecting confidentiality is completely secure. For example, your audio recordings could be accidentally heard by someone besides the researcher.

## BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

Results of this study may impact the future of language teaching practices and participants may experience more awareness and self-reflection about their own language experiences and identity.

If you have questions, complaints, or concerns about this research study, you may contact the researcher Bonnie Vidrine Isbell at bonniv@uw.edu or phone at 1 985 778-4583. For questions regarding your rights as a research participant, complaints, or concerns, you may contact the UW Human Subjects Division at hsdinfo@uw.edu or 1 206 543-0098.

Subject's statement

This study has been explained to me. I volunteer to take part in this research. I have had a chance to ask questions. If I have questions later about the research, or if I have been harmed by participating in this study, I can contact one of the researchers listed on the first page of this consent form. If I have questions about my rights as a research subject, I can call the Human Subjects Division at (206) 543-0098. I will receive a copy of this consent form.

| Printed name of subject | Signature of subject | Date |
|---|---|---|

Copies to: Researcher
Subject