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Personal Essay

My research paper, “New Foundations: Emotional Acculturation of Ethnic Chinese Abroad”, was written as a Term Paper for Honors 211/Slavic 426. In this course, I was tasked with writing a research paper about a topic of my choosing. I immediately went to my roots and decided to write about Chinese culture as it relates to me; originally, I decided to study Canadian-Chinese emotions. Unfortunately as I started to scour scholarly journals, using UW libraries’ search engine and Google Scholar, and public websites, using China’s Baidu and Google.ca, I found little substantive work on the Canadian-Chinese experience of emotion besides scattered research conducted at Canadian universities and Global Affairs Canada’s webpage on China. I varied my search terms and found more information which lacked credibility and rigor. After further consultation with Professor Dziwirek, I decided to pursue Anna Pavlenko’s work on emotions and bilingualism. Early in the quarter, I conducted a literature review of her works focusing on Chinese culture. From there, I pursued articles she had cited and those which cited her at a later date. This allowed me to broaden my understanding of research into Chinese culture and emotions over time¹. At this point, I reworked the scope of project into a broader topic, the ethnic Chinese emotion abroad. With this in mind, I began keeping a bibliography of the sources I consulted for the term paper specifically.

¹ Much of the work done up to this time was done for both smaller research papers and the term paper.

In order to maintain a rigorous and academic feel to my paper, I started consulting UW Libraries' Research guides for Slavic Studies and Linguistics. I found the latter more useful. Using the recommended databases, [Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts](#), [MLA International Bibliography](#), and [Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics](#), I came across a great breadth of literature on emotions at the intersections of different cultures. When I took a step back, I found that it would be worth restructuring my project once again to incorporate all this new information. While maintaining a focus on the Chinese expatriate experience of emotion, I decided to start my paper with a broad focus on the elements which contribute to the Chinese experience. In particular, I utilized research on many diverse cultures when introducing Language Priority and Emotional Acculturation before applying principles in these fields in general to Chinese expatriates.

When I finally sat down to write the paper, I laid out my articles from my notes and started to structure my paper. Since I had collected many resources about communities' experience of emotion at the intersection of two cultures, I started with a conversation on the general ideas circulating in the discipline. Utilizing a combination of journals, books, and public writing, I laid out both language priority and emotional acculturation research. Furthermore, I utilized resources which provided more basic overviews first; then, I introduced complications to those ideas by incorporating elements of later/more advanced material in the scholarly conversation. Finally, I shifted to Chinese-specific resources in order to synthesize my argument that Chinese expatriates' experience of emotion is dynamically formed through acculturation to new cultures; language is a main operator of acculturation. I used research by splitting the focus into different generations of Chinese expatriates

and analyzed research papers in two parts. This allowed me to come back to the topic as a whole and propose that the Chinese expatriate experience of emotion is indeed a dynamic occurrence as opposed to some static event.

Research Methodology

In this section, I will expand further on the way in which I conducted my research. Having never written a Linguistics paper, I went to the UW Libraries research guides based on my Teaching Assistant's recommendation. I started using the recommended databases. I found [Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts](#), [MLA International Bibliography](#) to be especially helpful as their search engine produced particularly relevant articles. I wanted to ensure that my search results were not limited to only the Linguistics discipline; so, I also conducted similar searches through the UW Libraries' search engine. All the while, I kept a physical set of notes documenting useful ideas and brief summaries of scholarly works I found useful. In the same journal, I kept a list of search words and combinations of said words. After consultation with Cassandra Hartnett, I started utilizing search engine operators (AND, OR, etc). In order to keep my paper relevant, I filtered most material so that it was relatively recent for my field of study (post 1970). Overall, I found that the UW Libraries' search engine was more effective than linguistics-specific databases. It also allowed me to discover survey literature in my field when I went to the Library shelves and looked at books with similar call number to the ones I found online. During the course of composing my paper, I ventured into using resources outside of UW Libraries for the first time. It seemed appropriate that research into people used more publicly orientated writing. Since my topic was international, I thought it useful to use both a Chinese search engine and Google. In doing so, I

found and utilized several sites (blogs and News Sites) written for the general public in order to provide clear and attainable definitions of quite academic concepts.

Incorporating these types of sources made me re-evaluate how to properly vet my resources. In particular, I had to conduct extra research on the authors in order to ensure their accuracy. For example for Psychology Today, I researched the author of one article and found that he was a linguist professor emeritus at a French university. This ensured that while his article was written for the public, it would still be accurate within the discipline. Furthermore, I sourced a news article from China Daily which I trusted since it is a widely published English-language newspaper in China and abroad. During this project, my academic resources were also strongly vetted. Using Google Scholar, I checked the number of times articles had been cited in academia to ensure validity.