Chapter 6
Design and Opportunity in Critical Multilingual/Multimodal Composing Pedagogy

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Abstract This chapter analyzes the affordances of critical multilingual/multimodal composing pedagogy for fifth-grade Chinese–English dual immersion students in the USA. Based on a year-long ethnographic study of one teacher's practice and her students' multilingual/multimodal compositions, we highlight two findings: (1) this pedagogy afforded students a more dynamic text production process and (2) it expanded the range of meanings and identities they constructed and enacted during literacy instruction. As a result, students produced robust compositions that demonstrated their development of a wide range of semiotic forms beyond language. We conclude by offering recommendations for readers interested in transforming L2 literacy instruction using this approach.

Keywords Bilingual education · Biliteracy development · Dual language immersion · Identity · Social semiotics

6.1 Introduction

就是一個填空式的寫作!這樣才可以寫得完…連填空式的可能要三天，三天才寫得完。汉錯!

> [I'll do fill-in-the-blanks so that we can finish [the unit] on time… But even fill-in-the-blanks might take three days for students to complete. Yep, that's right! It takes three days to finish writing like that.] (translated in English)
>
> - "Hu Fei," fifth grade teacher in a Chinese/English dual immersion program

Writing instruction in immersive language classrooms tends to be heavily focused on students' production of "page-bound, official, standard forms of the national language" (New London Group 1996, p. 61). Even in bilingual classrooms, students

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tend to be rewarded for textual production in a single target language at a time, rather than for engaging in a meaning-making process that effectively draws on all available communicative resources (García 2009).[1] In the current era of account-ability, this focus on teaching students to write specific standardized forms in a single target language has collided with increasingly strict curriculum pacing guides and increasingly narrow criteria for demonstrating learning outcomes (Flores and Schissel 2014). As a result, many language teachers feel pressured to use writing assignments that measure little more than students' ability to "correctly" reproduce standardized written language forms in the target language in a short amount of time. This trend is illustrated in the quote above, from fifth-grade Chinese immer-sion teacher Hu Fei (henceforth Hu Laoshi, or "Teacher Hu," as her students called her) during a curriculum planning meeting. To meet the demands of form-focused literacy teaching expectations, monolingual ideologies, time pressures, and a culture of accountability, Hu Laoshi settled on what felt like a safe choice for the culminating activity of her Chinese literacy unit: a fill-in-the-blank writing assignment.

However, L2 literacy scholars have cautioned that decontextualized writing curriculum, instruction, and assessment can constrain students' language learning rather than supporting it (e.g., Gebhard 2019; Yi et al. 2020). These and other scholars argue that language use in the real world is social, dynamic, multimodal, and often multilingual or multidialectal; it involves much more than correctly filling in a blank in an interaction. Therefore, literacy instruction must account for the interrelation of languages, cultures, learners' identities, and the variety of communicative modes in different environments (Cope and Kalantzis 2015; New London Group 1996). Moreover, these scholars argue that L2 literacy instruction may be more effective if it prioritizes learner agency over correct textual production.

In response to these limitations of form-focused literacy pedagogy, a growing number of L2 literacy scholars have been advocating for a critical *multilin-gual/multimodal composing pedagogy* (Bezemer and Kress 2016; Cope and Kalantzis 2015). Such pedagogy considers that language is one mode of communi-cation, so *multimodal* implies language and at least one other mode, while *multilin-gual* implies multiple languages in conjunction with other modes of communication (Jewitt 2008). The essential premise of this aspect of the pedagogy is that by weaving together multiple forms of content such as oral, written, and computer-mediated language(s), video and/or voice recordings, graphics, photographs, drawings, music, and tactile representations, students can create richer meanings than a single language or mode may allow for on its own. Moreover, research demonstrates that as learners negotiate multiple communicative modes, including multiple languages, they have opportunities to enact a wider range of identities (e.g., Norton and Toohey 2011). Further, this pedagogy is *critical* in that its goal is not only to teach L2 learners to comprehend and use multiple languages in conjunction with other modes but also to effectively engage with "student values, identity, power, and design" (Jewitt 2008, p. 245). This approach to L2 literacy instruction aims to empower learners to develop

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[1]For more on the ways, dominant monolingual ideologies have shaped the teaching and learning of world languages, see Achugar (2008) and Canagarajah (2006).

contextualized knowledge and meaningfully interpret, analyze, critique, and produce texts where they are entitled to bring all their cultural experiences and identities to bear as well as integrate all their semiotic resources.

However, as this pedagogical approach is relatively new, scholars are still working to understand what specific affordances and constraints it presents in unique contexts of teaching and learning. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to analyze what opportunities critical multilingual/multimodal composing pedagogy afforded one class of fifth-grade Chinese–English dual immersion students in terms of their meaning-making process, identity construction, and textual production. Specifically, we explore:

1. How does Hu Laoshi's use of critical multilingual/multimodal composing pedagogy influence bilingual students' process of text production?
2. What meanings and identities do bilingual students construct as they engage in this pedagogy?

6.2 Conceptual Framework

6.2.1 Decentering Language, Even in a Theory of Language Learning

As we alluded to in the introduction, this chapter understands language learning and its use as a social, dynamic, multimodal, and often multilingual or multidialectal process. In dual-language classrooms, in particular, language learning and use involve the complex interrelation of languages, cultures, learners' identities, and a variety of communicative modes. Yet the behavioral and psycholinguistic theories of language that have dominated language pedagogy for decades do not well account for the relationship between language and identity, language and power, or the interplay between language and other semiotic systems such as gestures and images (Gebhard 2019). These language and language-learning paradigms have focused so exclusively on linguistic forms that they leave teachers ill-equipped to recognize, value, and take on these other very important factors in language teaching and learning. In response to these limitations, critical multilingual/multimodal composing pedagogy draws on social positioning theory and social semiotic theory to decenter language—even in language teaching—to broaden teachers' understanding of language and language learning to include the relationship between language, power, identity, meaning, and meaning-making.

6.2.2 Social Positioning Theory: Understanding Power and Identity in L2 Literacy Learning

Social positioning refers to the process of negotiating different identities, discourses, and power dynamics across contexts and language varieties (e.g., Davies and Harré 1990). From this perspective, identity is not singular or static, just as literacy practices are not singular or static. Rather, a person's identities and literacy practices are both multiple and dynamic, constructed across time, space, and communities as a person accepts, resists, or struggles with different social positions. Social positioning is agentive and individual as learners make sense of themselves and what literacy means in different contexts. Yet it is also heavily dependent on others and the ways they take up, reject, or otherwise interact with an individual in a particular situation.

In L2 scholarship, social positioning theory shifts attention from the product of literacy instruction to the learning process, providing a basis for examining the tensions, struggles, and disconnections in identity that L2 learners experience as they engage in situated literacy practices (e.g., Lin 2008; Norton 2006). This shift can support teachers and researchers in identifying critical teachable moments that support learners in developing shared ways of knowing, thinking, believing, acting, and communicating to interact with each other, engage in cultural practices, and participate in discourse communities (Gee 2001). In other words, understanding learners' dynamic identities alongside their literacy practices can shape teaching and learning in ways that better support learners in becoming long term, participating members of multilingual discourse communities. By decentering language, social positioning theory can help teachers understand the complex identity work taking place through language. Thus, it offers teachers a framework for seeing the language classroom as space where students are not one thing or another thing (e.g., monolingual or bilingual, beginner, or fluent) but are in the process of becoming part of a wider range of discourse communities.

6.2.3 Social Semiotic Theory: Understanding L2 Literacy as Weaving Together Multiple Modes of Communication

The social semiotic theory maintains that while language is one way people construct social identities and represent their content knowledge, it is not the only way they do that (Halliday and Hasan 2012). Rather, people make these kinds of meanings *multimodally* by weaving together a variety of modes such as textual, audio, visual, tactile, and spatial into coherent multidimensional texts (New London Group 1996). Importantly, from this perspective, texts are "multimodal semiotic entities" (Kress 2011, p. 36), not just alphabetic written products. Therefore, writing is not the only, or even most important, semiotic work that takes place in the literacy classroom (Cope

et al. 2018). This theory, when applied to L2 literacy education, shifts the focus toward processes of multilingual and multimodal composition and text production.

This is not to say that all modes are equal or are equally valued in schools. Different modes have different meaning-making potentials in different contexts, depending on where a person is, how they use different modes, and in what ways institutions acknowledge them (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006). Further, every mode conveys different meanings depending on whether it is used alone or assembled with other modes. Building relations between different modes such as image, written text, and audio can produce a rhetorical effect to extend, elaborate, or/and enhance meanings (e.g., Kress 2011). Thus, while people create the same kinds of meanings using different modes (e.g., representing ideas, constructing and maintaining social roles), they are not simply repeating the same meanings using different modes. People construct new meanings by assembling different configurations of multimodal resources. Therefore, from a social semiotic perspective, L2 literacy can be understood as a multilingual/multimodal process in which a learner assembles a text through a process of using various semiotic resources to "establish cohesion both internally, among the elements of the text, and externally, with elements of the environment in which texts occur" (Kress 2011, p. 36). Social semiotic theory decenters language by considering it one of many semiotic systems, which can help widen teachers' view of the meaning-making options available in a given situation, culture, and historical moment.

Critical multilingual/multimodal composing pedagogy draws on the concepts of social positioning and multimodality to support teachers in designing and implementing instruction that supports students' multimodal meaning-making, not just language teaching. In the following sections, we present ethnographic data showing how Hu Laoshi took up these concepts in designing Chinese literacy curriculum for one class of dual-language fifth graders and how her students interacted with this pedagogy.

6.3 Methods

Over the course of one academic year (2016–2017), we used critical ethnographic case study methods to explore processes of L2 literacy teaching and learning in Hu Laoshi's fifth-grade classroom (Carspecken 1996). Conventionally, ethnographic methods aim to describe "what is" while leaving the environment under study undisturbed. Critical ethnography differs in that the researcher joins their participant(s) to explore *why* something is and take actions to change it (Carspecken 1996). In this study, Marsha, a Taiwanese Chinese–English speaking biliteracy scholar and first author of this chapter, was the primary researcher. She took an active observer role in Hu Laoshi's classroom, co-planning curriculum, collecting data, and conducting interviews with both Hu Laoshi and her students. Kathryn, a white, predominantly English-speaking L2 literacy researcher from the USA and second author of this

chapter served as a "critical partner" for data analysis and interpretation (Young 1999).

6.3.1 School and Classroom Context

This study took place at the "New England Chinese-English Bilingual School" (NECEBS), a K-12 public charter school in Massachusetts, USA. NECEBS followed a one-way immersion model, also known as an additive bilingual model (García 2009). Students learned basic interpersonal communication as well as academic content in Mandarin Chinese (普通话), the standard language used in China. Students also received academic instruction in English but in separate classes. Ultimately, the goal at NECEBS was for students to develop academic fluency and mastery of two languages. Most instruction at NECEBS was anchored in the Common Core State Standards, with the exception of Chinese literacy instruction. There are no national Chinese literacy standards; therefore, the Chinese curriculum was organized by theme, with each themed curricular unit lasting approximately 4–8 weeks.

At the time of this study, Hu Laoshi, a dual-certified Chinese language and elementary teacher from Taiwan, was the fifth-grade Chinese literacy teacher. She was beginning her fifth-year teaching at NECEBS. Her class consisted of 19 students, 11 girls and 8 boys. All students identified English as their primary home language, though one student was learning Chinese as a heritage language and had some exposure to Chinese in her home. When these students reached Hu Laoshi's classroom, they already had 3–5 years of experience studying Chinese. Nearly all students reported feeling comfortable speaking in Chinese, though only one in five felt comfortable reading and writing in Chinese. Hu Laoshi was interested in designing a Chinese literacy curriculum that was more motivating for her students and better aligned with topics they were covering in their other classes. Therefore, she invited Marsha to collaborate with her to redesign her literacy curriculum to be more interdisciplinary and engaging.

6.3.2 Focal Student

In this chapter, we focus on how one focal fifth-grade student, "Mei-mei," interacted with the redesigned literacy curriculum. Mei-mei had been a student at NECEBS since Kindergarten and was considered by most teachers to be a "strong student" with English literacy skills that typically exceeded expectations. She was born in the USA to a European American father and a half European American mother. Although her grandmother is Taiwanese, Mei-mei neither considered herself a heritage language learner nor did she view Chinese as a necessary language for her everyday communication at home and school. She simply reported that she wanted to master the language so she could communicate with her grandmother. Mei-mei was quite familiar with

technology and preferred to do assignments in Hu Laoshi's class on the computer. We selected Mei-mei as the focal student for this chapter because despite her keen interest in technology, strong English literacy skills, and motivation to learn Chinese, her L2 literacy development was progressing more slowly than she wanted, a feeling common among many L2 learners (Kramsch 2009).

6.3.3 Curricular Context

Together, Hu Laoshi and Marsha (the first author) planned four curricular units that combined Chinese literacy goals with social studies content standards around the topic of state history. Each unit lasted 6–8 weeks and was implemented between September 2016 and May 2017. As they collaborated, Marsha introduced Hu Laoshi to the concepts of social positioning and multimodality and prompted her to consider their implications for designing literacy activities. This chapter focuses on the second of these four codesigned curricular units, which tackled the "History of Massachusetts." The unit lasted from November 2016 to February 2017.

As Fig. 6.1 illustrates, Hu Laoshi attempted to integrate Chinese literacy goals with content relevant to students' other disciplinary experiences in this curricular unit, while also enacting pedagogical principles from social positioning theory and social semiotics. Throughout the unit, students engaged in experiences where they tried to learn about and assume multiple perspectives of people in Massachusetts history, for example through field trips to historic villages, or reading and writing different historical accounts. As a culminating project, students were asked to compose and produce a video that presented multiple perspectives on some aspect of Massachusetts history
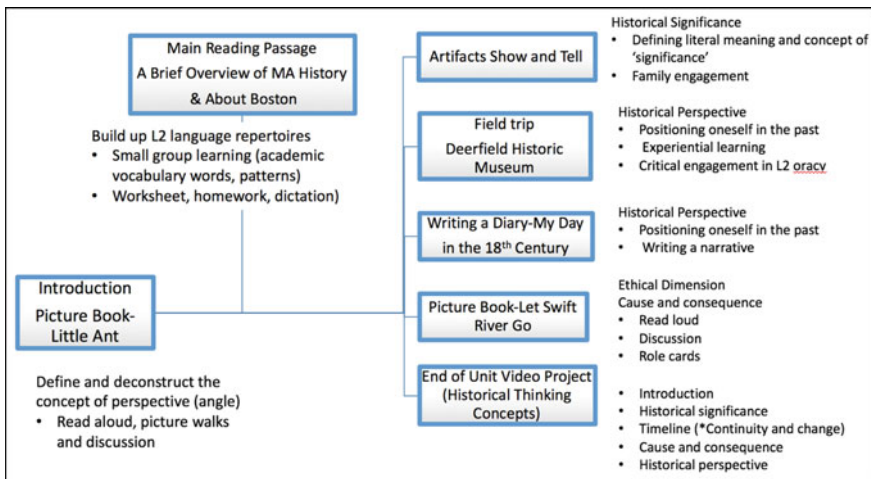

Fig. 6.1 "History of Massachusetts" curricular unit outline

through text, images, and voice for an audience of teachers and peers. The videos were produced on iPads using an app called Explain Everything, which allowed students to combine media, image, text, and voice recordings. Students particularly loved the interactive whiteboard function of Explain Everything, where they could record live audio while simultaneously interacting with objects on the screen. For example, they could simultaneously speak, write, draw, highlight, annotate, search the Internet, create animation, or take photos.

In composing their videos, Hu Laoshi intended students to use Chinese disciplinary language associated with the subject of social studies as well as with expressing stances on historical events. Students were allowed to choose their own topics focusing on people, places, objects, events, or even sports. They were allowed to conduct research on that topic in whatever language they chose, but Hu Laoshi expected students to write and narrate their final video in Chinese. Students who chose the same topic were encouraged to work together during research and composition, but each student ultimately produced their own individual video. In addition to the multimodal resources available in the app, students drew on a variety of other semiotic resources available in the classroom, including Chinese resources curated by Hu Laoshi such as assigned texts and sentence frames, digital technologies such as online dictionaries, web resources that provided information and images related to their various topics, and interactions with their peers.

6.4   Data Collection and Analysis

Marsha observed Hu Laoshi's class two to three times a week during the Massachusetts History curricular unit, for approximately three hours for each visit to make a thick description of students' composing and social positioning processes and to collect the videos they composed. During these visits, she generated participant-observation field notes and analytical memos, audio and video recorded classroom interactions, collected curricular materials, and samples of student work. In addition, she conducted 30-minute pre- and post-unit interviews with students in small groups. Interviews were conducted bilingually. Since Marsha is bilingual and biliterate in Chinese and English and has spent substantial time in bilingual Chinese–English classrooms in New England, she used her knowledge of the language, context, and participants to translate all Chinese data into English, checking translations with two other Chinese–English bilingual professionals.[2] Because of the multimodal nature of classroom artifacts collected during this unit, images were also transcribed for data analysis (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006).

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[2]Author 1 translated all classroom texts for meaning instead of word by word, following Marshall and Rossman's (2011, p. 165) assertion that the essence of translation is to produce "insightful and meaningful data." However, we recognize the risks in remaking meanings by translating classroom artifacts for the purpose of reaching academic audiences (e.g., Birbili, 2000). To mitigate these risks, translations were reviewed by two bilingual education professionals, followed by member checks with Hu Laoshi and/or the bilingual student authors themselves..

Qualitative analysis of the data began with a grounded approach to opening the data and building initial themes (Charmaz 2014). Initial themes included students' use of prior knowledge, identity construction, L1 skill transfer, uses of technology, meaning-making processes, textual practices, alternative perspectives, and sense of social issues. Then, drawing on the analytical frameworks of social semiotics and social positioning, we coded the data for modes, intermodal relations, identity negotiation, and exploration of power dynamics. Finally, we performed multimodal discourse analysis on the students' videos to understand the ultimate selections they made in using different modes to construct knowledge and identities (e.g., Bezemer and Kress 2016). These complementary analytical approaches allowed us to triangulate and nuance our findings regarding processes of multilingual/multimodal meaning-making and dynamic identity negotiation in the bilingual classroom and provided the means for "making visible" semiotic work that may otherwise have gone unnoticed or been taken for granted (Bezemer and Kress 2016, p. 38).

6.5 Findings: Affordances of Multilingual/Multimodal Composing Pedagogy

Based on grounded analysis of interview and observation data combined with multi-modal discourse analysis of student texts, we highlight two main affordances of multilingual/multimodal composing pedagogy as implemented by Hu Laoshi: (1) it supported a more dynamic text production process in which L2 Chinese learners were able to draw on a wider range of semiotic resources and experiences to make meaning and (2) this more dynamic process afforded students opportunities to construct and enact a wider range of meanings and identities in academic spaces.

6.5.1 Dynamic Composing Focused on Ideas Rather Than Forms

Hu Laoshi's implementation of critical multilingual/multimodal composing peda-gogy afforded L2 Chinese learners opportunities to focus on their ideas first and language forms second as they worked to produce their final videos. In Mei-mei's case, she shifted from a monolingual recall process to a dynamic, iterative, multilin-gual process of identifying and writing down her ideas, and then constructing them for an audience using multiple modes. In form-focused Chinese literacy lessons, Mei-mei struggled to remember and produce Chinese words her teacher had empha-sized in prior lessons. Even when she successfully produced the target language, she reported feeling limited in her ability to express her true ideas on a topic and questioned whether that was even the point of literacy instruction. She shared, "I feel a little limited in [assignments that only ask me for] Chinese because I don't
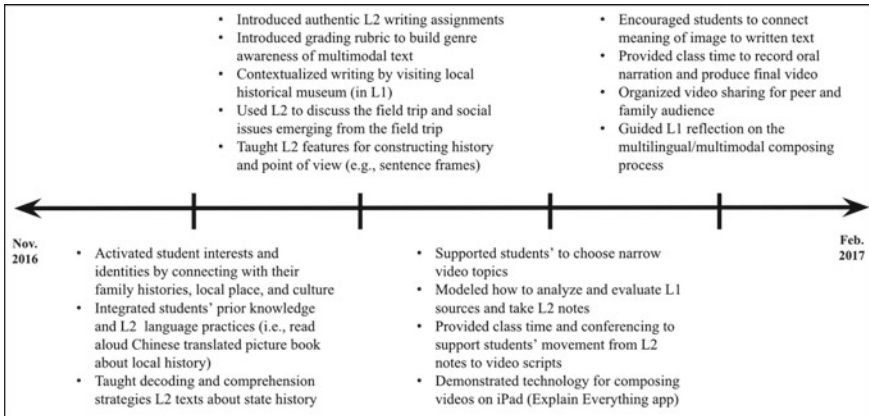
Fig. 6.2 Hu Laoshi's Scaffolding of a dynamic text production process (field notes, Nov. 2016–Feb. 2017)

know as much Chinese as English." Much L2 literacy scholarship has documented similar feelings of limitation in form-focused literacy instruction (e.g., Schissel 2019; Steinman 2002). In form-focused instruction, L2 learners often perceive that they are to provide the exact word, phrase, or sentence structure the teacher desires. They do not feel free or able to construct their own ideas or fill-in-the-blank with any effective word or phrase. As Mei-mei expresses, this constraining notion of linguistic competence as producing the "correct" word is at odds with the expansiveness of her thoughts.

In contrast, our analysis demonstrates how critical multilingual/multimodal composing pedagogy afforded Mei-mei classroom space to work out a much more dynamic text production process in which she was able to draw on her full semiotic repertoire to construct her own ideas about the content being covered and tailor the way she shared her ideas using sophisticated knowledge of her audience (see Fig. 6.2). In her post-unit interview, Mei-mei described how her composing process in this unit differed from her experience with more form-focused literacy pedagogy. She reported:

> Thinking in two languages is helpful. When I have ideas in English and then I want to write in Chinese, I feel I have more I can do it because I have an idea in English. It's more difficult than other [assignments], but when I have my own ideas it's probably more advanced. I was doing a lot of research in English and then translate it into Chinese from English… and that was a little difficult because sometimes there are things that you have to change a little bit. I would read something in English and I would change it to be more kid friendly in English and then I would translate to Chinese. That way, I'd be writing something down that I actually understood rather than something I read somewhere else… [My goal] is definitely to think of a kid friendly idea when I have my own ideas…but it's hard to translate [all of my ideas] into Chinese because some of the words I don't know in English.

Along with Fig. 6.2, this interview excerpt illustrates how Mei-mei's composing process was much more dynamic than simply recalling and regurgitating a desired

language form. Mei-mei describes thinking and conducting research in English, translating her thoughts into Chinese, revising her written English drafts into "kid friendly" oral language, translating the text again, adjusting translations "a little bit" to be right for the context. During this process, Mei-mei was constantly making analytical decisions about what modes to use, and further, what language to use as she learned new information, integrated it into her existing knowledge, developed insights, and considered her audience. Using two languages in a way that felt fluid and productive to her allowed Mei-mei to develop her ideas and produce an extended written text for her teacher and peers in her L2 Chinese. Further, this pedagogy provided opportunities for her to draw on digital tools as part of her meaning-making process. Mei-mei reported, "When I work digitally, I have more resources that I can use…[Plus] I'm good at using iPads. And my dad is a software developer, so I know a lot how to use these things."

However, Mei-mei noted that the linguistic part of this process was not always easy and that she felt a tension between producing "proper" Chinese words and sentences to represent her own ideas. This tension meant that the multilingual/multimodal project was more challenging for her than simple cloze activities, even as it allowed her to produce more extended Chinese writing by drawing on her prior experience expressing advanced ideas in oral and written English. In the focal unit, where content and ideas were meant to be the starting point for composition, Mei-mei felt worried that her Chinese syntax and vocabulary choices may be incorrect. On the other hand, in prior units where populating specific syntactic structures was the starting point for composition, Mei-mei worried that her complex ideas were being reduced into overly simple sentences, coming across as childlike, even for a 10-year old.

From an instructional standpoint, this finding is important because it demonstrates the possibilities of a literacy pedagogy that more closely approximates the dynamic and social nature of meaning-making, where ideas give rise to semiotic processes and forms (e.g., Kress 2011). As Kress would argue, meaning is important, ideas are not fixed, and learners should be able to take advantage of more ways to mean.

6.5.2 Multimodal Assembling Supports Resourceful Meaning-Making and Dynamic Identity Construction

As L2 Chinese learners engaged in a more dynamic multilingual/multimodal composing process, we found that they also constructed a wider range of meanings and identities in the literacy classroom. In addition, they were more agentive than during strictly form-focused instruction. The data suggest these were positive responses to the way the pedagogy positioned students as much more than L2 writers; it acknowledged their social worlds, multiple identities, and agency in the classroom. Further, Hu Laoshi acknowledged multiple communicative modes as complementary, related, and legitimate for engaging in literacy instruction, and students were

encouraged to weave together different semiotic resources to make a coherent final product.

Students responded productively to these affordances. In Mei-mei's case, as she composed, produced, and presented the video shown in Appendix A, she was not just a Chinese writer, but a critical thinker, a designer of meanings, an oral narrator, *and* an L2 writer. Multimodally, Mei-mei positioned herself as a knowledgeable person regarding local history, a fluent orator of written Chinese, an opinionated/emotive person sharing an impassioned response to historical events she found outrageous and out-of-line with her developing sense of culture and ethics, and a child trying to use her experience to speculate about why something beyond her comprehension might have happened (i.e., an analyst of historical causes/effects). As Kress (2017, p. 47) puts it, she was a "designer and rhetor" who assembled modes and languages to deliver content messages, and at the same time, messages about who she was relative to that content and to the languages she was composing in.

We illustrate how Mei-mei constructed a cohesive ensemble of modes to shape these meanings through a detailed analysis of one frame of her video, Frame 4 from Appendix A. Following Kress (2011), we show how Mei-mei resourcefully used color, writing, layout, images, and audio (Appendix B). Frame 4 is entirely black and white, a choice that established the emotional tone of the frame. Because we live in a naturally colorful world, Mei-mei's choice of black and white as a color scheme here constructs a degree of removal from reality, establishing her stance on the events she reported as being "unreal" or outrageous (Accurso et al. 2019). In addition, she layered quite dark images, constructing her point-of-view that the Salem witch trials represented a dark time in Massachusetts history. On top of these images, Mei-mei layered written text, also in the color black. She positioned this text at the top center of the frame, sending the message that these written words are the primary meaning makers in the frame while the image is there for emphasis and extension of the ideas and tone constructed through the written words.

Mei-mei constructed concrete information and events through her use of action verbs (e.g., *killed*, *arrested*) and named participants (e.g., *many innocent people*). When we consider the range of choices available to Mei-mei for constructing this information, we can see that her word choices also reveal her stance toward the information (e.g., Halliday and Hasan 2012). For example, Mei-mei constructed Abigail and Betty as *innocent people* rather than *convicted witches* and described the outcome of the witch trials as people being *killed*, a more charged term than, for example, *died.* Mei-mei's use of passive voice reinforces this meaning. In Chinese, passive voice tends to imply imbalanced power relations, reflecting Mei-mei's awareness of a social hierarchy and its impact on the trials. However, Mei-mei did not simply note this imbalance. She positioned herself relative to it. For instance, she included hedges to avoid judging the accused women (e.g., *we don't know why…but*) and she used the third person to create distance between herself and the dominating opinion of the time (e.g., *many people think…*).

Mei-mei's choice of images emphasizes and extends the meanings she made through writing. In Frame 4, she layers two images, the front page of a newspaper and

a drawing of a courtroom scene. The typical purpose of a newspaper is to report information about events, which reflects one of Mei-mei's primary purposes in composing this video. Likewise, the drawing presents information about the topic of the video but it also constructs a point of view by presenting those events from a certain perspective. For example, in the drawing, the characters are not looking at or engaging the viewer, suggesting they are simply offering information about *this history* Mei-mei constructed with written words (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006). The relative position of these characters to one another extends Mei-mei's meaning regarding unequal power dynamics—the accused are shown lower in the frame relative to the judges.

While Mei-mei's color, writing, layout, and image choices construct her relationship to the social studies content she is constructing, her audio and video choices construct her relationship to her audience and the local context in which she is composing and presenting. With the audio, Mei-mei constructs herself as a fluent Chinese reader and user. In her recorded narration, she read the written Chinese text aloud with a calm and clear voice and at an appropriate speed. In addition, Hu Laoshi noted that Mei-mei more than met prosody expectations; she followed the text exactly and was "smooth and natural," meaning she was familiar with the written Chinese characters, sentence structures, and content in her video. Mei-mei managed the rhythm, linguistic tones, and intonation precisely and paused in meaningful places, which supported her audience's understanding of the written and spoken Chinese (Eggins and Slade 1997). Further, because she knew her peer audience had varying levels of Chinese reading and listening skills, she supported their meaning-making experience by including a visual pointer in the video (☝)so they could read along as they listened to her narration.

Though her final video included only Chinese, Mei-mei constructed a biliterate identity through the composing process, meaning she positioned herself as a competent user of two languages in her local language community—the L2 literacy classroom. This was important to Mei-mei in the context of her dual immersion school, and though she was proud to already be recognized among teachers and peers as highly literate in English, she did not feel she had been as successful before in being seen as literate in Chinese. Reflecting on her video after the unit, Mei-mei commented, "I think it was pretty good … each time I read through it, I still learn things that I didn't know before—because sometimes you immediately translate some things… so I'm pretty impressed with it." Evidently, she was quite satisfied with her video, flexible use of two languages, and Chinese writing.

As Mei-mei's interview excerpts here and in the previous section demonstrate, she was aware that this pedagogy demanded different things of her as a thinker, language user, and meaning maker than other literacy pedagogies she had experienced. Her interviews and final video show that she responded to the affordances of this pedagogy by agentively framing herself not just as a rote voicer of facts, but going deeper to form an opinion on historical events and how they affected her to communicate these ideas in her L2 in ways that were effective within her local language community. While social positioning theory maintains that students' identities are always multiple and in process (e.g., Norton and Toohey 2011), this finding makes clear that one strength of multilingual/multimodal composing pedagogy is the way it activates

and supports such multiplicity rather than constraining students' literacy practices to narrower notions of what L2 literacy looks like in official classroom spaces (e.g., producing predetermined language forms). Additionally, as Mei-mei's video illustrates, a pedagogy where students are encouraged to generate meanings and semiotic forms by engaging all their identities can ultimately result in L2 writing of the same or greater complexity as cloze activities (Bezemer and Kress 2016). Liaw (2019) offers a detailed account of linguistic complexity in bilingual students' videos, including Mei-mei's.

In sum, our analysis of Mei-mei's multimodal assemblage warrants the claim that individual modes have meaning-making limitations but can be combined to achieve "intensity, framing, foregrounding, highlighting, coherence and cohesion"(Kress 2017, p. 46). Moreover, this analysis demonstrates Mei-mei's remarkable resourcefulness in circumventing what she viewed as the constraint of her own Chinese writing proficiency. Using the affordances of critical multilingual/multimodal composing pedagogy, she made rich meanings by assembling modes and drawing on both her English and Chinese proficiencies. As Bezemer and Kress (2016, p. 131) described it, Mei-mei's video showcases creativity and innovation in "finding apt signifiers, distributing meaning over the available modes, exploiting the distinct potentialities of each, and demonstrating sensitivity to [her] social and material environment." This pedagogy presented Mei-mei with an opportunity to "make visible" (p. 5) knowledge and identities that were previously invisible or unavailable in Chinese literacy instruction that was strictly form-focused and textual.

6.6   Implications: Reframing "Literacy" to Privilege the Process, Not just the Product

Though this chapter presented Mei-mei's case as a way of illustrating our findings, in the larger study, these trends bore out in the experiences and compositions of other learners, as well (Liaw 2019). Thus, this chapter is meant to represent the affordances critical multilingual/multimodal composing pedagogy held not only for Mei-mei, but potentially for all teachers and students responding to the demands of new standards that aim to support multilingual competence within "local and global communities," including in schools (e.g., ACTFL *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages*).

Therefore, based on these findings, we recommend that L2 teachers and literacy researchers who wish to take up critical multilingual/multimodal composing pedagogy shift their thinking to privilege the composing process, not just the product. What we are suggesting is different from the well-known "process approaches" to writing used in monolingual classrooms for English text production (e.g., Lucy Calkins' *Writers Workshop*). Rather, we first propose teachers do some reframing within their own minds: reframing the notion of *language* to see it as a construction of knowledge and identity rather than a set of forms, reframing *literacy* as semiotic

work beyond strictly "pen and paper," and reframing *composing* to see it as a process of multimodal assemblage. Second, we recommend enacting these process-oriented understandings of language, literacy, and composing through a teaching and learning cycle where teachers:

- Plan for robust compositions that meet their learning goals
- Create instructional space for students to engage with and be supported in using multiple languages and modes to learn, contextualize, and communicate new content knowledge
- Recognize and reward students' creative and critical uses of multiple modes to construct meanings and identities throughout the composition process
- Analyze students' final compositions to reflect on their semiotic work and design subsequent literacy instruction.

Through this cycle, teachers may discover that critical pedagogies and multimodal projects lend themselves not only to different learning processes and outcomes than strictly form-focused writing tasks but also to greater student engagement and a wider range of identity activations, too, as Hu Laoshi did. Though the video project described here took much longer than the 3 days Hu Laoshi lamented spending on a unit-ending writing assignment in the quote that opened this chapter, the findings from this study suggest that it was time well spent.
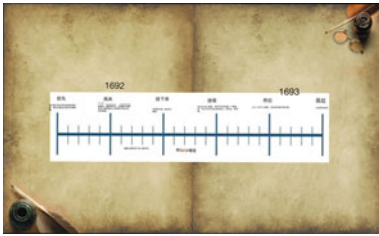
Appendix A

Multilingual/Multimodal Transcription of Mei-mei's Video

Frame	Time	Screenshot	Transcription of Mei-mei's Chinese Narration [English Translation]
1	00:23		说到塞勒姆/,(.) 就一定要提到很恶名招展【昭彰】的女巫审判//(..) [Speaking about Salem, we must mention the notorious Salem witch trial.] 你知道吗↑?(.) 二十个人在女巫审判里被杀死/,(.) 还有(.h)两百多人被控//(..) [Guess what? Twenty witches were killed in the Salem witch trials, and more than 200 people were accused.]

(continued)

(continued)

Frame	Time	Screenshot	Transcription of Mei-mei's Chinese Narration [English Translation]
2	00:23–00:37		女巫审判对塞勒姆的人很有历史意义/,(.) 因为这件事情发生了以后/,(.) 很多的人觉得塞勒姆是一个**不好**的地方//。(..) [The witch trials were historically significant to people in Salem. Why is that? Because after this incident happened, many people think that Salem is a bad place.] {我认为, 在未来, 女巫审判不会一样的重要, 因为只有对麻州的人有意义。} [From my perspective, I don't think the witch trial will be as important in the future because it's only meaningful to people in Massachusetts.]
3	00:38–03:03		首先阿比盖尔和贝蒂开始**做**起奇怪的事//。(.)他们说(.)是因为她们在**被着魔**//。(..) [At first, Abigail and Betty started to do weird things. They said it was because they were bewitched.] (*1692*) 再来(.)提圙【图】芭(.)(**tituba**),(.) 薩【萨】娜奥斯本(.)(sanaaosi ben),(.)和薩娜古德(.)(sanagu de)(.)< 被控 > 因为(他; 因为)塞勒姆的人**觉得**她们是女巫/, 还有(..)被(.)捕(Gu)//。 (1692) [Next, Tituba, Sarah Osborne and Sarah Good were charged because people in Salem think that they are witches and [they are] arrested.] < 薩娜古德 > 和四个别人(.)被杀死//。接下来/< 多罗西古德 > (.)(她四岁/)(.)**被控**//。 (+**两只**)狗(two dog's icon)(+< 也 >)**被控**// < 接 >(.)**着**(.)-**Giles Corey**(.) 被控/,(.h) 但他不会**说**他是一个魔法师,(.) 所以人们方石头在他身上。(。) 两天后,(.) 他**死掉**//。 < 然后 > -< 比十二 > 多个人(.)被控/,但法官说她们是**无辜**//。 **最后**,(.) 女巫**审判结束**//。 [Sarah Good and four others were killed. Next, Dorothy Good, only 4 years old, is accused. Two dogs were accused. Subsequently, Giles Corey was accused, but he would not say he was a wizard so people threw stones at him (coerce him to plead?). Two days later, he died. (1693) Then, more than 12 people were accused, but the judge said they were not guilty. Finally, the witch trials ended.]

(continued)

Frame	Time	Screenshot	Transcription of Mei-mei's Chinese Narration [English Translation]
4	03:04–03:29		这段历史不知道是**为什么开始的**/,(.) 但很多人觉得是(..)因为**阿比盖尔和贝蒂**要(..)有人(.)注意她们//。 [We did not know why this history started, but many people think the reason is that Abigail and Betty wanted people to pay attention to them.] 它的结果是(.h)很多无辜的人(.)被控或(.)< 被捕(bu4) >//。 [The consequence was that many innocent people were killed or arrested.]
5	03:30–04:11		如果我生活在(.)1692-(+到)1693的(.)**塞勒姆**/, 我会很**害怕**/,(.) 因为**很多无辜人被控**/。(..) [If I lived in Salem in 1692–1693, I would be very frightened because many innocent people were accused.] 如果(.)一样的**事情发生在现在**/,(.) 很多人会知道(.)> 不是真的 <//,会停止 > 这一件事情 <//。 如果以前人(.)们**知道女巫不是真的**/, 女巫审判(.)就不会发生。 [If the same thing happens in the present, many people will know this is not true and will stop these things. If people in the past knew witches were not real, the witch trial would not have happened.]
6	04:12–04:23	*(image unavailable due to copyright)*	谢谢! [Thank you]

Image credits

Frame 1: Adapted from Matteson, T. H. (1855). *Trial of George Jacobs, August 5, 1692* [oil on canvas]. Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts. Reprinted with permission.

Frame 2: Adapted from Baker, Joseph E. (1892). *The witch no. 1.* Retrieved from https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2003677961/

Frame 3: Student created. Reprinted with permission.

Frame 4: Adapted from Ellis, E. S. (1887). *Witchcraft delusion scene in court.* In The Youth's History of the United States. New York: The Cassell Publishing Company. Retrieved from http://ushistoryimages.com/salem-witchcraft-trials.shtm

Frame 5: Adapted from Lossing, B. J. (1912). *Deliverance from witchcraft by prayer.* In Harper's Encyclopedia of United States History. New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers. Retrieved from http://ushistoryimages.com/salem-witch-trials.shtm

Transcription Notation

Bold and font sizes	= emphasis
(.) (..) (…)	= pauses (more dots show longer pause)
//	= final pitch contour with a definite fall, signaling an end of an idea unit
/	= an idea unit with a small fall, signaling a nonfinal pitch contour
↑?	= final pitch contour ends in a rise, signaling a question

(continued)

(continued)

Bold and font sizes	= emphasis
>text<	= the enclosed speech was delivered more rapidly than usual for the speaker
<text>	= the enclosed speech was delivered more slowly than usual for the speaker
strikethrough	= miscue or missing tone
+	= adding words to complete a meaning unit

*Adapted from Atkinson, M., & Heritage, J. (1984). Transcript notation. In M. Atkinson & J. Heritage (Eds.), *Structures of social action: Studies in conversation analysis* (pp. ix-xvi). Cambridge University Press

Appendix B

Multimodal discourse analysis of Frame 4 from Mei-mei's video

	Mei-mei's semiotic choice	Contribution to meaning/function or purpose in this video
Color	Black and white images; black text	Establishes emotional tone: Choice of black and white constructs removal from reality, perhaps showing her stance on the events as being "unreal"
	Use of darkness	Darker color choices construct what Mei-mei views as a dark time in Massachusetts history
Writing	Uses action verbs and named participants to construct events (…*many innocent people were killed or arrested*)	Tells concrete information
	Uses *innocent people* rather than *convicted witches*	Communicates her stance on the information
	Hedges to avoid judging the accused women (*We didn't know why…but*)	
	Uses third person to create distance between herself and prevailing opinions of the time (*many people think…*) Passive voice	
Layout	Text is positioned at top center, image is behind	Lets readers know that words are the primary meaning makers while the image is there to emphasize and extend the ideas and tone of the text
Image	Focalization: characters are not looking at viewer (i.e., are simply offering information to the viewer)	Accused people are shown lower relative to judges

(continued)

(continued)

	Mei-mei's semiotic choice	Contribution to meaning/function or purpose in this video
	Accused people are shown lower relative to judges	Shows that unequal power dynamics were at play in this event, extending the meanings made with written language
Audio	Clear voice; appropriate rate of speech; manages prosody (rhythm, linguistic tones, intonation, meaningful pauses)	Constructs identity as a fluent Chinese reader and speaker
Video	Uses pointer to indicate written word as it is read aloud	Manages the needs of an audience with varying levels of Chinese reading and listening skills; supports their meaning-making experience to read along as they listen to her narration

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