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A Case Study of English Language Learners? Multimodal Compositions and Identity Representations

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A Case Study of English Language Learners' Multimodal Compositions and Identity
Representations

by

Huan Wang

Under the Direction of Dr. Gertrude Tinker Sachs

ABSTRACT

English learners' literacy practices have become multimodal in today's media and
technology saturated world. Studies have investigated the application of multimodal composing
in English language learning (ELL) classrooms and found that multimodal composing fostered
students' English achievement and understanding of course content more effectively than the
lecture-type instruction (e.g. Yang & Wu, 2012). However, the examination of English language
learners' (ELLs) multimodal writing practices and their identity representation through out-of-
class spaces have not been fully explored. This qualitative case study investigated international
multilingual students' choices of multimodal resources and how they used their preferred
resources to design multimodal compositions to write about their previous and current English
learning experiences, and how their social and literate identities are revealed from their
multimodal compositions. There were three overarching research questions: first, how do ELLs
use multimodal resources to write about their experiences of learning English in and out of the
U.S. in a multimodal composing workshop? Second, how are their identities portrayed in their
multimodal compositions and self-descriptions? Third, what are their perceptions of using
multimodal resources to express themselves?

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, workshop observation notes, video-recorded workshop sessions, participants' multimodal compositions and researcher's log. Social semiotic multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) (Jewitt, 2009, 2011), and grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) were the primary data analysis methods. The study was situated in the frameworks of multimodality (e.g. Jewitt, 2008; Kress, 1997) and sociocultural and literate identities theory (e.g. Holland et al., 1998; Vasudevan et al., 2010). Participants were a group of ELLs recruited from an Intensive English Program (IEP) in a university located in the southeastern region of the U.S. A series of 10 workshop sessions were scheduled to investigate ELLs' multimodal composing practices and identity manifestation. Participants were found to use a combination of words and images to compose multimodal texts to write about their personal journey of English learning regardless of their age, gender, and nationality. Revolutionary perceptions about multimodal composing both in and out-of-classroom spaces were advocated by participants to satisfy their various writing purposes and communication needs.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Research Context

The meaning of literacy in today's world is very different from what it meant thirty years ago. Kaestle (1985) defined literacy as "the ability to decode and comprehend written language at a rudimentary level, that is, the ability to look at written words corresponding to ordinary oral discourse, to say them, and to understand them" (p. 13). Some researchers consider literacy especially writing as the changing force of cultural structure and tradition (e.g. Goody, 1968). Although Ong admires oral culture and traditions in literacy, he lays specific emphasis on writing and asserts that "without writing, human consciousness cannot achieve its fuller potentials" (Ong, 1982, p. 14). In this respect, writing has been considered as a conscious mental process which expresses and reflects writers' cognitive activities.

In the 21st century, literacy has become multifaceted and has been integrated with new technologies and multimodality. Compared to foundational literacies which include print-based text comprehension and production, new literacies have incorporated more aspects of practices. These practices include but are not limited to multimodal forms of text input and output such as reading an event poster or information on the website, as well as composing an e-poster or responding to a friend through email with visuals and words. It is claimed that literacy and Internet use are beginning to slowly become more integrated and have a direct impact on literacy education (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, Castek & Henry, 2004). The practices of writing have shifted from composing written texts to constructing meanings by using multimodal resources such as image, sound, and other forms of communication. The New London Group (1996) has broadened people's understanding of being literate from "learning to read and write in page-bound, official,

standard forms for the national language" (p. 61) to incorporate multimodal semiotic modes such as textual, visual, audio, gestural to make meaning out of the social and cultural context. New Literacy Studies (NLS) perceive literacy learning as a social and cultural practice that should be "understood and studied in its full range of contexts – not just cognitive – but social, cultural, historical, and institutional, as well (Gee, 2009, p. 2). The perspective on literacy as a social practice "seeks to shed light upon how students' cultures, contexts, and histories are embedded within their literacy learning" (Skinner & Hagood, 2008, p. 13). This indicates that literacy achievement is not only affected by the cognitive process of students but also the social and cultural experience students are currently participating or have previously participated. This also explains "a social perspective of literacy" that "highlights the idea that students will bring their own cultural resources, agendas, and purposes to literacy learning" (Skinner & Hagood, 2008, p. 13).

Due to the multimodal nature of reading and writing practices in today's literacy classrooms, it is imperative to include multimodality in literacy instruction. As Edwards-Groves (2011) claims, "classroom practices need to explicitly enable multimodal, collaborative and interactive learning opportunities between students, between teachers and students and between students and online learning spaces over time" (p. 62). However, the learning practices should not be bound to the classrooms, because "pedagogical practices must not only be generative but also explicitly draw on the techno-literacies students are 'practicing' in their out-of-classroom" settings (Edwards-Groves, 2011, p.62-63). In this respect, literacy learning can be extended beyond school boundaries to home or community settings through multimodal literacy practices (Boivin et al., 2014; Flottemesch, 2013; Westman, 2012; Wong, 2015). It is expected that literacy

learning happens out of school contexts can be stepping stones that connect with literacy learning at school.

In today's multimedia and technology saturated world, school students, college and university young adults and non-school learners all engage in various forms of multimodal reading and writing activities on a daily basis. Due to this, language and literacy learning in the 21st century has multifaceted meanings – to be literate in today's classrooms means students are not only able to read and write print-based texts, but also be able to read and write multimodal texts in print as well as in various forms at multiple venues. Particularly, the definition for writing needs to be shifted from composing solely written text to constructing meanings by using multimodal resources such as image, sound, and other forms of communication. Additionally, "it is fast becoming a commonplace that digital composing environment are challenging writing, writing instruction, and basic understandings of the different components of the rhetorical situation (writers, readers, texts) to change" (Selfe & Takayoshi, 2007, p. 1). Therefore, "students need to be experienced and skilled not only in reading (*consuming*) texts employing multiple modalities, but also in *composing* in multiple modalities, if they hope to communicate successfully within the digital communication networks…" (Selfe & Takayoshi, 2007, p. 3). Thus, for the purpose of enhancing writing skills, non-linguistic multimodal resources should be employed in writing instruction, together with linguistic resources, to engage learners, particularly ELLs, to promote their English language and literacy skills.

Multimodality and ELLs

Multimodality plays a critical role in the transformation of today's literacy practices since it affects the ways meanings are communicated. It becomes a common practice that ELL students combine several modes to communicate a message to complete a class assignment

(Mestre-Mestre, 2015). Therefore, ELL teachers should be more aware of the changes in ELLs' literacy practices and acknowledge the shift of practices in ELLs' language and literacy teaching (Mina, 2014). With the growing number of ELLs in the U.S., ELLs' literacy practices and performance are inevitably affected by multimodal forms of communication and meaning construction. In the following, I will first describe the context of the ELL population and then discuss why their multimodal literacy practices should be studied.

Payan and Nettles (2008) report that the "population of ELL students in the U.S. is growing in size, variety and importance" (p.1). This large non-native population comes to the country for various reasons but all need to receive education with classes being taught in English. According to Payan and Nettles (2008), these English language learner (ELL) populations take up approximately 10 percent of public school enrollment and speak over 450 languages. Besides, an increasing number of non-resident international ELL students have been admitted to US universities. According to a survey conducted by the Institute for International Education (IIE) in 2013, "the total number of international students enrolled in fall 2013 (FA 13) was higher than in fall 2012 (FA 12) at 72% (274) of the American universities that participated in the survey" (Vaughn, Bergman & Fass-Holmes, 2015, p. 321). Among these students, those with insufficient English proficiencies are placed in the university Intensive English Programs (IEPs) to receive intensive English training before they are admitted to the general degree-seeking programs or placed in English as a Second Language (ESL) programs to enhance English language and literacy skills to be better prepared for undergraduate and graduate programs of study. Those ELLs with insufficient English literacy skills also need attention and assistance in and out of classroom spaces to enhance their English proficiency to satisfy their various English learning needs.

Although these ELLs belong to various age levels and come from different linguistic backgrounds, it is equally significant for them to gain the required level of proficiency of English and be able to communicate in English at school in both oral and written forms. Technology and multimodal modes of communication are transforming people's understanding and the definition of literacy. "The ubiquity of digital media in the lives of young adults makes it almost impossible to ignore these media in the L2 classroom" (Mina, 2014, p. 141). Therefore, it is crucial to study the multimodal literacy practices of ELLs in order to "keep pace with the new literacies and text types students develop and deal with every day outside class" (Mina, 2014, p. 141). Multimodal text forms and meaning-making processes mandate a shift in the teaching of ELLs "to acknowledge new ways of engaging students with L2 language, building on the literacies these students develop and practice" (Mina, 2014, p. 141) in their daily lives. To draw on these concepts, ELLs' multimodal composing practices in adopting multimodal semiotic resources need to be studied to understand ELLs' construction of meaning and identity representation in specific social and cultural contexts.

Problem Statement

The application of multimodal composing at K-12 classrooms as well as in university classrooms have been captured in previous literature (e.g. Bou-Franch, 2012; Yang, 2012; Yang & Wu, 2012). For example, Yang and Wu (2012) studied high school Chinese EFL students' different achievement between the use of traditional lecture-type instruction and multimodal digital composition. They found that participants in the multimodal digital composition group outperformed participants in lecture-type group in their English achievement, learning motivation and understanding of course content, and ability to critical thinking. In addition, these multimodal composing practices even travel beyond school boundaries and are being used at

home and in the community (e.g. Flottemesch, 2013; Westman, 2012) and are investigated as a connection to school to facilitate learning. For instance, Flottemesch (2013) examined the impact of utilizing multimodal composing practices in a university class project to capture family stories and establish intergenerational relationships. It was found that through the process of multimodal composing, students gained deeper understanding in the subject matter and also enhanced their appreciation and respect with family members except for the content knowledge they learned from this process.

Moreover, several studies have also focused on using multimodal digital storytelling as a way to demonstrate personal identities of marginalized school populations (e.g. Shin & Cimasko, 2008; Wake, 2012). For example, Wake (2012) studied the identities of rural middle school students in the Southeast United States through their practice of multimodal storytelling and found "the rural nature of the participants' communities had a significant impact on their identity formation and understanding of community" (p. 23). However, Belcher (2012) has addressed the issue of IEP students being understudied and their writing practices being uncovered by current research. Even though previous studies have investigated IEP instructors' use of social media networks or multimodal resources in class instruction (e.g. Fuchs & Akbar, 2013; Rance-Roney, 2008), few studies so far have investigated how ELLs in the IEP compose multimodally and how their identities are enacted through multimodal composing activities. This study intends to extend the conversation about how ELLs in the IEP utilize multimodal resources to compose, how their identities are represented through multimodal composing practices as well as what their perceptions are about using multimodal resources to express themselves.

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

Writing in one's non-native language is particularly challenging because "it demands use of vocabulary, grammatical structures, and rhetorical conventions that are very different from conversational language" (Fu, 2009, p. ix). However, multimodal composing encourages higher-level critical thinking, independent cognitive processing and meaning making through the selection of multimodal representations (e.g. Buckingham, 2008; Rance-Roney, 2008) because students who are writing multimodally are given the freedom to purposefully select multimodal resources to convey meanings in ways that best express themselves. In this respect, the purpose of this qualitative case study is to examine the multimodal composing practices of ELLs in a multimodal composing workshop and to describe how their multimodal compositions portray these ELLs' identities while they write about experiences of studying English in their home culture as well as studying English in the U.S. Also, I am interested in ELLs' perceptions about using multimodal resources to express themselves. There are three guiding research questions: first, how do ELLs use multimodal resources to write about their experiences of learning English in and out of the classrooms in their home countries as well as in the U.S. in a multimodal composing workshop? Second, how are their identities portrayed in their multimodal compositions as well as their self-descriptions? Third, what are their perceptions about using multimodal resources to express themselves?

Research Overview

A qualitative case study methodology was used in this inquiry. A group of 6 participants from an IEP in a southeastern university of the U.S. was recruited. The participants were non-native speakers of English from various social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, who came to the U.S. to pursue their higher education degrees. They were placed in the IEP to receive

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intensive English training and prepare themselves to be qualified to apply for the degree-seeking programs offered in the university. There were three criteria for participant recruitment: first, they needed to be non-native speakers of English and should have been learning English as an additional language; second, they should have never studied in a high school or higher education institution in an English-speaking country where English is utilized as the dominant language of instruction before enrolling in the Intensive English Program; third, they should be current active students from level IV or level V in the IEP. For the purpose of gender balance, both male and female participants were recruited based on their satisfaction of the above criteria.

The reason I chose pre-college level ELLs was first inspired by my personal experience of teaching pre-college and college level English to native speakers of Chinese in a Chinese international university. I had implemented multimodal elements in my previous teaching of English reading and writing so I would like to apply multimodality in the writing practices of international students whose first language is not English, and examine how they approach writing by using multimodal resources. In addition, the trend of the globalization of English and the technology and multimedia saturation have contributed to the belief that ELLs from all parts of the world should have some experience of reading and writing multimodal texts. Moreover, previous studies have investigated the strengths and challenges of ELLs' academic writing (e.g. Lillis & Curry, 2010; Park, 2016; Show, 2015; Staples & Reppen, 2016) but few studies have focused on ELLs' multimodal writing practices and how their various identities are represented through their multimodal compositions. Finally, since ELLs in the IEP are provided with intensive training of reading, writing and language mainly for academic purposes using text-based materials, I am seeking their perceptions about the possibilities of using multimodal resources to express themselves either in or out of their classroom writing activities. Given these

aforementioned, I would like to investigate how these international multilingual students utilized multimodal resources to write about their experiences of learning English in both their home countries and in the U.S., how their identities were represented through their multimodal compositions as well as their self-descriptions, and their perceptions about using multimodal resources to express themselves.

Data were collected by using semi-structured interviews before and after multimodal compositions were created by the ELL participants. Data sources also included observation notes taken from workshop sessions while students were composing multimodal texts, participants' multimodal compositions, video-recorded workshop sessions, and researcher's log. Social semiotic multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) (Jewitt, 2009, 2011) and grounded theory analysis method (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) were used as the major data analysis methods.

Theoretical Frameworks

The current study is situated in the frameworks of multimodality (Jewitt, 2008; Kress, 1997; Kress & Jewitt, 2003; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; O'Halloran, 2011), and sociocultural and literate identities theory (Holland et al., 1998; Vasudevan et al., 2010; Wortham, 2006). Multimodality features the use of a variety of modes such as visual, audio, and spatial representations to achieve the purpose of meaning making; sociocultural and literate identities theory focuses identity construction in social contexts where individuals interact with the social world such as their literacy activities of reading and writing in various social and cultural contexts. In the following sections, I will introduce each theory and explain how they are interconnected and collectively theorize this study.

Multimodality

In multimodality, meaning is communicated and represented through linguistic or non-linguistic forms or a combination of both. These communication forms include but are not limited to the modes of textual, visual, audio and spatial. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2001), multimodality is 'the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event' (p. 20). For example, a multimodal product can be a hand-made birthday card with words, images and cut-paste shapes; in the meantime, a multimodal event can be a class presentation described by Kress and van Leeuwen in *Multimodal Discourse*, when the instructor uses speech as a mode to deliver the message, draws picture (visual mode) on the board to help students visualize the delivered message, and also turns to a model – a physical mode to show and explain the same message. Kress (2009) defines mode as "a socially shaped and culturally given resources for making meaning. *Image, writing, layout, music, gesture, speech, moving image, soundtrack* are examples of modes used in representation and communication" (p. 54). In other words, writing for instance, makes meaning through "graphic resources such as *font, size, bolding, spacing*" (Kress, 2009, p. 55), through syntactic resources such as *sentences* or textual resources such as *words* or *clauses*. However, socially speaking, a mode demonstrates the representational needs for a certain community in a specific culture (Kress, 2009). In other words, people from different cultures use different semiotic resources within a mode to express meanings. For instance, white is used as the color for wedding in some countries but red is used as the color for wedding in others. Additionally, people in different cultures may have different preference of modes for communication. For example, people may prefer gesture as a mode to express meaning in one culture but may use speech to express the same meaning in another culture.

Multimodality features the use of multiple modes to make meanings. In order to make meaning, individuals are encouraged to use multiple resources to design and demonstrate their ways of thinking. Jewitt (2008) defines multimodality as meaning "made through the situated configurations across image, gesture, gaze, body posture, sound, writing, music, speech" (p. 246). Also, Jewitt (2009) describes what multimodality does, "to extend the social interpretation of language and its meanings to the whole range of representational and communicational modes or semiotic resources for making meaning that are employed in a culture – such as image, writing, gesture, gaze, speech, posture" (p. 1). This indicates that although oral and written language is usually considered as the central media of communication, there are also other modal resources such as visual, gestural, aural through which individuals can represent significant meanings (Kress & Jewitt, 2003; O'Halloran, 2011). In this respect, it is expected that the ways participating students compose will draw on various modes that are not limited to speech or written language alone, but will include multiple forms of representations such as visual, aural, spatial and gestural. Today's literacy practices are beyond reading written text, to reading multimodal texts with images, sounds, and various forms of modalities within different social and cultural contexts.

Jewitt (2009) has articulated four assumptions of multimodality: first, language is acknowledged as the most important mode of communication, however, other representational and communicative modes all have the "potential to contribute equally to meaning" (p. 14). However, different modes contribute differently depending on different message created and communicated. For instance, a visual mode in a photograph may operate and contribute differently but significantly from a visual mode in an illustrated essay because the photograph itself may speak to the audience with the need of few words to explain it; however, a photograph

in an illustrated essay may have the contribution to elaborate the words. The second assumption describes "each mode in a multimodal ensemble is understood as realizing different communicative work" (p. 15). It is further explained by Jewitt that "Multimodality assumes that all modes have, like language, been shaped through their cultural, historical and social uses to realize social functions" (p. 15). Jewitt connects the third assumption of multimodality to the meaning making processes as people's "selection and configuration of modes" (p. 15), which emphasizes multimodal composers' agentive and purposeful choice of modes and the significance of modes' integration and interaction for meaning making. The final assumption of multimodality describes the social meanings of signs and suggests that "meanings of signs fashioned from multimodal semiotic resources are, like speech, social" (p. 16). This means that signs are inherently social in that they communicate to viewers, readers and listeners in different social contexts. Moreover, the meanings of signs are shaped and influenced by sign-makers' "motivations and interests" at a specific "moment of sign-making" as well as "in a specific social context" (p. 16). For example, the way soldiers walk in the army is different from the way models walk on the stage, and their walking posture conveys different meanings and represents different identities of soldiers and models. By the same token, the meanings of signs ELLs make and use to express themselves in their home countries should be different from the signs they make and utilize to convey meanings in the U.S. since their sign-making processes are motivated in the specific local context. In this respect, it is crucial to investigate the different meanings of signs made by ELLs in different social contexts to understand their interest and motivations of multimodal sign-making activities; therefore, it may support ELL teachers and researchers to find out appropriate approaches to ELLs' literacy teaching and learning in their situated social and cultural context.

Multimodality and Social Semiotics

Social semiotics has been strongly influenced by Michael Halliday who suggests the term "social semiotics" and connects learners' linguistic choices with the specific culture where they are situated. He believes that texts are produced in their specific social context or "semiotic structure" - "a constellation of meanings deriving from the semiotic system that constitutes the culture" (Halliday, 1978, p265). In today's language and literacy research, the emphasis has been gradually shifted from only language to other semiotic resources or communicative modes. Except for its linguistic origins, social semiotics has been extended to explain the growing popularity and significance of sound and visual images, and how these various modes of communication are combined in both traditional and nontraditional ways such as digital media (e.g., Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996). The marriage of social semiotics and the innovative digital technology have expanded the boundaries of social semiotic studies to better satisfy the needs of multimodal literacy studies in the 21st century.

Social semiotics investigates all kinds of social meaning-making activities in the social world, no matter visual, audio, or gestural (Thibault, 1991). In particular, social semiotics studies how people design and interpret meanings through written and non-written texts, how semiotic systems are shaped by social interests and cognitions, and how they are adapted in the constantly changing society (Hodge & Kress, 1988). From the perspective of social semiotics, instead of being confined into static "codes", signs are utilized as resources for people to design and make meanings. Van Leeuwen (2005) has defined semiotic resources as "the actions and artefacts we use to communicate, whether they are produced physiologically – with our vocal apparatus; with the muscles we use to create facial expressions and gestures, etc. – or by means of technologies – with pen, ink and paper; with computer hardware and software; with fabrics, scissors and sewing

machines, etc." (p. 8). Moreover, social semiotics examines the social and cultural practices of human beings in a particular context. It is aimed at explaining the process of meaning-making in a social context. Semiotic modes include but are not limited to visual, audio, written, gestural and linguistic aspects of communication. They also include the combined use of a variety of "multimodal" elements of any of these modes (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). These various semiotic modes are intentionally selected to represent individuals' meaning making process in particular social and cultural contexts. In this respect, it is important to study ELLs' design of multimodal texts by using multimodal semiotic resources and look at how ELLs' purposeful selection of multimodal resources can contribute to the construction of meaning and enactment of identities in different sociocultural contexts.

Sociocultural and Literate Identities

People are always wearing different identity hats in different situations. A sociocultural perspective views identity "as dynamic and constantly changing across time and space" (Norton, 2006, p. 3). There are three key tenets that drive how identities are constructed from this perspective:

1. People construct their identities within a figured world (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner & Cain, 1998);

2. Identities are not only constructed within the contexts individuals situate, but inevitably shaped by individuals' previous as well as current experience (Vasudevan et al., 2010);

3. Literate and social identities are interconnected (Sableski, 2007); literate identities can reflect the influence of particular cultural practices (Gee, 1996) as well as social practices (Luke & Freebody, 1997; Taylor, 1983).

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Holland et al. (1998) assert that people construct their identities within contexts of "figured worlds" or what they call "identity in practice" (p. 271). As specified by Urrieta (2007), "People 'figure' who they are through the activities and in relation to the social types that populate these figured worlds and in social relationships with the people who perform these worlds" (p. 108). Figured worlds were also defined by Holland et al. (1998) as "socially produced, culturally constituted activities" (pp. 40–41) that people participate to produce fresh understandings of selves. Skinner, Valsiner and Holland (2001) also indicate that "without this knowledge (of figured world), it is difficult to understand the shifts or readings of events that the narrators construct or the reasons why they orchestrate voices as they do" (p. 13). In this respect, identities are built within the situated context where individuals act and interact while they are living and conducting cultural practices.

In addition, Vasudevan, Schultz and Bateman (2010) shared a similar perspective that "people take on identities in relation to context and experience. The identities are not intrinsic or separate from social contexts and interactions; rather they are embodied and enacted in practice" (p. 445). This suggests that identities are not only constructed within the contexts individuals situate, but are inevitably shaped by individuals' previous as well as current experience (Vasudevan et al., 2010). Moreover, as contexts vary, individuals may shift identities while participating and engaging in a variety of social, cultural and literacy activities. In this case, individuals' identities are a mixed representation of selves combining the impact of previous experience and the current contextual influence where individuals are currently situated or contemporarily associated.

Sableski (2007) holds the concept that literate and social identities are interconnected. She defines literate identity as "the ways in which people form conceptions of themselves as

readers and writers based on the discourses of which they are a part" (p. 20). In other words, students "figure" who they are while they are participating in reading and writing activities in different sociocultural contexts. In this respect, while students participate in the multimodal composing activities – talking about their English learning experiences in their home countries as well as in the U.S. by composing multimodal texts, their literate identities are portrayed through their purposeful selection of multimodal semiotic resources to express themselves in different contexts, and through the ways of presenting their life stories. However, their literate identities are not fixed, they are shaped and reshaped (Bloome & Dail, 1997; Martens & Adamson, 2001; Martens, Flurkey, Meyer, & Udell, 1999) while they interact with and draw on experiences from the outside world. Not only can they interpret themselves and build their literate identities through the relationship with their contextualized world, they can also construct their literate identities through the experiences they imagine (Sumara, 1996). Since students play a variety of roles within different social and cultural contexts, their literate identities also reflect the influence of particular cultural practices (Gee, 1996) as well as social practices (Luke & Freebody, 1997; Taylor, 1983).

In this study in particular, ELLs were asked to compose multimodal texts based on their English learning experiences in their home countries as well as in the U.S. The theory of sociocultural and literate identities helped me understand how their identities were portrayed in their multimodal compositions depicting their English learning experiences in different social and cultural contexts. While ELLs wrote about their previous English learning experiences, they talked about their situated literate learning activities in specific social and cultural types (in their home countries and in the U.S.) and described how they figured who they are when they were interacting with contextualized culture, social activities and people. Additionally, their depiction

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of situated social and literate activities in the multimodal texts reflected their previous as well as current experiences interacting with local culture, social activities as well as people. Moreover, even though ELLs were writing about their English learning experiences, which reflected their perceptions about who they are in these activities, these literate activities were inevitably interconnected with their situated social and cultural activities. In the following sections, I explain the connection between these two theoretical perspectives.

Figure 1. Guiding Frameworks

Multimodality
Meaning made through various modes of representation such as visual, audio, gestural, and spatial (Jewitt, 2008; Kress, 1997; Kress & Jewitt, 2003; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; O'Halloran, 2011)

Interconnected

Interdependent

Sociocultural and Literate Identies Theory
Identities are constructed in a figured world (Holland et al., 1998) where students figure who they are in social and literate activities; literate and social identities are interconnected (Sableski, 2007)

Interconnectedness between Multimodality and Sociocultural Literate Identities

Rogers, Winters, LaMonde, and Perry (2010) explained the connection between multimodality and sociocultural literate identities. They studied how secondary school youth situate themselves through video production by utilizing multimodal resources. They claim that when popular culture and media elements were incorporated in composing individual multimodal products, they "display their multiple subject position" (p. 299) in reality. Usually, students choose images, music or other visual audio elements that they are familiar with or have a social or cultural connection with to represent their identities (Rogers et al., 2010). Since international students are living in a foreign culture and have grown up in their home culture, it is assumed that one culture should have a larger influence in demonstrating their identities than the

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other (Mina, 2014). In addition, Durst (2012) asserts that students "weave representations of self" (p. 48) that can reflect their racial, ethnic, and national background as well as other factors when they are creating multimodal projects. This being said, since multimodal composing offers an entry way for ELLs to express themselves by adopting multimodal resources, the knowledge and confidence they gain from composing multimodal texts may help portray their identities while they are engaging in various sociocultural as well as literacy activities and practices. They may feel more comfortable while reading, writing and interacting with multiple modes and resources to make meanings out of their sociocultural and literate experiences within their situated academic, social and cultural contexts. In addition, the multimodal semiotic resources they select should represent their voices, their ways of perceiving themselves, and the ways they would like others to perceive them through the selection, recognition, organization, and negotiation of the multimodal elements.

Interrelations between Multimodal Digital Literacy and Sociocultural Literate Identities

Moreover, Buckingham (2008) strongly recommends that digital literacy in the new media should not only be read and analyzed but should go beyond this level to an advanced level of being composed and produced. Therefore, composing incorporated with more hands-on and higher order thinking which incorporates "written text, visual images, simple animation, audio and video material" (p. 85) are more encouraged when students are given the opportunity to create their own multimodal texts. In addition, the production of multimodal texts provides students with the opportunity to "conceptualize the media they use and their life activities" (Mina, 2014, p. 143). To extend Mina's concept, these everyday life activities depict students' identities in and out of their classrooms. Furthermore, Martin (2008) extends the conversation and makes his claim about how digital media and digital literacy becomes "an element of that

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person's identity" (p. 167). He asserts that digital media enhances the development of identities since individuals are able to represent their identities through composing multimodal texts and share their products with others who they have direct or indirect interactions in the social world. The engagement with digital devices brings in a new relationship to digital-connected individuals and make them aware of the role digital tools play in their daily and academic lives and a more sustained conception about their identities in the situated social and cultural world.

Finally, multimodality is immersed in almost all aspects of literacy learning in today's social and academic world. Additionally, the four assumptions proposed by Jewitt (2009) bring multiple implications to multimodality to situate the examination of language and multimodal semiotic resources in specific social and cultural contexts at specific moments while multimodal sign-making activities take place. Besides, ELLs' social and literate identities are depicted while they engage in various forms of multimodal literacy activities and practices within all kinds of spaces such as school, home and the community. Their identities are shaped, shifted and reshaped due to the development, innovation and revolution of literacy learning in the 21st century.

Role of Researcher

My background of being an English language learner for over 15 years, and my shifting paradigms to enhance my reading and writing skills, and teaching English as a foreign language in a Chinese International University for seven years elicited my interest of investigating the multimodal literacy practices of ELLs. I have taught students who struggled in the traditional text-based reading and formulaic five-paragraph writing. This is an important reason why I am examining new possibilities of English learning and writing techniques which could potentially motivate ELLs in their language and literacy learning thus to promote their efficacy in second

language acquisition. I understand how difficult it is to learn another language and the obstacles ELLs have to encounter in their journey of language and literacy learning.

Furthermore, being an international student myself, I have experienced the difficulties of writing in academic language for the purposes of coursework and publications. I have witnessed the challenges international non-native English speakers have encountered while I was proctoring their English placement test during their second day of orientation and from my observation of their writing classes. Also, as a literacy researcher, I have been learning about ELLs' literacy development practices through reviewing the literature as well as through my personal observation and interaction with them. I intended to study the struggles ELLs' encountered in their English writing experiences and find out feasible solutions to their obstacles in learning an additional language. My goal is to help ELLs achieve the purpose of learning a second or foreign language through a rewarding and entertaining experience instead of as a suffering and frustrating endeavor. Therefore, through the examination of ELLs' multimodal writing practices, I may find potential possibilities and strategies to support ELLs' writing as well as their speaking, listening and reading skills.

Definitions of Key Terminology

English language learners (ELLs)

ELLs in this article refer to non-native speakers of English who study English as an additional language either in a country where English is taught as a foreign language or in the U.S. or other English-speaking countries where English is taught as a second language. ELLs participating in my current study are international students who come to the U.S. to pursue their higher education degrees. These students have insufficient English proficiency so they are

prevented from enrolling in the regular degree-seeking programs offered by the higher education institution.

Intensive English Program (IEP)

Thompson (2013) describes IEP as "those programs in which the students are enrolled in full-time English classes that are not for university credit (pre-university courses)" (p. 212). In this study, IEP is a specially designed bridge program, which academically prepares non-native speakers of English who come to the U.S. to pursue their degrees in a higher education institution. The program provides non-native speakers of English with intensive training of English-speaking, listening, reading, and writing to prepare them to enroll in the general degree-seeking programs in the university. Students in the IEP are enrolled as full-time non-matriculated students and take classes to earn credits for non-degree-seeking purposes. Students are assigned to various levels (Level I to Level V) based on the result of their English placement test taken at the beginning of the program. Students have to pass the test at Level V to be qualified to apply for the regular degree-seeking programs in the same university.

Multimodal Text/Composition

A multimodal text/composition combines two or more than two semiotic modes to contribute to meaning-making within the same text (New London Group, 1996). There are different types of multimodal texts depending on the media through which multimodal texts are created. A multimodal text can be created through printed form – on a piece of paper, such as a book or a poster; it can be created through digital form – such as web pages, movies, slide presentations and animations; since the form of a multimodal text can be "a semiotic product or event" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 20), a multimodal text can be a live performance or

presentation. For instance, as the example Kress and van Leeuwen give in *Multimodal Discourse*, a class instruction can be a multimodal text since the instructor uses speech as a mode to deliver the message, draws picture (visual mode) on the board to help students visualize the delivered message, and also turns to a model – a physical mode to show and explain the same message.

Multimodal Composing

Multimodal composing is the construction of "*multimodal* texts (texts that …may include still and moving images, animations, color, words, music and sound)" (Selfe & Takayoshi, 2007, p. 1) which is delivered in the form of print or "documents we now see in digital environments that use multiple modalities to convey meaning – moving and still images, sounds, music, color, words, and animations – and that are distributed primarily, albeit not exclusively, via digital media" (Selfe & Takayoshi, 2007, p. 1). It is described by Bezemer and Kress (2008) as the use of "socially and culturally shaped resources for making meaning" (p. 117). Multimodal composers create multimodal texts on certain topics by using a combination of multiple modes such as visual – a picture/photo, audio – recorded sound or music, textual – pieces of typed or written text, gestural – any types of body language or facial expression that communicate one's thoughts or ideas, and modalities such as drawing, handwriting, digital camera, digital recorder. Multimodal composing can be achieved through the application of digital technology such as computer, digital recorder, tablet, cellphone, and digital camera. The terms multimodal composing, multimodal text, multimodal storytelling, and multimodal digital storytelling will be used in this study. Multimodal digital storytelling is a form of multimodal composing by using digital devices as tools to compose narratives.

L1 Writers

L1 is widely used in language and literacy research, which means first language. It is usually simultaneously used and compared with L2, which means second language. L1 writers are writers who compose in their first language. In this study, L1 writers refer to first language writers of English.

L2 Writers

L2 means second language. L2 writers in my current study means writers of English who are non-native English speakers. It includes ESL learners who are learning English as a second language as well as EFL learners who are learning English as a foreign language. L2 and L1 are usually used comparatively in language and literacy research.

Multilingual Writers

The term "multilingual writer" was recommended by Canagarajah (2013) instead of "second language writer" since the globalization of English brings more possibilities for language learners to draw on multiple resources to approach language learning. Morton, Storch and Thompson (2015) indicate the fact that "multilingual writer" starts to be more frequently used in academic writing even though "'L2 writer' continues to be the preferred term" (p. 2) for some researchers. In my current study, I define multilinguals as international students and non-native speakers of English who speak at least two languages: a native language and English as an additional language, and who have acquired the skills of composing multimodal texts before or after the workshop practices.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview

The purpose of my study is to examine how international multilingual students in a U.S. university Intensive English Program (IEP) utilize multimodal resources to write about their experiences of learning English in their home countries as well as in the U.S., how their multimodal compositions and self-descriptions reflect ELLs' identities as well as their perceptions about using multimodal resources to express themselves. Based on the review of the literature, the application of multimodal composing at various school settings have been captured in previous literature (e.g. Bou-Franch, 2012; Yang, 2012; Yang & Wu, 2012). These multimodal literacy practices even travel beyond school boundaries and have been investigated at home and in the community (e.g. Flottemesch, 2013; Westman, 2012) as a connection to school and extension to facilitate learning. A few studies have also focused on using multimodal digital stories as a way to examine personal identities of marginalized school populations (e.g. Shin & Cimasko, 2008; Wake, 2012). Some empirical studies have addressed the challenges ELLs encounter in literacy learning and the helpful interventional strategies to cope with their literacy learning difficulties (Van Staden, 2011). However, the investigation of how ELLs in the university IEP utilize multimodal resources to compose in an out-of-classroom workshop space and how their identities are enacted through multimodal compositions have not been fully studied. Given this, I am interested in finding out how ELLs compose multimodally through writing about their experiences of learning English in and out of the U.S. and how their identities are represented through their multimodal compositions and self-descriptions.

My study is framed by two theoretical perspectives. They are multimodality (Jewitt, 2008; Kress, 1997; Kress & Jewitt, 2003; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; O'Halloran, 2011), which uses a variety of modes such as visual, audio, and spatial representations to achieve the purpose of meaning making; and the theory of sociocultural and literate identities (Holland et al., 1998; Vasudevan et al., 2010; Wortham, 2006), which focuses on identity construction in social contexts where individuals interact with the social world such as their literacy activities of reading and writing in various social and cultural contexts. These two theoretical frameworks are not separated from one another; they are interrelated. They are interdependent and intermingled and collectively theorize my current study. Overall, these guiding frameworks underpin my understanding of literacy practices in today's media and technology saturated world, and also support the design of the entire study. In this chapter, I first discuss a few traditional models of writing and how they develop and relate to multimodal composing in my current study. I also review challenges of English writing in general and L2 writing in particular. Afterwards, I discuss the strengths and challenges of multilingual writers in both academic writing and non-academic writing domains. I then draw on literature in various areas to discuss the strengths and challenges of multimodal composing and the application of multimodal composing to L1 and L2 learners at various age levels. I will also discuss strategic language and literacy interventions to L2 writers, challenges of international multilingual writers in L2 writing practices, and the use of print-based writing approaches as well as multimodal composing to investigate the enactment of identities of L2 writers.

Development of Traditional Writing Models and Their Interrelatedness with Multimodal

Composing

The historical development of writing research has witnessed major shifts in composition theories. The theoretical changes have redefined and redirected how writing research can be conducted. In today's multi-literacy world, technology-mediated writing practices have portrayed writing in the classroom as multimodal and multifaceted practices embedded in a variety of spaces and dimensions. In the following section, I review the major models of writing and discuss how they are related to the emerging genre - multimodal composing.

Genre Model

Genre is defined by Swales (1990) as "a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes" (p. 58). An early study in *genre* was done at the University of Sydney and was named the Sydney School of genre analysis in the late 1970s. It has been described as Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) which perceives the structure of language as an inseparable component and as situated in the social context and function of a text (Bawarshi & Reif, 2010). In SFL, genre is defined as "recurrent configurations of meanings ... that … enact the social practices of a given culture" (Martin & Rose, 2008, p.6). SFL was heavily influenced by Michael Halliday who suggests the term "social semiotics" in a cultural context. Halliday connects learners' linguistic choices with the specific culture where they are situated and believed that texts are produced in their specific social context or "semiotic structure" - "a constellation of meanings deriving from the semiotic system that constitutes the culture" (Halliday, 1978, p265). Under the influence of Halliday, Martin (2008) and his colleagues continuously focused on the effects of context in the generation of text. They criticized previous writing methods as ignoring the social and cultural context of the texts and

encouraged the incorporation of context in writing instruction so that texts created can be culturally and contextually relevant. Hyland (2007) has defined genre as "abstract, socially recognized ways of using language" (p. 149). He perceives writing as a practice based on readers' expectations, and he believes that if writers are doing a good job anticipating readers' expectations, it would be less difficult for readers to interpret the meaning of the written text. Except the fact that relationship between text and its context is seriously considered, genre theory can better facilitate novice writers to use language as well as multimodal representations, such as charts, graphs, and images in various settings since context in today's literacy practices becomes increasingly multimodal and multifaceted.

Genre model of composing assumes that text is created for a specific active audience and is dialogic in nature. According to Sperling and Freedman (2001), genre model of writing is dialogic because text is mixed and integrated within its sociocultural context. Kress (2003) has made important points about writing in printed forms and multimodal composing. He believes that due to the impact of the screen as a dominant communication medium, "the affordances and the organizations of the screen are coming to (re)shape the organization of the page" (p.6). His perception about the shift between using *words* as simply being read and comprehended and utilizing *words* as being acted on and worked on has affected genre since the conventions that guide text production and organization have been modified in the technology and digital dominant era.

Sociocultural and Contextual Model of Writing

Schultz and Fecho (2000) extended the genre theory of composition and proposed a social contextual view on writing and writing development. The social contextual perspective of writing looked at writing as situated in reflective processes of social and historical contexts, as

well as reflections of classroom curriculum and pedagogy. According to Schultz and Fecho, writing practices vary across cultures and contexts, and are shaped by writers' social communications and interactions. Writing is also perceived as a nonlinear process and is closely related to social identities. In other words, through the social contextual lens, the understanding of writing has been shifted from viewing writing as a personal activity or technique, to a mental, cognitive process shaped by the broader social, cultural and historical contexts. Writing reflects writers' mental process and shows who they are at the specific moment that writing occurs, and is framed by the social, political, and cultural contexts at that moment. In particular, the social contextual perception of writing suggests that writing is a non-linear process (Schultz & Fecho, 2000). From the sociocultural perspective, writing is perceived as "chains of short- and long-term production" which "involves dialogic processes of invention" (Prior, 2006, p.57-58). Texts are also perceived as artifacts which include "linguistic signs" and involve "multimodal activity" through the process of mediation, distribution and negotiation (Prior, 2006, p.58). Students always bring in their own resources, prior knowledge and repertoire of language use to construct their own pieces and are inclined to apply diverse modes received from multi-media to their writing tasks in today's writing practices. As Herrington and Moran (2005) claim, the writing practices of students always need to be changed, transformed and challenged to harbor newly appearing practices. Framed by sociocultural and contextual perspectives, the development of writing is largely influenced by writers' interactions and engagement in social communications, interactions, and dialogues.

Multimodal Composing

Multimodal composing extends from the previous genre and social contextual model of writing and plays an important role in today's literacy world. Multimodal composing can be

perceived as an emerging genre because:

> Whether one subscribes to a theory of genre that sees text forms as relatively stable social constructs or a theory of genre that defines text forms as fluid enactments influenced by a variety of social contexts, naming a text as belonging to a particular genre helps situate that text within an interpretative framework. (Bowen & Whithaus, 2013, p.2)

Multimodal composing involves multiple modes and modalities which provide multiple resources to convey meaning. It includes but is not limited to the forms of communication such as textual, visual, audio and spatial. Sociocultural researchers claim that all texts are multimodal because all texts are composed through certain linguistic, visual, or spatial elements that involve various modes of meaning and representation (Kress, 1997; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; New London Group, 1996). That is, in order to make meaning, individuals are encouraged to use multiple resources to design and demonstrate their ways of thinking. Jewitt (2008) defines multimodality as meaning "made through the situated configurations across image, gesture, gaze, body posture, sound, writing, music, speech" (p. 246). This indicates that although language is usually considered as the central method of communication, there are also other modes such as verbal and body language, images, and voice through which individuals' can represent significant meanings (Kress & Jewitt, 2003; O'Halloran, 2011). In this respect, the ways individuals communicate or make meanings are dependent on the use of various modes that are not limited to oral or written language alone, but are extended to the use of multiple forms of representations such as visual, audio, spatial and gestural.

The digital age has led current language and literacy learners to become multimodal text producers and designers in this changing world. Students now write on social networking sites such as Facebook, blog, Twitter, and through other possible and available digital tools such as iPad, tablet, and cellphone. In today's digital world, text-centered reading materials are becoming increasingly multimodal, so is the process through which they are composed. Writing

in the classroom in the new era requires that:

> Pedagogical practices and understandings incorporate 'designing', 'producing', and 'presenting' as key elements of the writing process. To be relevant in the contemporary classroom these new dimensions of writing and text construction need to sit beside 'planning', 'drafting', 'editing', 'redrafting' and 'proofreading'. (Edwards-Groves, 2011, p.62)

Edwards-Groves' suggestion of incorporating "designing" "producing" and "presenting" in the process of writing resonates with Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2001) multimodal theory of meaning making and communicating through designing, producing and distributing. However, foundational writing skills should not be replaced by multimodal composing practices but is used only as a tool to extend and shift the composition process by utilizing multimodal modes, digital devices, and technologies. As Bowen and Whithaus (2013) suggests, the job of writing instructors in the digital and multimedia dominant time is "neither to lead them into this changing world of multimodality nor to hold them back from it. Rather, we are in the midst of a shift that is affecting how we write, why we write, and where we write" (p.5).

In this respect, I suggest the implementation of technology and multimodal elements in classroom writing practices needs to be conducted in a way that can develop students' capacity to express themselves in words, images, music, gestures or other possible meaning-making modes. In the new era, multimedia and innovative technologies may continue to dominate the lives of learners from schools and non-school contexts. To be literate in today's classrooms is to read multimodal text in print as well as in various forms at multiple spaces and dimensions, and compose multimodal texts with multiple forms of modes and modalities within different social and cultural contexts. Additionally, the definition of writing has shifted from composing written text to constructing meanings by using multimodal resources such as image, sound, and other forms of communication. Besides, writing practice in the 21st century is never independent of the

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social world; it always resides in and is simultaneously shaped by the social and cultural contexts. Finally, writing is no longer limited to single-mode printed text; instead, the increasing use of digital tools has expanded the teaching and learning of writing from print to multimodal formats of meaning construction (Lankshear & Knobel, 2008).

After a brief review of models in writing, I then discuss the issues and difficulties in English writing to both L1 and L2 writers. I will also address the strengths of L2 writers as well as their English writing challenges. Writing-related challenges of L2 writers such as linguistic, social, academic, and psychological issues will also be discussed. At the end of this section, I will articulate how non-traditional strategies are implemented to cope with L2 learners' writing obstacles to turn them into more efficient English learners and writers through the review of literature.

Challenges of Writing in English

Challenges of English Writing

Writing is a demanding task even for accomplished writers; it does not happen easily. Writing is time-consuming since it is "a complex intellectual activity that requires students to stretch their minds, sharpen their analytical capabilities, and make valid and accurate distinctions" (National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges, 2003, p.13). What makes writing more challenging is that writing is not only a mental process, it is also a social and cultural practice. Dutro, Selland and Bien (2013) assert that writers' interactions with writing cannot be separated from their social relationships, the experiences they bring to the classroom, the micro-culture of the classroom, and their perspectives on school and themselves as learners. This context-based writing perspective provides students with the actual context to which their new ideas can be attached (Rivet & Krajcik, 2008). Writing instruction in today's

language arts classroom can be more challenging since student writers become more diverse in today's urban classrooms in terms of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds, which means their foundational skills of writing and their sociocultural resources attached to their writing practices are very different.

In addition, writers' sociocultural and linguistic experiences can become valuable resources to their writing (e.g. Bassetti & Cook, 2011; Fu, 2009) and can also be a hindrance which disconnect them from their situated learning and writing environment (e.g. Shepardson, Wee, Priddy, & Harbor, 2007). In addition, writers from various backgrounds may have very different strategies to approach writing. In this respect, writers whose writing styles satisfy the conventions of certain genres and cultures that are valued in today's literacy world will be considered more successful writers and make their writing practices less challenging; in contrary, writers who cannot meet the requirements of the writing conventions of certain genres and cultures will be perceived as less successful writers and put themselves in a more challenging situation.

As writing in any language, original writing in English reflects a creative process. Barbot, Tan, Randi, Santa-Donato, and Grigorenko (2012) investigated the insights about 28 writing related factors on writers of all trades, including educators, psychologists, linguists and children and found creativity is one of the most important factors that influence writing. Skills of creative writing are affected by factors such as perseverance, motivation, imagination and observation. However, creative writing is not always favored at school due to the pressure of mandated state-wide or national assessments. Besides, it is hard to establish a self-initiated writing habit (Jeffery & Wilcox, 2016), which fosters and develops writing skills not only at school, but outside of the school walls - at home or in the community. Self-initiated writing such as journal writing or

autobiography requires foundational knowledge about writing and ability to connect writing topics to self-engaged experiences within and out of school contexts. In other words, agency is required as a critical factor in the writing practices. However, writers working on classroom-related writing tasks are not commonly seen as knowing, understanding, controlling and even directing their own writing assignments.

Based on the literature reviewed, English writing can be a challenging task for both L1 and L2 writers. Even though both L1 and L2 writing are expressing meanings, L2 writers are considered disadvantaged since they may lack the language expressions and rhetorical strategies L1 writers can strategically use to convey meaning (Connor, 1996). Differences were also found between L1 and L2 writers in their lexical diversity and syntactic patterns (Staples & Reppen, 2016). Besides the linguistic differences, L1 and L2 writers are different in their social and cultural repertoires, which affects their writing experiences as well. In the next section, I describe the strengths of L2 writers and the challenges they encounter in their English writing experiences.

Strengths and Challenges of L2 Writing

Strengths of L2 writers. Non-native speakers of English who have a variety of first language backgrounds may assist their writing in English as an additional language. In other words, L2 English writing can be supported if L1s are used as facilitating resources or as a transition to L2 writing (e.g. Fu, 2009). Bassetti and Cook (2011) have discussed how L2 users are different from L1 users in her second language acquisition research. She found the major differences lie in their different ways of thinking, language use, their awareness of language itself and knowledge in their first language in particular, and a better effectiveness in use of their first language compared to L1 users. In this respect, L1 can be a valuable resource for L2

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learning and writing since L1 provides another dimension of language insight and another available linguistic understanding. Additionally, L2 users have another advantage in terms of language use. Cook (2012) indicates that L2 users "studying through the medium of a second language may be able to do things they cannot do in the first language- write essays and reports for example" (p. 5). This implies that genres and discourses of writing must be learned. It seems that native speakers of English do not have an advantage of writing in different academic genres if they are not explicitly trained to do so. In other words, if trained well, it is very possible that L2 writers can achieve native-like writing or at least abbreviate the distance with skilled L1 writers.

A lot of non-native speakers of English in the U.S. schools are facing challenges in developing their English writing skills not only because they lack the experiences of using the language but also because their L1 is not being used to support L2 writing (Fu, 2009). Fu (2009) argues that:

> We have made the development of strong writing skills much more difficult than it needs to be for ELL students in the junior grades and beyond because we have ignored the power of students' first-language (L1) writing skills as a stepping stone to English. (p. ix)

In her perspective, writing in L1 can be used as a transitioning practice to emerging writers of L2 and scaffold L2 writing development. She suggests that transitions need to be made from L1 writing to English and at the same time from "personal narratives to more formal academic writing" (Fu, 2009, p. 5). To add to Fu's point, L2 writers' L1 literacy and sociocultural experiences can be valuable resources to enrich their writing repertoire.

In addition to taking advantage of their first language, L2 writers are able to develop and conscientiously use a variety of strategies to become successful writers. For instance, Pessoa and

Miller (2014) investigated how L2 learners in an English-medium university in Qatar developed their writing skills to transition to more proficient academic writers. Students were found to seek help from peers and writing instructors and use available resources to improve their writing performance. In another study conducted by Munoz-Luna (2015), the researcher analyzed the academic English essays of 200 Spanish college undergraduate students. She found that these L2 writers of Spanish were proficient users of cohesion devices and effective transitions, and these abilities of proficiently use the language enabled them to produce high quality texts with consistency, coherence and complex sentences.

In addition, Phillips (2014) studied an international multilingual graduate writer from Indonesia. In order to develop his English writing skills, the student developed a variety of strategies. First, he established a network of friends consisting of both native and non-native speakers of English to be his editors. These friends not only provided him with emotional support, but also offered substantive feedback to his writing. Even though his editor friends could only provide him with the correction of local issues such as mechanical errors, sentence-level problems instead of global issues such as organization and development, he still received adequate corrections for his writing. He also enrolled in a writing course for multiple times to satisfy his personal needs such as to improve his basic writing skills, to learn how to write summaries and critiques, and to understand how to compose proposals and thesis for his degree. Additionally, he chose helpful collaborators for his group projects so that he could play his own role in these projects instead of feeling lost and neglected due to his language and writing limitations. This multilingual L2 writer's conscious selection of strategies was portrayed in this study which supported his English writing in various academic disciplines.

Even though L2 writers have different L1 linguistic backgrounds, which may facilitate their L2 writing in English, many of them have encountered issues and challenges in their writing experiences. Although some of the L2 writers are conscious users of various strategies, these "survival strategies" such as taking less literacy demanding courses may act as "double-edged sword" that help L2 writers in a short term, but may prevent them from learning authentic literacy skills (Yi, 2013). These challenges will be addressed in the following section.

Challenges of L2 writing and L2 writers in English. The experience of learning how to write in a language other than one's native language is very likely to be frustrating to many L2 learners attending public schools in the U.S. Since these learners lack the experience of being immersed in the English-speaking medium so it would be challenging to situate them in an English-speaking context where they need to learn not only the content in various subject areas but a new language required to be successful in school. Besides learning to speak the language, these ELLs also have to build their proficiency in English listening, reading, and writing. Based on her observation and field study in several city schools in New York city, Fu (2009) claims that writing practice using one's non-native language is the most challenging language skill for English language learners especially when the purpose is to achieve native-like writing because "it demands use of vocabulary, grammatical structures, and rhetorical conventions that are very different from conversational language" (p. ix). Based on Fu's perception, writing is especially difficult for non-native English speakers whose writing skills in their first language have not been fully developed because their first language writing skills are not sufficient enough to facilitate their writing in a second language. Furthermore, the complex "national, cultural, religious, ethnic, and linguistic" background of this ELL population may "interfere with their

ability to successfully participate in school" (Show & Griffith, 2014, p. 304) and cause difficulties in their language and literacy learning.

To use my personal English learning experience as an example, I first learned English in my first year of middle school when my first language proficiency was still developing. My English writing practices started with writing English words, phrases and then complete sentences. In my second and third year of learning English, we were required to write paragraphs and short essays. My strong first language writing skills supported my English writing in terms of expressing my ideas and thoughts but did not turn me into an efficient English writer because I lacked the knowledge of the rhetoric and pragmatic conventions in English writing which was not provided by my teacher at that time. Additionally, writing in English at that time was isolated from its social and cultural context, which made it more difficult for me to connect my writing with my life experiences. In my high school, the Chinese traditional approach of beginning an essay indirectly gave me a hard time to compose high-quality English essays since English writing usually starts directly with writers' main points. One of the common techniques of beginning an expository essay has been addressed by Wang and Yang in 1980s. They suggest "dang kai bi mo qu zhe ru ti" (Wang & Yang, 1988, p. 76), which means to begin the topic through "a tortuous and winding approach to the subject" (Kirkpatrick, 1997, p. 239). These experiences give me a deep understanding of the obstacles and challenges of writing in English as an additional language learned at school.

According to Tang (2012), non-native speakers of English face a variety of challenges in academic writing, which extended the issues and problems addressed by Belcher and Braine (1995) in regards to the issues revealed by non-native speakers of English in their academic writing. Tang also claimed several particular challenges ESL and EFL student writers in both

undergraduate and graduate stages have encountered. These challenges include both linguistic

issues such as vocabulary choice, sentence construction, the use of reporting verbs, the use of

cohesive devices, and the use of idiomatic languages, that can be observed and analyzed, as well

as psychological problems such as deciding on new ways of thinking and writing and finding and

shifting identities (Bhowmik, 2016; Chang & Sperling, 2014; Hirvela & Belcher, 2001;

Rahimivand & Kuhi, 2014; Seban & Tavsanli, 2015; Yi, 2013) in their embedded discourse

communities, which need to be uncovered through long-term examination and investigation.

Some other challenges L2 academic writers face except for the linguistic and

psychological issues were indicated by several studies. For instance, researchers found that

making publications in English, text borrowing, plagiarism (Bloch, 2001; Flowerdew, 2007),

writing strategies, and receiving writing support from specific disciplines are some frequently

reported issues by L2 writers. Not only students face the issue of L2 writing, scholars with a non-

native English-speaking background also feel they are being put in a disadvantageous position in

terms of publications. Flowerdew (1999) investigated 26 Hong Kong Chinese scholars in various

disciplinary areas and teaching positions by using in-depth interviews. He found a series of

problems reported by these scholars such as less rich vocabulary, less expression facility, the

influence of L1, and the restriction of style.

L2 writing challenges also come from social and cultural aspects. Sometimes, while

writers are transferring from L1 to L2 writing, they face a hard time finding the social values in

their writing. Often times, writing development of L2 writers is affected by their lack of

understanding of the socio-cultural characteristics of the targeted language (Fernsten, 2008;

Hinkel, 2009; Lee, 2008). For instance, Ahmed and Myhill (2016) studied the influence of socio-

cultural context on Egyptian L2 English writers with Arabic of their first language in an Egypt

university. Researchers selected 14 English majors and 7 L2 writing instructors to explore their understanding of L2 writing and its impact by the socio-cultural factors. 10 social and cultural related issues were reported by participants to have direct impact on their L2 writing experiences. Except for the issues mentioned in previously reviewed studies, rote learning, formulaic expressing, lack of reading were also found to affect L2 writing. Participants also reported that certain culturally sensitive topics such as sex and religion were prohibited by their instructors, and their ways of thinking and brainstorming were directed by their teachers as well. Based on these findings, it is significant to understand the context in which the writing is situated so that L2 writers' issues can be resolved and their needs of writing can be better met.

By reviewing relevant literature, it is found that substantial studies have investigated the various challenges of L2 writers, issues occurred during L2 writing process, and how ELLs deal with L2 writing and finding solutions and strategies to their writing obstacles. Most of the strategies have close connection with the current technology which assists teaching as well as language and literacy learning. In the following section, I review and discuss literature related to strategic English language and literacy teaching and learning practices to L2 learners.

Strategic Language and Literacy Pedagogies to L2 Writers. Language and literacy researchers have been exploring the effective language and literacy instructional interventions to ELLs. Most of the language literacy teaching strategies implemented by ELL educators so far are technology-assisted since technology is "perceived as a way of integrating authentic materials and engaging students" (Fuchs & Akbar, 2013, p. 163). For instance, a few researchers have examined the use of computer software-based technology as a tool for acquiring language and literacy skills (e.g. Cummins, 1998; Lacina, 2004; Meskill & Mossop, 1997; Schwartzman, 2004). In addition, some studies have investigated the benefits of ELLs when incorporating

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technologies into content area instruction (e.g. Egbert, 2002; Kasper, 2000; Meskill, Mossop, & Bates, 1998). Some other research has focused on the combination of visual and verbal literacies as the strategy to teach ELLs (e.g. Eakle & Dalesio, 2008; Labbo, Eakle, & Montero, 2002). Moreover, Ahmed (2013) investigated the effects of implementing e-mail writing on secondary school EFL students' writing skills' development. However, in terms of the language and literacy interventions implemented in the IEP, Fuchs and Akbar (2013) found that the instructors' self-reported applications of technology in IEP classrooms were very limited. Even though some of the instructors reported their occasional use of Skype and YouTube, they could not articulate how they effectively used those tools to facilitate instruction.

Ahmed (2013) studied first year EFL students in Saudi Arabia in a secondary school through quantitative methodology. He intended to find out the impact of e-mail writing intervention on the writing skills of EFL students. After different procedures were implemented with control and experimental groups within a period of one semester, he found that EFL students enrolled in the e-mail writing program developed their English writing skills in the areas of sentence construction, text organization, and style registration. Although the e-mail writing program was tested to be effective, the researcher did not have much consideration of learners' initiatives and impact on their learning outcomes. In addition, he did not touch on how the control group was instructed and whether the instruction was sufficient and appropriate to make changes to the writing skills of the control group. Readers needed more background information about the control group to be compared with the experimental group for more rigorous findings.

In another study, Alameddine and Mirza (2016) examined the effects of using templates on the writing performance of high school L2 writers in Lebanon. Researchers developed a writing template as a strategic intervention to teach academic writing for a class of 9 high school

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grade 10 students. For both pre- and post-writing tests, participants had to respond to a literature-based prompt and compose an essay with 4-5 paragraphs. Based on the Common Core State Standards Writing Rubric, researchers found that participating L2 writers' essays were well developed, more complex and coherent. Learners became autonomous and more confident in their writing performance. Even though the template-based approach was found effective to improve the participating advanced English proficiency level L2 writers' writing performance, it did not test whether the same approach was also effective for less advanced English writers. The small class size is another limitation since writing instruction can be more challenging with a larger number of students. Finally, this "short cut" strategy in teaching academic writing is a formulaic approach which may be effective to prepare students for standardized tests, but not a sufficient strategy to inspire authentic writing abilities. Given this, less formulaic and more interesting strategies are needed to better support L2 writers.

Multimedia and technology have shifted social network and the communication landscape of the world. This shift has brought "the reconfiguration of the representational and communicational resources of image, action, sound, and so on in new multimodal resembles" (Jewitt, 2008, p. 241). Multimodality has reshaped people's understanding of literacy learning and demonstrates that literacy cannot be considered "solely as a linguistic accomplishment and that the time for the habitual conjunction of language, print literacy, and learning is over" (p. 241). Moreover, digital technologies are changing the way we teach and learn in many aspects; new advancements in technology have great potential to arouse students' curiosity and, in turn, impact their learning motivations. As a minority population in the U.S., multilingual English learners at different age and proficiency levels from various backgrounds may have benefited from the technology saturated teaching pedagogies, but at the same time, they have been situated

in disadvantageous language and literacy learning situations simply because a lot of them are still in transition and are not ready to achieve fluency and proficiency (Fu, 2009). Freeman and Freeman (2012) have named four types of English learners, who they call emergent bilinguals: ELLs with adequate formal schooling, ELLs with limited formal schooling, long-term ELLs, and potential long-term ELLs. Given this, serious attention needs to be paid to effectively assist their English learning especially their writing needs in all possible ways. To understand the strengths and limitations of L2 writers and how L2 writing may look like bring me a better insight to work with my participants in my current study. Since my target participants are L2 English learners with multilingual backgrounds, in the next section, I discuss the strengths and challenges of multilingual writers in both academic and non-academic writing domains. By doing so, I hope to gain a better understanding of what multilingual L2 English writers look like and what their strengths and limitations are in terms of L2 English writing.

Strengths and Challenges of Multilingual Writers

Multilinguals who master multiple languages have more communication channels available to them. Multilinguals also have multiple social and linguistic insights which help them transfer and translate between or among different languages. However, often times, multilinguals in the U.S. come from various social and linguistic backgrounds with limited knowledge and proficiency in English.

A multilingual can be categorized very differently according to their age of acquiring another language and their learning context. Sankoff (2013) applies the critical age theory and claims that, "the younger age children immerse into the L2 environment, the more native fluency they are likely to acquire" (p. 505). Based on Sankoff's comments about age, I propose that children who are learning their native language and an additional language at about the same age

in the context where the additional language is spoken and taught may have more resources and opportunities to learn the target language; however, children who are acquiring an additional language much later than their native language is fully acquired or who grow up in a foreign context where an additional language is taught only for educational purposes may have a harder time achieving native-like fluency in both speaking and literacy.

In my current study, I define multilinguals as international students and non-native speakers of English who speak at least two languages: a native language and English as an additional language, and who have acquired the skills of composing multimodal narratives after the workshop practices. In general, multilingual writers have both strengths and limitations in terms of writing in English. Also, they showcase strengths and challenges in composing in both academic writing and non-academic writing domains. These issues will be discussed in the following section.

Strengths and Challenges of Multilingual Writers in Academic Writing Domains

Academic writing is a common practice in university graduate courses. English academic writing is writing for academic and professional purposes, including but are not limited to writing a research proposal, a literature critique or review, a report or a summary or even dissertation studies. According to Swales and Feak (2012), their third edition of *Academic Writing for Graduate Students* is aimed at "developing academic writers" and "providing assistance with writing part-genres (problem-solutions, methods, and discussions) and genres (book reviews and research papers)" (p. viii). Hyland (2004) has described academic writing as "a set of decontextualized skills which were transferable across domains and disciplines" (p. x), and perceived it as "an interactive" and "cognitive project" (p. xi). Due to its purpose-oriented and academic language-dominant nature, if well trained and practiced, multilingual writers can

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become expert writers of academic English. However, L2 academic writing can become a challenge for English users with low proficiency level simply due to the fact that multilingual writers lack the background knowledge of writing conventions and rhetorical discourse of English. I first address the strengths of multilingual L2 English writers.

Strengths of L2 writing for international multilingual students. With the shift of English becoming an international language (Crystal, 2003; Robertson, 1992; Schulzke, 2014), and the "speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness" (Held, McGrew, & Perraton, 1999, p. 2), junior scholars and graduate students with multilingual background have become more networked in today's literacy world (Lillis & Curry, 2010). In regards to the dominant status of English, an increasing number of multilingual academic writers of English are studying in English-medium universities all over the world. These non-native users of English, therefore, have gradually benefited from the networked tele-communication with local and global scholars and researchers, and become proficient speakers and writers of English.

In general, the academic writing genre is mostly structured and it requires writers to include certain components in their formatted writing. For instance, a research paper for research studies and graduate students predominantly begins with an introduction, followed by literature review, methodology, and ends with findings and discussions. In this respect, if multilingual writers learn the structure and the discourse of such writing, it is more than likely that high quality academic paper can be composed. However, some multilingual writers may suffer from their low English proficiency; therefore, they are not able to efficiently use academic language to compose in order to meet the standards of academic writing. In the following paragraphs, I discuss challenges of academic writing of multilingual writers.

Challenges of L2 academic writing for international multilingual students.

Specifically, non-immigrant international students who are learning English as an additional language is "growing in both numbers and diversity" (Lawrick, 2013, p. 27). The main purpose of learning English is to acquire university degrees in an English-speaking country in order to become more competitive in the international job market. Given this, it becomes a challenging reality to accommodate the language and literacy needs of this linguistically diverse international population. These international students whose oral and written English lack proficiency are usually placed in the IEPs if they are non-matriculated or placed in ESL programs if they are admitted to the universities. These programs are specifically designed to improve their proficiency in English-speaking, listening, reading and writing. In order to satisfy the needs of these ELLs and to better prepare them for university degree-seeking programs, specific instruction on academic writing is usually emphasized.

However, writing is a specifically complex process and it is challenging for non-native learners of English and "it is even more so for international students who are often English language learners" (Wang & Machado, 2015, p. 143). These ELLs' insufficient proficiency in English writing is partially due to their limited understanding of "western rhetorical framework and communication style" and partially due to their "scant knowledge of U.S. cultural values, including academic culture" (Lawrick, 2013, p. 28). The cultural context of writing is usually unnoticed by ELLs so that they spend more time checking the use of language but neglecting the focus on idea development and rhetorical structures (Show, 2014; Silva, 1993). For instance, from a mixed methods study conducted on twenty university ELL undergraduates, Show (2015) found that majority of ELL students all experienced difficulties in writing and they perceived their writing challenges in areas such as "linguistic/cognitive deficiencies",

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"psychological/emotional deficiencies" and "sociocultural aspects of writing difficulties" (Show, 2015, p. 237). These writing challenges will inevitably hamper ELLs' writing development and may affect their learning in other academic areas as well. In this respect, writing interventions are needed to facilitate this particular population.

Park (2016) examined the issues of international graduate students' academic adaptation in an ESL writing class in a mid-western university. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were adopted to investigate the most challenging dimension of adaptation in this ESL writing class among the 36 international graduate participants. Three participants were selected to be further investigated based on the survey results. The researcher found that academic writing was reported as the most challenging aspect as well as being the major concern of all the participating international students. Additionally, these three participants reported issues of outline and organization of ideas, use of verbs, genre of writing, writing structure, and finding scholarly references.

Staples and Reppen (2016) conducted a quantitative research investigating the language used in the writing of three first-year university students who have the L1 background of English, Arabic and Chinese. Researchers examined the corpus of 120 papers of these three students including both argumentative essays and rhetorical analysis papers to look for grammatical features in their writing. The L1 Arabic and L1 Chinese students were international students from the Intensive English Program. Differences were found in participants' degree of using syntactic patterns and the diversity of their lexical choices. Findings also displayed the genre impact on different lexical and grammatical choices, and the selection of cohesive devices among these three developing writers. Due to the non-native nature of the L1 Arabic and L1 Chinese, they were found to frequently use a simple syntactic structure "I think… that" while

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expressing their stance of argumentation. These findings resonate with the previous point made by Hinkel (2006) that "even advanced and trained L2 writers continue to have a severely limited lexical and syntactic repertoire that enables them to produce only simple text restricted to the most common language features encountered predominantly in conversational discourse" (p. 123).

This study focused on the level of language use of first-year developing writers in the university and it revealed the distinct features of lexical, syntactical and grammatical use of both L1 and L2 writers with different L1 backgrounds. An L2 writing instruction approach addressing the lexical, syntactical and grammatical use was suggested even though there is still space to investigate L2 writers with other L1 linguistic background except for Arabic and Chinese. This L2 population may have similar or very different features in terms of language use. Understanding the language features and limitations of these L2 writers can better facilitate their L2 writing experience. The above studies reviewed have investigated the strengths and challenges of L2 writing and L2 writers in the domain of academic writing; next, I articulate the strengths and challenges of L2 writers in the area of non-academic writing. To review L2 writing in both academic and non-academic areas help me gain a comprehensive understanding of how L2 writers engage with writing practices in both formal and informal ways.

Strengths and Challenges of L2 Writing through Non-academic Spaces

Up to now, an abundance of research studies has explored L1 and L2 writers' writing experiences, strengths, and challenges in English academic writing. Few studies have examined L1 and L2 writers' non-academic English writing practices (e.g. Ahmed, 2013; Armstrong & Retterer, 2008). The reason might be that academic writing is provided in a lot of university

graduate courses, so it is convenient to assess the writing skills of L1 and L2 students who are usually taking these classes.

One of the few studies that examined L2 writers' practices through non-academic setting is reported by Armstrong and Retterer (2008). They conducted a case study exploring L2 writing in Spanish through the use of a blog in an intermediate level college Spanish course. Researchers found students communicated effectively through this online venue and engaged in various forms of writing such as informational and persuasive writing via blog writing. Students wrote extensively on the blog and utilized a variety of vocabulary and tenses to express themselves, and demonstrated significant improvement in the use of verb forms. Even though the study targeted Spanish learning instead of English, it provides us with the insight that L2 writing can be practiced and improved through online platforms and venues if the intervention is well designed. It leaves much space for future research about L2 writing in English through various media forms and renovated technology.

Another study regarding L2 writing in a non-academic space was conducted by Ahmed (2013). Ahmed studied first year EFL students in Saudi Arabia in a secondary school. He intended to find out the impact of e-mail writing intervention on the writing skills of EFL students. In the experimental group, writing tasks were communicated by emails between the teacher and students. Students were given e-mail as a platform to conduct and practice their writing skills through brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. The researcher found that participating students enrolled in the e-mail writing program developed their English writing skills in the areas of sentence construction, text organization, and style registration. Ahmed's findings resonate with previous study findings which supported online or computer-

assisted strategies as effective tools of language and literacy instruction (e.g. Gonzalez-Bueno, 1998; Li, 1998).

Choi (2009) also conducted a multiple case study to investigate how a group of Asian high-school adolescents constructed their identities in an after-school literacy club through the activities of reading, discussing and electronic wiki writing about multicultural literature that had personal connections with themselves. Although the study focus was on the identity manifestation of ELLs and the connection to their literacy activities, a safe online space where ELLs could freely post their reflections to their literature reading was provided. This out-of-class space prompted students to think critically and reveal their value systems through writing and commenting on topic questions from the researcher. Participants addressed the issue of being capped with "positive model minority stereotype" which may separate them with other peers in their home and school worlds. They also advocated that it is necessary and important for educators to broaden their understandings about Asian students and their multiple identities through various reading and writing activities.

In addition, Flowerdew and Costley's (2017) recent claim about discipline-specific writing provides us with a fresh perspective regarding academic writing. They indicated the different processes and forms writing in each discipline identifies and represents; they also perceive writing in different disciplines as various approaches to perform different genres, and emphasize culture and context in the process of writing. It provides researchers with a different lens to perceive academic writing which is similar to what Bazerman and Prior (2004) claimed, "to understanding writing, we need to explore the practices that people engage in to produce texts as well as the ways that writing practices gain their meanings and functions as dynamic elements of specific cultural settings" (p. 2). Flowerdew and Costley's perception about

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academic writing extends the traditional understanding about academic writing and add culture and context to each specific discipline or content area. Additionally, as writing context plays a significant role in various writing practices, it demonstrates the potential of academic and disciplinary writing instruction and production by using technology-based non-academic settings such as blogging, Facebooking, Twittering, and E-mailing.

Since multimodal composing has become part of popular writing practices, it is important to understand its strengths and limitations while being integrated into writing instruction and research. It is also crucial to examine how it supports both L1 and L2 English writers with their writing practices. In the next section, I focus on the strengths and challenges of multimodal composing for both L1 and L2 writers of English.

Strengths and Challenges of Multimodal Composing

Strengths of Multimodal Composing for L1 English Writers

Multimodal composing has been utilized to be integrated with writing instruction in the classroom. In a study conducted by Bogard and McMackin (2012), the researchers found that the third graders (native speakers of English) in a New England public school actively engaged in using digital technology to document their learning through creating digital stories, which provided the researchers with the opportunity to reflect on their metacognitive processes and new understandings of learning in an early age. Students went through a few steps such as planning, developing stories based on their oral recording as well as creating story maps and graphics and story boards to help them think through the process of meaning making. They drew stories, discussed the stories, and listened to their own taped stories. They developed critical thinking through listening to their own stories, visualizing the text through judging whether or not they

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need to add or delete certain parts to make their digital stories more meaningful. This method engaged emerging writers in their composing by providing them with the opportunity of writing creatively, digitally and critically. It also showed the readers a vivid picture of what literacy learning and being literate could look like in the 21st century.

In this technology mediated world, the use of multiple meaning making modes with the combination of digital tools not only affect the literacy learning experiences of L1 young children (e.g. Bogard & McMackin, 2012), adolescents, and young adults at school but also inevitably impact the literacy learning practices of L1 English users at home (e.g. Flottemesch, 2013; Wong, 2015).

New technology and digital devices have brought new possibilities for young children to engage in daily activities as well as participating in literacy learning in a home setting. Wong (2015) conducted a qualitative study examining young children's (age 3-5) engagement in multiliteracy practices independently as well as collaboratively in western Canada and southern Australia. Participants included six Canadian and four Australian families with diverse economic backgrounds but with English as the primary language used at home. The researcher focused on the learning environment, children's interactional relationship with family members while examining the learning phenomena when children engaged with digital devices such as iPad, tablet or computer. The researcher found that parents' positive feedback and encouraging reaction gave confidence to their children and motivated their learning. The process showed how children developed their emerging literacy abilities through everyday interaction and operation with multimodal and digital tools.

An interesting finding from this study was that children's use of technology and digital tools depended largely on parents' attitudes to and interaction with these digital tools themselves

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rather than on their economic affordance or family structure. In other words, parents who tended to adapt new technology themselves and were dependent on these technologies were more competent in operating digital devices, and more comfortable of opening up the digital space for their children to gain knowledge from using the technology. In contrast, parents who are reluctant to adapt new technology or permit limited interaction of their children with digital tools usually turned out to worry more about the safety of their children engaging with digital devices; therefore, their children gained less experience and knowledge from using technology. Even though children who participated in this study improved literacy skills in social, cultural and critical aspects through interactions with multilieracy practices, the data collected through interviewing and having conversation with these children were not truly reliable since some of the children did not participate actively in conversation with the researcher and some of the questions were answered by their parents. In this case, studies could focus on children who can freely and clearly express themselves which would enrich the data and improve the credibility of the study.

Another study captured the multimodal composing practices of university students at home with family members. Flottemesch (2013) examined the impact of utilizing various modalities to make multimodal stories in the class project to capture family stories and establish intergenerational relationships. This study selected college undergraduate students from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds in the US. Students were assigned to interview family members from another generation and compose a digital story based on the interview. Through the conversation and interaction with family members, students gained deeper understanding of the subject matter. The creation of digital stories also inspired the appreciation and mutual respect among family members and for the content knowledge learned from this process. Although this

study did not touch on the actual learning activities that were going on among family members such as parents reading to the children or facilitating with homework, this study brought a vivid example of how the use of multimodal storytelling nurtures learning outside of the classroom and bridges the possibilities of literacy learning between school and home. At the same time, it provided tight connections among family members through the engagement of constant dialogue and appreciation.

The above studies investigated the benefits L1 users received from participating in different multimodal composing projects at school and at the home settings. By understanding how L1 English users compose multimodally at both academic and family settings will extend my insight into perceiving multimodal composing practices at various social and cultural contexts. In the following section, I review literature that addresses the benefits L2 learners obtain from engaging in a variety of multimodal composing activities. This section covers studies focusing on how multimodal composing and literacy activities at school, at home and in the community help support literacy learning of L2 learners with varied age levels in both English as a foreign language (EFL) context and English as a second language (ESL) context.

Multimodal Composing with L2 Writers

Multimodal composing has changed the way of teaching and learning dramatically. My coursework interview with elementary English language arts teachers indicated that multimodal storytelling is an entry way for 4th grade ELLs to learn English in the English as a Second Language (ESL) and the mainstream classroom. ELLs are not under the pressure of writing a formulaic five-paragraph essay when their writing skills are not proficient enough; instead, they are given an entry way to learn how to express themselves, write their ideas down in simple text and attach multiple modes to their text to interpret what they attempt to indicate in the written

text. In the following section, I first address multimodal composing taking place in the settings where English is taught as a foreign language (EFL).

Multimodal Composing in EFL Settings. Duveskog, Tedre, Sedano and Sutinen (2012) conducted a qualitative case study investigating the use of computer technology and digital storytelling as self-directed and student-centered strategy on students' expression of life obstacles, and challenges as well as solutions to these troubles and life difficulties in a primary school in rural Tanzania. Researchers intended to examine how the process of story creation helped students develop their literacy skills and insights. 17 participants aged from 11 to 15 joined the workshop and worked both independently and collaboratively to create story context, background, and storyline. Upon comparing the effects of digital storytelling and traditional storytelling, researchers found that digital storytelling has all the advantages that traditional storytelling has but also has additional advantages that traditional storytelling does not have such as "provide a virtual platform for oral tradition" (p. 233). Students were found to be motivated when participating in the process of creating digital stories and solving problems discussed in their stories. Their talents could be better expressed based on their own liking. Students felt safer to share their stories in groups since everyone was involved and assigned a role in the composing process. Furthermore, their creativity, imagination and concentration were enhanced as well. Even though the technical issues encountered by participants caused unexpected problems, they took it as a learning process through actively solving problems with the researchers. The story topics students were asked to create connected well with the local context and students' life so that they learned not only the process of making digital stories but also real-life experience of solving problems.

In another study, Boivin, Albakri, Yunus, Mohammed and Muniandy (2014) conducted a case study using mixed-methods approach investigating the implication of multimodal literacy practices in social settings. A literacy event which incorporated social and multiliteracy practices was designed to involve all the participants including EFL children from preschool to middle primary school, parents, grandparents and other relatives from working class families. The multimodal literacy activity event highlighted the use of songs, videos, storytelling, cartoon and craft making as well as gestures to demonstrate the various types of literacies. Children all enjoyed the one-day event and actively participated in all the activities through games, group collaboration, and storybook reading etc. Data collected from quantitative questionnaire and qualitative interview showed that parents agreed with the power of utilizing multimodal elements and technology as effective literacy practices. They accepted their lack of understanding about social literacy constrained the literacy learning of their children at home. They would like to participate more and embed the multimodal literacy practices in their children's daily lives. Although this study invited participants of family members not limited to parents, it did not draw too much on non-parents' participation in the literacy events. Also, since the literacy practices in this study were mostly about hands-on craft making and oral storytelling, more studies could be done to focus on the L2 writing practice through the use of multimodal literacy activities.

Hung, Hwang and Huang (2012) applied a quantitative approach to study the effects of digital storytelling on the experience of project-based learning of Taiwanese elementary school EFL students on a science project. Students were involved in the process of taking pictures, developing their stories based on the pictures taken, producing a video based on their stories and finally presenting the stories. Results from this quasi-experimental study indicated that project-based learning incorporated with the aspect of digital storytelling engaged students more than the

conventional project-based learning activities such as assigning tasks and presenting results. In addition, this innovative approach also enhanced EFL students' learning motivation for science, problem-solving ability as well as achievement of learning. Although this study successfully tested the effectiveness of adopting digital storytelling in improving EFL students' learning achievement, the study was limited in that the digital story software adopted in this study guided the students to produce the videos using a step-by-step procedure; therefore, more experiments are needed to investigate the effectiveness of using other software through which students are given autonomy to make their own decisions. Moreover, students with different cognitive and learning styles need to be considered in quantitative studies.

Alcantud-Díaz and Gregori-Signes (2014) investigated the effects of implementing digital storytelling in the practical English classes of Tourism in a university curriculum in Spain. Researchers found that students improved in their speaking, writing as well as their researching skills under the assistance of computers. In addition, their traditional skills and sense of collaboration had also been improved. The limitation of this study may be due to the fact that a tutorial which trained students in how to make digital stories was not officially implemented which means instruction of using the software was not sufficiently provided so that the quality of recorded voices, images appeared in the digital stories did not turn out well. In addition, the time given to students to work on the digital project was very limited so that some students complained about the constraint of time. This indicated that researchers and classroom teachers need to be student-centered and consider both learners' needs and challenges while implementing innovative literacy interventions.

Studies have shown the differences of ELLs' achievement between the use of traditional lecture-type instruction and use of digital storytelling (DST) as the major instructional strategy.

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For instance, Yang and Wu (2012) conducted a year-long quasi-experimental study investigating Chinese high school EFL students on the impact of DST on their academic achievement, critical thinking, and learning motivation. Findings from the quasi-experimental design indicated that DST participants significantly outperformed lecture-type participants in the aspects of their English achievement, critical thinking, and learning motivation. The interviews conducted with classroom teachers and students also showed the important educational value of DST, as they reported that DST increased students' understanding of course content, willingness to explore, and ability to think critically. Although this study adopted both quantitative and qualitative methods in data collection, the non-standardized, self-designed instrument which was used to test EFLs' English achievement undermined the validity of the study findings. Specifically, the interview conducted with students and teachers addressed this issue and also the imperative to not only consider collaborative learning but also to pay attention to learners' individual role in the learning process.

Yang (2012) conducted a qualitative case study exploring two undergraduate English language learners in southern Taiwan. These two ELLs selected a variety of multimodal semiotic resources such as voiceover, images, background music, animated texts, and special effects while composing their digital narratives. By analyzing their digital storytelling projects and their personal crafting process in an undergraduate composing course, the researcher found that multimodal resources selected by participants in their multimodal digital storytelling project were guided by individuals' intents. In other words, the multimodal semiotic resources selected were based on the character's emotional changes and represented his/her varied voices. Additionally, participants in this study "experienced imagination and re-imagination when assigning meaning to the semiotic resources used in their digital stories" (p. 221). The multiple

modes selected also indicated the story designers' intention to grasp audience's attention and comprehension. These digital stories composed by these two ELL participants opened the window for the researcher to see through the thinking process of English language learners as multimodal story designers. One of the limitations of this study was that participants were selected from the class the researcher was instructing so researcher's role and subjectivity may have affected the validity of data and the process of conducting the study.

Xu, Park and Baek (2011) conducted a quantitative study exploring the effects of "writing for digital storytelling on writing self-efficacy and on flow in the virtual reality learning environment known as Second Life" (p. 181). Sixty-four undergraduate university EFL students in South Korea were investigated with one group creating their digital stories in Second Life and the other creating their digital stories off-line utilizing the software Windows Movie Maker. The experimental group went through several steps of being introduced to the software, to digital storytelling, brainstorming their stories, writing the stories, creating stories in Second Life, and sharing their stories in groups as well as in the class. The experiment results showed that digital storytelling conducted in a virtual space was less restrictive and stimulated more creative writing. Therefore, it is more effective than digital storytelling off-line. This study displayed how to use digital technology and virtual space to teach L2 writing. Students benefited from composing in the virtual world since they were less restrained to time and space, their imagination and creativity were highly stimulated, they were free to correct their mistakes, and to arrange and rearrange their thinking a logical way.

Thus far, a large number of studies regarding multimodal composing have been conducted among Asian ELLs; however, Bou-Franch (2012) conducted a study focusing on digital stories produced by Spanish undergraduates of English Studies in the US. The researcher

found that students used several multimodal discourse strategies such as direct and indirect statements, attaching figures to the factual text, and the academic use of narratives. Moreover, these digital stories also revealed students' use of multimodal semiotic modes to express meanings and converse with audiences. This study showcases the facilitating characteristics of multimodal literacy practices to the language learning process of Spanish speaking ELLs.

Torres, Ponce and Pastor (2012) studied the usefulness of implementing digital storytelling pedagogically on generation of EFL students' learning interest and attention as well as on their development of linguistic skills through a didactic sequence. After working with first year undergraduate students in College of Education at the University de València in Spain to help them make progress in their oral language skills, build their daily conversations and linguistic routines. Through successfully completing 7 workshops, students were finally asked to compose their own digital stories using these linguistic routines they have practiced which consisted of both dialogue and narrative in the form of introduction, conflict and solution as the final project to close the workshop. Researchers found that students' utilization of linguistic routines such as expressions of greetings and leave-takings had been improved through the production of digital stories. Additionally, results showed their improved use of various expressions and complex sentence structures to initiate and end a conversation. Moreover, students' independent as well as collaborative learning had also been developed. They also devoted more intention and motivation to this project. This study well demonstrated how digital storytelling could be used as a pedagogical tool of teaching English as a foreign language. Since this study focused on the development of speaking skills, future inquiry could explore the effects of digital storytelling on the reading, writing or the combination of all the areas' development of EFL students.

These studies utilized both qualitative and quantitative approaches to capture the advantages of implementing multimodal composing practices to engage L2 English learners. In particular, multimodal composing provides learners with an entry way to connect multiple modes to the content of their learning. Students were involved in higher level thinking while combining text with multimodal elements. Additionally, multimodal composing promoted students' learning motivation as well as problem-solving abilities. In the following session, I will review literature regarding the application of multimodal composing to L2 English learners in the context where English is taught as a second language.

Multimodal Composing in ESL Contexts. One of the digital composing projects engaged with English learners from a college-based intensive English program in the US was implemented by Rance-Roney (2008) in her college elective course on American culture. She used digital storytelling as the vehicle to practice L2 students' reading, writing, and speaking skills. She perceived digital narratives as a meaningful practice of literacy learning since it involves a variety of literacy activities such as compose the narrative, rewrite the narrative into a script, record the script using ones' own voices and accurate English expression, listen to ones' recording and judge the quality and understandability of the script. After polishing the script, students need to bring in images, sound effects, and other multimodal resources that can be appreciated and understood across cultures. She viewed digital composing not as a linear process; instead, it requires writing, editing, rewriting, a lot of higher level thinking, problem solving, and decision making. These international students learned English through their own practices of speaking, reading, and writing using multimodal resources. The end-project presentation also gave English learners a great opportunity to showcase the literacy skills they have learned by sharing with peers, families and friends their critical life stories.

Angay-Crowder, Choi and Yi (2013) examined the effects of implementing digital storytelling as a teaching intervention on Spanish-speaking L2 middle school English learners in a summer program in the US using a qualitative approach. Researchers utilized digital storytelling as a multiliteracy pedagogy to engage students in their literacy composition and identity construction. Researchers designed 7 sessions to engage 12 multilingual digital storytellers focusing on the four components of multiliteracies: "situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformative practice" (p. 36). Study findings indicated that these incorporated multimodal practices helped students improve their way of expression in their literacy development activities. In addition, both text-based and computer-assisted multimodal composing were found to be helpful in that both of these practices expanded students' capacity of expression and literacy repertoire. Furthermore, students' leadership skills were also developed while they conducted teamwork and collaborated in setting up goals and looking for helpful resources. This process also positively constructed their social identities. However, the pedagogical approach utilized in the summer program may not be applicable to L2 language and literacy instructors who often face constraints with time, resources, and rigid curriculum.

Shin and Cimasko (2008) conducted a qualitative study focusing on a multimodal writing research in a freshman ESL composition class in a mid-western U.S. university. This mandated course consisted of 14 undergraduate students with diverse L1 background (3 from India, 3 from South Korea, 1 each from Brazil, China, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Indonesia and Japan, Pakistan and Taiwan). The majority of data came from the multimodal argumentative compositions. Findings showed that participants preferred to utilize "objective" print-based linguistic design rather than "subjective" multimodal non-linguistic design to approach their writing task. It was also found that students were reluctant to accept the production of

multimodal text to approach their argumentative writing, which may due to the instructional approach and the context this multimodal composing project took place. The writing instructor encouraged multimodal approach, the traditional form of argumentative writing was emphasized and provided with feedback before students started to apply multimodal non-linguistic modes to compose this project. This study is one of the few studies that explored the effects of multimodal composing through academic writing (argumentation). It also showcased the self-selection process of L2 writers when they had to decide and prioritize between linguistic and non-linguistic approaches of composing. It indicated that the attitude and instructional orientation of teachers can also affect the choice of linguistic orientation of L2 writers.

Summary. The reviewed literature examined the literacy learning experiences of school children, adolescents and young adults through their engagement with multimodal composing practices. These multimodal practices include but are not limited to class projects, and literacy programs conducted in the workshop space. However, research studies focusing on the literacy instruction of university ELLs from IEP were only a few, not to mention the study of writing instruction and particularly writing instruction incorporating multimodal methods. Additionally, multimodal literacy practices were not only utilized as instructional strategies, but also used as an approach to investigate ELLs' inner world to find out how their identities are portrayed and enacted by engaging in multimodal writing practices. In the following section, I will review literature which targets the representation of ELLs' identities through participating in various multimodal composing projects.

Studies conducted on ELLs learning English as a foreign language (EFL) or learning English as a second language (ESL) all revealed that multimodal composing played an effective role as a pedagogical or instructional strategy to language and literacy learning for the ELLs

under investigation. These studies demonstrated specific cases of how ELLs actively, enthusiastically engaged in the multimodal literacy practices and how these practices positively impacted their literacy repertoire, critical thinking, creativity, learning motivation as well as their leadership skills. The review of L2 writers' multimodal composing practices in both EFL and ESL settings provide me with a holistic understanding of how L2 writers compose multimodally in various social, cultural and linguistic contexts, which strikes my contextual awareness in my current study. However, issues and challenges do exist in multimodal composing research. In the following section, I switch the discussion topic and articulate issues and obstacles in multimodal composing practice itself and in multimodal composing research in particular as well as addressing possible solutions to cope with the existing issues.

Challenges, Issues and Possible Solutions in Multimodal Composing

Challenges and Issues in Multimodal Composing. Based on the review of research on multimodal composing, some of the challenges came from the specific studies themselves and some are common problems for research in multimodal composing usually during the process of designing and conducting the research. In general, it seems that studies in multimodal composing (multimodal narratives, multimodal storytelling or multimodal digital storytelling) all face the challenge of preparing participants for the studies since many of the participants lack the knowledge of how to compose multimodally or compose multimodally and digitally. To deal with this issue, a workshop can be held at the opening of the study to give participants an orientation of what the study is about and how to use digital devices to compose multimodally. One exception is the study conducted by Mina (2014). In her study, she investigated three international multilingual students' multimodal narratives and how their identities were enacted through their multimodal digital stories. There was no workshop or orientation mentioned in the

study and it might be based on the researcher's understanding that these students have already acquired some basic technology to compose multimodal stories by using available technology.

Another common issue confronting the researchers designing and conducting multimodal composing studies is the amount of data generated from various resources. Due to this, researchers usually choose to study the product, which is the final multimodal compositions participants create. There are a few exceptions. For instance, Vasudevan, Schultz, and Bateman (2010) investigated the multimodal composing practices of a class of fifth graders and intended to find out how these students developed their literate identities through the engagement of multimodal composing practices. The researchers studied both the process, which is their multimodal composing steps, procedures and their ideas of composing, and the product, which is their final multimodal compositions. Even though the article only focused on two student cases, the prolonged time researchers spent with these students had generated a large amount of data. In another qualitative case study conducted by Mantegna (2013), the researcher stated the issue of being overwhelmed by the huge volume of data since she also studied both the process and the product of participants' digital compositions. She finally chose to focus on three student pairs to do her data analysis.

In some other studies, researchers addressed some particular challenges in their specific research. For instance, in Yang's (2012) study investigating two English language learners' digital storytelling project, the researcher raised the issue of copyright and plagiarism of multimodal resources collected from the Internet and other media. She believed *copyright* is hard to be defined and differentiated. Whether these practices are plagiarism or re-creation is a disputable topic in the context of multimodal literacy practices. Vasudevan, Schultz and Bateman

(2010) addressed the dilemma researchers faced in the study. On the one hand, researchers needed to play the role of observers to document students' activities; on the other hand, they also had to facilitate and lead the literacy activities in which students engaged. This challenge distracted them from focusing on the major jobs of observing and recording. For studies that researchers did not participate in the literacy activities but invited participating classroom teachers, challenges also emerged in that teachers were not proficient in using the multimodal composing software and other multimedia editing tools or lack the knowledge related to visual and linguistic signs (Shanahan, 2013). Given this, teachers could not provide technical support or to troubleshoot technical or metalanguage issues to facilitate students' digital story making process.

Except for insufficient mastery of technology skills, time is another concern for teachers (Yi & Choi, 2015). Similarly, in Sadik's (2008) study attempting to implement digital technology to assist Egyptian teachers' curriculum instruction and students' learning, most teachers reported that integrating digital storytelling approach increased the time to prepare their lessons and students also spent longer time engaging in digital storytelling project. Teachers also expressed their concern about the quality of students' work since most of their work lacked variety of multimodal resources and information types. Most students only used pictures, texts and personal narration. This may due to the reason that students are used to text-based writing and only add convenient modes and transfer their writing pieces into multimodal compositions after completing the print-based text.

In a more recent study conducted by DePalma and Alexander (2015), researchers reported several challenges encountered by university undergraduate and graduate multimodal composers from a private religious institution in the U.S. It was found that students' rhetorical

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knowledge in their print-based writing was adopted to conduct multimodal composing practices. Due to this reason, they faced challenges in terms of deciding which aspects of print-based writing knowledge can be transferred to multimodal composing to create sophisticated multimodal compositions for diverse audiences. They also encountered difficulties when determining the types of multimodal resources to add, change or avoid when shifting from print-based writing to multimodal text. The stage of editing and revising were also reported as a challenge for most of the students. Finally, technology was reported as an issue since a lot of multimodal composers did not expect the significant role of technology in the process of multimodal composing so they were not well prepared when actually working on the project.

In general, multimodal composing poses a set of questions including but are not limited to its challenges to L1 and L2 writers, to classroom writing instructors as well as to writing program administrators (Bowen & Whithaus, 2013). To be specific, multimodal composers have to be critical thinkers to make their own choices about what multimodal resources to use, how to compose a multimodal text as well as how to present the text to appropriate audiences. In addition, classroom writing teachers need to rethink and reassign writing tasks that include multimodal forms of composing that is less formulaic, less serious but more authentic and entertaining. To writing program administrators, it is challenge in that they need to ensure a space for teachers and students "to explore the potentials of multimodal composing without losing the programmatic structures that facilitate the development of discrete writing skills" (Bowen, 2013, p. 9).

Possible Solutions. In order to address previously mentioned challenges and issues in multimodal composing research, actions can be taken to respond to some of the challenges. Except for organizing a workshop for participants to receive an orientation on how to manage

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digital devices or how to compose in a multimodal way, to deal with the issue of data management and analysis, researchers can analyze data based on certain cases instead of analyzing all data sets. It may reduce the workload of researchers and allow them to focus on specific cases and provide readers with a more comprehensive description and report of the study process and findings. To cope with the problem of teachers not proficient in incorporating digital technology in their classroom instruction and not able to provide necessary support to students to troubleshoot their problems in digital composing, technology training or professional development workshops with the theme of managing digital technology to assist classroom instruction can be provided to general teacher population. In this case, when teachers are invited to participate in a multimodal composing study, it is less likely that they have a difficult time learning and figuring out how to manage digital devices and provide foundational support for students. Finally, the issue of whether or not downloading and obtaining resources from the Internet violates copyright and the law of plagiarism is a debatable topic. Even though digital composition authors change or re-create the obtained resources, the original authors and their work must be acknowledged and respected regardless. A common regulation or digital media law is needed to monitor digital and multimodal composers' practices.

I have reviewed substantial literature to address the challenges of English writing in general, and strengths and challenges of L2 English writing in both academic and non-academic areas. I have also reviewed studies addressing the issues in multimodal composing and the benefits to L1 and L2 writers' literacy learning experiences. In the following section, I shift to discuss the non-literacy aspects of writing, which is to demonstrate writers' identities and represent who they are while being situated in various academic, social and cultural contexts when participating in different writing activities.

Writing as Identity Expression and Self Representation

Writing as Identity Expression for L1 English Writers

Writing is a complicated process which involves mental, cognitive, as well as social and cultural activities. Writing in L1 seems to be less challenging since it is the native language that has been used since birth. However, writing is considered more as a high-level literate activity that is difficult to achieve proficiency for both L1 and L2 English writers (e.g. Staples & Reppen, 2016). During the process of writing, writers negotiate and express their ways of perceiving themselves as well as the way they expect readers to understand them. This process of negotiating and representing self-perception develops and varies in each writing task. Additionally, people's "identities are not intrinsic or separate from social contexts and interactions; rather they are embodied and enacted in practice" (Vasudevan et. al, 2010, p. 445). In this respect, writers' literate identities are shifted while they engage in various writing practices in different contexts.

Seban & Tavsanli (2015) studied how 2nd grade writers gradually formed their literacy understanding and demonstrated writers' identities during their first-time engagement in a writing workshop in an urban elementary school in the US. This year-long qualitative study investigated 27 second graders through collecting interview data at the end of the school year. Process writing in which participants drafted, edited, shared and published their writing pieces was adopted as the approach to engage students with their writing practices. It was found that participating children's literate identities were gradually developed in the process of reading, writing and engaging in relevant literacy activities. Students' perception about themselves being successful, average and struggling writers also affected their role of engaging in various literacy activities and as a result, shaped their literate identity construction. This study focused on one

aspect of identity depiction -- literate identity depiction, which is one of the most influential identities in students' life experiences. Also, current study findings only draw on the students' literacy practices in a writing workshop. Literacy activities that take place at home and in the community can also shape or reshape students' literate identities. In addition, there is much space for further studies to investigate different literate activities such as multimodal writing that foster multi-dimensional thinking and literacy abilities of writers.

Olinger (2011) investigated the "discoursal identity" of a group of undergraduate writers who enrolled in a first-year writing class in a U.S. university. The researcher examined and analyzed students' negotiation of their discoursal identities through the use of the word "discourse". Based on the interviews and field notes taken from group work, it was found that these college students' identities were enacted in close relation to the use of the word "discourse". For instance, teachers read this word, good students used the word frequently, and other students tried not to use the word in order not to "show off". This study exemplified how college L1 English writers revealed identities through the examination of their interaction with certain terms and concepts. These interactive activities included group work conversations as well as essay writing practices.

Based on the literature reviewed, L1 English writers negotiated, expressed and enacted identities through a variety of literacy activities in different social and literate contexts. In the following section, I review literature focusing on the investigation of identity representation for L2 writers of English.

Writing as Identity Representation for L2 Writers of English

Similar to L1 writing in English, writing in English reveals the voices and identities of L2 writers as well. For instance, Yi (2013) investigated a high school multilingual writer's identity negotiation and strategies to approach academic writing through a longitudinal case study conducted in a U.S. Midwestern city. Through the analysis of various data collected from interviews, observations, field notes, and literacy artifacts, Yi found that this L1 Korean ESL student portrayed his academic achiever identity and multiple ESL-student identities through his academic writing practices. He also demonstrated several "survival strategies" such as avoid taking literacy demanding courses through participating in school activities. These strategies were considered as "double-edged sword" to help the student gain a high GPA on the one hand, but on the other hand, prevented him from participating in authentic literacy engaging activities. This study detailed how multiple identities were evidenced on a multilingual student through his engagement with academic writing experiences. From this L2 multilingual writers' experience, it was suggested that writing related feedback and discussion should include not only the correction of mechanical errors such as misspelling or misuse of vocabulary, but the "how" and "why" regarding writing styles, genres and discourses.

In another study conducted by Maguire and Graves (2001), researchers explored the relationship between L2 writing and ESL students' identity expression through the examination of participants' journal writing. Specifically, this study investigated how three elementary school Muslim girls' journal writing experiences in English as their third language in a Canadian urban school. Researchers focused on language, culture and their interaction in the depiction of writers' identities. It was found that journal writing can play the role of expressing writers' ideas, private thoughts as well as psychological issues. Journal writing has its social as well as its literacy

functions if accepted and utilized in literacy classrooms. This study reveals the sociocultural aspects of writing and its impact on writers' personality, academic discourse and identity representation. It inspires future studies in examining both the social and cultural aspects of writing practices as well as its impact to writers' shaping and reshaping of identities.

In a recent study conducted by Bhowmil (2016), the researcher examined how identity and agency played their roles in a U. S. university L2 writing class. The researcher investigated 31 international L2 writers from 12 different countries. The findings displayed that L2 writers' identities were enacted through how teachers labeled them and how they preferred to be labeled while they engaged in various writing activities. At the same time, L2 writers' self-perception also affect their writing practices. Agency was also found as an important factor to determine the reaction, performance and investment in a particular writing task. The findings implied that L2 writers' perception about selves gradually changed during the participating process of the writing assignment. Both agency and identity directed L2 writers towards the use of writing strategies, making writing choices, and applied a variety of lived experiences to their writing practices. This study investigated agency and identity expression of L2 writers in the context of a writing classroom. It showcased the important roles agency and identity played when L2 writers engaged in composing as well as revising. More importantly, agency and identity were enacted, evolved and sustained during the writing activities.

After the review of literature addressing the topic of identity depiction and representation through L1 and L2 writers' traditional print-based writing experiences, I discuss next how L1 and L2 writers' various identities are portrayed through engaging in multimodal composing activities, and how their identities are enacted through their multimodal composing practices of various kinds.

Multimodal Composing as Identity Representation

Multimodal Composing as Identity Expression for L1 Writers of English

Multimodal composing plays the role of portraying identities for writers with diverse social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Particularly, it provides an approach to understand marginalized populations as well as minority groups in terms of who they are and how they perceive themselves in their specifically situated environment. As an emerging genre of writing, multimodal composing represents substantially writers' ownership to the multimodal text since writers have to determine the materials to use, the resources to be referred to, and the forms of presentation to targeted audiences. For instance, Wake (2012) studied rural middle school students in the Southeast United States. Her exploration of their identities in the rural contexts through the practice of multimodal storytelling indicated that "the rural nature of the participants' communities had a significant impact on their identity formation and understanding of community. This study supported students' use of technology to promote exploration of identity within geographic and sociological settings" (p. 23).

Moreover, Shin and Cimasko (2008) also indicate that multimodal composing allows for better communication of knowledge and expression of personal identities through various modes of representation. Students would be able to use non-linguistic modes to project cultural and national identities and to express emotional connections with their topics. In addition, Hull and Katz (2006) conducted a longitudinal multimodal storytelling study focusing on two emerging writers- a child and a young adult, who used multimodal stories to describe and reflect on their significant life moments. The participants established "supportive social relationships" through their multimodal project; e.g. with famous figures, with ordinary people from the neighborhood, with family, and with new friends. The researchers found that one of the participants was

building a positive sense of self, which was quite different from one of the identities this student was labeled by others at school, where she was perceived as unmotivated and lazy.

Krause (2015) described how her children participated in the process of multimodal journal composing and negotiated meaning and built their knowledge of both print-based writing as well as utilizing a variety of visual, audio and graphic modes to enhance their knowledge of multimodal composing. She found that at the end of their multimodal composing process, her children were able to create audience-engaged multimodal text. More importantly, her children developed a sense of ownership through self-selection of materials and multimodal resources, a sense of authenticity to learning through their composing process, and a sense of engagement with their composing tasks. This study exemplifies how young children engage in authentic literacy learning activities through composing multimodal journal at home, and evokes the reconceptualization of literacy learning and authentic practices in classrooms.

Multimodal Composing as Identity Demonstration for L2 Learners of English

My target informants in this study are ELLs with various first language backgrounds. These international multilingual students also come from different cultural and social backgrounds. When they are creating multimodal narratives, there are lots of modes that can be related to their heritage culture and may be used to express themselves and their identities such as images, music, animation, sound effects etc. The selection of various modes can represent their values, beliefs as well as their cultural identities. Students purposely mingle different modes as representation of themselves that can reflect their race, gender, ethnicity, origin and many other characteristics during the process of composing multimodal texts. Students are self-motivated when creating multimodal compositions since they are allowed to use multimodal resources that they are interested in and familiar with and they should feel comfortable to express

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themselves through telling and sharing their own life stories in multimodal forms. ELLs' mental world, their values, conception, and their recognition of the world were revealed from the multimodal texts they made since multimodal products consist of students' negotiation and final decisions of selection and application of multiple modes.

In her dissertation study, Mantegna (2013) focused on understanding the digital composing process and product of high school L2 English learners. This qualitative case study applied the theory of identity and voice as one of the theoretical frameworks. Mantegna conducted a macro level examination of the videos composed by three student pairs, focusing her analysis on four communicative modes/categories: *visual, human action, movement, and sound,* and examined the density of each mode/category. The researcher then reexamined the three videos at a micro level by intensively analyzing a small portion of each video in a detailed manner using multimodal interaction analysis. The researcher detected four patterns –*less is less, layered modes, less is more and overlapping modes* to guide her micro level analysis of the three video clips. In this case study, the researcher gathered rich data through the investigation of a bounded ESL class of nine ELLs' composing processes with digital videos and their final product of video compositions. The investigation of both *process* and *product* was one of the uniqueness of the study. Through the examination of students' choice of modes, signs and semiotics, identity as a major theme was discovered. In a similar way, by examining the purposeful language use of English learners, various roles such as the role as actor, as camera person or interpreter, different identities were also found through the interview with the students.

Angay-Crowder (2016) conducted a micro-ethnography to investigate how L1 and L2 doctoral students engage in the online literacy practices through the Global Conversations of Literacy Research (GCLR) web seminars. She examined how the four participating doctoral

students (two L1 and two multilingual international students) produce, react, and interact with multimodal texts and establish intertextual connections through the GCLR online community. For one of her research questions, she was looking at how L1 and L2 doctoral students' social and academic identities were constructed or negotiated in the online professional communities-the GCLR web seminar. She theorized identities and discovered several identity related themes such as academic identity, discoursal identity, interdiscursivity and discourse appropriation. It was found that the L2 participants enacted various identities as language learners, junior scholars, as well as L2 researchers and educators.

In another study, Mina (2014) examined three international multilingual college students by collecting and analyzing their multimodal digital narratives. She found that even though those students lived in a foreign culture, they still valued the previous experiences in their home countries and the people with whom they shared those experiences; their cultural identities were represented through their selection, integration and negotiation among multimodal modes and semiotics. The use of various modes and expressions in the local context represent multilingual students' understanding of themselves being in a foreign culture. Additionally, their choices of various semiotics could reveal their ideologies and their self-perceptions about themselves being a "foreigner".

Chapter Summary

According to the literature thus far reviewed, many researchers have investigated the distinctive needs of ELLs in language and literacy learning. Nontraditional innovative language and literacy teaching pedagogies implemented with ELLs have also been examined. Multimodal composing practices such as multimodal storytelling and multimodal digital storytelling have been accepted and applied in many language arts classrooms and travel beyond school walls

across time and spaces to home and community settings. In addition, the power of multimodal composing in expressing, revealing, representing and shifting story tellers' identities have become a popular topic in the literacy field. Researchers are provided with opportunities of not simply investigating the explicit narratives storytellers make, but also penetrating into their cognitive and emotional world through the multimodal depictions to explore the implicit indications and implications of their meaning making processes.

However, studies focusing on the multimodal literacy practices of ELLs in the university IEPs are scarce. Carkin (1997) notices that in reality these programs are marginalized in most university settings. This unfortunate reality is a constraint in the development of these programs; therefore, it cuts the effectiveness of these programs which intend to effectively facilitate ELLs' writing development. Kaplan (1997) also notes that many of the programs are isolated from the university programs. They do not belong to any of the university departments so they are tossed back and forth between departments. Another reason the IEP writing practices are scarcely investigated is that "those who know the field best are not required to publish as a part of their job description, resulting in a lower number of articles about the structure" (Thompson, 2013, p. 213) of the IEP.

Drawing on literature contributing to technology-based, multimodal literacy investigations and their impact on ELLs' language and literacy learning and identity representation, the current study focused on pre-college ELLs' multimodal composing practices. These targeted ELLs have graduated from high schools in their own countries and are currently enrolled in the IEP to prepare themselves in English-speaking, listening, reading and writing to apply in the degree-seeking programs in the same university upon completion of the highest-level courses. Additionally, the current study also focused on how ELLs utilized multimodal

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resources to write about their English learning and writing experiences in their home countries as well as in the U.S. Finally, I would also like to find out how these ELLs' multiple identities are revealed through their multimodal compositions and their self-descriptions while they are living and studying in a foreign culture. In the following chapter, I will discuss participants' selection, data collection and data analysis procedures in details.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In the previous chapter, I reviewed relevant studies that help inform my current study. In this chapter, I will explain in detail how this study was conducted. This study was aimed at examining how ELLs from a university IEP compose multimodally in a multimodal workshop, how their identities are represented through their multimodal compositions as well as their self-descriptions, and what their perceptions are about using multimodal resources to express themselves. I collected data from individual semi-structured interviews, workshop observation notes, participants' multimodal compositions, audio-recorded workshop sessions as well as researcher's log. The three guiding questions in this study are: first, how do ELLs use multimodal resources to write about their experiences of learning English in their home countries as well as in the U.S. in a multimodal composing workshop? Second, how are their identities portrayed in their multimodal compositions and in their self-descriptions? Third, what are their perceptions of using multimodal resources to express themselves? The social semiotic multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) (Jewitt, 2009, 2011a) and grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) analysis methods were used as the major analysis methods.

In the following sections, I explain the method adopted in this study, participant selection processes, context of the study, data collection methods, data management and analysis procedures, researcher's role, ethical considerations, and the trustworthiness of the study.

Rationale for Case Study Method

A qualitative case study was applied to my inquiry. As one of the many forms of social science research, a case study has been defined by Yin (2014) as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (p. 16). According to Merriam (2009), "a *case study* is an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (p. 40). Also, Miles and Huberman (1994) perceive case study as "a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context" (p. 25). They visually present it as a circle with a heart in the center. Obviously, the heart is the center of the study, and the circle "defines the edge of the case: what will not be studied" (p. 25). Given this, my current study, which intends to investigate how ELLs from a university IEP compose multimodally and how their identities are represented through their process and product of multimodal compositions in a multimodal composing workshop in the Fall semester of 2017, confines the boundary of the study in that the participants, the location, and the time spent on conducting the research are all bounded. My case is defined as the multimodal composing workshop where a group of 8 to 12 ELL international multilingual students meet, discuss, and create their individual multimodal compositions and share with the group. Conversations and interactions taking place within the workshop and the complete multimodal compositions/texts are the focus of my study.

As Cresswell (2007) asserts, case study research is a "qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving *multiple sources of information* (e.g. observation, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports)" (p. 73). In this respect, my collection of multiple sources of data by using individual semi-structured interviews,

workshop observation notes, multimodal compositions produced by participants, audio-recorded workshop sessions, as well as the researcher's log will appropriately fit the features of case study.

Except for the above definitions, there are some specific features of qualitative case study. First, qualitative case studies are characterized by being *particularistic,* which means that they "focus on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon" (Merriam, 2009, p. 43). In terms of my current study, the focus on the multimodal composing workshop as a bounded system and the focus on ELL participants typically recruited from a university IEP reveal the particularity of my study.

The second feature of case study is *descriptive*, which means that "the end product of a case study is a rich, 'thick' description of the phenomenon under study" (Merriam, 2009, p. 43). In this study, the interviews conducted are in-depth face-to-face interviews with each of the informants being interviewed twice at the beginning, and after the end of the workshop for 30-45 minutes each. These interviews yield extensive transcribed data. The findings are reported in a comprehensively descriptive way, which includes the narratives of the participants, tables with numbers, major findings from interviews and observation notes, description and interpretation of multimodal texts created by participants and my overall interpretation of data collected and the discussion based on the major findings.

Study Context

In this study, I draw on Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) to describe the types of information needed, information the researcher needs to collect under each type, and the method the researcher intends to use to collect the information.

Table 1. Overview of Information Needed (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 107)

Type of Information	What the Researcher Requires	Method
a. Contextual	Background of institution, mission, values, culture and study site description.	Observation and Document review
b. Demographic	Information about participants: age, gender, ethnicity, native language, cultural traditions.	Survey (See Appendix E)
c. Perceptual	Participants' understanding and their experiences of multimodal composing and their perceptions of it.	Survey and Interview (See Appendix B)
d. Research Question 1. How do ELLs use multimodal resources to write about their experiences of learning English in their home countries and in the U.S. in a multimodal composing workshop?	What does multimodal composing look like on this particular group of ELL participants' writing processes, procedures and products?	Interview, Workshop Sessions and Observation, Multimodal Compositions, Researcher's log.
Research Question 2. How are their identities portrayed in their multimodal compositions and self-descriptions?	Typical features found or indicated from these multimodal texts that represent their identities of being ELLs. The implication of these typical features of these ELLs being in a foreign culture.	
Research Question 3. What are their perceptions of using multimodal resources to express themselves?	Participants' perspectives of using multimodal resources to express themselves in and out of classroom contexts.	

Contextual Information

The Intensive English Program (IEP) in the university is a special program within the Department of Applied Linguistics and ESL. Though dating back to the 1970s, its current iteration as an IEP with a particular focus on the teaching of English for academic purposes was initiated in 1998. The majority of the students in this program at that time came from China, Vietnam, and Saudi Arabia. From the year of 2014, students enrolled in this program started to represent over 40 countries. Students register for classes in five levels based on the placement test they take at the beginning of the program. Once they pass a lower level test, they are eligible to register for higher level courses until they successfully pass the courses at level V. After they pass level V courses, they will have the opportunity to either apply to study in the same university without taking other qualification tests or apply to another university's degree-seeking program with the requirement of taking a language proficiency test.

Demographic Information

In order to display diversity of country of origin, participants from different countries – preferably both females and males — were invited from level IV and level V classes. Based on the IEP assessment standards, the English reading proficiency of level IV students is Flesch-Kincaid grade level 8-10 and the reading proficiency of level V students is equivalent to Flesch-Kincaid grade level 10-12. I chose ELLs from level IV and level V classes to ensure students reading proficiency level is above level 8, which did not prevent them from understanding the study consent form. Since my study is focused on how ELLs utilize multimodal resources to write, I would like to see how the ELL participants engage in writing practices with purposeful selection of multimodal resources and how their identities are represented while they are writing about their experiences of learning English in and out of the U.S.

Table 2. Biographical Information of Participants

Name (Gender)	Country	IEP Level	Age	Time in IEP	Time in the US	Native Language	Number of Sessions Attended	Other Languages Spoken
Dao (M)	Vietnam	V	23	1.5 years	2 years	Vietnamese	8	English, Chinese
Danilo (M)	Columbia	IV	50+	2 months	2 months	Spanish	8	English
Fanghui (F)	China	IV	19	5 months	5 months	Chinese Mandarin	9	English
Sung Min (M)	South Korea	IV	25	3 months	2 years	Korean	9	English
Leyla (F)	Azerbaijan	V	34	10 months	10 months	Azerbaijanian	6	Turkish, Russian, Azeri
Tien (F)	Vietnam	IV	40+	1.5 years	10 years	Vietnamese	7	English, Japanese

Perceptual Information

Before the first workshop session, each participant was interviewed in English initially. The purpose of the initial interview was to have the opportunity to get to know my participants, and at the same time, obtain information about their knowledge of multimodal composing. Also, the purpose of my study and the processes was explained to each of them. They were asked to sign forms of consent. They were also informed that they could opt out the study at any time if they did not want to continue participating. (See Appendix B)

Information to Answer Research Questions

In order to understand how ELLs in a U.S. university IEP use multimodal resources to compose in a multimodal composing workshop and describe how these multimodal practices implemented by these participating ELLs represent their identities while they were studying English in their home countries as well as in the U.S., data was collected through semi-structured interviews conducted before and after the series of workshop sessions to elicit participants' self-description and depiction of their multimodal composing experiences. Also, detailed observation notes were taken while participants were creating multimodal texts, seeking various visual, audio, or other multimodal effects in the process of composing multimodal texts. The analysis of interview data and data collected from the observation notes and researcher's descriptive notes will be able to answer the first research question. Additionally, the completed multimodal compositions were one of the most important data sources. Findings from analyzing these multimodal compositions could answer the first two research questions. Finally, the third research question about participants' perceptions of using multimodal resources to express themselves can be answered by the interview data as well as data collected from conversations and discussions in workshop sessions.

I present the following Figure 2 to display the relationship of my research questions, theoretical frameworks and the data sources to answer each research question. As shown in the figure, question 1 and question 3 can be looked at through the lens of multimodality and be answered by various data sources listed following the direction of the arrow with the same color. However, to answer question 2, sociocultural and literate identities theory was the framework through which the question could be looked at; semi-structured interviews and participants' multimodal compositions were the targeted data sources to help answer the question.

Figure 2. Relationships of Research Questions, Theoretical Frames and Data Sources

Q1: How do ELLs use multimodal resources to write about their English learning experiences in their home countries as well as in the U.S.?

Q3: What are ELLs' perceptions of using multimodal resources to express themselves?

Q2: How are ELLs' identities portrayed in their multimodal compositions and their self-descriptions?

Theoretical frame: Multimodality

Theoretical frame: Sociocultural and literate identities theory

Data sources:
Observation notes;
Video recording of workshop sessions;
Multimodal compositions;
Researcher's log

Data sources:
Semi-structured interviews;
Video recording of workshop sessions;
Researcher's log

Data sources:
Semi-structured interviews;
Multimodal compositions

Research Design

A qualitative case study is designed for my current inquiry. A 10-session 5-week long multimodal composing workshop was conducted in a computer lab in the university. A group of 6 ELLs from a university IEP were invited to participate. In the workshops, participants used multimodal resources they selected to write about their experiences of learning English in their home countries as well as in the U.S. in and out of the classrooms, and shared their multimodal compositions with other participants in the group. I will describe how participants were recruited in the following session.

Participant Selection

A group of 6 participants from an Intensive English Program (IEP) in a southeastern university were invited to participate in this study. These participants are non-native speakers of English from various social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, who came to the U.S. to pursue their higher education degrees. They were placed in the IEP to receive intensive training of academic English and prepare themselves to be qualified to apply for the regular degree-seeking program offered in the same university. There were three criteria for participant recruitment: first, they need to be non-native speakers of English and have been learning English as an additional language; second, they should have never studied in a high school or higher education institution in an English-speaking country where English is utilized as the dominant language of instruction before enrolling in the Intensive English Program; third, they should be current active students from level IV or level V in the IEP. For the purpose of gender balance, both male and female participants were recruited based on their satisfaction of the above criteria. (See Appendix A for the participant-recruiting flyer).

My intent of choosing pre-college level ELLs was based on my personal experience of teaching pre-college and college level English to native speakers of Chinese. I had implemented multimodal resources such as images, sound effects, music and videos in my teaching of English reading and writing in a Chinese university. Students were found to be engaged in class activities and devoted to writing assignments. Based on my experience, I would like to integrate multimodality in the writing practices of international multilingual students and examine how they use multimodal resources to write about their experiences of learning English in their home countries as well as in the U.S. In addition, the trend of English globalization and technology and multimedia saturation has brought the assumption that ELLs from all parts of the world should

have some experience of reading and writing multimodal texts that enable them to participate in conversations and multimodal composing activities. Given this, I would like to explore how they compose multimodal texts on topics of *their experiences of learning English back in their home countries in the classrooms as well as out of the classrooms*, *their experiences of learning English in the U.S. in the classrooms as well as out of the classrooms,* and how they portrayed who they are in their multimodal compositions and their self-descriptions.

Recruitment of Participants

This study is designed to explore how ELLs in a university IEP use multimodal resources to write about their English learning experiences and how their identities are represented through their multimodal compositions. Before recruiting participants, I secured IRB approval for this study. Once the study was approved, I started to recruit participants using the following procedures: 1) I contacted the IEP coordinator and obtained some general information about the program and sought permission to talk about my study to IEP students. 2) I emailed the IEP level IV and Level V instructors to get permission to talk about my study in their classes. 3) I went to 4 Level IV and 2 level V writing classes upon the instructors' approval to talk to students about my study in these classes. 4) In each IEP classes, I explained the study purposes, procedures and benefits of participating in the study. 5) I also handed out flyers in class to provide more information about the study. 6) At the same time of handing out flyers, I handed out the study consent form and the information flyer to all and told students to sign it if they were interested in participating. 7) I went back to these classes to collect all consent forms and the information flyers so neither teachers or students know who had signed or not signed the consent forms. 8) I also waited outside Level IV and Level V classes during their dismissal time to talk to students about my study and recruited a few participants. 9) After I collected the consent forms, I

contacted students to inform them about the details of participating in the study and scheduling the pre-workshop interviews.

I originally recruited nine participants. However, three participants only attended the workshop once so their data were eliminated from the data pool. Participants were international English language learners who came from diverse language backgrounds and who were enrolled in the IEP at the university. Efforts were made to include both male and female participants from level IV and level V classes. Since this is a qualitative study, the number of participants selected would keep my focus on gathering more detailed data from students and providing thick descriptions to increase the credibility of the study. Particularly, the number of participants has been selected (a) to allow for variation in gender, country of origin, language background, and English language literacy abilities of the participants; (b) to ensure the researcher was able to examine in-depth individuals' processes of working with multimodal texts; and (c) to maximize the development of a comfortable and supportive learning community within the workshop context.

Epistemological Stance

Multimodal composing employs multiple modes and semiotic resources to construct and communicate meanings. I believe that the process of multimodal composing can benefit ELLs in the following ways: first, students can enhance their abilities of critical thinking, problem solving as well as decision making (e.g. Hung, Hwang & Huang, 2012; Yang & Wu, 2012) because they have to decide what multimodal resources to select and then apply those selected to their multimodal texts; second, by composing multimodal compositions, ELL students can develop their skills of researching and exploring (e.g. Alcantud-Diaz & Gregori-Signes, 2014) as well as representing their emotional changes, various voices (e.g. Yang, 2012) and identities (Mantegna

(2013; Mina, 2014); third, ELLs' creativity, imagination and concentration can be stimulated and enhanced through their practices of multimodal composing (e.g. Duveskog et al., 2012; Xu, Park & Baek, 2011). These concepts provide with me the epistemological stance to study ELLs' multimodal composing practices through their process and product of multimodal composing and identity representation through their multimodal compositions.

Role of the Researcher and Establishing Entry into the Field

   Role of the Researcher. Being an English language learner myself, still learning to enhance my reading and writing skills, and employing multimodal resources in teaching English reading and writing in a Chinese International University for seven years inspired me and brought me the interest to investigate the multimodal composing practices of ELLs. As an English learner, I remembered how I was attracted when my English teacher first used PowerPoint to show us class-related pictures and typed vocabulary in different font, size and colors. Later, as an English instructor, I have applied multimodal resources including pictures, music, sound effects, as well as videos in the reading and writing instruction to EFL students in class and noticed their changes in learning motivation, classroom participation as well as involvement in out-of-class English-speaking contests. I have taught students mostly college ELLs who struggled in the traditional text-based reading and formulaic five-paragraph writing. I have also taught middle school and high school students in summer programs to help them improve their English proficiency in all the four areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing. I have noticed their challenges in English writing among students of all age levels I have taught. These are important reasons why I am searching for emerging and innovative methods of teaching English which could possibly motivate ELLs in their language and literacy learning thus to promote their efficacy in second language acquisition. I understand how difficult it is to

learn another language and the obstacles ELLs must encounter in their journey of language and literacy learning.

As a literacy researcher, I have been learning about ELLs' literacy learning experiences through reviewing the literature as well as through my personal observation and interaction with them. I intend to understand how ELLs compose multimodally and how their identities are enacted through their multimodal composing practices. Based on the study findings, I may find out new possibilities to approach ELLs' English teaching in the multimodality dominant era. This is why when I was reading about multimodal composing and multimodal storytelling, I was inspired by the practices of incorporating various semiotic modes and resources into writing practices, and I was interested in examining how ELLs apply multimodal resources to write about their English learning experiences in their home countries as well as in the U.S. In this study, I look at a particular ELL population – ELLs from a university IEP.

I consider myself first as an emerging researcher since I am conducting the study to satisfy the requirement of my academic department. However, I do believe it is more important to establish a relationship of trust and mutual benefit so that participants could behave naturally and comfortably in each study setting and data elicited from them are rich and valid. Moreover, being an international student myself and sharing similar English language learning experiences may also shorten the distance between these participating international students and I. In addition, being an Asian female English educator may close the distance between some of my participants and I for those who come from Asian countries may share similar cultural and ethical values. On the contrary, for those who are from other parts of the world, I need to understand their individual "local language" (DeWalt and DeWalt (2011, p. 58) and learn about their culture to ensure the communication and interaction between us are free from bias.

Entry into the Field. I took a writing class in Fall semester of 2016 and talked to the instructor about my research interest and my proposed study. She encouraged me to talk to an instructor in the IEP and connected us through email. Now the instructor I met become the IEP coordinator. After my study was approved, I contacted the IEP coordinator by email and filled out the application for entering into the IEP classes to research. After my request was approved, contacted the Level IV and Level V instructors to request for permission to attend their classes to talk about my study.

Format of Multimodal Workshop

This study's data came primarily from a workshop that I had designed and conducted. This workshop intended to provide space for a group of ELL international students from the IEP to write about their English learning experiences in their home countries as well as in the U.S. using multimodal resources. I had designed a five-week, 10 session multimodal workshop for participants. Each week was comprised of two 60-minute sessions. A detailed plan of each session is presented in Appendix D. Participants were composing and discussing one multimodal text in every two sessions. They completed four multimodal texts in total over the 5-week time frame. The first session of the first week was an introduction to the workshop while the last session was a debrief/reflection on their learning about themselves as well as multimodal composing. In general, during the second session (after the first session of introduction to the workshop) of the first week, participants composed their first multimodal text. They shared and discussed with the group their complete multimodal texts during the first session of the second week. I as the researcher facilitated and collected data from these workshop sessions. Below is a brief description of each of the workshops:

Table 3. Overview of workshop Sessions

Week	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
Session 1	Introduction of multimodal composing	MM Text #1: Share and discuss	MM Text #2: Share and discuss	MM Text #3: Share and discuss	MM Text #4: Share and discuss
Session 2	MM Text #1: use multimodal resources to write about your English learning experiences in classrooms in your home country	MM Text #2: use multimodal resources to write about your English learning experiences out of classrooms in your home country	MM Text #3: use multimodal resources to write about your English learning experiences in classrooms in the U.S.	MM Text #4: use multimodal resources to write about your English learning experiences out of classrooms in the U.S.	Debrief/ Reflection: what has been learned in this workshop

In the following, I list the details of each workshop sessions:

1. Introduction of participants, the researcher and multimodal composing: There was an introduction about what multimodal texts looked like, some possible ways to create multimodal texts, and how effective they are to convey meanings. Handouts were distributed with vocabulary, explanation and examples of key terms in multimodal composing, their meanings and how these terms could be used in contexts (See Appendix F).

2. MM Text #1: Students shared their experiences of learning English in classroom settings in their home countries for 10 to 15 minutes and then used multimodal resources to compose a multimodal text to respond to the question: what was your English learning experiences before you came to the U.S. in your home country in classrooms? Students were responding

to the question by creating a multimodal text by the end of this session and were prepared to talk about their work in the next session.

3. MM Text #1 Sharing: students shared and presented their individual multimodal texts and explained why certain multimodal modes or resources were selected and the purposes of selecting certain those resources.

4. MM Text #2: the group started with the discussion for 10 to 15 minutes to share their experiences of learning English out of classroom settings in their home countries and spent the rest of the 45 minutes to write about these experiences using multimodal resources.

5. MM Text #2 Sharing: participants shared and presented their multimodal texts to the group and explained why certain multimodal modes or resources were chosen and the purposes of selecting certain resources.

6. MM Text #3: students were asked to compose a multimodal text to respond to the question: what are your English learning experiences in classrooms so far in the U.S.? The multimodal composition on this topic followed the discussion of each individual's English learning experiences under the described circumstances.

7. MM Text #3 Sharing: participants shared and presented multimodal texts to the group and explained why certain multimodal modes or resources were selected and the purposes of selecting these modes based on the multimodal text created in the fifth session.

8. MM Text #4: students discussed and shared their experiences of learning English in the U.S. out of the classrooms and used multimodal resources to compose a multimodal text to respond to the question: what are your English learning experiences out of the classrooms so far in the U.S.?

9. MM Text #4 Sharing: participants shared and presented their multimodal texts to the group and explained why certain multimodal modes or resources were selected and the purposes of selecting those resources when creating the multimodal text in the seventh session.

10. Debrief/Reflection: participants reflected on all their created multimodal texts in previous sessions about their experiences of learning English in different times and at various contexts. A celebration was followed to close out the project. This session was the last gathering of all the participants. After this session, I scheduled a face-to-face meeting with each of the participant i to conduct the follow-up interviews.

Data Collection Methods and Procedures

Data collected include the following: 1) observation notes taken in each workshop session; 2) semi-structured interviews with each of the participant before the initial and after the final multimodal composing workshop session; 3) participants' multimodal texts; 4) video recordings of workshop sessions; 5) researcher's log. In the following sections, I explain each of the data source in details

Observation Notes

As DeWalt and DeWalt (2011) assert, "field notes are a product, constructed by the researcher. The researcher decides what goes into the field notes, the level of detail to include, how much context to include" (p. 159). When researchers observe and take field notes from the research site, "all their intuitive moments, the conversation and interaction with participants all come together to provide with them a deeper insight and understanding of people's behavior" (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011, p. 15) in the field, which is a useful data source. Observation notes will also help recall scenes and occurrences from the research site. In this study, an observation

checklist (see Appendix G) will be used for each participant at each workshop session to keep record of the context of the research site, participants' mood and actions as well as researcher's reaction to what she observes. Specifically, I observed each participant for three to five minutes in the sessions while they were working on multimodal texts independently and jotted down what I saw based on the checklist. I intended not to disturb participants' composing processes but to closely watch how they searched for and chose multimodal resources, what resources they used to compose the texts, and what they did to achieve the purpose of multimodal composing. As facilitator, I responded to their questions when they asked, but tried not to interrupt while they were working independently on their multimodal compositions. I focused on taking notes while I was observing.

Even though an observation checklist is prepared with a specific list of things I intended to look for; however, I had to be flexible about taking notes on occurrences or trivial details I had no initial intention of. I continually reassessed and reframed my understanding based on the "fact" I observed "as new insights occur as a result of increasing familiarity with the context" (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011, P. 9) and things unexpected happened as well. Distractions and interruptions popped up so that I was prepared of trouble shooting in order to solve any occurring problems.

Each workshop session was video-taped and detailed observation notes were taken in some sessions. I self-identity as a *moderate participant* (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011) since I "present at the scene of the action, is identifiable as a researcher, but… only occasionally interacts with people in it" while I am observing how participants are conducting their multimodal texts (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011, p. 23). I balanced my role of being an observant and a participating researcher. I left room for my participants to brainstorm and create their own plan

and work independently since my intent was to examine how they purposefully chose multimodal resources to write about their English learning experiences and why they chose certain modes to express themselves. I also provided opportunities for them to talk about their work with others when they felt comfortable to do so. I considered the "emic/etic approach" (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011, P. 9) and identified myself as both an emic and an etic since "the question of what is going on comes both from the point of view of the researcher and from the point of view of the participant" (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011, P. 9). My interpretation about these ELLs' engagements with multimodal composing did not only come from my observation but also from my conversation with them and their self-expression about writing even including their non-verbal gestures, facial expressions and body language. I also took notes on the location, the environment of the workshop sessions since I believed that the "context" was as critical as the "content" when interpreting the data generated from the observations (see Appendix G for the observation checklist).

Semi-Structured Individual Interviews

Semi-structured interview, according to Roulston (2010) is "a prepared interview guide that includes a number of questions. These questions are usually open-ended, and after posing each question to the research participant, the interviewer follows up with probes seeking further detail and description about what has been said" (p. 12). During each interview, I used open questions (Roulston, 2010) because this type of questions "provide broad parameters within which interviewees can formulate answers in their own words concerning topics specified by the interviewer" (p. 12). For instance, some of my interview questions started with "Could you tell me something about…" or "How do you feel about…"? These questions invited interviewees to tell a story or generate detailed descriptions about the topics I was interested in and could also

provide flexibility for me to ask follow-up questions to probe further and deeper. Even though some of my questions had to be close questions in form, for example, "What do you know about multimodal composing" and "do you like using multimodal resources to express your ideas in writing", I tried to find a way to follow up by asking about their "account or explanation" (Roulston, 2010, p. 11). This helped expand the interviewee's responses to the fullest extent possible as long as they were relevant to my research questions (see appendix B for initial interview questions).

I attempted to set up the atmosphere of each interview as conversations and prepared to conduct a "quality" interview. I tried to be a 'skillful' interviewer, trying to take a "neutral" role, asking 'good' questions and attempting to "refrain from participating in the data generation" processes (Roulston, 2010, p. 52). However, when the participants became less productive in their responses and almost drained of ideas, I started to increase the input of my thoughts, directing, exploring, responding and clarifying the questions I had asked.

I conducted two interviews for each participant in this study. I conducted a pre-workshop interview, between 30-45 minutes, before the first session of the multimodal composing workshop. I also conducted a post-workshop interview following the last workshop session. I interviewed each participant initially in a study room in the university to both of our convenience. The initial interview was aimed at understanding the cultural, linguistic and educational background of each participant, and their knowledge of multimodal composing. After the final workshop session and my initial analysis of their multimodal texts and pre-workshop interviews, a follow-up 30-45-minute semi-structured interview was conducted to investigate participants' workshop experience, their perception of multimodal composing to express themselves in regard to writing about their English learning experiences, the reason of

choosing certain types of multiple modes and their intention and interpretation of those choices. They were also asked questions about their perceptions of writing, their steps of composing multimodal texts and their descriptions about themselves studying English in different contexts.

Multimodal Texts/Compositions

A multimodal text/composition combines two or more semiotic modes to contribute to meaning-making within the same text (New London Group, 1996). There are different types of multimodal texts depending on the media through which multimodal texts are created. For example, some participants choose to use words and images to write about their English learning experiences on a piece of paper or on a word document; other participants chose to use PowerPoint to type in words, insert images to achieve their purposes of multimodal composing.

Each participant was asked to create four multimodal texts/compositions about their English learning experiences in their home countries in and out of classroom settings and their English learning experiences in the U.S. in and out of the classrooms. The four questions are listed below for students to respond through multimodal compositions respectively using multimodal resources.

MM Text #1: What were your English learning experiences in the classrooms in your home country?

MM Text #2: What were your English learning experiences outside of the classrooms in your home country?

MM Text #3: What are your English learning experiences so far in the classrooms in the U.S.?

MM Text #4: What are your English learning experiences so far outside of the classrooms in the U.S.?

Participants were asked to create their individual multimodal texts through the use of self-selected multimodal resources and share their multimodal texts during the workshop sessions to explain their choices of multimodal resources and their purposes of utilizing those resources. These multimodal texts were one of the main data sources to investigate how ELLs used multimodal resources to convey meanings and how their identities were represented while they wrote about their English learning experiences.

Video-Recorded Workshop Sessions

Although field notes can record what happens on the research site and help researchers interpret the phenomenon under investigation, video recording expands the recording capacity "to capture everything that is taking place" in the research site, "thus allowing us to postpone that moment of focusing, of decision taking" (Pirie, 1996, p. 3). Moreover, video recording what happens on the research site allow researchers "to re-visit the aspect" on the research site through viewing and reviewing what has been recorded, "granting us greater leisure to reflect on… events and pursue the answers we seek. At one level at least, a video-tape buys us time" (Pirie, 1996, p. 3). In this respect, video recording of the workshop sessions allowed me to review each session multiple times, to describe the occurrences of each session and to reflect on what I see. Since I spent approximately five minutes observing each participant in the sessions while they created their multimodal texts, the recording gave me a holistic view of what happened for other participants while I focused on one person. A digital camera was placed facing the participants in each session. Also, my smart phone was used as well to record each session as a backup recorder. A stand was connected to each recorder so that it was easy to shift the angle when it was necessary. These two video recorders were placed in two different locations but all captured what was going on in the workshop.

Researcher's Log

       I kept a personal journal reflection section after the thorough description of each workshop session to describe occurrences and circumstances for each workshop session and my personal reflection to these happenings. I reflected on participants' modal choices, their learning experiences and challenges as well as how they were perceived as English learners. I also kept a record of how I planned to set up the next session and things to expect in the future. Additionally, any changes, nuances or unexpected occurrences that potentially affected the study were recorded as well.

Data Management

       In this study, I managed the data collected from various sources in the following way. All the data sources were stored in a password-protected computer and copied in a portable hard drive as backup. All the interview audios and workshop videos were numbered, dated and saved in separate e-folders. Specifically, data collected from interviews were transcribed, numbered and kept electronically in the e-folders in the computer. Workshop observation notes were digitalized and saved in an e-folder. Researcher's log which kept the detailed narrative descriptions of each workshop session were typed electronically and stored in a separate e-folder. Participants' multimodal texts were photocopied and scanned if they were print-based or digitalized if they were created through the computer. In addition, I created several Excel sheets to store analyses of observation field notes, all interviews, and notes taken from video-recorded workshop sessions (notes can be retrieved from researcher's log). Finally, I used the researcher's log to keep the notes of each workshop sessions (described earlier) based on the review of the workshop videos. My personal reflections and tracking of the actual implementation of activities

were also kept in the log. All the paper files such as surveys and consent forms were locked in a home cabinet.

<div align="center">**Data Analysis**</div>

Grounded Theory Data Analysis Procedures

Grounded theory features an inductive way of data analysis. The process of data collection and analysis are happening simultaneously which provides researchers with fruitful opportunities to discover the unanticipated circumstances that have not been carefully considered or noticed during data collection. This requires that in-depth data needs to be collected systematically and analyzed simultaneously. Corbin and Strauss (1990) suggest that "in grounded theory, the analysis begins as soon as the first bit of data is collected" (p. 6). I started analyzing my first bit of data after it was collected which gave me a taste of what it is like by reviewing and reflecting. This helped me modify my interview questions and gave me insights in later interviews. Another advantage of analyzing data while it is collected is that researchers can shift their process or modify their guiding questions before they continue to better serve the purpose of their inquiry (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

In addition, I perceived knowledge and truth as discovered instead of being created (Schwandt, 2003). By holding this notion, I viewed data as generated by both the researchers and the participants within a particular context. In terms of the grounded theory data collection method, I adopted the grounded theory focusing not only on the implicit aspects of informants' narratives and hesitance but also on the explicit content articulated by the informants (Charmaz, 2009). This given, grounded theory analysis method was appropriate to analyze the interview

data and the data collected from observing and interacting with participants during the workshop sessions.

Grounded theory data analysis involves close examination of the data and generalizing common themes from the data, which leads to coding. "Coding means categorizing segments of data with a short name that simultaneously summarizes and accounts for each piece of data" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 111). Codes summarize the messages conveyed from the content of the data and represent the researchers' understanding and interpretation of the data. Since codes reflect the preconceptions of researchers, it is important to be loyal to the data, interpret the information objectively and let the data speak. Data coding using grounded theory can be overwhelming because it consists of reading tremendous amount of data attentively and repeatedly attempting to break them into small segments. Codes are usually labeled to "define what is happening in the data and begin to grapple with what it means" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 113). Grounded theory data coding involves two steps: the open coding phase that gives initial labels to the segments of data (word or line or incident), and the selective or focused coding phase that consists of reviewing high frequency initial codes or most prominent ones, comparing, categorizing and abstracting the data (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012; Charmaz, 2006).

Interview Analyses

Based on the two-step coding procedure of grounded theory data coding, I read through the interview transcript multiple times and coded the data by questions and responses (incident). After codes were labeled at the end of each response, I read the coded data once more looking for similar codes and common themes and recorded frequently occurring themes. I then tried to make meaning out of those themes and categorized them. To keep my research purpose and questions in mind, I searched for themes that could possibly answer my research questions. I

tabulated the interview excerpts, codes and the major findings in different columns in the comprehensive Excel sheet (see Table 4 as an example; "I" represents "interviewer, and "P" represents "participant"). After the initial coding of data and the generation of common themes, I turned to a critical friend (see: Rossman & Rallis, 2003), a recent Ph.D. graduate in the field of language and literacy education who had the experience of working with ELLs, analyzing multimodal data and conducting research about students' multimodal literacy practices. I sent her 5% of randomly selected data to check inter rater agreement before I entered into further coding processes. I explained to the critical friend my data coding process, the definition of the codes and asked her to give me feedback. I also applied her feedback in my later analysis.

Table 4. Excerpts, Codes and Major Findings from Interview Data

	A	B	C
1	**Excerpts from Data**	**Codes**	**Findings**
2	I will start with the question: tell me something you learned from 3. this workshop. 4. P: Ok. So first Huan thank you for inviting me to participating to this work.	Good opportunity to go to the workshop, very important to receive additional information after class.	He took the workshop as an opportunity to learn English so he was happy to attend it.
3	So did you learn anything from working on the multimodal texts? 14. P: Yes. Something I learned from the multimodal text because it is a new expression or	MM composing was new and interesting; it gave him the opportunity to talk about his English learning experiences in home country and in the U.S.	He was interested in learning about MM composing and share his experiences of learning English with other partcipants.
4	21. I: Ok. Thank you. Tell me how you feel about multimodal composing or multimodal writing? 22. P: I feel very well because I want to use different ways to express my ideas. So it's a good experience, or not exactly an	He enjoyed using different ways to express his ideas and using different modes to compose multimodal texts. It was new to him.	He enjoyed the workshop experiences when he could have options to express his ideas using different multimodal resources.
5	Ok. Did you have any challenges working on the multimodal texts? 34. P: Challenges? 35. I: Like difficulties or hard times? 36. P: No. For me each session was very easy because you are very clear, very	No challenges or difficulties working on multimodal texts.	Each session was very clear and specific to him so he did not have any challenges.

Observation Notes Analyses

I read the notes I had generated multiple times for each participant to look for patterns and themes. Then, I composed a narrative for each participant based on the observation notes to

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describe how each of them worked on their multimodal texts at different sessions. Since the observation notes could help answer the question of how ELLs use multimodal resources to compose, I tried to stay close to the data (Charmaz, 2006) and searched for themes and trends that could answer this research question.

Video-Recorded Workshop Sessions Analyses

I watched the videos of the 10 workshop sessions closely for multiple times to take descriptive notes from each session. I kept the notes in my researcher's log. The notes included thorough description of what was happening in each session. Also included in the notes were the verbatim transcriptions of participants' words captured in the workshop. I typed the discussion questions and responses from each participant at different sessions in the Excel sheet I created for my data recording in the first column. Then I read through the information multiple times before I coded them. While coding, I summarized researchers' responses in one column and assigned codes to their responses in another column. Then, I read through the codes, compared codes to abstract and categorize codes to generate findings. I searched for themes that could help answer the questions of how ELLs use multimodal resources to write about their English learning experiences and what their perceptions are about using multimodal resources to express themselves.

Multimodal Texts/Compositions Analyses

Social semiotic multimodal discourse analysis (Jewitt, 2009; 2011a) was used to analyze multimodal texts created by participating multilingual ELLs since this method is targeted at examining how multimodal writers purposefully select semiotic modes to design their multimodal texts. In addition, multilingual and multicultural designers' identities were

represented through their use of different modes and semiotic resources, which went beyond linguistic representation. According to Jewitt (2011b), multimodal modes provide researchers with specific aspects to understand the cultural resources users utilize and organize in certain ways to represent themselves. In other words, the use of various modes and expressions in the local context represent ELLs' understanding of themselves being in a specific culture and their semiotic choices could reveal their ideologies and their self-perceptions about themselves being an "English language learner". Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) claim that interest in certain cultural resources and forms represent the individual's relation and feelings to the situations and moments they select to represent themselves in the multimodal text. In this respect, the available semiotic resources that are chosen in certain context reveal the preference of the multimodal designers and open up the window for researchers to penetrate and perceive the inner world of the multimodal sign makers.

In the following, I present how I analyzed a slide in one of the multimodal texts created by Dao, a student from Vietnam, drawing on Albers' (2009) notion of how to read visual texts, on the topic of his English learning experiences outside of the classrooms in his home country.

Figure 3. An Example of Multimodal Text Analysis
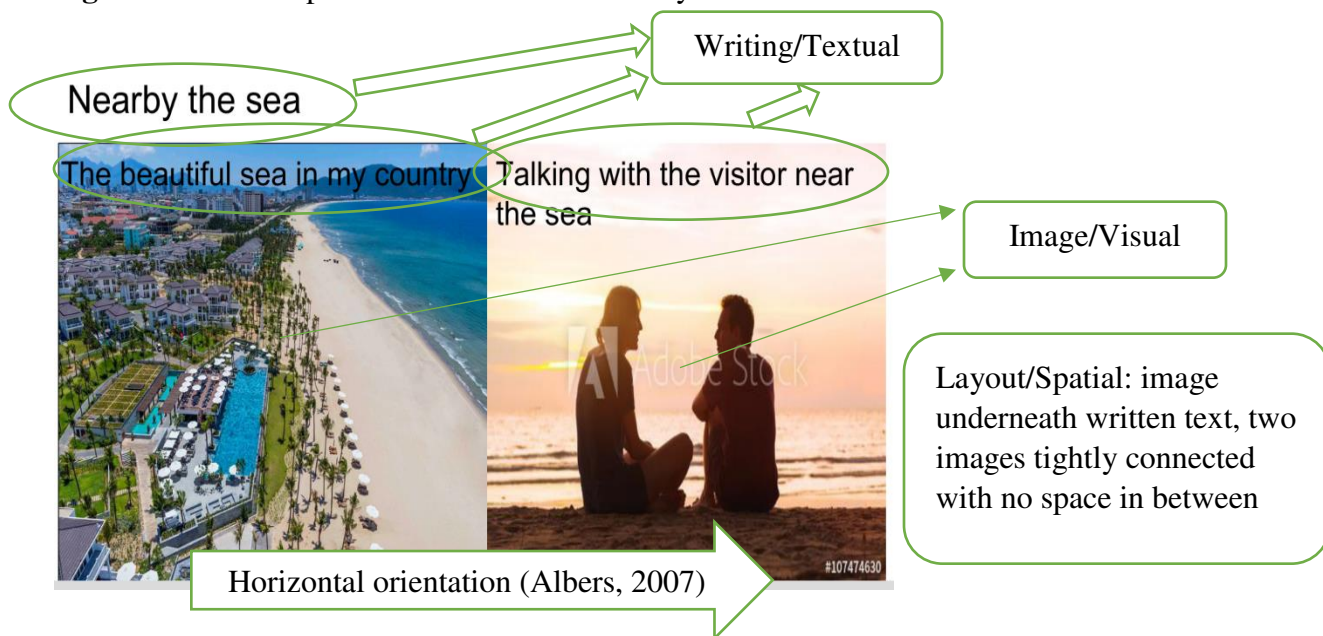
Dao chose a horizontal orientation to create this slide. He chose two photos and positioned them next to each other. He displayed the leading information on the upper left of the slide. He also used typed words on top of each photo to display the information represented from that photo. As Albers (2009) suggests, texts with horizontal orientation "are read from left to right" (p. 11) and this horizontal orientation often suggests a narrative. Additionally, the size of the pictures depicted represent their significance for the multimodal text maker. Dao purposefully selected a photo which captures the actual look of a famous beach near his home. He also chose another photo with the same size that displays two people sitting on the beach next to each other to exemplify the information he intended to express: "Talking with the visitor near the sea". His choice of visual mode from his home context represents his understanding about his role of being an English learner attempting to take advantage of practicing English speaking with the large number of English speaking visitors at the beach near his home. His use of typed texts provides the information he intended to express through the visual mode.

Additionally, according to Albers' (2012) interpretation of modal affordance, different mode carries different messages so "an ensemble of modes contributes to the overall meaning in different ways" (p. 50). In this particular part of multimodal text, for instance, Dao's choice of images plays the focal role and the words "take on lesser roles" but both of the words and images carry messages which Dao intended to express and together they contribute to the purpose of displaying the meaning "where Dao learned English and with whom he practiced it". Particularly, Dao's mode choices are based on his "design of the message" and "the modes that will carry the intended message" (Albers, 2012, p. 51).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues were considered in this study throughout all phases of data collection, communication and interactions with participants. First, all the participants were recruited under their willingness of participation. They were given the freedom to quit the study at any time. Secondly, all participants' names mentioned in this study are pseudonyms in order to conceal their identity. Thirdly, when participants used pictures of themselves, their friends or other people, their faces were blocked out for the purpose of confidentiality when these visuals are used in this manuscript. In addition, I learned about their cultural, racial, religious, and linguistic traditions and taboos during my initial interviews with all participants and deliberately tried to avoid conflict and misunderstanding of those cultural, racial and religious issues during my communication and interaction with participants in the later phases of my study.

I facilitated each workshop session and took observation notes for those sessions while students worked independently on their multimodal texts. Also, I prepared for unexpected occurrences and respected cultural diversity. For instance, I confirmed with participants about the workshop tentative schedules for all the sessions at the beginning and I confirmed with them

again at the end of each workshop session for the time of the next meeting. I tried not to schedule workshops on days when they celebrated their traditional holidays or other big events. I intended to schedule the workshop sessions on days when all or at least most of them were able to attend.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Quality of Study

I use the word "credibility" instead of "validity" since validity is commonly used in quantitative research. In order to increase the *credibility* of my study, I had a segment of analyzed data reviewed by my participants since these data were mainly generated from them and reflected my understanding of the research questions. The participants were able to judge the *credibility* of my interpretation of data and provided feedback which could be used to shape my later data analysis. I also turned to a critical friend (see: Rossman & Rallis, 2003) to have partial data analyzed to check for interrater reliability. In addition, since qualitative study examines the nature of a particular setting in a particular moment or time period, *generalizability* is not the main purpose of qualitative studies; however, I did my best to enhance the *transferability* of my study by describing the sociocultural context and the specific circumstances of my research settings so that other researchers are able to make judgment of whether or not my study results can be transferred to another study context. In order to achieve *dependability*, I described any changes or occurrences in my study settings which may have the potential to affect the conduct of my study. Taking into consideration the ever-changing nature of society, I tried to anticipate any unexpected occurrences to my participants, study settings, and the procedures and reported any changes or nuances that affected the study.

Triangulation

In order to have the case study findings supported by more than a single source of evidence, I collected multiple data sources including semi-structured interviews, video-recorded workshop sessions, participant observation notes, researcher's journal, and participants' multimodal texts. I collected and analyzed each type of data separately but converging the findings after coding each of the data set. Actually, these multiple sources of evidence provided multiple measures of the same phenomenon to answer particular research questions. The purpose of doing data triangulation is what Yin (2014) suggests: it "helps to strengthen the *construct validity* of your case study". (p. 121). By doing data triangulation, my case study became more rigorous. In terms of data analysis methods, I chose to use social semiotic multimodal discourse analysis as well as grounded theory to support procedures of the analysis. The use of multiple data analysis methods also provided multiple lenses for me to view and synthesize the data which added trustworthiness to the study.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I described how I recruited the study participants, and how data were collected and managed. I also discussed what methods were utilized to analyze each type of data. I introduced the context of the study, the role of researcher, ethical considerations, and procedures used to enhance the trustworthiness of the study. In the following chapter, I will describe each of the participant's English learning and writing experiences and their multimodal texts. I will present how I conducted the focused analysis of participants' multimodal compositions and the cross analysis of all participants.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

In the previous chapter, I discussed the methodology adopted to guide my investigation about ELLs' multimodal composing practices in a series of workshop sessions. In this chapter, I begin by describing my data organization and analysis procedures for each participant, how I wrote up each section, and which data were drawn on while I wrote up each section. Then I conducted a focused multimodal analysis of participants' multimodal texts drawing on Kress' (2010) notion of multimodal modes. Next, I closely analyzed data across all six participants looking for commonalities and differences in their responses to each question in the pre- and post-interviews as well as in the workshop sessions. The cross analysis of all data sources generated the major themes.

Data Organization and Analysis Procedures

After the data collection process, I decided to make descriptions for each individual based on the different types of data collected from them. This helped me comb the data and gave me a deeper understanding of each participant. I first reviewed the data collected from each participant, including the pre- and post-interview transcripts, the observation notes taken from the workshop sessions, my description of each workshop session (the written descriptive field notes, Merriam, 2009) reporting what was happening in each session, participants' multimodal texts, and my reflections taken down at the end of each workshop session. For each participant, I pulled out all the data about the specific individual from my data pool and wrote up sections based on the analysis. For instance, while I was writing up the sessions for each participant, I first introduced the participant and their English learning experiences in and out of the U.S. and their learning challenges mainly based on the data collected from the pre-interviews. Then I

wrote up the session to describe each of the participant's multimodal texts and the researcher's reflection on each text. Some of the participants have revised versions of multimodal texts and I described those texts as well. In the following section, I used the data pulled out from post-workshop interviews to report what each participant said about attending the workshop and their perceptions about using multimodal resources to compose multimodal texts as well as to express themselves. Finally, I wrote the general observations about each participant. While I conducted the focused analysis of participants' multimodal texts, I drew on all the multimodal texts created by each participant, looking at each individual's four multimodal texts as well as looking across at the first, second, third and fourth multimodal text from all participants. Then while I cross analyzed the overall data from all participants, I drew on all data sources collectively to generate major themes.

Dao—A Student from Vietnam

Meeting with Dao and Learning His English Learning Experiences and Challenges

Dao is a 23-year old soft-spoken man from Vietnam. He has been living in the U.S. for 2 years. He has enrolled in the intensive English program for 3 semesters at the time I interviewed him. He started learning English in his second year of middle school. He learned a little English in his middle school; but in high school, he did not learn much English because he focused on math, chemistry, and physical science and was preparing for exams for those subjects. As a result, his English skills declined during high school years. He stated in the pre-interview that learning English in his home country was different from learning English in the America. He said, "Sometimes Vietnamese English is not good" (Pre-interview, line 40). In addition, the sound and the use of the word is different from what he learned in the United States. He said that

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the words and the grammar he learned in his home country was the British way so they were a

little different from American English. He said:

> Um. You know… I don't know how to say. Here I study different subjects, different
> grammar…But in my country, the grammar, the importance is the tense. The present, the
> past and future…But in here we… (Cellphone ringing) … I think people like to use the
> grammar and write an essay. (Pre-interview, lines 77-86)

In terms of his English writing experience, he mentioned that writing an English essay was

difficult when he first came to the U.S. because he only had the experience of paragraph writing

back in Vietnam. However, in the writing class he took here in the U.S., he had to write an essay

with several paragraphs and he did not know how to do that at the beginning. Then his professor

taught him how to write and he felt English writing was not as hard as before. He said, "Uh. I

don't know how to say but writing an essay is so hard…In my country it is not an essay, it's a

paragraph, but after I come here, the professor teach me how to write. Now I feel writing is easy"

(Pre-interview, lines 92-95).

In his writing class, Dao's professor asked him to first think about the topic and

brainstorm ideas. He then chose ideas he liked to use and made an outline. Based on the outline,

he wrote several paragraphs, usually five paragraphs, which he felt comfortable with, and

completed his draft. He felt essay writing was easy when he followed these steps. However, back

in his home country, his teacher taught English writing differently. She passed him example

essays and asked him to read and write by himself. Dao had to think about the grammar and the

vocabulary at first and found it so hard to write the essay. He told me he only learned to read the

example essay but did not understand the rules to write his own essay. He said:

> Uh. They pass me example essay. Ask me to read the example… My writing professor
> gave a lot of examples to me. I read the example and thinking…I think about the
> grammar and I think about the vocabulary, and not outline… So, I feel so hard to write…

Because it does not have the rule to write. I just read the example and think how to write. (Pre-interview, lines 119-129)

When he was asked about his knowledge of using multimodal modes like pictures, drawings or sound to write, surprisingly, he told me he often used pictures to make his plan after he made the outline and generated ideas. He told me "I think I often use pictures to write my essay… After I make the outline, after I am thinking of the idea, I use the pictures to make my plan… if I can use the picture; I will use the picture but not the music" (Pre-interview, lines 149-154). I asked him to explain why he would not choose music to express his ideas in writing, he said:

> I think the picture can help me thinking about the idea. The music can help me relax but I cannot use the music to write my essay. Because you know I like the music and I hear the music and when I hear the music I am not thinking of anything. (Pre-interview, lines 171-173)

I asked Dao how he would describe himself in the U.S. He seemed unsure about that and said he felt U.S. is like his second home and he felt he did not belong here. He told me he had many challenges in life. Sometimes he felt alone because his roommates liked to watch TV or play computer games but he liked to read books. He also had challenges to understand the English language when he first came to the United States. He told me:

> Uh. You know the first time I come here I could not understand everybody talking about…everything. After I study here, I can understand but there are some words that I cannot understand. The language feature you know is different and life here is so different… because they have different accents even though they all speak English…You cannot understand all their… might be I understand the idea but not all the…all the information. (Pre-interview, lines 208-210, lines 215-218)

In order to make his life easier and understand people better in the U.S., he tried to practice English with American people such as people in the leasing office. Except for that, he and his

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roommate sometimes went to the coffee house to practice English. He also watched English news on TV last semester to practice his listening. However, he stated that people could not understand him when he talked with academic words. In the situations when he had challenges understanding people or being understood by American people, he asked them to repeat what they said or used visual tools to help him communicate. He shared one of his experiences and said, "The problem is the food you know when sometimes my friend and I talk about the food, the name is very hard. We cannot explain the food because we cannot think… the words… So we… show them in the picture" (Pre-interview, lines 239-243).

Reflection on Dao's English Learning Experiences

Dao was taught basic English skills of reading, writing and speaking in Vietnam. However, he was taught the British way of speaking and writing which made his first experiences in the U.S. classrooms challenging. He had a difficult time writing in English in his home country because there was lack of directions about how to write an English essay. Due to this reason, he experienced challenges of writing in English in the IEP when he took the first classes. However, he gradually learned English writing skills when following the rules. He personally liked to use pictures to help himself think and organize his ideas while he was writing an essay in class. It seems that he was not quite confident about his English-speaking skills because of his strong accent and inaccurate pronunciation of words. His perception that "sometimes Vietnamese English is not good" (Pre-interview, line 40) seems to show the judgement of other people to Vietnamese English learners. Dao seems to be quite diligent and took every opportunity in his life to practice English-speaking skills. Even though he seems to be an introvert, he attempted to open himself up to practice speaking, listening and writing skills whenever he had the chance.

Dao's MM Text I

Figure 4. Dao′s MM Text 1, Slide No. 2 and 3

Dao made six slides to talk about his English learning experience in the classroom in his home country Vietnam. On the first slide, he put the title "Experience About Learning English" on top of the page centered with a watery blue color, and his name below the title with a watery orange color. On the second slide, he put the words "The Middle School" on top of the left side with bold red color and put the words "English: It's Easy!" under the red words using purple color. He used a cartoon character, like an old make scientist wearing a white gown and a huge pair of glasses with messy hair and beard pointing at the purple words with his right hand next to the purple words. Underneath the purple words and the cartoon character, he used the image of a survey with three columns: Excellent, Good and Average and with all the red checks selecting Excellent. On the right side of the second slide, he chose to use the image of several hands with each hand holding a handle of a round poster board, which shows the number "10" with bold red color. In his third slide, he put the red bold words "The High School" on the top of the left-hand side. Right below the red words, he used a picture which shows the structure of a molecule, several tubes and testing glass bottles with fluid of different colors and with a word Chemistry in the center of the image. Right next to the image, he put a second image which shows the number,

the symbol, and the diagram of mathematics with a cone, a ball and a cube at one side of the image. He put the third image next to the second one on the right with Einstein's famous equation "E=mc2" on a green chalkboard on the top and two stacked books placed on the surface of a table with two pencils and one red apple on the top book. Below the three images, Dao put a bigger image which shows two fish tanks with one tank holding seven fish and the other one with no fish at all. There is one fish jumping from the full tank to the other empty tank. A blue arrow is pointing at the mouth of the empty tank with words "English skill" on it. On the left-hand side next to the fourth image, he put "Out of my mind" with small red letters". On his fourth slide, Dao put two black colored words "The University" on the top left. Underneath, he chose to use an image with a finger pointing at a green button with an obvious word "Start" on it. Next to the first image on the right, he used a word cloud with many words with different sizes and colors. The word "English" was centered in the image, and the word "learning" was about the same size placing below "English". "Language", "fluency", "learn", and "process" were smaller in size than "English" but also obvious in the image. In Dao's fifth slide, he put the words "How I learn English in high school" on the top of the slide slightly left aligned. Below the words, he used another word cloud image which centered a big bold word "grammar". On the right side next to the first image, Dao used a second image with a cartoon teacher-like character dressing up with red top and black pants standing in front of the black chalkboard and a group of student-like characters sitting at their desks. The words in the teacher's bubble text box says, "I am sure my lecture has made you think." The words in each student's bubble text box shows different words. One says "What a bore...." the second one says "I stopped listening after 5 minutes"; in the third and the fourth student's bubble box, there is no words but "? ! ?" and "ZZZ...", seems to represent one student is confused and the other one is sleeping with his two

hands covering his face. A big stack of thick books is placed on top of a student's desk. Dao's last slide featured the words "How I learn English in Mid school" on the top of the slide slightly left aligned. Below the words, there are three images standing next to one another horizontally. The image on the left shows a cartoon worm poking his head out of a big red apple smiling. Behind the worm and the apple, there is a green chalkboard with the word "Welcome!" on it and the black highlighted words "Beginning English" above the chalkboard. Underneath the apple and the worm, there are 26 letters which has both upper and lower case placing together with a little image underneath each pair of letters. The image shows the objects which start with the specific letter they are referring to. The second image was centered on the slide which shows a little cartoon ladybug and its words in the bubble box with big colorful bubble letters "HELLO!" The last image was placed on the right-hand side with four cartoon characters each holding one piece of the puzzle and trying to solve it and putting it back to shape.

Researcher's Reflection

Dao chose not to use paper but the computer to create his first multimodal text. Dao's first multimodal text used a large number of pictures to tell a story about his English learning experience in the classrooms in his home country. He started from the second slide talking about his English learning experience in middle school. He selected images with the word "excellent" and the number "10" with bold red color, which means full score on the grading scale in his culture. Additionally, red is the traditional color that teachers use to manually grade students with their exams and papers. According to Mina (2014), "students select the music, songs, and images from their culture that best show their identity. In the case of international students, there are two cultures in play" (p. 144). In this respect, Dao's choice of image and the color seems to

suggest that his home culture may have a "bigger influence in forming" his identities. He also put the words "English: It's Easy!" on the slide to show the audience how he felt about English learning in his middle school. On the following slide, he talked about his English learning experience in his high school. He used images to show the subjects he focused on learning in high school, including chemistry, math and physics. He centered the image with two fish tanks, one is full of fish and the other is empty. In the image, one fish is jumping from the full tank to the empty one. He added an arrow text box which says, "English Skill" pointing to the mouth of the empty tank, seems to represent his English skill dropped dramatically with almost zero practice and contact in his high school years. The words "out of my mind" located on the left side next to the image represented how he felt about English in his high school years. He said that he lost his English skills because he did not learn English once he chose to take the exams of chemistry, math and physics for his entrance examination to college. In the following slide, he used the image with a big green "Start" button to show his English learning in the university is a fresh start to him. He chose a word cloud image with "English learning" as the center and other words related to English learning of smaller size in the surrounding. He created another slide with the title "How I learn English in high school" to extend his description of English learning experience in high school. The huge word "grammar" is placed at the upper center in the word cloud. The cartoon picture next to the word cloud showed the reaction of a group of students expressing confusion, loss of interest, and tiredness to their English teacher -- a black-haired, Asian-like women's instruction. Based on Durst's (2012) concept of students "weave representations of self" (p. 48) in their multimodal text, Dao's choice of image seems to vividly illustrate his experience and reaction to his English teacher's instruction in high school. It might be the reason that he chose not to study English in high school, therefore losing his English skills

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dramatically. In the last slide, he used three images to continue talking about how he learned English in middle school. He used the image with the 26 alphabets and the words "beginning English", "welcome" and a smiling cartoon worm to show the proficiency level of English he learned in middle school. The second image featuring the word "Hello!" also showed the beginning English he learned in middle school. In the third image, a group of four students holding one puzzle piece each trying to solve the puzzle seems to represent how he felt about beginning English—solving an easy puzzle.

It seems that Dao felt comfortable working on the computer with PowerPoint. He told me he used PowerPoint many times to do his class presentation and he had few challenges of using PowerPoint to complete his work. It seems that he would like to share a lot of his experiences when having the discussion with other participants but he could not express himself well. He chose to smile or keep silent when he could not express himself in English during the discussion. Sometimes he showed a red face and said, "I don't know how to say, but..." and kept a smile until I said, "Oh! It's fine. Let me ask something else" during the interviews. However, when it came the time to talk about his English learning experiences through the use of multimodal resources, he seemed to have a clear mind of what he wanted to say and could express himself accurately and informatively by showing words and images. Occasionally, he had conversations with Tien, another student from Vietnam, in their native language while working on his multimodal text. It seems that they felt more comfortable talking to each other in their home language.

Dao's MM Text II

Figure 5. Dao's MM Text II Slide No. 2 and 3

Nearby the sea

The beautiful sea in my country

Talking with the visitor near the sea

In the coffee house

HIGHLANDS COFFEE

I and my friend practice english with visitor, who I can make friends, in the coffee shops.

In the second multimodal text, Dao continued to choose PowerPoint to write about his English learning experience out of the classrooms in his home country. He used three slides this time. On the first slide, he put the title "How I Learn english in outside of class" in big black font at the center of the slide and his name underneath the title. On the following slide, he put the words "Nearby the sea" on the left top of the slide. Underneath the words, he used two pictures side by side, one showing the view of a beautiful beach and the hotels, tall buildings, trees and

swimming pools close to the beach, the other showing two people sitting next to each other on the beach talking during sunset. He added the words "The beautiful sea in my country" on the top of the picture on the left side and the words "Talking with the visitor near the sea" on the top of the picture on the right side. On the last slide, he used the words "In the coffee house" on the left top of the slide, a picture underneath the words, and a sentence below the picture. The picture shows the front view of a famous local coffee house with glass walls and doors in Vietnam near his home. He typed in "I and my friend practice english with visitor, who I can make friends, in the coffee shops" underneath the picture. He used red color to the words "practice english" and "who I can make friends".

Researcher's Reflection

In his second multimodal text, Dao continued to combine multimodal resources on the PowerPoint. He used two images to show how he learned English "nearby the sea" and one image to show where he practiced English near his home. Dao chose the image of a famous beach in Vietnam where he used to swim and met foreigners to practice his English. He used the words "beautiful sea in my country", which seems to represent his proudness of his home country and the recognition of his nationality. In the following slide, he used the image of a famous coffee house where he used to meet English-speaking foreigners and practice his English. It seems that he enjoyed the time there talking in English because as he said, he never had the chance to practice his speaking skills in class (Pre-workshop interview).

Dao's MM Text III A

Figure 6. Dao's MM Text III A
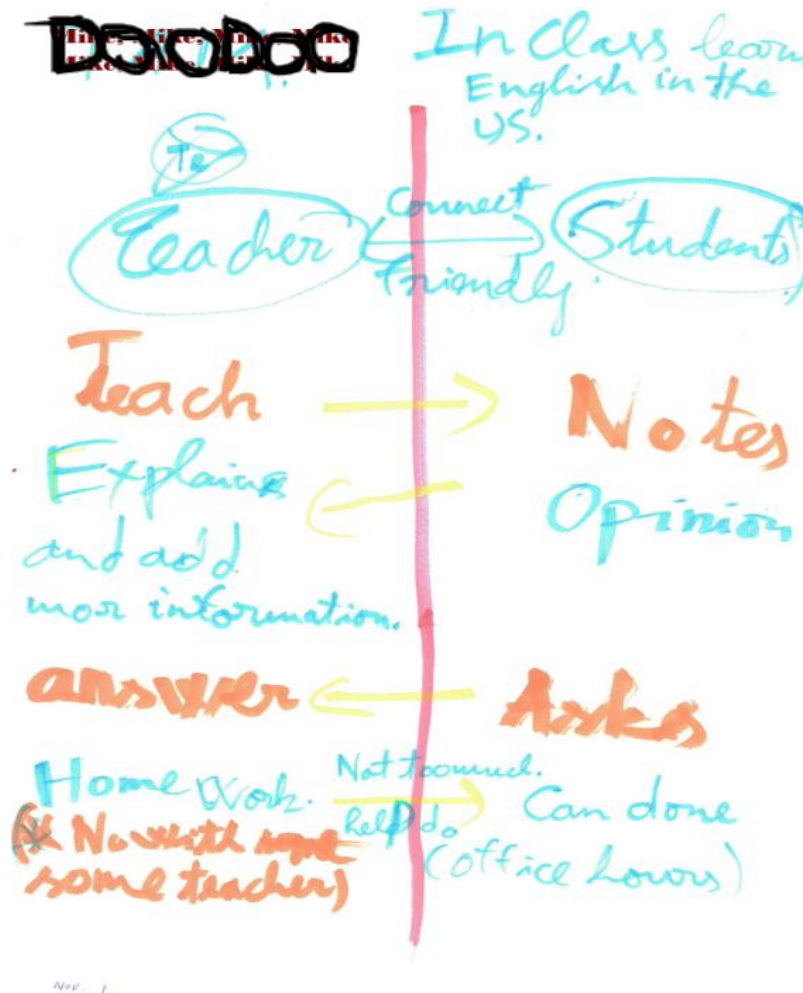
Different from his previous two multimodal texts, Dao chose to create his third

multimodal text on an A3-sized paper. He chose a vertical orientation (Albers, 2007) and used a

blue marker to write his name on the top left of the paper and the title "In Class learn English in

the U.S." on the top right of the paper also in blue color. A red line was used to separate the

paper into two columns with a vertical line. On top of the left column, he put the word "teacher"

in blue and used a two-direction arrow to connect it to the word "students" on the right column.

He put the word "connect" above the arrow and another word "friendly" under the arrow. Both the word "teacher" and "students" are circled in blue. Underneath the word "teacher" on the left column, he put a brown color word "Teach" and connected the word to another brown word "Notes" on the right column using a one-direction arrow pointing to the word "Notes" on the right. Underneath the word "Teach" on the left column, he used some blue-colored words "Explains and add more information" and another blue-colored word "Opinion" below the word "Notes" on the right column. He used a uni-directional yellow arrow to connect the word "Opinion" and the words "Explains and add more information" with the arrow pointing to the left. Underneath the blue words "Explains and add more information" on the left column, he put a brown word "answers" and another brown word "Asks" on the right column. He connected the two words by using a uni-directional arrow pointing to the left. At the bottom of the paper, he put a blue word "Homework" on the left column and another two blue words "can done" on the right column below "Asks". He connected these words with a yellow one-direction arrow pointing to the right. He also put the blue words "Not too much" above the arrow and "help do" underneath the arrow. He put some brown words "No with Home teacher" in brackets underneath "Homework" on the left column and "office hours" in blue in brackets underneath "Can done" on the right column.

Dao's MM Text III B

Figure 7. Dao's MM Text III B, Slide No. 4

Student ask, and teacher answer

Dao created five slides for his revised multimodal text III. On the first slide, he put "Experience in class in the USA" in black in the middle of the slide, centered, and his name underneath the title with a slightly smaller size in black also centered. On the second slide, he put the words "Teacher and students are friendly" on the left top of the slide and a picture underneath. In the picture, there is a young man dressed in a white shirt, black tie and black suit pants standing in the middle of a group of students with his arms open. He is looking at one student and seems to answer his question with a smiling face. A group of five to six students around the age of 10 is sitting at their desks surrounding the teacher listening to him with smiles on their faces. One girl is raising her hand trying to catch the teacher's attention. A dark-green chalkboard is located behind the teacher and students. On the third slide, Dao put the black words "Teacher teach, and student note" on the top left of the slide and a picture underneath. In the picture, there is a female middle-aged teacher-like woman standing next to a student-like young man, bending her body

over, pointing to the paper with a big smile on her face. The student-like young man is looking at the woman with a pen on his right hand, showing a big smile on his face. Another student-like young man is sitting at the same table, showing his side profile, slightly lowering his head to read something on the white paper placed on the table. Another student-like female is showing part of her face and body with a pen on her right hand, writing down something on the white paper. On the following slide, he put black words "Student ask, and teacher answer" on the top left of the slide and a painted picture underneath the words. In the picture, a teacher-like woman dressed in a yellow suit is standing in front of a dark green chalkboard smiling to a student-like boy with her left hand holding a chalk. A blond boy wearing a blue shirt facing the chalkboard is raising his right arm high into the air, seems to ask a question. On the last slide, the black words "Not too much Homework, and teacher help student do homework" is placed on top of the slide, left aligned. A picture is placed underneath the words. The picture depicts a student-like girl dressed in navy blue skirt sitting in front of a table with her left hand holding a ruler and her right hand holding a pencil writing something on a white sheet of a notebook. A teacher-like man dressed in a navy-blue sweatshirt, wearing a pair of glasses is bending over holding the girl's pencil in his right hand. A pencil holder with full of pencils and color pencils is standing on the desk in front of the girl. There is a drawer and a green-leaved plant on top of it in the background.

Researcher's Reflection

In Dao's multimodal text III A, he used a red marker to separate the paper vertically into two sections. On the left column, he wrote "teacher" on the top and on the right-hand side, he wrote "student" on the top. In his multimodal text, he was trying to talk about his experience by showing the relationship between teachers and students using key words and simple text. He told

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me that he wrote "friendly" because teachers are friendly to students and students are friendly to teachers. He also wrote down "Homework", and explained to me that many teachers gave a little homework so that is why he put "Not too much" above the arrow. He also said that there was no need to do homework with a home teacher because he could do it himself or his school teacher would help him do his homework. It seems that hiring a private teacher or home teacher to help with students' homework was part of his home culture and it is not necessary to pay extra money to do it here in the U.S. Finally, he told me that he would revise his text when he comes to the next session.

In the following workshop session, I asked each of the participant to think about revising their multimodal text III if they felt it necessary to do. Dao did not revise anything on his multimodal text composed on the paper. Instead, he opened up a new PowerPoint template with pure white background and searched for pictures to add to his slides. I asked him why he chose to recreate his multimodal text. He told me he only used words on the paper-based text to show his points, but he wanted to add pictures to illustrate his points on the PowerPoint slides. In addition, he said he would not only use pictures, he would also use words to explain the pictures in his PowerPoint slides. He said that the paper text and the PowerPoint are together. He transferred the main ideas from the paper-based text into the PowerPoint.

In Dao's multimodal text III B, he used one picture for each slide to illustrate his point on that slide. On each slide, he used one picture with a teacher-like figure and one or some student-like figures to show the relationship between the teacher and the student(s) or the responsibilities of the teacher and the student(s). He only used words and pictures to talk about his English learning experience in the U.S. in the classrooms. I asked him why he did not do the revision on the paper-based text, he said that he would like to use pictures to illustrate his points but he could

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not draw very well, so he decided to transfer his main ideas into PowerPoint in which he could add in pictures.

Dao's MM Text IV

Figure 8. Dao's MM Text IV, Slide No. 3

Dao created five slides to talk about his English learning experiences out of the classrooms in the U.S. He started the first slide with the title centered in black "Experience study English outside of class" and his name underneath the title with the same color but a smaller size. He put the words "Go out of class and talk with classmates" on the left top of the slide and chose to use a black-white cartoon image underneath the words. The image featured a group of student-like figures coming out of a wide-opened door holding folders and books in their hands smiling and walking to different directions. A bulletin board is hanging on the wall next to the door with several sheets of paper pinned to it. On the following slide, Dao put the words "talk with cashier" in black on the left top of the slide and a colored cartoon image underneath the words. In the

image, a cashier-like male dressing with a red uniform, a blue tie, a white shirt and a nametag is standing behind a counter in front of a scale, holding a credit-card-like item in his left hand. A red basket is placed on top of the counter with full of grocery. A customer-like male is standing behind the counter showing his back waiting for the cashier-like man to help him check out. On the fourth slide, he put the words "talk with people in elevator" in black on the left top of the slide and a picture underneath the words. In the picture, there are four people all dressed up with suits and ties making conversations with one another with smiles on their faces. One person is carrying a file case in his right hand with his left hand pushing the button in the elevator. On the last slide, Dao put the words "Watching Movie and Read Book" on the left top of the slide in black and two pictures next to each other underneath. The picture on the left side is showing the screen of a laptop with the poster pictures from different movies. Two hands are typing on the keyboard on the laptop. The picture on the right side features a male figure dressing up with a light color shirt and a dark brown suit top sitting on a chair flipping over a thick book. The male figure does not show his face in the picture.

Researcher's Reflection

Dao chose to use PowerPoint to create his final multimodal text. His first slide was informational with the topic on the upper middle of the slide centered and his name underneath. In the following three slides, he chose to display the key information on top of each slide and a picture underneath to express the meanings represented from the pictures. In the last slide, he chose two pictures and placed them underneath the typed words next to each other. In his final multimodal text, Dao presented his ideas through typed words and pictures he selected that could represent his understanding about the topic. His identity of being an Asian was revealed from the third slide, on which he selected a cartoon picture with black-haired cashier-like male serving

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another black-haired customer-like male (representing himself) at the check-out counter to represent the information he intended to deliver: "talk to cashier" to practice English-speaking.

Dao Reflects on His MM Texts and Workshop Experience

In the post-workshop interview, I asked Dao some follow-up questions to explore how he felt about participating in the workshop and things he learned. I asked him to tell me something he learned from the workshop and he said, "I learn to remember my experience in the past. I learn about how the multimodal text is and you know the PowerPoint, talk and improve my speaking skills, speak to more people and make more friends. It's helpful for learning English" (Post-interview, lines 4-6). He told me he started using PowerPoint to do his class projects in the first year in his university in Vietnam. I asked him how he felt about using multimodal modes and resources to express himself, and he said:

> I think uh it helped and now I know about how to do the presentation. I now have a different way to do PowerPoint with the words, pictures, sounds and music and something like that and the color... when I did the multimodal text, I really like to do the PowerPoint because it's very easy and it helped me to memorize. The PowerPoint is easy, easy to show my ideas to other people. When I talk and show the pictures, it's easy for people to understand and share their ideas. (Post-interview, lines 18-24)

He stated that he had some challenges working on the multimodal text and the biggest challenge for him was to find the picture that exactly match his ideas in his brain. He also explained why he did not choose to use sound or music in his multimodal text. He mentioned, "It was so hard to connect the picture with the sound because some pictures need the sound to explain to people like what are people's feeling in the picture" (Post-interview, lines 36-38). He continued:

> You know a piece of music can make someone feel... but another person may have a different feeling at a different time so when I was thinking about the idea and the music,

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it was what I think exactly at that time, but maybe after a few minutes, it was not good for my idea. (Post-interview, lines 44-47)

When Dao was asked whether multimodal composing could help him with his English writing in the classroom, he said:

Yeah. It can help me with my logical thinking, my ideas. You know when I have a topic and I was thinking and I had the picture (in my mind), so it can help when I see the picture and explain because I really like to explain when I see the picture. Also with the picture, I can write down the outline for picture 1, picture 2 and picture 3 and it helps me to plan. I think when people write a topic, they have a lot of ideas. And when they try the ideas to write, if there is no pictures, there might be more ideas in their mind when they write so it is hard to write about "the one" idea. So, I will have three ideas, 3 pictures, and see the pictures and explain each picture, so it helps me with my writing. (Post-interview, lines 54-61)

Then Dao was asked whether he would like to use multimodal resources to express himself for general writing, he stated:

I think about using the sound and music. Because before I came to your workshop, when I do the PowerPoint, I was thinking about using the words and pictures. But after I came to your workshop, I tried to use the video and music and the sound but it's so hard (laugh). (Post-interview, lines 68-71)

Dao said that he used words, text and pictures the most frequently for his multimodal composing and he explained the reason:

First, it's easy. It's easier than video, sound and music. Third, it is easy to find pictures in the web on google. Because the first step in my brain activity about the topic is the picture, not the sound or something like that. So, it's very easy to do that. (Post-interview, lines 80-82)

When Dao was asked about his possibility/perception of using construction paper or cardboard to do cut and paste while creating his multimodal texts, he said it might not help him because he felt easy and comfortable to do his work on the PowerPoint and explain things to his audience.

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Dao also shared the steps he followed while working on his multimodal texts. He said:

> First, I understand the topic. And the second step, I try to find the information about the topic. Third step, I make the idea, the main ideas, and the detail. Then I draw the picture. Next step, I find the important words with the picture to make people understand. And then finally I find the pictures on the web. (Post-interview, lines 93-96)

When he was asked how these multimodal resources might help express himself, he said:

> It changed my mind to do the presentation. For me, pictures helped me. Before when I did my homework or work in the class I used a lot of words, but now when I talk to people, I try to draw the topic I talk with them and it can help me explain more ideas. (Post-interview, lines 107-109)

When he was asked about his perception of the five-paragraph essay and the multimodal writing, he shared:

> Maybe the essay writing can help me now, but in the future, MM writing can help us maybe do the presentation or make the music also. Because now I try to make the music and sound into the PowerPoint, but it's hard now, but I think it can happen in the future. (Post-interview, lines 114-117)

Dao also shared how he thought writing should look. He said, "I think writing should look like linking and connect a lot of ideas with logic to tell a story. A story you talk to people, explain with people how I think about it to make people understand" (Post-interview, lines 122-124). Then he added to his points saying that "Before it was on the paper, but now it's not. Now it's more linking to the picture or video. Before I studied with you, I thought writing essay was the picture and words, but now I connect small pictures to make a video" (Post-interview, lines 126-128).

When he was asked how he perceived himself in the U.S. and back in his home country, he shared that "(Laugh). I think I am an international student... I try to look like the national

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(laugh)...Because now I am international student and I use two languages, English and the
language in my home country" (Post-interview, lines 131-137). He added to his point and said
that:

> (Laugh). When I was in my home country, I was a common Vietnamese person. It's the
> same with other Vietnamese people. I wanted to become a special person so I work
> hard to connect to people. But I am new in here. I live in different communities and it's
> hard to communicate with people because I don't know their culture and the intention to
> talk with people. (Post-interview, lines 141-145)

When asked about how his experience may affect his English learning in his home country and
here in the U.S., he said, "It's very helpful, the environment is helpful to learn English because
when I come here, I meet people and I speak English so I can practice more. Little by little
experience make my English skill better and better" (Post-interview, lines 155-157). He then
continued and said that:

> When I travelled back to my home country, I forgot a lot. Because now my English skill
> is not very, very good so when I don't practice, my English skill is decreased. So, in the
> U.S. I practice a lot, so my English skill is increased, but in the future, when I have a
> good English skill, when I go home, it's ok. (Post-interview, lines 161-164)

General Observations about Dao

Even though the name "multimodal composing" sounds new to Dao; in reality, he has
been composing multimodally for his classroom presentations and writing assignments. Dao
used words and images in all his four multimodal texts. He chose to use PowerPoint to create his
multimodal text I, II and IV but chose to use paper to create his third multimodal text. However,
in the following session, he transferred his text on the paper to PowerPoint and recreated his text.
It seems that Dao was comfortable creating multimodal texts on the computer using PowerPoint
and PowerPoint seemed to be a popular form of presentation in the classroom domain. He shared

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in the workshop sessions and the pre- and post-interviews that he felt comfortable using pictures to express himself. He had been using pictures to help write his essay in the writing classes here in the United States. He said during the pre-interview that he thought he could not use music or sound to create his multimodal texts because he could not think of anything while he was listening to the music. Music was too distracting to him for his writing. However, during the post-interview, he said that he tried to find music to connect to his ideas but it was too hard to do that. Also, he was concerned about himself changing his mind about finding the perfect music at a different time and people' different interpretation of the same music. He shared that he had been trying to include music or video in his class presentation recently because participating in the workshop brought him some new insight to explore more possible ways to express himself. His perception about whether music can be used in writing has shifted due to his participation of the workshops. He has become a practitioner to explore and try out possibilities of using multimodal resources to compose academic-related genre in his English learning and writing process.

In several of his multimodal compositions, Dao chose real-life pictures or cartoon pictures to represent his culture and nationality. In his conversations with the researcher, he described himself as a common Vietnamese student and a hard-working English learner trying to be special; however, his description about himself in the U.S. had been changed to an international student who wanted to look like a native speaker of English. Dao's social and literate identities had shifted due to the change of his learning context and his different interaction with social events and literate activities in different social and cultural contexts.

Danilo—The Student from Columbia

Meeting with Danilo and Learning His English Learning Experiences and Challenges

Danilo is a soft-spoken man from Columbia. He is in his fifties and had many years of experiences working in different libraries, multinational oil companies and publication companies in Columbia before coming to the U.S. to learn English. He has been in the United States for 2 months at the time I interviewed him. He started learning English in his middle school and he took English classes for six years until he finished high school. However, he only learned words, sounds, verb tense and simple sentences in his English classes; he did not have the opportunity to learn how to make sentences, paragraphs or how to write English essays. He mentioned in the pre-interview about his English learning experience in Columbia:

> The words the sounds... but it's not... ah. You don't have the opportunity to make sentences, to make paragraphs, to make essays... Just words. (Laugh). So maybe in the last year in the middle school, the teacher gave us the information about the sentence, about the past tense, the present tense, future tense, the verbs... But it's very different from what I know and what I see at this time. Very different. (Laugh) so at that time, it was not interesting for me. (Pre-interview, lines 70-80)

When Danilo was asked about his English learning experience in the U.S. He said, "Ok. But let me talk about my previous experience because I learned English in my job, in my work" (Pre-interview, lines 98-99). Then he talked about his experience working for multinational companies such as Shell and Eco Petrol back in Columbia. He talked about the challenges he confronted while working with his bosses and colleagues. He said:

> My boss was American or English...English-speaking people? Or Switzerland. So people from different parts of the world. So ok so...They have to speak one language. Yes. English. Absolutely. So, I was very nervous, very disabled because I don't understand everything. So, I understand some parts but other parts nothing. Oh, my goodness (showing a confusing face). Very difficult for me. (Pre-interview, lines 102-108)

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He mentioned the dilemma he encountered while he was trying to find time to learn English in

Columbia. He said:

> Sometimes I try to take a course in my country. But I always... I try to learn good
> English. Always, I was in front of different experience or many, many years of different
> companies and many people... so now, I say stop. I don't care... I don't want this
> embarrassment in my life. I come to the United States in order to take only English. (Pre-
> interview, lines 110-115)

He then transitioned to talk about his English experience here in the U.S. He said:

> It is my decision now. So, my experience here is wonderful. So, when I took my first test.
> My classification was intermediate... They say middle. So, level 3 or 4. But I know for
> sure I don't have very good basis. Like grammar basis or that thing so I tried... And I see
> this experience here like every teacher, every class has a good methodology. Its specific
> rules, its specific steps. It's very easy for us to understand. (Pre-interview, lines 119-126)

Even though Danilo said he did not have problems speaking English in the U.S.;

however, he added, "But the problem is to write in English with grammar, the good rules...

Because I had a lot of mistakes ... so another problem is listening" (Pre-interview, lines 133-134,

line 138). Then he transitioned back to his previous working experience and said, "It is very

difficult because ok for my boss for example in... Holland. Amsterdam. Every time and every

year people speak English I don't understand completely, completely... Oh my goodness. This is

very difficult. So..." (Pre-interview, lines 140-147). He then shared that he had problem

understanding his professors in his first classes because they spoke fast. He lost some

information in those classes but now he feels that he is making progress. He mentioned the

difference between learning English in his home country and here in the U.S. He stated, "I

expose every time to English only environment. Like speak to you at this moment. So, I talk and

answer your questions so look... (Laugh)" (Pre-interview, lines 163-164). When asked about

what he has learned from his English teachers here in the U.S. Danilo shared:

> I learned from my grammar teachers to write very good sentence. To know what is the subject, what is a verb, what is an object, what is an adjective, it′s very complicated to understand... Grammar here in English is not easy. But when you practice the rules, apply the rules a lot of times, you learn their way, the best way. (Pre-interview, lines 182-187)

He talked about the importance of rules and how he followed the rules to make paragraphs. He

believed the steps to make paragraphs were the same, so he just needed to apply the steps. He

also mentioned it was easy for him to have an outline when writing an essay. Even though he had

been using these strategies to help him write, Danilo still had problems in his writing. He said:

> But the problem is when you put together very good sentences while you write there is problem because at that time you can have the mistakes for examples use a verb, tense of the verbs, singular and plural, with "s" and without "s". I have these mistakes right now. (Pre-interview, lines 197-200)

Danilo continued to share his other challenges of learning English. He said:

> I have the problem with the sound. In Spanish we have five vowels like English, ok. But in Spanish we have only five sounds... In English they have 15 or 17 sounds with the same five vowels. So, for me it is difficult to combine and understand what is...using the same vowel. (Pre-interview, lines 210-214)

He repeated his listening difficulties and connected it to communication issues and said, "First I

had problem with listening so it causes communicating difficulties too because I have mistakes

in pronouncing different vowels. I don′t remember what is the right position. If you put the

sound in the ending" (Pre-interview, lines 219-221).

When he was asked about how to describe himself as an international student, Danilo

answered:

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Ok. I understand that as international student, I feel like a strange person that need to learn and to know the culture, but it is the situation for international students because for example, if I take the train, I need to use the doors, the electric doors, you know you don't know that in the left, people go fast, in the right, people stop...It is simple, but for me I need to learn. It is part of the culture. (Pre-interview, lines 228-233)

When Danilo was asked if his experiences in the U.S. affect his English learning, he responded

Yes. But the affect is very positive, not negative. Because it's a challenge, you need to understand, and you need to confront in reality to learn and understand what is its way in that situation. So, it's far from where you live in your life in here. I think it's the situation for every international student. (Pre-interview, lines 246-249)

Then he responded to the question about the difference of learning English in his home country

and here in the U.S. Danilo said:

The difference is because in my country, to learn English is not very effective. Because you take a course. You go for the course. And when you leave the course, you continue your normal life in Spanish (laugh)...So the learning of the English in the course is only for the time of the class. No more... But here the difference is then you leave the class, you need to apply. (Pre-interview, lines 254-260)

He then added, "Here you have to expose all the time in English. In my country, it's limited to the class, the time of the class. It's different so it is more effective here" (Pre-interview, lines 268-269). He said that he did not have any experience learning English after class during his school years. However, he shared the experiences of his son learning English in Columbia. He said:

I know a lot of people learn English in the country like my son. He is a good example. For my son, I took him to English school. He is like a translator. Very young.... He takes English classes from American people. He is very good, very high English proficiency...And the other reason is he is very young when he takes the courses. It's not my experience because I had a different pressure, different situation to take English. I took English When I worked with my boss in the publication company (Pre-interview, lines 271-273, lines 279-280, and lines 286-288).

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Finally, Danilo told me again why he quit his job and came to the U.S. to learn English. He said, "Because I don't feel comfortable and my boss too. So, I told my situation to my boss 'Bye-Bye' ...Because for that position, I need a high quality of English" (Pre-interview, lines 297-298, line 300).

Reflection on Danilo's English Learning Experiences

Danilo is the oldest among all the participants and he has been in the U.S. the shortest – two months at the time I interviewed him. He had the longest time of working experiences in different universities and companies. He learned some basic English skills in his middle and high school years but it could not help him survive in the English-speaking environment he had involved in his work. The demand of learning and using English in his work made him understand how important English was. Additionally, it also helped him make his decision to quit his job to end his pain and embarrassment in his previous job and came to the U.S. to learn English. Even though he had been struggling with English "sound", verbs and grammars, he had been making progress to his speaking and listening in this English only environment. Except for listening and speaking difficulties, Danilo had struggled with English writing as well. Even though he learned to follow the rules to write good sentences and paragraphs, he still had challenges to compose high quality essays with accurate grammars. He seemed to enjoy his classes and appreciated every learning opportunity including participating in this workshop. He perceived his life and language challenges as a positive learning process and he seemed to be prepared to encounter the future challenges and find his value in the U.S. Even though he could survive in the American society as a native speaker of Spanish, he seems to challenge himself of speaking English and learning English culture while studying and living in the U.S.

Danilo's MM Text I

Figure 9. Danilo's MM Text I
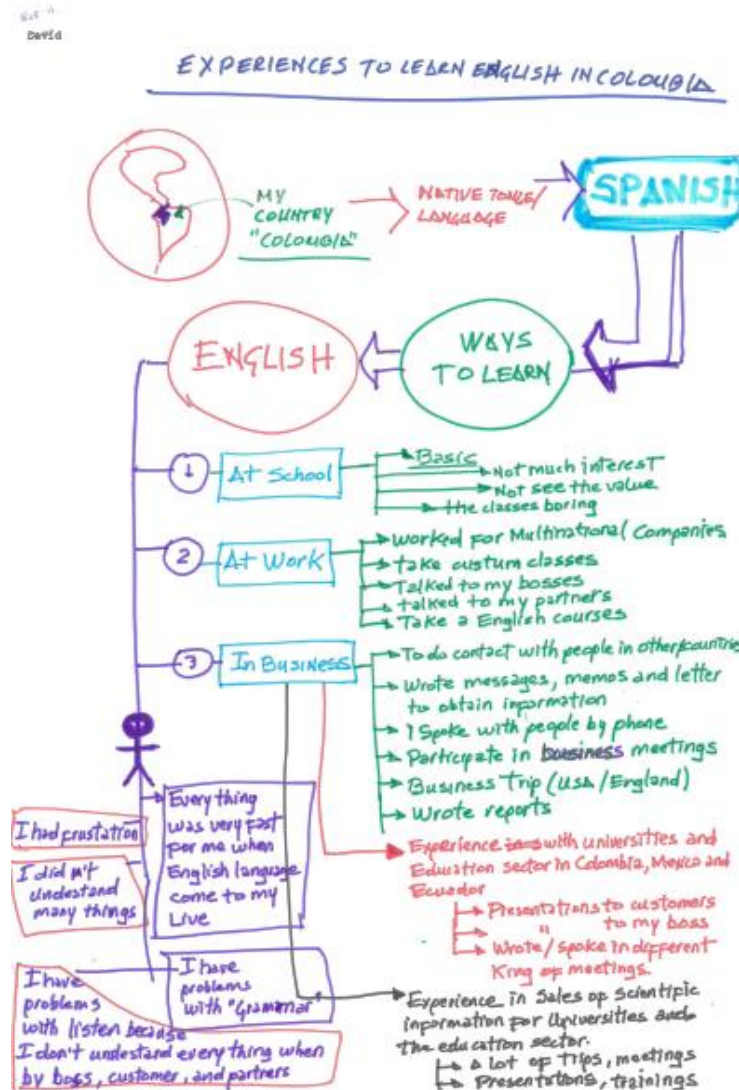
Danilo's first multimodal text was designed in a vertical orientation (Albers, 2007) on an A3-sized white paper. He put the title "Experiences to Learn English in Columbia" all in uppercase letters in navy blue. Underneath the title, he drew a globe in red with purple tracing and purple filling out the shape of his country. He wrote down the words "My Country 'Columbia'" in green on the right side next to the globe, underlined the words, and used a curved

arrow pointing to the location of this country on the globe. A red arrow was pointing to the words next to the green words on the right, which says "Native Tongue/ language" in red. Another purple arrow was used to point to a big bold blue word in a bold blue box, which says "SPANISH". A drop-down purple bubble arrow was used to link to another green circle with text inside that says, "Ways to learn" all in green and uppercase letters. The green circle was connected by a purple bubble arrow to another red circle with red text inside which says "English" all in uppercase letters. A purple line was drawn from the red circle and down to be connected by three purple numbers 1, 2, and 3, all circled. Next to the number 1 on the right, a sky-blue box with text "At School" of the same color was connected to a short green line and four branches with text after them indicating Danilo's English learning experience at school in Columbia. Underneath the number 1 and the text talking about his school experience, he put "At Work" in sky blue in a box in the same color and a short green line to connect the branches after which he put text next to each branch listing his English learning experience at work. Underneath the number 2 and the text describing his English learning experience at work, he used the same layout for number 3, "In Business". He drew a little purple person on the purple line directing to five text boxes with purple words in them. In one of the text boxes, he wrote "I had frustration". In another text box underneath the first one, he wrote "I didn't understand many things". In the third text box on the right side of the first two, he wrote "Everything was very fast for me when English language come to my life". Then underneath the third text box, the fourth one says, "I have problems with 'grammar'". The last text box at the bottom of the paper says, "I have problems with listen because I don't understand everything when by boss, customer, and partners". Danilo also drew two flowing arrows, one in red and another in black to connect the words "In Business" to more text in red explaining his experience learning English with different

people, in different companies and in different countries, and another text block in black indicating some details in his learning experience such as "a lot of trips, meetings, presentations, and trainings".

Researcher's Reflection

Danilo chose to create a paper-based multimodal text to begin his multimodal composing practice. He spent about 40 minutes working on this first multimodal text. He was careful about writing the text, choosing the color, and deciding the layout of the text and his drawings. He used a hand-drawing image to show where his home country was located on the globe and another hand-drawing little man to represent himself talking about his English learning challenges using text boxes. His native language Spanish was emphasized by using a bold blue box to circle it and the same blue color to bold the word, which seems to indicate his Spanish speaking language identity and the difficulties he had experienced when learning English. Even though he was asked to focus on writing about English learning experiences in the classrooms in his home country, Danilo still mentioned his general learning experiences "At Work" and "In Business" in Columbia. His first multimodal text was organized by his various experiences and locations of learning English at school, at work, and in business. His learning challenges were written down in several text boxes, illustrated by a little hand-drawing man representing himself.

While I was walking around taking notes of each of the participant, he was typing in some text in an online dictionary-like website in another language, and once he clicked a button, the text was translated into English. Then he copied some English words from the translated text and wrote them down on his paper. When I was taking notes on him, he turned around and showed me the computer screen. He told me he used three online dictionaries: Google translator, Webster and another dictionary from his own country Columbia. When he had problem writing

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some words, he typed in those words in Spanish, hit the button, and then the words or expression were translated into English. Then he transferred those English words and expressions to his multimodal text on the paper. I asked him why he used those different dictionaries to help him compose the text. He said that he used Google translator just because it can display text in both Spanish and English on the same page which is easier for him to compare the two languages. But when he needs to check the grammar, he uses Webster and another online dictionary from his home country.

It seemed that Danilo felt comfortable using handwriting and drawing while creating his multimodal text on the paper. Danilo seemed to be very serious about creating his multimodal text. He wrote down every single word carefully even though he made a few mistakes in spelling. He used three online dictionaries to help him translate and check the accuracy of English expressions and grammars while working on his multimodal text. Speaking Spanish as his native language seems to make him proud of himself as he said during the pre-interview, "Only Spanish. No more. It's my place (laugh)" (Pre-interview, lines 52-53). This proudness could also be represented by his emphasis of the word "Spanish" in the multimodal composition. He used what he called "conceptual map" to organize his ideas and as he shared in one of the workshop sessions, this conceptual map worked for him because it helped him connect things and remember things easier. This conceptual map was used multiple times in Danilo's later multimodal texts.

Danilo's MM Text II

Figure 10. Danilo's MM Text II
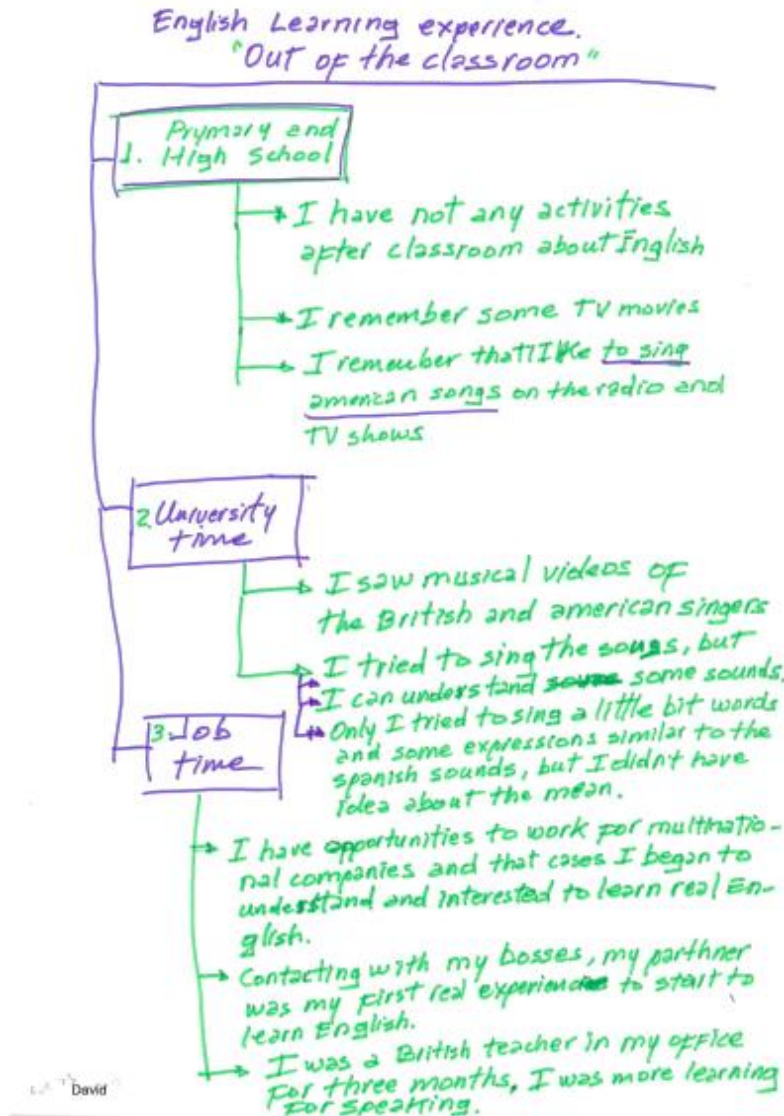
Danilo chose to use the A3-sized white paper again this time. He chose a vertical

orientation (Albers, 2007) while creating the text. He wrote down the title "English Learning

Experience 'Out of the classroom'" in purple on top of the paper with a green quotation mark

quoting the words "out of the classroom". He drew a purple horizontal line underneath the title to

separate the title and the content. Below the purple line, he drew another vertical line to connect

the left end of the horizontal line and made it the main "trunk" of his "conceptual tree". He drew three text boxes linking to the trunk. The text box on the top is purple with green words "1. Primary and High School" inside. Connected to the box were three green "branches" each linking a green arrow and some words describing his English learning experience back in his school years. He wrote down words "I remember that I like to sing american songs on the radio and TV shows" after the third branch and underlined the words "to sing american songs" in purple. Below the block writing about his primary and high school experiences, Danilo created another purple text box with purple words "2. University time" inside. Then connected to the text box, he drew two green branches and three purple branches linking to the points describing his English learning experiences in his university time. Below the chunk of his university experience, he drew a third purple text box with purple words "3. Job time" inside. Three branches were connected to the text box each linking to one of his points describing his English learning experiences related to his jobs.

Researcher's Reflection

Danilo chose to use paper again to create his second multimodal text. He only used purple and green-colored markers at this time. He used again what he called "conceptual map" to display his points and ideas but he did not include any hand-drawing images in this text. When he gave his work to me, I asked him why he did not use any pictures. He said he liked to use pictures but he just preferred to use only words this time because the words could express himself sufficiently. Also, this showed how he usually write using the conceptual map, which helped him link things together and remember easier and faster. He said he could show me the PowerPoint he made for his future conference in Mexico. In that PPT, he used only pictures and

keywords with no lengthy text. He said he could send it to me when he came back from the conference.

Danilo's MM Text III

Figure 11. Danilo's MM Text III

What are your English learning experiences look like in the classrooms in the U.S.?

I had found several English Learning experiences during this semester in [____] classrooms.

1. Methodology

The methodology used by the English's teachers is very consistent and organized. Everything is in the Syllabus so every classes are planned before and the teacher follow up the content and they contribute with specific and additional knowledge and activities for the students.

The methodology is focused to teach step by step, since simple concepts until complex information.

2. Teachers

The qualification and quality of the teachers are very important, and I see that the teacher assigned to my classes are very professional, however not every teacher have the same experience. I realized when the teacher has a huge experience than others because the youngest teachers are limit to repeat the Syllabus contact and not add anything to the class. I understand, they are the educational postgraduate college students and they need to do the practice, but for me is not good experience respect to others teachers because the quality of the program is compromised.

3. Content

4. Participation

5. Home work

6. Extracurricular activities

7. Technology

Danilo created his third multimodal text on a Word Document on the computer. He typed in the question "What do your English learning experiences look like in the classrooms in the U.S.?" on the top and he left a space in between and started typing in another line saying, "I had found several English Learning experiences during this semester in XXX classrooms." Then

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underneath the second line, he left some space and put "1. Methodology" indented. Below the word, he wrote down how he felt about the methodology used by his professors using about 60 words in four lines. Below his description about methodology, Danilo wrote down "2. Teachers". Then underneath the word, he wrote about 75 words in six lines to describe the qualification of teachers and how he felt about different teachers in this program. Then below his description about teachers, he put "3. Content", left some space and put "4. Participation" below. Underneath "Participation, he wrote "5. Homework". Below "Homework", two more points were listed "6. Extracurricular activities" and "7. Technology". All the seven points were numbered, indented with only the first two points explained in detail. The last five points were left unfinished.

Researcher's Reflection

Danilo came back from his conference in Mexico one day before the workshop session so he looked a little tired when he attended the workshop. Different from his first two multimodal texts, he chose to create his third one on a Word document on the computer. He typed in words slowly but very carefully and he paused occasionally to gather ideas before typing in the next points. It seemed that Danilo did not use typing to do his work very often and it seemed to take him a longer time than working on a piece of paper using handwriting and hand drawing. I realized time may be another issue for him because when he was working on something which he was not quite familiar, he needed more time to think, to gather information and to transfer what is in his mind to the document through typing. He stayed about ten more minutes after the session and he told me he could not finish the text because he felt tired and he needed more time. I said it was fine to leave the work unfinished and asked him to send it to me. He told me he was going to add pictures in the text because he liked to use visuals. However, it did not happen because when he came in to the next session, he said he was too busy to find pictures so he

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would leave the work like that. He also showed me the pictures in Mexico where he presented at the conference. He told me in the PPT presentation, he only used pictures and key words and it was very successful to attract the attention of his audience.

Danilo's MM Text IV A

Figure 12. Danilo's MM Text IV A, Slide 3
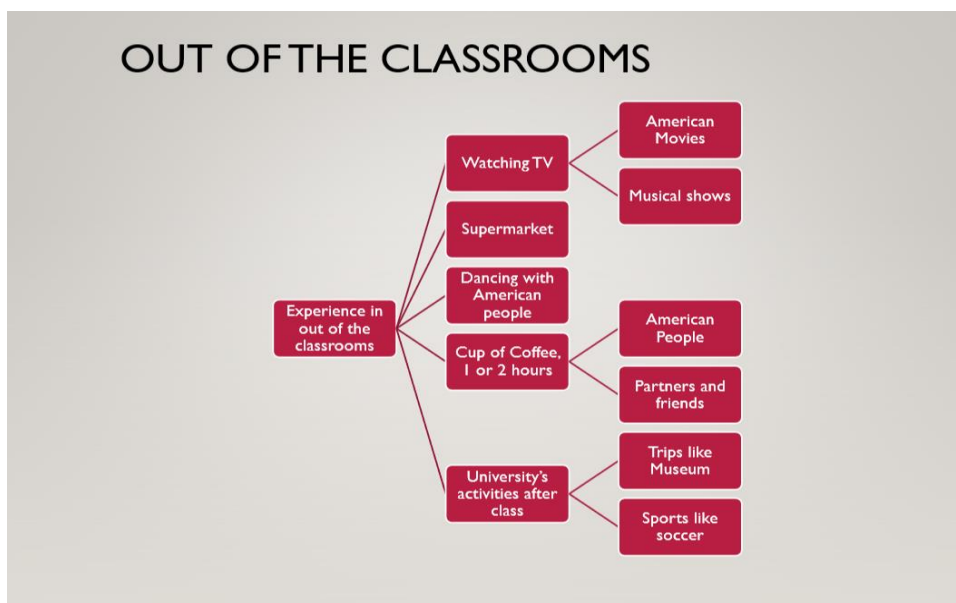
Danilo chose to use PowerPoint to create his fourth multimodal text. He chose the template with pure grey background and the image of wooden floor at the bottom of each slide. He made three slides to write about his English learning experiences out of the classrooms in the U.S. On the first slide, he put the title "English Learning Experience in the U.S. out of the classrooms" all in uppercase letters in black. A red line was used to separate the title and his name underneath. The date he created the work was listed underneath his name. Both his name and the date were in small-sided font and in black color. On the second slide, Danilo put the words "Both ways are important" on top of the slide all in uppercase letters in black and used a

red line to separate the words with the "conceptual tree" he made underneath. He put the white words "English Learning experience in the U.S." in a red-filled text box. Two red lines were connected to the text box each directing to another textbox. The text box on the top was filled in red and with white words "In Classroom" inside, and the text box down was also filled with red and with the white words "Out of Classroom" inside. The text box on the top was also linked by two red lines each directing to another textbox. The top one contained the words "Fundamentals and Grammar Rules", and the one underneath contained the words "Formal or Academic English". Connecting to the text box which had the words "Out of Classroom" were three red lines each directing to a text box with words inside describing English learning experiences out of the classrooms. All the text boxes were filled in red and all the text within the text boxes were in white. On the third slide, he put words "out of the classrooms" all in uppercase letters in black and another "conceptual tree" underneath. The conceptual tree was created using the same color red to fill the text boxes and white to type the text within the text boxes. The single text box on the left says, "Experience in out of the classrooms". Five red lines are connected to the single text box each directing to a text box with "Watching TV", "Supermarket", "Dancing with American people", "Cup of Coffee, 1 or 2 hours", and "University's activities after class" inside. The text box "Watching TV" is connected by two red line each directing to a text box which says, "American Movies" and "Musical shows". The text box with "Cup of Coffee, 1 or 2 hours" is lined by two red lines each directing to a new text box, one says "American People", and another one says, "Partners and friends". At the bottom, the text box "University's activities after class" are connected by two red lines each directing to a new text box with one saying, "Trips like Museum", and the other one saying, "Sports like soccer".

Danilo's MM Text IV B

Figure 13. Danilo's MM Text IV B, Slide 3
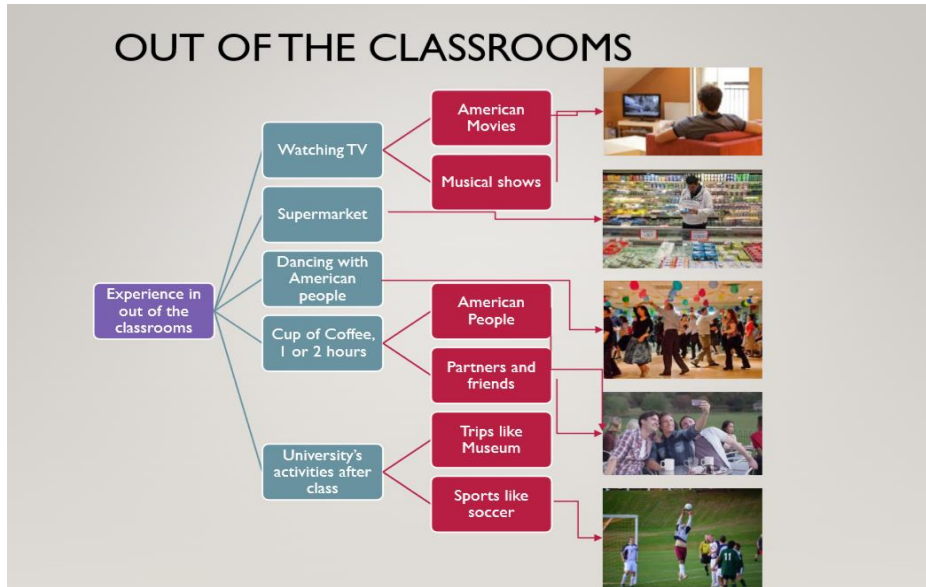
The revised multimodal text was based on the original text created with PowerPoint. The first slide was not changed. On the second slide, the "conceptual tree" looks exactly the same except for the colors that filled in the text boxes. The single text box on the left was filled with purple instead of red. The two text boxes in the middle were filled with navy blue instead of red, and the five text boxes on the right end stay the same, all filled with red. Some more changes were made to the third slide as well. The single text box on the left end was filled with purple instead of red, the five text boxes in the middle were filled with navy blue, and the six text boxes on the right end were all filled with red, which was the original color Danilo used. For each of the text box, a picture was connected to the text box with a red arrow showing and illustrating the point in it. For instance, the picture attached to the text box "American Movies" is linked with the picture of a man sitting on the couch showing his back but facing a TV which is placed at a far corner in the room.

Researcher's Reflection

Different from his previous multimodal texts, Danilo created the final text on the

PowerPoint slides. Even though he was asked to focus on his English learning experience out of

the classrooms in the U.S. He still mentioned his experiences in the classroom to make

comparison with his out-of-classroom experiences. He used what he called "conceptual map"

again in this composition to organize his ideas and display his points. In the following session

after Danilo created his final multimodal text. I asked the participants to think about revising

their multimodal texts if they felt necessary. Danilo pulled out his PowerPoint created in the

previous session and made some revisions. Even though the content of the text remained the

same, he made some changes to the color of the text boxes, the color of the lines connecting the

text boxes and added some pictures to illustrate the points he made within the text boxes. As he

shared in one of the workshop sessions and the interviews, he preferred to use short text and

pictures to express himself and this final multimodal text could show how he made it work for

himself and his audience.

Danilo Reflects on His MM Texts and Workshop Experience

In the final interview, I first asked Danilo to share something he learned from the

workshop, he first thanked me for inviting him to the workshop and told me it was a great

opportunity for him to learn English and to receive additional information after class. Then he

said:

> Something I learned from the multimodal text because it is a new expression or new
> 'keywa' in my language. Because it's not very common to know or hear about
> the multimodal text. It's a very interesting expression. When you explain the meaning
> of the multimodal texts, it's very interesting because it's an opportunity to talk
> about different ways of learning English. From my home country and in comparison to

my experience here in XXX University, so I receive a lot of information in there. So thank you. (Post-interview, lines 14-20)

Danilo also shared how he felt about multimodal composing and said:

I feel very well because I want to use different ways to express my ideas. So, it's a good experience, or not exactly an experience but just to review a new concept. What is multimodal text. How you use modes and different ways to do multimodal text. So, I enjoy every time I attend and I learned different... I compared different ways to learn English. multimodal text is very different. It's open options. (Post-interview, lines 23-27)

He also said that multimodal writing showed him more options to learn English. He said, "So multimodal text show me or remind me all ways: graphic maps, or pictures, writing, and technology applied to learn English" (Post-interview, lines 30-32). Danilo said that there were no challenges for him to compose multimodal texts or attending the workshop sessions because everything was explained clearly and specifically. When he was asked how multimodal writing may help him with classroom writing, Danilo shared:

I think it's combined with pictures and everything. It's not one way you know. Because I understand multimodal writing with different ways. So, I can choose different modes to express my writing. So sometimes it's only letters, only words or texts; other times I use texts combined with pictures or conceptual maps or other times use only pictures. So, it's different ways to do writing. (Post-interview, lines 44-48)

When he was asked either the five-paragraph essay writing or multimodal writing can help him better express himself, Danilo said, "For me I choose... it's the conceptual map because that's my strength. For me it's very easy to read something and creative the map. Very fast" (Post-interview, lines 51-52). He said that he used the conceptual map to help with his essay writing. He said:

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When I was writing an essay, I have my brainstorm, my map with the key words and associate with some different words or the main concept in order to clarify what is the main idea, what is the topic idea. That is a very good way to plan to write very good essay in order to organize your points, your ideas, your examples and everything. (Post-interview, lines 56-60)

Danilo shared that he would like to use multimodal resources to express himself and he explained the reason "I like it because I need to express myself every time. So...I need to take the modes available in my multimodal text, there is colors and color pencils, I use it. If I have the computer, I use it. If I have only a piece of paper, I use it. No problem" (Post-interview, lines, 64-67).

He shared that he would use any available resources he was asked to use to express his ideas and if poster board, cardboard, glue and scissors were provided, he would use those to make his multimodal text. However, he said if he could have his own choice, he preferred to use PowerPoint presentation to combine texts with a lot of pictures to create his text because it was easier to present his work to his audience using PowerPoint. He said:

Because you know it's... some people want to listen to your ideas, it's more easy today to do the PowerPoint presentation. Because you always need to work, to do the report, to present it to your colleagues or things you need to express, and explain to everyone. So that way is very easy. You know time is very important. (Post-interview, lines 90-93)

When Danilo was asked to talk about the modes he used the most frequently in his multimodal texts, he said, "Visual and textual, both" (Post-interview, line 97). He said that using words and pictures could help express himself; however, he said:

Let me talk about my experience with the children. When you need to explain something to the children, you need to use, for example, poster board. It's more easy because children learn everything by eyes... Yes. Visual. So not text. So, in that case, the presentation needs to be changed... It depends on the audience. (Post-interview, lines 109-116)

Danilo also shared the steps he followed to create his multimodal texts. He said:

> In my case, I start with understanding the subject, the topic. Then I write the key words, the key words about the multimodal topics, about the main idea. Then I put in the details for each point or I combine it with pictures because I can use one picture to associate different details. So it is the process for me... maybe you need to divide the important points and then for each point, I can describe with different pictures or one picture for each one and then I can add information with the key words for each picture in order to specify the details for each point or for each topic. It's my own learning process (Post-interview, lines 122-125, and lines 128-131)

Danilo believed that all multimodal modes were helpful for writing. He said, "I use everything. The pictures, the conceptual map. Everything is very important to my writing" (Post-interview, lines 134-135). When he was asked why he did not chose to use sound or music in his multimodal texts, Danilo stated:

> The music is not... Ok. The sound is a good mode when you want to comply, explain your point. You need to listen maybe the speech of the person you talk about maybe. It's another way. It's not common. It's not common to use the sound because it's more easy to go to the pictures. I don't think oh Ok let's listen to the song or listen to the speech or maybe to see the movie. No. I don't think so. (Post-interview, lines 143-147)

Another reason that Danilo did not choose to use sound or music is because of his custom. He said he could use music to relax or play Jazz music as the background music but he would not use music in his writing. When he was asked how multimodal resources may help express himself, he said, "The power is you can express your opinion with different resources. Because you know how to use, you know how to borrow multimodal resources, a lot of options you can use to explain things or make clear your ideas" (Post-interview, lines 191-193). He reiterated how he felt about five-paragraph essay writing and multimodal composing and said:

I think multimodal text you need a logical to explain your idea. You have different ways to express that. Because you know in the essay, you have the methodology and the components, the specific elements in the assignment. You need to apply that to meet the requirement for the assignment. But the multimodal test you are free so you can use your imagination to express your own idea. It's more open to express your idea... It's more easy to use multimodal text. Because in English writing it is more difficult. You need to write very well to apply or meet the requirements. Everybody follows the same ways. You need to follow the same procedures, the same rules. It's different in my home country. In Spanish, I don't have rules about writing. When I write in my home country, you just express your ideas, like your logical knowledge. (Post-interview, lines 203-207, and lines 209-213)

He thought that multimodal composing had no rules so he felt free to express himself. He agreed that multimodal writing changed his way of perceiving writing but he said:

It's not a strong change, it's a little change because it's different for my classmates because my classmates don't have the experience in the job. I am different because I have a lot of experiences in the job. So I have solid experience in writing and now I combine the information in my own text. (Post-interview, lines 240-243)

When he was asked to describe writing, he said, "Writing is a knowledge... Writing is writing (laugh). Writing is a book, it's a magazine. It's on a piece of paper. Writing is like when the knowledge is registered, is recorded. When your knowledge is recorded, it's writing" (Post-interview, line 248 and lines 250-252).

When he was asked if writing should be on a piece of paper, he said, "You know if you use technology you don't need to use paper, you can just download the application in the computer and you can write" (Post-interview, lines 260-261).

When Danilo was asked to describe himself in his home country, he said:

I didn't think about that in the workshop. I was a student, a normal student, and in the first years I didn't pay attention to the English classes because it was not mandatory, no requirement for anything. But then when I started to work, I realized English is very important so I took different course in Columbia in different institutions. The

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most important experience was with my bosses. Everybody was speaking English because they came from different countries in the world. American people, English people, Holland people, different people, so English was a mandatory language in business. (Post-interview, lines 270-276)

Then when he was asked to describe himself in the U.S., he raised up his voice and said, "I am a student. I focus only on studying English here because it's my goal here, for the reason I come here in order to concentrate to focus on learning English only" (Post-interview, lines 278-280). He said his goal was to speak good English in order to find more job opportunities in both his home countries and in the United States. When he was asked how his different learning contexts such as his home context and the U.S. context affect his English learning, he said:

> In here you have to express all things in English. In my home country, I need to express the same things, but I have Spanish. When you have an English class, you talk in English but it's limited. It's a short time to use English compared to Spanish. So in my country, I use everything, every time in Spanish. Here is different because it's only English all the time. I focus on only English. (Post-interview, lines 313-317)

He finally expressed that he wished he could learn English earlier because he believed young people learn things faster than aged people.

General Observations about Danilo

Danilo used paper to create his first two multimodal texts. He used Word document to make his third multimodal text and used PowerPoint to create his final multimodal text. This could explain what he mentioned in the post-interview that multimodal text is free and open to express his ideas. So, he was exploring and trying out multiple possibilities to compose in this out-of-class setting. In three of his multimodal texts, he used what he called "conceptual maps" to organize and display his ideas. His third multimodal text was left unfinished because he was tired after an international conference and he could not find time to finish it after the workshop

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session. As he shared in the post-interview, the use of conceptual maps is his strength. It was easy for him to use it to express himself and to explain things to his audience. It seems that Danilo had accumulated useful learning methods and he seems to have a clear understanding of his learning type and had been adopting useful methods to achieve his English leaning purposes. Danilo used two hand-drawing pictures in his first multimodal text, but he did not use any pictures in his second and third texts. In his final multimodal text, he used six small digital pictures he found from the Internet to attach to his points. As he shared in the post-interview, he felt the use of words and sometimes a combination of key words and images could help him express himself effectively and that explains why he chose to use words and images when creating his texts.

Danilo drew images to represent his nationality, his English learner identity and his native language background in his first multimodal text. In his conversations with the researcher, he described himself as a normal student who did not pay attention to English but later realized the importance of English in his workplace. His status in the U.S. was transitioned to an English learner who had the goal of focusing on English learning and finding more job opportunities. He was clear about how the different learning contexts affect his English learning, who he was in his home country and who he is in the U.S. It seems that he was satisfied to take advantage of his current learning environment to achieve his English learning purposes.

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Fanghui—The Chinese Student

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Meeting with Fanghui and Learning Her English Learning Experiences and Challenges

Fanghui is a smiling-faced Chinese girl enrolled in level IV in the Intensive English Program. She is 19 years old and she has been studying in the United State for 5 months at the

time I interviewed her. She planned to apply for the university Law program after she completed

the IEP. Fanghui started learning English when she was 5 years old before she went to primary

school back in China. Her first English teacher in her first grade had the experience of studying

English in the U.S. so she felt lucky to have that teacher. Her teacher taught her phonetic

symbols to help her pronounce vowels, consonants as well as English words. She was also taught

grammar and some basic English skills in primary school. When she was asked about her

English writing experience in her home country, Fanghui said:

> I started learning writing in my 3rd grade. Writing was not hard for me (laugh) because it was always emphasized and I learned the grammar... I tried to use simple sentences so... When I came to here I learned the complicated and compound (sentences) but when I was in China, I always used simple sentences. And the structure was always different from what I learn in the United States. (Pre-interview, lines 53-58)

She then gave me an example of the difference she noticed. She said, "Like we can put the 'an' as

the first word, and we don′t need a lot of commas. And like 'because' we can let it become the

independent sentence, ″because, why″, in here, we must write two clauses" (Pre-interview, lines

60-62). Fanghui gave another example to explain the difference she experienced when she wrote

her first essay in the U.S. She said:

> I think that... because American people always repeat, repeat, repeat, but we never repeat. We can keep it going... my first essay, I wanted to tell that thing and all the things about that thing and my teacher in China said, ″ok, I got it″, but my instructor said, ″what do you mean?″ I must repeat my topic and my subject again and again. (Pre-interview, lines 65-69)

She said that her American teachers would not allow her to use multimodal resources like

pictures or music in her writing. She then shared her writing steps in class and said, ″First is

brainstorm. Yeah. We can talk about a lot of things that we want to put in the essay. And I

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choose some points I like (laugh) then I can write it (laugh)... I can make it become paragraphs"

(Pre-interview, lines 83-87). When she was asked if an outline was needed to draft an essay, she

said, "I think it is not useful for me because I can write it without an outline. I don't want to use

outline because when I write, write, and write I would change my opinion. So outline cannot

help me" (Pre-interview, lines 90-93). She showed her interest in trying multimodal writing in

the workshops and she was looking forward to her new writing experiences using multimodal

resources. After she talked about her English writing experience in the U.S. classrooms, I

followed up and asked her to tell me more about her English writing experiences back in China.

She said:

> We are very strict at grammar. You must put subject, verb and subject and verb
> agreement. So I am not sure because I always... It was not really long. Our writing
> was (short) like ten sentences. Very little, short paragraph... We never write an essay like
> what we do here. (Pre-interview, lines 123-127)

When she was asked about the steps she followed to conduct English writing, she said, "Because

our writing was very short so I could do it immediately not to think over or what should I do to

put in the first paragraph and second paragraph... Sometimes a topic or some background

information and some more details" (Pre-interview, lines 134-137).

Fanghui shared that she did not feel being an international non-native English speaker

affect her life and learning experience in the U.S. She explained:

> Because I have not talked to American for a long period of time but when I first came and
> communicated with them I was fluent and brave. They can understand me and I also...
> I am not afraid to talk to them. So I don't feel like I am the foreigner and I cannot do
> that. And my roommates are also Americans. We have a good relationship. Maybe
> because my oral English is better (laugh) so I am not feeling like I am the foreigner. (Pre-
> interview, lines 154-158)

She said that she never had communication problem in class with her professors and classmates. She mentioned her different classroom experiences between China and the U.S. She said:

> Maybe our teacher taught us all of the information. We have to follow them. But in the U.S., we can ask our teachers questions and give opinions to them. We can have communication with teacher, but in China teacher said, 'what, why and what' and we say 'oh. What and what' (laugh). (Pre-interview, lines 169-172)

When she was asked to describe herself as an English learner in China, Fanghui shared, "Maybe I could have a good chance to get a job in a foreign company. When you learn a new language, you have the ability... That also helps me because I can use English to communicate with all people around the world" (Pre-interview, lines 180-182).
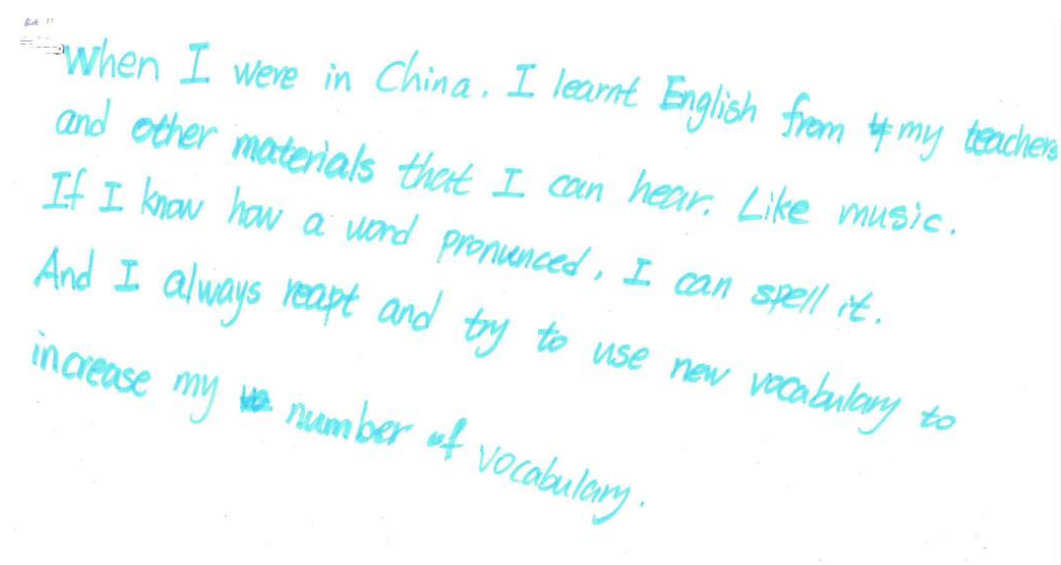
Reflection on Fanghui's English Learning Experiences

Fanghui started learning English at the age of 5, which was the youngest among the 6 participants. It seems that she did not experience any challenges in her speaking and listening both in her home country and in the U.S. since she had many opportunities to practice English speaking while she was travelling with her family. Additionally, she was confident about her speaking skills when she first came to the U.S. As she said, she learned the phonetic symbols early so when she relearned it in the IEP, she felt it was not new to her and she could recall the knowledge from her memory and learned it fast. It seems that she did not have any issue writing English back in China; however, when she wrote her first essay in the U.S., her teacher "did not get it". She told Fanghui to rewrite and explain her points, which brought some frustration to her. Once she learned how to write an English essay, she knew what to do to achieve her writing purpose. It seems that Fanghui liked the English classes in the U.S. better than the English

classes she had back in China because she had to follow what the teachers told her to do but she could communicate with her teachers freely and express her opinions in the U.S. classrooms.

Fanghui's MM Text I A

Figure 14. Fanghui's MM Text I A

Fanghui first chose to write her English learning experiences in the classrooms in her home country on a sheet of paper. She chose to use a horizontal orientation (Albers, 2007) and wrote in blue marker "When I were in China, I learnt English from my teacher and other materials that I can hear. Like music. If I know how a word pronounced, I can spell it. And I always repeat and try to use new vocabulary to increase my number of vocabulary".

Fanghui's MM Text I B

Figure 15. Fanghui's MM Text I B
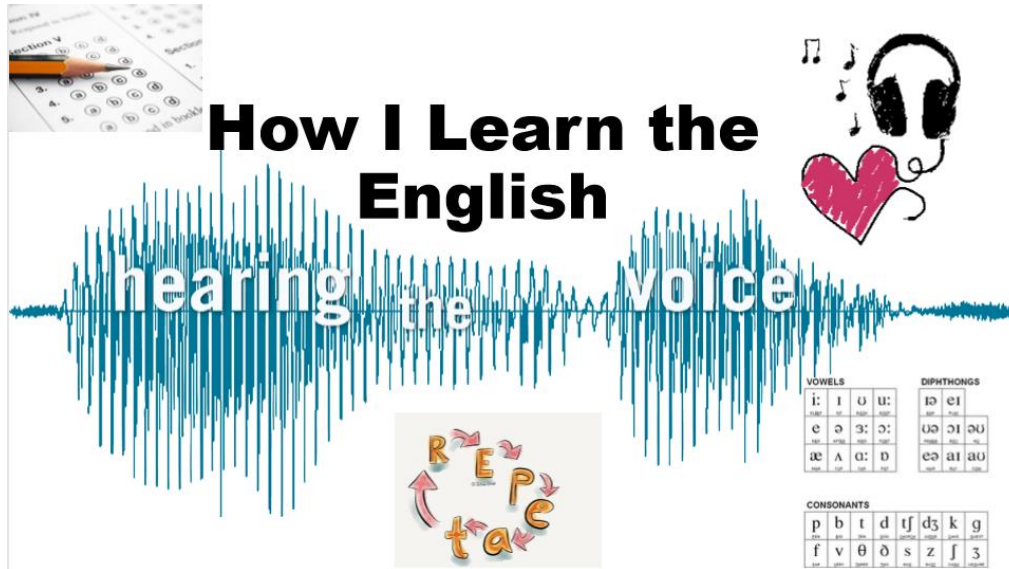
After Fanghui created her first multimodal text, she was trying to find music to add to it but found out she had to use computer to do it. After she logged on to computer and searched for aural resources, she realized that she did not know how to download free music on the Internet. Then she changed her mind and started to search for pictures on Google Images website to recreate her first multimodal text. She opened up a new PowerPoint slide and paste the images she found on the website to her slide. She created one single slide on the PowerPoint. The bold black words "How I Learn the English" were placed on top of the slide, centered. She used five images located at different places on the slide to write about her English learning experience in the classrooms in China. She used an image with an examination paper with multiple choice questions as the background and a pencil placing on top of the paper at the left top corner. At the right top corner, she put an image with a headphone, a pink heart and some musical notes. In the middle of the slide underneath the title words, another image was used showing the various

strengths of sound waves on a soundtrack with bold white words "hearing the voice" spreading out horizontally on the sound waves. Below the sound waves, the fourth image was used showing a circle made by each letter of the word "Repeat" connecting by an arrow. The last image was placed at the bottom right corner of the slide displaying three tables of phonetic signs with the first table saying "VOWELS" on top of the table, the second table saying "DIPHTHONGS" on top of the second table, and "CONSONANTS" on top of the third table.

Researcher's Reflection

Fanghui chose an A3-sized paper at first and wrote her English learning experience back in China using a blue marker. Then she asked me how she could add in pictures and music to the words. I told her she could draw the pictures by hand but I suggested that she use the computer to look for sound or music. She logged on to the computer and searched resources online. She asked me how to download music from American Internet because she did not have that experience. I told her I did not have the experience downloading free music and suggested that she upload the music saved or recorded in her phone and send it through email so that she can download the music from her email and use it in her multimodal text. She then changed her mind and said she would like to search for images on the website. She opened a blank PowerPoint slide and asked me how to find "symbols" in English pronunciation on the website of Google Image. I showed her to type in words "phonetic symbols" in the searching bar. She tried it and then worked on her own to locate other visual resources and inserted those in her multimodal text on the PowerPoint slide. She spent about 30 minutes on her text by using only visual resources and she moved those pictures around to change the layout. When she finished, I asked her if she would like to add the words she wrote on the paper to her text. She said she did not want to add those words and she could explain to her audience why she only used visuals.

Fanghui explored at the first time to find out what resources she needed as well as what she wanted to do to create her first multimodal text. She first chose to write on the paper but later she changed her mind to recreate her text on the PowerPoint slide. It seems that her transition from paper to PowerPoint was natural and quick, and it did not cause her any issue recreating the text. She looked for help at the beginning to find the exact resources she needed but later on she could work independently to complete her work. Fanghui chose to use words and images as the major resources to create her text and it seems that she knew why she used these resources and how these different resources could help express herself.

Fanghui's MM Text II

Figure 16. Fanghui's MM Text II, Slide 1

Fanghui created two slides for her second multimodal text. On the first slide, she put words "Primary School" in black at the center of the slide and one picture at the top left corner above the words. Two other pictures were placed underneath the words side by side. The picture at the top left corner displayed three girls dressing up with their home costumes with black hair

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but different skin colors all holding a Malaysia National flag with both of their hands. The picture located at the bottom left was showing a group of student-like teenagers all dressed up as different characters and posing in a drama play. The picture next to it on the right side is twice as big as the one on the left which was showing three colored wooden clips on a rope with each one clipping a card. The word attached to the first clip was "The", on the second clip was "winner" and on the third one was "is...."

On the second slide, the words "Middle School" were placed on top of the page centered. Three pictures were used on this slide. The picture on the left side below the words was displaying a road sign under the blue sky with multiple directing plates with the words "Asia, Europe, Australia, Africa, South America, and North America" on the plates respectively. The second picture next to this one on the right side was showing five student-like teenagers, four females and one male, with different skin and hair colors all smiling and facing out. The third picture underneath the second one was displaying a black-haired Chinese-looking girl dressing up with a red top, carrying a brown backpack sitting on a bench talking to a middle-aged white man sitting next to her. The background was showing some green grasslands and a black-haired guy taking pictures with his hands holding a long-lensed camera.

Researcher's Reflection

Fanghui chose to use words and images to create her second multimodal text describing her English learning experiences out of the classrooms in China. She typed in two words and used three images on each slide to write about her experience learning English in primary school and middle school. She said she purposefully selected the picture with three student-like girls each holding a Malaysian national flag because she had classmates from Malaysia in her primary

school years and she learned English through having conversations with them. She also used a picture displaying students playing in a drama representing her previous experience learning English by playing different roles in the drama. The pictures on the second slide all showed her experiences traveling to different parts of the world and communicating with international people while she was traveling. These pictures all represented Fanghui's real-life experiences learning English out of the classrooms. It seems that Fanghui was confident about her English-speaking skills in her travelling experiences when she could have the chance to talk to people in English because she mentioned more than once that she was the only one in her family that spoke English and she had to take the responsibility to communicate with people while they were traveling. She was the language speaker in her family. Fanghui used a picture with a black-haired Chinese-looking girl talking to a foreigner, which seems to represent her identity as an English learner in China trying to practice her English-speaking skills.

Fanghui's MM Text III

Figure 17. Fanghui's MM Text III, Slide 2
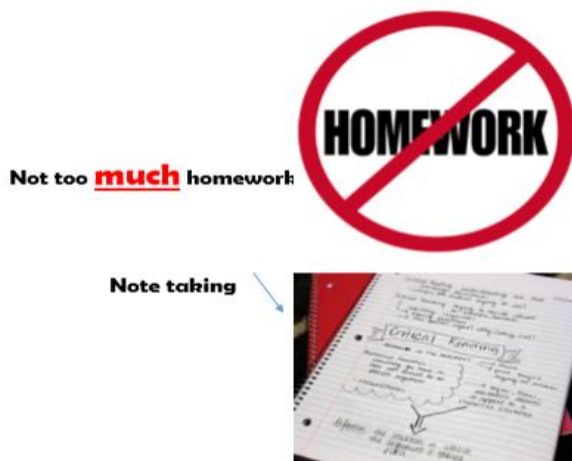
Fanghui created two slides to write about her English learning experiences in the U.S. classrooms. On the first slide, she put in black "Learning experience in the U.S." on top of the slide, centered. The abbreviation "US" was changed into red and italicized. Underneath the words, she used three pictures with two in vertical order and the third one at the bottom left. In the picture right below the words, there is a group of college-student like professionals circling around a table with one female talking to the rest of the group. Other student-like professionals are scattered in different parts of the room, having discussions with their groups. Next to the picture on the left side, two black words "Group work" are pointed to the pictured by a blue arrow. In the second picture underneath the first one, it displays a computer lab with multiple rows of computers stations, two white screens, and one master computer station. Three black words "Technology in classrooms" are placed on the left side a little bit above the second picture. The third picture at the bottom left was showing a classroom-like room with a group of student-like teenagers circling around several tables, sitting and listening to one student talking. The male student-like guy was standing facing in, talking to the rest of the group, and leaning his body on one of the tables. Two black words "Share opinions" are placed on top of the third picture with a blue arrow pointing to the picture.

On the second slide, Fanghui used two images and a few words. A "Stop" sign image is used with the word "Stop" being replaced by the word "Homework". On the left side of the sign, she put four words "Not too much homework" in black except the word "much" being changed to red, underlined, bold, and enlarged. Underneath the sign, another picture with a notebook-like image has full of notes on the top page. Two black words "Note taking" are placed next to the notebook image on the left side with a blue arrow directing it to the image.

Researcher's Reflection

Fanghui chose to use words and images to write about her English learning experiences in the U.S. classrooms on the PowerPoint for her third multimodal text. She put key words next to the pictures to explain what she wanted to express through the pictures. She purposefully changed the color and format of the abbreviated word "U.S." and changed the color, font, and size of the word "much" which seems to emphasize and catch the attention of her audience. In the following session when everyone presented their multimodal text, she said she liked to use pictures to express herself and she thought it was very effective and could clearly express herself. She said she always used key words to explain what she means by using the pictures because she thought people may have different perspectives to interpret the pictures so the key words could enhance clarity and reduce confusion. She said she did not use long sentences because she thought that was boring. It seems that Fanghui felt comfortable using pictures and key words to express herself and explain her points. All the images she selected seems to come from the U.S. culture which represented her awareness of using cultural-relevant resources to express herself.

Fanghui's MM Text IV A

Figure 18. Fanghui's MM Text IV A

Fanghui created one single slide to write about her English learning experience out of the classrooms in the U.S. She put the title "My Learning Experience Out of Classroom" on top of the slide in black except the word "Out", which was in red. The title was centered. She used two images with one placed at the left bottom corner and the other placed at the right bottom on the slide. The picture on the left was displaying a food court with many customers sitting down around a table eating or standing in line waiting for their orders. The red words "Chinese Eatery" was placed on the face of a food court eatery on the top. Several other Chinese eateries were connected to this one in the picture. The black words "Ordering food in food court" were placed on the right side of the picture with a blue arrow pointing to the picture. The picture on the right bottom was showing two college student-like females sitting on the chair at a dining table facing each other. The background was a kitchen decorated in white. All the furniture and the kitchenware were all in white except for the vase and a fruit bowl sitting on top of the dining table which were black. Three words "Chatting with roommates" were placed next to the picture on the left with the word "roommates" italicized, underlined and in red. The other two words "Chatting with" were in black.

Fanghui's MM Text IV B

Figure 19. Fanghui's MM Text IV B, Slide

Fanghui made some revisions to her original multimodal text in the following workshop session. The first slide remained the same. She added one more slide to the original single slide. In the slide she added, she put "Shopping in the shopping mall" on top of the page left aligned. Underneath the title, two pictures were placed side by side. In the picture on the left, it displayed the front image of the store "macy's". The bright lights and the variety of products were visible in the picture. In the picture on the right side, a sale-representative-like man with an orange T-shirt and a lanyard on his neck was touching the screen of a desktop computer explaining something to a customer-like woman with blue top and a handbag on her right shoulder.

Researcher's Reflection

To write about her English learning experiences in the U.S. out of the classrooms, Fanghui first created one single slide with words and images. As she explained, she wanted to use visual to catch the attention of her audience and show them the information she intended to express. But she also used key words to explain what was going on in the pictures. Both the pictures and the words helped her deliver the information. She chose to use black-colored words but purposefully changed two words into red to make them stand out and catch the attention of her audience. In one of the pictures, Fanghui chose the image of a few Chinese eateries which seems to represent her awareness of her Chinese identity. It might be one of the many restaurants that she and her roommates went to but she chose to use the image that displayed her country of origin and reminded her of the taste of her home country.

In the slide that Fanghui added, she chose to use the image of the shopping center she and maybe many of the women often went to which seems to represent her female identity. Both images also seem to represent her interest of shopping clothes, shoes, cosmetics, and technology supplies.

Fanghui Reflects on Her MM Texts and Workshop Experience

During the post-workshop interview, I asked Fanghui some questions to understand her

perception about composing multimodal texts as well as using multimodal resources to express

herself in writing. She shared that she learned from other participants their different experiences

and their home culture. Attending the workshops also helped her remember things that she

thought she had already forgotten such as how she learned English and why that helped her

learn. When she was asked to share her feelings about multimodal composing, Fanghui said:

> I feel that it's helpful but sometimes I only use one or two modes that I prefer to use... For
> me, I like listening. But if I want to show somebody I won't use this kind of thing like
> sound or music. But for me, I learn things from what I heard... To show anybody, I don't
> want to use that. I only prefer visual and letters because I prefer to use my own words to
> let them know. My explanation and my own speech to let them know, not to find
> something on the Internet. (Post-interview, lines 10-13 and lines 15-16)

When she was asked to share her challenges for multimodal writing, Fanghui said, "Sometimes I

cannot find the pictures (laugh), the exact picture. I am also not good at PowerPoint (laugh)"

(Post-interview, line 17). She further explained:

> Because I always do the simple things like put the document, title, and content and
> nothing else, and I put pictures... I want to make it in order and look very clean and all
> look like beautiful (laugh) but it's hard for me to make a PowerPoint like that... Like use
> a lot of tools like have different background pictures and beautiful words. You are not
> only using Times New Roman (laugh). (Post-interview, lines 21-25)

When she was asked if multimodal resources may help her in her classroom writing, Fanghui

said:

> Writing in classroom I think... I can use the picture to illustrate what I want to say. That's
> good to me because in class I cannot hear anything, I cannot use sound or music. I can
> find something on the Internet only... I can find some pictures when I don't know what

that means, when the words don't give me a clear definition I can search for the pictures and find out what that means. (Post-interview, lines 33-37)

When she was asked her perception of using multimodal resources to express herself in writing, she shared:

Yes. I think when you write a lot of things it's so boring and if I read a long essay, it makes me fall asleep. But if I put in something interesting and in different ways, it may attract the audience. So I prefer to do that and I hope my teacher would do that for me (smile). (Post-interview, lines 41-42)

She also talked about the modes and resources she used the most frequently in her multimodal texts. She explained, "Off course the words because I always use the words to write and to do my speech... I used a lot of pictures... They are easy to find" (Post-interview, lines 45-49). Then I followed up and asked if "easy to find" was the only reason that she used pictures. She answered, "That's the only reason because for me, I think the easy way is the best way. It saves time and I can do it most efficiently" (Post-interview, line 53). She then explained how pictures may help express herself and said, "Like I gave the pictures and I explain them. I talk about the pictures and that's what I want to say. I focus on the pictures to express myself" (Post-interview, line 57). When she was asked why she chose not to use music or sound in her multimodal texts, she explained:

First is when I am in my pronunciation class, the teacher ask me avoid to use some other voice rather than you (laugh)...And also not all the voice, the music can be downloaded exactly. Some I need to pay money (laugh), some have the protect. They cannot be downloaded. The most important reason is sometimes I cannot explain myself exactly with music. (Post-interview, lines 59-61)

She expressed that she would not use construction paper, cardboard or poster board to create her multimodal texts. She explained:

If I got a paper or something, I don't like this kind of materials. It wastes my time. When I was young maybe I would, but now I don't want to do this kind of things. When I need to write up something, I need to put some pictures, I need to cut them. It makes me feel I don't want to do that (laugh). (Post-interview, lines 67-69)

Fanghui also talked about the steps she followed to create her multimodal texts. She said:

First I think about the topic. What is this about, out of the classroom or in the classroom and where is it. And I try to remember, I find some memory in my brain. And I want to choose one or two things that suit for this topic. And open the browser to search picture and put some key words in there, and emphasize the key terms, the most important words. Then my PowerPoint is finished (laugh). (Post-interview, lines 73-77)

She explained how she placed the words and pictures in her multimodal text, "I always put the words nearby the pictures and put something to point out. Oh, these words belong to this picture" (Post-interview, lines 85-86). When she was asked to share something multimodal resources may help her do in her writing, she said:

In my writing. I will find some pictures or something interesting to me to make my writing active. When I write a lot of things, I feel I need to find something interesting. I don't want to keep writing a lot of time. So that helps my writing to be active. (Post-interview, lines 91-93)

She shared that she never used pictures in her essay writing; she only used pictures in her presentation and she felt more comfortable finding pictures from the Internet than drawing her own because she was not good at drawing. I asked Fanghui to explain what words and pictures can do to help express herself; she said, "the words show the exact meaning of the picture. The picture give the image to the audience and keep them active" (Post-interview, lines 110-111). She told me that she sometimes changed the color, font and size of words to emphasize the key terms in order to catch the attention of her audience.

Fanghui felt that multimodal composing could better express herself than the five-paragraph essay. She said:

> Because essay writing is always long, long, long, when at first I want to say this topic, but when I write, write, it's a lot of topics (laugh). So, I need to write something not very long, it's short or medium, not too much writing and I can explain myself with my oral speech. And also, I don't want my audience to be boring like 'oh five-paragraph writing, oh my gosh'. (Post-interview, lines 123-127)

However, she added to her points, "But if it's an interesting topic, I don't mind if I write five paragraph or fifteen paragraph, but sometimes in the class, the topic is not interesting, I will write four paragraph and I feel it's enough" (Post-interview, lines 132-134). When she was asked to share her perception about writing now and in the past, Fanghui said:

> Before I think writing is something you want to say and you put it in words but now I find it's easier to give them picture and let them think. I don't want to show you anything I want (laugh). You can think about it yourself. I don't want to tell you anything I want you to do. (Post-interview, lines 145-147)

She then explained more "But before I want them to understand me exactly... Now I give the picture, I explain and then you can guess what I mean" (Post-interview, lines 157-159). When she was asked about what writing should look like, she shared:

> Writing should look like... must be in order like first, second. It must have the outline. First it's meaning is clear and also you need to explain your main idea or topic carefully and exactly. And also, you should give some interesting examples. Don't make it like a lot of statistics or survey (laugh). (Post-interview, lines 161-163)

She said that writing could be anywhere, and she preferred to write on the computer. She explained her point and said:

> First my handwriting is not very good (laugh) so I don't want to be very tired to use pen for too long. And when you type... my typing is very good so I can write very fast to

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finish my essay quickly. When you write in the Word document, if you make some obvious mistake, they will underline with red line or blue line. You can easy to find out your mistake. But if you write something by hand, you cannot find it easily. (Post-interview, lines 169-173)

When Fanghui was asked about how her experience in her home country may affect her English learning, she said, "In my home country, nobody speak English out of class. If I want to practice my oral speech, I need to go somewhere else like the Europe" (Post-interview, lines 179-180). She then explained:

> Like during summer vacation we were traveling. Maybe the people we met their mother language is not English, but they understand English and I need to use English to communicate with them. So, when I was very young my mother and father took me to travel abroad. So, I am not afraid. They don't know anything about English so I am the translator so that's why I am not afraid to talk with people. Also in my home country, we focus on the skill for exam and the grades, scores so we do not pay attention to something else, like the culture or something else. Only for the test. (Post-interview, lines 182-188)

She agreed that the fact that her teacher focused on exam skills and grades affected her because she is now grades-driven. She is not satisfied with B because she always wants A in all her courses. She always wanted to do her best because her teacher used to teach them to compete with others. Additionally, she had listening challenges in her first few classes because she was not taught in 100% English in her home country so she had challenges understanding all the words the professors were talking about in class. However, she said, "after the first class I think, it was not too hard to follow although sometimes they say some words I don't know but I can skip them. It doesn't matter if I don't know every word" (Post-interview, lines 192-193). Fanghui shared her previous experience of note-taking that affect her English here in the U.S. She said:

> In my home country I was not asked to take notes so I never took notes, but in here I need to take notes but I usually take notes at home. I focus on what teachers say in class. Because in my home country, when people take notes, the teachers would say 'what! You

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are not listening to me. You don't need any notes if you listen to me carefully'. (Post-interview, lines 215-218)

When she was asked if her previous experiences affect her choice of multimodal resources, she responded:

> I am not sure like... because I want to make something simple and you can obviously know so I choose the easy way and make something easy. That's why because I am lazy (laugh). Because in my home country, my teacher told me not to waste too much time on everything that is not very real or dramatic. So, I choose the most simple way. (Post-interview, lines 227-230)

She explained the reason she chose words and pictures, she said:

> I think that's the best way because if I put too many things in one PowerPoint, the audience and you will not know what to do first. Shall I open the music first, or explain the picture first or why I put the words? You will not be clear what you want to do. But if you only have two choices and they are connected, then you can explain them together. (Post-interview, lines 233-236)

She reiterated that her teacher used to tell them to compete and she thought that kind of mindset encouraged her to work hard and do her best in the U.S classrooms. Finally, she shared her opinion that it was more effective to teach beginning learners of English with both images and words and made connections between these two so that it could help them understand better.

General Observations about Fanghui

Fanghui seems to be confident about her English speaking and listening skills and she seems to have few challenges understanding her professors in class and communicating with American people out of the classrooms. She started learning English at the age of 5 which was the earliest compared to other participants in this study. She seems to be proud of her grammar skills because she learned it in her primary school years and she did not perceive any issues in

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her English writing back in China. She did encounter some small challenges in her writing in the U.S. classrooms because the rules were different from what she learned in her home country. She seems to be comfortable using PowerPoint to include pictures and key words to express herself when writing about her English learning experiences in China as well as in the U.S. However, she shared in the post-interview that she felt she was not good at PowerPoint because she wanted to make it more beautiful and attractive to her audience. She also hoped that her professor could also include multimodal resources in their teaching. Fanghui seems to be an active learner and she took the opportunity to learn English everywhere she went: going grocery shopping, doing clothes shopping, taking taxis and eating out with American roommates. Her goal was to go to a U.S. Law school and she was working hard to improve her English skills to achieve her goal.

Fanghui intentionally chose pictures that represented her Chinese nationality and her previous learning experiences in China. She also chose pictures that display her cultural originality—a Chinese food court in the U.S. While she had the conversations with the researcher and had the discussion with other participants in the workshop, she described herself as a normal Chinese student who had little chance to speak English out of class and who was not afraid of speaking English to native English speakers. She was aware of her identity shift after she came to the U.S. She described herself as an international student, an English learner and someone who was trying to improve her English speaking and writing skills to attend law school in the U.S. She was also aware of the impact of different contexts to her English learning.

<div align="center">**Sung Min—The Student from South Korea**</div>

Meeting with Sung Min and Learning His English Learning Experiences and Challenges

Sung Min is a 25-year old young man from South Korea. He has been in the U.S. for two years but has studied in the IEP level IV class for only 3 months at the time I interviewed him. He shared a lot about his home culture: K-pop, cellphone, food and famous pop stars. Sung Min started learning English before he went to elementary school. He started with learning the English alphabets from a private teacher his mom hired for him. He was required to take English class in his third grade in elementary school. He learned some basic English such as how to greet people and some simple reading from his English teacher. He said that he was not taught how to write in English because all he needed to do was multiple choice. He was not given the chance to write English sentences, paragraphs or essays even in the exam. He remembered his only writing experience in the exam was to respond to short-answer questions with two to three key words. He shared his story of learning English in a private training academy in South Korea. He said:

> Basically, I was prepared to... my mom wanted to send me to Australia after I graduated from high school because I did not have any interest about the Korean education system. So she (his mom) told me even you don't want to study in Korea, you should go outside the country to see the world. (Pre-interview, lines 90-93)

He said that he ended up with working in Australia instead of studying because he liked to experience travelling and earning some money for himself. He then shared what he learned about writing in the academy. He said, "So at first time, I registered for private academy to prepare to IELTS test... I learned there how to do writing not spelling or grammar but how to write the full sentence, sentence structure. Because I don't have idea for writing" (Pre-interview, lines 112, 116-117). He told me that he always wrote his essay, and his teacher checked for his mistakes and sent it back to him, then he fixed it and rewrote, then his teacher fixed it again and he rewrote. When he was asked the type of mistakes he often made, he said, "Always grammar. Sometimes nonsense idea (big laugh)" (Pre-interview, line 126).

When Sung Min was asked about the different English writing experiences in his home country and in the U.S. He responded "I think basically I was taught British writing (laugh), and now it′s American writing. It′s more flexible" (Pre-interview, lines 133-134). Then he gave an example and explained "Like British English something different... Yeah. For example, when you do conjunction, complex sentence, we can use the pause like comma, period, or semicolon, period, but for the British English, no semi-colon" (Pre-interview, lines 136-138). He then transitioned to his English writing experience here in the U.S. He shared, "Well, basically, here they didn′t check for specific grammar. So, I always make a lot of mistakes. Like plural or singular" (Pre-interview, lines 145-146). He said that he already learned the ideas for writing so he had been working on fixing small things like grammar and preposition. Sung Min shared his experience after his first writing class in the U.S. He said, "For the first writing class, my teacher told me to go to her office. She told me there was very serious problem about plural and singular, and preposition also (laugh)" (Pre-interview, lines 158-160). His American teacher also told him to write on the computer so he could check his grammar before sending his essay to her. He was also suggested to practice timed writing at home on the computer even though he preferred to do handwriting in the classroom. When he was asked what his teachers taught him in writing class, he said, "Um similar thing like conjunction, preposition, plural, singular, or coordination... cause and effect" (Pre-interview, lines 177-178). He shared the steps he followed to write his essay in class. He said:

> Brainstorming...I just connect the ideas for example the "Uber" ... I talk about food delivery, cheaper price, or transportation like every brainstorming ideas... find the main ideas like controlling ideas. Make the body paragraph... Introduction, body 1, body 2, body 3 and conclusion. But I always work first on body 1, body 2 and body 3, then make the first paragraph and conclusion (laugh). (Pre-interview, lines 189-197)

He then explained why he always wrote body paragraphs before writing the introduction

paragraph "I always forget main ideas when I am writing something like in introduction (laugh),

and I change main idea (laugh)" (Pre-interview, lines 199-200). When he was asked if

multimodal resources may help him in his writing, Sung Min said:

> I think the visual, the body language... we can see something. We will memorize easier...
> Especially the visual. You know even though I can speak very good Korean language,
> some little thing I cannot explain in language, so drawing the visual thing... it's a good
> way to tell someone, to show someone what I mean. Even when people use different
> languages, we can understand each other. (Pre-interview, line 213, and lines 222-228)

When Sung Min was asked to describe himself as an international student, he said, "Well.

It's absolutely a hard time. I feel the hard time in the first year. I have been living in a "ghost

house" (laugh)" (Pre-interview, lines 232-233). Then he shared his experience of living in an

apartment where someone died in the bathroom a few weeks ago. His roommate and he was so

angry and they moved out of the apartment and slept in his car for three weeks. He agreed that

his first experience in the U.S. did not help him learn English because he said, "I was not using a

lot of English to someone... I was always gathering with some Korean guys, Korean friends.

Even though... a lot of Korean... I was living in the Korean community there, so I don't have the

opportunity to use English" (Pre-interview, lines 260-263). He said that his unpleasant

experience of living in the "ghost house" made him cautious and "always not trusting

everything" (Pre-interview, line 275). He further stated "when signing the contract or something

or spend money on something. For the deal, I need to check again and I need some more and

enough information" (Pre-interview, lines 277-279). However, when he was asked if his

experience affected his study and English learning, he said, "Well (laugh). I don't think so. Life

is life and study is study (laugh)" (Pre-interview, line 284).

Reflection on Sung Min's English Learning Experiences

Sung Min started learning English in an early age before he entered elementary school. However, his English learning experience was mostly about simple greetings, spelling words, grammar, reading and answering multiple choice questions. As he mentioned, he did not have the experience of essay writing at school in Korea. He first started learning to write English sentences in a private academy where he was prepared to take IELTS test before going to Australia. It seems that taking classes in the academy laid him the basic skills of English writing. Sung Min had an unpleasant life experience when he first came to the U.S. when he and his roommate lived in an apartment where someone had just died. However, he kept a positive attitude so that his study was not affected. Sung Min had some challenges in English writing at first in the IEP. It seems that he had been struggling to fix his grammar mistakes and "small things" like preposition, singular, and plural forms. Sung Min shared his perception of using multimodal resources in his writing and he believed that visuals could help remember things and explain things better when language was not sufficient, and visual could enable communication among people speaking different languages.

Sung Min's MM Text I

Figure 20. Sung Min's MM Text I
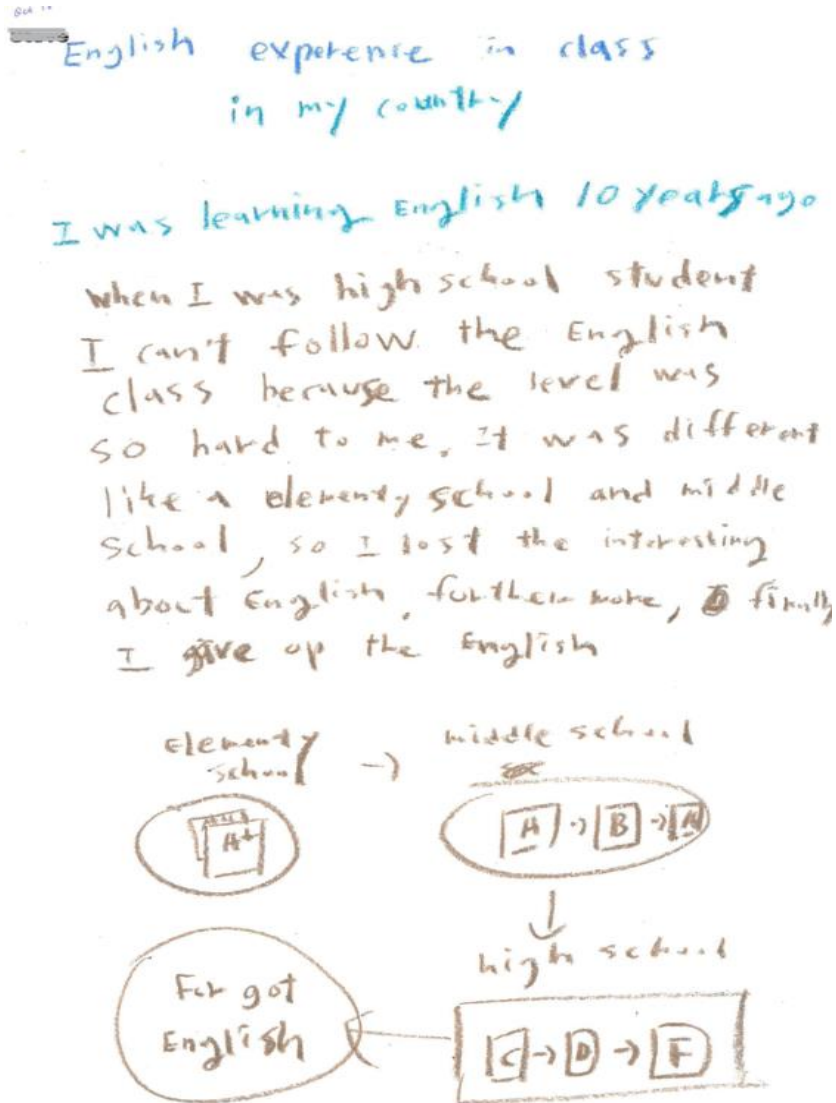
Sung Min wrote about his English learning experiences in South Korea on an A3-sized paper. He used all crayons to write words and draw pictures. His text was created in a vertical orientation (Albers, 2007) with the title words "English experience in class in my country" on top of the page, centered" He used navy blue to write the first four words "English experience in class" but used aqua blue to write the other three words "in my country". Below the title, he

wrote in aqua blue "I was learning English 10 years ago". Then he used a brown crayon to write "when I was high school student, I can't follow the English class because the level was so hard to me. It was different like an elementary school and middle school, so I lost the interesting about English. Furthermore, finally I gave up the English". Underneath the paragraph, there were four images with words that were shaped in a rectangle connecting by arrows. The first image started with the words "Elementary School" and a small hand drawing image underneath, which showed two examination paper with "A+" on both. The two-paper image was circled. An arrow was used to point to the next image. There were words "middle school" and three letters "A, B, C" each drawn within a square and connected by small arrows. These three squared letters were circled by an oval. Another arrow was pointing to the words "high school" and the hand drawing image underneath the words. The image was showing three squares with the letter "C, D, F" within each of them. The squared letters were circled by a rectangle. An arrow was drawn from the rectangle to the words "Forgot English" which were circled. All the words and images in the flowchart were written and drawn in a brown crayon.

Researcher's Reflection

Sung Min chose to work on his first multimodal text on an A3-sized paper. He spent about 25 minutes to work on the text. It seems that Sung Min preferred to use paper to write and draw to compose his writing tasks. He seems to feel comfortable to work on the paper rather than the PowerPoint which explained what he said in a later time that he was not familiar with PowerPoint. He wrote about 50 words in a paragraph describing his English learning experiences mostly challenges in his high school years in his home country. Underneath the paragraph, he used key words "elementary school", "middle school" and "high school" with small hand-drawing images to illustrate what he had talked about in the paragraph. It seems that he was

aware of using images to simplify and summarize the information he provided in the paragraph. Sung Min's multimodal text looks like the traditional word-based genre with add-ons—hand drawing images to explain the words written previously in the same composition.

Sung Min's MM Text II

Figure 21. Sung Min's MM Text II
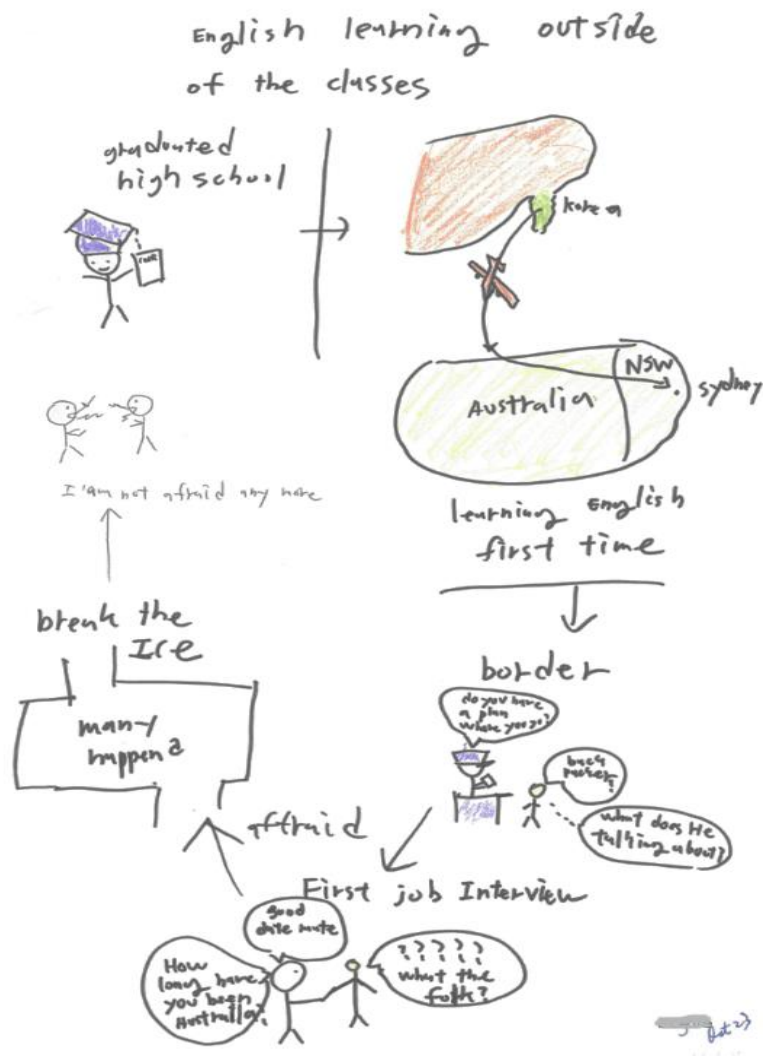
Sung Min chose to create his second multimodal text on the A3-sized paper again this time. He chose to use a black marker to create the majority of the text and a few more crayon to

color his drawings. He chose to use the vertical orientation (Albers, 2007) with the title "English learning outside of the classes" on top of the page centered. Underneath the title, a vertical line about 1 inch long was separating the paper into two columns. On the left column, he wrote "graduated high school" and drew a little man dressing up with a purple cap holding a diploma underneath the words. A black arrow was drawn across the vertical line pointing to the right column. On the right column, he drew an image of a map of Asia, colored the map in brown but with Korea highlighted in green. An arrowed line was starting from Korea on the map and was connecting to another map image with the word "Australia" on it below the map of Asia. He drew a small plane on the linking line and colored it brown. He put a black dot on the Australia map and wrote "Sydney" next to the dot outside the map. Underneath the Australia map, he put four words "learning English first time" in black with a line underneath "first time". A black arrow connected to the line was pointing to another word "border". Underneath the word, he drew the image of a custom-officer-like man with a cap and uniform standing behind a counter and another shorter little man standing in front of the officer-like man. The text box above the officer's cap said, "Do you have a plan where you go?" The little man's text box above his head said, "beg pardon?" and another text box behind him said, "What does he talking about?" This image was connected by another black arrow to the words "First job interview" underneath slightly to the left. Below the words "First job interview", he drew two little man shaking hands with each other with the man on the left saying something in the text box that did not make sense and the man on the right saying "????? What the folk?" He put a word "afraid" above the words "First job interview" and used an arrow to connect the image of the two little men to another image showing an open-edged rectangle with the words "many happened within it and the words "break the ice" above it. Finally, above the words "break the ice", Sung Min drew another picture

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with two little man facing each other with their mouths open and some talking waves coming out of their mouths. He put "I am not afraid any more" underneath the image.

Researcher's Reflection

Sung Min chose to use paper again this time to create his second multimodal text. Instead of using crayons which he said were difficult to write with, he chose to use a black marker to write the text and draw the images. He used crayons of brown, green and purple to color some parts of the pictures. In this multimodal text, Sung Min used words and images and used one direction arrow to connect the words and images to make them flow. It seems that he was aware of making his text flow smoothly so that his audience could follow easily to read about his experiences. Sung Min included every piece of his experience he shared with the group and showed his audience how he transitioned from being afraid of speaking English to "not afraid any more". Even though he was asked to write about his English learning experiences out of the classrooms in his home country, Sung Min chose to write about his experiences out of his home country in Australia. As he said, he did not have much experience to talk about in his home country because he spent most of his time working and travelling out of Korea. It was not a surprise that he chose his English learning experiences in Australia where he encountered a lot of challenges communicating with people in every part of his life.

Sung Min's MM Text III

Figure 22. Sung Min's MM Text III
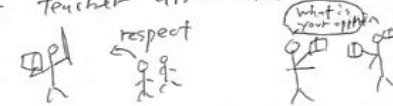
In his third multimodal text, Sung Min chose to use black pen to create his text on an A3 size paper where he wrote about his English learning experiences in the U.S classrooms. As he did previously, he chose a vertical orientation (Albers, 2007). There is no title in this text. He put "1. Discussion with teacher and sharing idea" on top of the paper and two little images underneath. One of the images was displaying a little man standing in front of a board writing

something with one hand and holding a book with another hand. Two other little persons were sitting in front of a table facing the man listening. On the right side of the first image, he drew another board with a person sitting in front of it on the floor and a few little persons sitting around a round table. He put a big "X" above the image on the left. Underneath the two images, he wrote "2. American's education (space) What to know (space) What does student thinking (space) for example (space) more than 50% writing and essay". Underneath the words, he drew two examination papers with the one on the left having a list of A, B, C, D each followed by a line and a circle indicating the selection of one choice. The paper on the right side was showing only lines with two letters starting the first line. He put a big "X" above the image on the left. Underneath the examination papers, he wrote "3. Student should be nice to teacher, but teacher also nice to student." Below the words, he drew two images. The image on the left was showing one taller person holding a box in his hand and another stick in his other hand. Two smaller persons were standing in front of the big person with the word "respect" above their heads. The image on the right side was showing one person holding a box in his hand and other two persons each holding a box in one of the hands facing the person on the left with a text box saying, "what is your opinion" above their heads. Underneath the two images, he put "4. they have a extra credit system, so they help students". Below the words, he drew two examination papers with one on the left having the text"400/299 B" on the top and some other numbers followed by several lines underneath. The image on the right was displaying "400/299+30 A" on the top and some numbers followed by lines underneath with a "+30" at the bottom.

Researcher's Reflection

As what he did for his previous two texts, Sung Min chose to use paper again this time. Sung Min chose to use hand writing words and hand drawing images to create his multimodal text writing about his English learning experiences in the U.S. classrooms. He chose to use only black pens to write the text and draw the pictures. I asked him when he turned in his work why he chose to use only black-ink pen to create this text. He said that because he though this is a very serious topic so he preferred to use black and use numbers to list his main points. Under each of his point, he drew two images with one showing a comparative point and a big "X" above it. It seems that he was unconsciously comparing his learning experiences in the U.S. classrooms with his personal experiences before in his home country even though he was not asked to do so. It seems that Korean classroom culture may still stay in him and it made him compare with the American classroom culture. Sung Min gave his judgement by showing the big "X" to the images that represented things he did not like in one of the cultures.

Sung Min's MM Text IV

Figure 23. Sung Min's MM Text IV
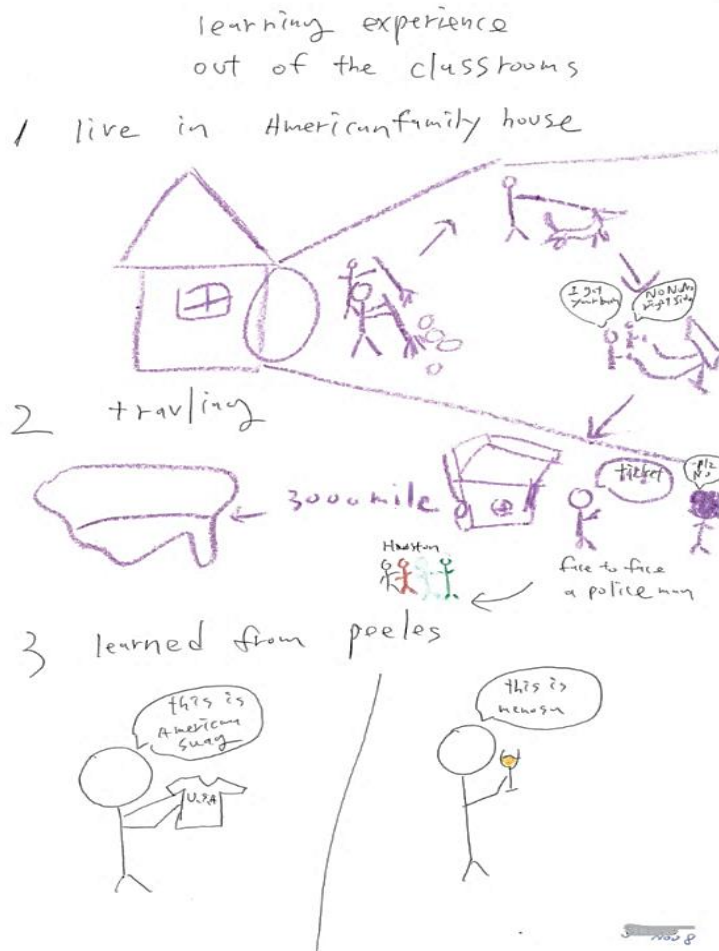
In the final multimodal text, Sung Min chose to use paper again. He chose a black inked pen and a few crayons to create his multimodal text vertically writing about his experience of learning English out of the classrooms in the U.S. He put the title "learning experiences out of the classrooms" on top of the page centered. Underneath the words, he wrote "1. live in American family house". Then he drew an image with a house, a little person holding a broom with one hand, another little person holding a bigger broom in both his hands sweeping some round stuff on the floor. Another little person was holding the leash of a dog with one hand

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walking. An arrow was pointing to another image with two little persons standing in front of the screen each holding something in their hands and speaking to each other in the text box above them. One of the text box says, "I got your ball", and another text box says "No. No. No Right side". Underneath the image, he put "2. traveling" and another image of a map underneath. Next to the image on the right, he put "3000 mile" and a vehicle. Next to the vehicle, he drew a person and a text box saying "ticket" and another person with his text box saying, "Plz, no". Underneath the two persons, he wrote, "face to face (space) a policeman". The words were connected by an arrow pointing to another small image with four little persons standing side by side. He put "Houston" above the four little persons and drew the four persons with different colors: black, red, blue and green. Underneath the map image, he wrote "3. learned from peers". He drew two other images underneath the words and separate them by a vertical 1.5 inches line. The image on the left side was showing a person holding a T-shirt with "U.S. A" on it with both his hands and a text box above his head saying, "this is American swag". The image on the right was displaying a person holding a goblet with some yellow liquid in it and a text box saying, "this is mimosa".

Researcher's Reflection

Sung Min chose to make his final multimodal text on an A3-sized paper as he did previously. In this text, he put the title on top of the page and organized his ideas as "1. 2. 3". As he did in the previous multimodal texts, he used hand writing words to describe his ideas and hand drawing images to illustrate and further explain his points. He chose to use a black pen to write the words and a purple crayon to draw most of the images. For the two images he illustrated for his third point "learned from peers", he used the black pen and a yellow crayon to

color the liquid in the goblet. He used the color of red, blue and green to color the little men he drew for his traveling experience, seems to represent the diverse population he met in Houston.

Sung Min laughed at his work before presenting it to the group even though everyone else said they liked his drawings. He shared with the group why he used words, drawings, and symbols to express himself. He also used numbers to help him remember the key points so he did not lose his thoughts when working on the text. He said he first wrote down the points and left some space between his points then came back and drew pictures to illustrate his points. He also used arrows and lines to show the flow of his thoughts and the connections of different occurrences. Sung Min said that drawing and writing down the key information made sense for him. He always chose to write down key points and draw small pictures to illustrate the text because this could help him organize his ideas and help his audience understand what he wanted to express in his multimodal texts.

Sung Min Reflects on His MM Texts and Workshop Experience

During the interview after the final workshop session, I asked Sung Min to share something he learned from the workshop. He said he learned the influence of pictures. He explained "Because before when I was drawing something in middle school or high school, pictures to me was I just did it. Now I understand why they draw pictures or wanted us to draw the pictures" (Post-interview, lines 5-6). When he was asked to further explain, he said:

> Because when the little child is learning languages, they always think about it when they see, or smell or feel it. But for the language, you can't see, you can't smell it or hear it. But you have something to help them understand, the signal, like the voice signal (snap his figures) to put in the empty space in the brain. You explain it, then they translate it into visual. So that's why they use pictures. (Post-interview, lines 10-14)

He said that he also learned different cultures, people's different thoughts about education and their preference to use different resources to compose their multimodal texts. He said, "The topic is not change. But different opinions came out of people's different knowledge" (Post-interview, lines 20-21). When he was asked to share his feeling about multimodal composing, he said, "Compared to just writing, this multimodal text is a good way for understanding but drawing by myself is so painful (laugh)" (Post-interview, lines 27-28). When he was asked to further explain, he said, "I mean when they made something and they did the presentation or something, I like someone's presentation in the front. I was just watching. I like it. I want something like knowledge" (Post-interview, lines 34-36). When he was asked why he chose to use paper to write and draw things down, he explained:

> (Laugh). Because I was not familiar with PowerPoint... Or sometimes the professor wants us to do a presentation, at that time, I just made it for the presentation, but most likely, in daily life, I choose paper. And also, I am very familiar with writing, better than typing. (Post-interview, lines 45-47)

He said that he did not meet any challenges while working on his multimodal texts. When he was asked if multimodal writing may help him in his writing in the classroom, he said:

> I think when I was a little kid in elementary or middle school, it may help. But right now, the topic is very serious topic. Like for example, the discussion in the class, we discuss about the effect of writers or sometimes like global warming. It's kind of like a lot of factors and gathering something like problems. It's not good for multimodal text... it's like drawing pictures. (Post-interview, lines 59-62)

Then I reminded him that a multimodal text does not have to include pictures and I asked him if the no-picture text would help him with his classroom writing, he said, "Yeah. Because I already know the specific concept but people don't need to write all things. I already know, so I just write down key words and main ideas" (Post-interview, lines 80-81). When he was asked if he

would use multimodal resources to express himself, he said, "Not much but when I play with my friends. When I explain something, I don't always use language, just drawing or explain by action" (Post-interview, line 90). He said that he would never use multimodal resources for classroom writing but later changed his mind after being reminded of his previous experience of making posters for class presentation. He said:

> Oh! Yeah! Yeah! Yeah! The effects of cigarette... I don't do that very often. It was to share the ideas for everybody, every student so we did that. But normally we didn't do that like the drawing. I did some like the mind map, the main idea, the main topic, key words. (Post-interview, lines 96-98)

When he was asked about his most frequently used modes in the multimodal texts, he said, "I usually use textual. That's the most frequent. Because it's too easy to explain to someone because I can't draw anytime, anywhere" (Post-interview, lines 102-104). When he was asked the reason of not using sound or music in his multimodal text, he explained:

> Yeah. I never thought about that. When I talked to my friends, some songs maybe funny. Some lyrics may make some fun but I don't know how can I use it in a specific time, like the lyrics of the song to make...make meaning... I don't know the metaphor or the sarcastic (laugh) for Americans' ways. I don't know English people's thinking (laugh). (Post-interview, lines 108-110)

When he was asked if he would use construction paper, cardboard, scissors and glue to make his multimodal text, he said, "It will make the poster funny, glue or scissors, cut and paste" (Post-interview, line 116). Then he further explained, "Because first I don't need to draw (laugh). It looks like professional. The last thing is it's very attractive when people look at it" (Post-interview, line 118).

When Sung Min was asked to share the steps he followed to create his multimodal texts, he said:

> Just think about the main ideas like the first, second, or third. You know I always put the numbers or divide by something, the lines, the box. I use arrows. I divide the sections... Next, explain in short answer and drawing or putting down pictures or something. (Post-interview, lines 122, 126)

When he was asked how multimodal resources may help him in his writing, he said, "Oh yeah. In the classroom, we share the ideas. You can visualize things by using pictures or drawing before you write down your ideas" (Post-interview, line 130). He shared how he used multimodal resources out of the classroom settings and showed me the pictures used in his text messages. He said, "For example, when I talk with my friends, I send some pictures to explain in the text message (laugh) (showing me the images in his phone he sent to his friends and his friends sent to him)" (Post-interview, line 133). When he was asked if the multimodal resources he selected could help express himself, he said:

> Yeah. Because I don't have to write the specific... because a lot of times, I made a lot of grammar mistakes (laugh). Or sometimes people misunderstand what I say. If I just say in lecture, like bla, bla, bla, some people misunderstand. You know they have different ways of thinking because people always have different ideas. But if I draw, they know what I am saying. So, if I say something in mistake, they will understand what I say. So, pictures can represent the meaning. (Post-interview, lines 138-142)

Sung Min believed that pictures were more influential and effective. When he was asked either the five-paragraph essay or the multimodal writing could better express himself, he first said:

> It depends where you located in, your status. For the young kids, it's good to express with the picture. For the older kids, it's better to do the essay because they already know about the essay, and also the language can explain the specific knowledge. So, it's good for older kids. But the picture is good for younger kids. (Post-interview, lines 142-145)

When he was asked which way may better express himself, he said, "Myself. Because it′s English. I prefer picture because my English level is the same as like...Kind of younger, (laugh). Between younger and teenager, adolescents" (Post-interview, lines 144-146). When he was asked about his perception of what writing should look like, he said, "Writing should look like clear, easy to understand... Short sentence, and just action picture... Good looking and understandable writing″ (Post-interview, lines 150-154). He said working on the multimodal texts made some changes to the way he looked at writing but did not make tremendous changes.

When Sung Min was asked to describe himself in the U.S. He said, ″Because I already know my status. Before I always check my status (laugh). Who am I?... A student from foreign country (laugh). Yeah. And find my goal and my purpose (laugh). I always ask myself. What is my purpose in the U.S. (laugh)?" (Post-interview, lines 158-160). When he was asked about his purpose in the U.S. He said, "Studying and get a bachelor′s degree and go back to my home country... Get a job" (Post-interview, line 162). When he was asked about his role in the workshop, he joked and said, "I am a writer. And someone who participate in the workshop, like a rat (laugh). A lab rat (laugh)" (Post-interview, line 172). When Sung Min was asked to describe himself as an English learner back in his home country, he said, ″A Korean citizen in my country (laugh). A young person... I was young. I want to learn English" (Post-interview, line 180). When he was asked why he wanted to learn English, he said, "Because I want to be a pilot. And I am my parents′ son (laugh). My parents′ only child (laugh)″ (Post-interview, line 182).

I asked him again to describe himself in the U.S. in general, he said, "Hardworking student (laugh). Hardworking student and half homeless (laugh)" (Post-interview, line 186). Then he further explained:

Because I just compare to my life in my country and here. Here is more difficult (laugh) because I always have limited money. I have to do everything, spend monthly car payment, phone bill, insurance, and even though something I don't qualify to it (laugh). Because before when I was in my country, I didn't care about that. Now I have the responsibility myself (stressing). It's harder. In my country, my parents... they still support me but they support me in specific, even they help me something like laundry or cleaning room. They help me a lot. (Post-interview, lines 188-193)

Sung Min shared his previous experiences and revealed what type of learner he was. He said:

When I study something, I learn very slowly. If I learn it at one time perfectly, I never forget. It is my strength (laugh). It's my habit. For example, when I learned how to ride a bike, I fell a lot of times compared to my peers. After I know how to ride, I did something trick (laugh). I ride it without hand and... also I ski. It was too hard for me. But after I learn it, I never forget even though I didn't take ski for three or four years, I can still do it. (Post-interview, lines 194-198)

When he was asked whether the different social contexts affected his English learning, he said, "When I go back to my home country, it affected. And my accent. Making new sentences, making new languages (laugh), new English, generate English (laugh)... Making up new words, new expression" (Post-interview, lines 198-200). He then explained how the U.S. context may affect his English learning. He said, "It doesn't affect. No, I mean when I talk in action with my friends, I don't do the American expression like that. That's Korean to Korean. But only use the English speaker's way or American saying. I have two different roles (laugh)" (Post-interview, lines 206-208). Finally, he laughed at the word he mispronounced and joked "Yeah. Another accent problem (laugh)" (Post-interview, line 216).

General Observations about Sung Min

Sung Min was introduced to the workshop by his friend Danilo, another participant from Columbia. Even though he missed the session when I talked about multimodal texts and how to use different modes to create multimodal texts, he could understand right away after I explained

the information to him. He shared that at one time, he and his group made a poster where he could draw pictures and write text to show the audience how they understood the harm of cigarettes. It seems that Sung Min did not feel comfortable about showing his work especially his drawing to the audience even though others complimented his drawings. He always laughed at his own work before presenting it to the group. When he was presenting his work, he used his body language to act out his work with his facial expressions to show his feelings while talking about his English learning stories in the text. He shared that he preferred to receive the "input" such as listening and watching other people's presentation but did not feel comfortable to "output" such as to present his work to the audience and speak about his personal ideas. However, he did an excellent job explaining his ideas and talking about his experiences whenever they had the discussion or presentation in a group.

Sung Min was a hard-working student based on his own description. He was trying to achieve his goal to get his bachelor's degree and go back to Korea to work. He wanted to become a pilot which demanded him to improve his English skills. He was aware of his status and identity as an international student. He said, "I already know my status. Before I always check my status (laugh). Who am I?... A student from foreign country (laugh)." (Post-interview, lines 158-159). It seems that his perception of himself being a foreigner revealed his awareness of not belonging here in the U.S. He was also aware of the shift of his identity from previously being a Korean citizen, his parents' only child, and someone's good friend to a foreigner, an English language learner, and a goal achiever in the U.S. In addition, Sung Min was aware of his mistakes and he joked about his mistakes many times; however, he treated his mistakes as a learning process and always kept a positive attitude to "fix things". Even though he encountered many hardships and challenges in his life and study such as living in a "ghost house" and make

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terrible grammar mistakes, he tried to keep himself up because his goal had demanded him to work hard, to support himself and to be independent.

<div align="center">**Leyla—The Student from Azerbaijan**</div>

Meeting with Leyla and Learning Her English Learning Experiences and Challenges

Leyla is a 34-year old woman from Azerbaijan. She is the mother of two boys. She has studied in the IEP level V class for 10 months at the time I interviewed her. She speaks four languages: Turkish, Russian, Azerbaijani and English. She used to work as a military doctor in her home country. Leyla is from the place where rich oil was found and extracted and where old buildings are mixed with modern skyscrapers. Guests are welcomed and placed in a very important position in her country. Leyla shared that women in Azerbaijan were given the rights to vote in 1918, which was much earlier than most of the European countries and the U.S. English was an optional class starting in her fifth grade but Leyla shared her different experience at that time and said, "it was a controversial time. At that time, Azerbaijan just declared its independence. Secondly, there was a time when Russia and Romania and Azerbaijan was... you know, it was very hard time. And ah everybody just tried to be safe (laugh)" (Pre-interview, lines 49-51). She further explained her English learning experience and said：

> Actually, I did not pay attention to English. I just tried to have my main majors, my main classes more than the English. I didn't pay attention to the English class too much but periodically, I try to learn English you know. I ah studied English for a month to sometimes for two years. Ah actually my English was very good when I was 25 years old. But then I didn't use that language for a while for ten years or something until I came here in the last year, last semester to begin (learning English) again. (Pre-interview, lines 53-58)

When she was asked to share her English writing experience, she said:

It's really difficult for me because our writing style, writing structure is totally different. So here you know I feel like you have to clarify everything, every single thing you know. You have to give the examples for everything. it's kind of weird for me because our traditional writing system teach you to infer, to make the decisions by yourself. But here you have to have the very examples and details. It's kind of weird for me. The structure of the essay is different too. For example, in my country, when you write the essays, it's good when you have them... more ideas the better but how I can say it. But here when you pick up the difference, you have to only write about the difference. It's... When I think about it, it's complicated for me because I have many ideas in my head and I used to write that way but now I try to teach myself to write in a different way. So, it's hard. (Pre-interview, lines 68-78)

Leyla said everyone was taught grammar and the vocabulary at the time she learned

English at school. However, she said:

But you know... for example, my English. I improve my English much better in this full year than in my country because there is no talks in English, there is no native English speaker. You didn't hear the language... That's why it is difficult. But they are more strict, they are more official you know. You have to learn (laugh). (Pre-interview, lines 84-86, 88-89)

When she was asked to talk about her previous English writing experience in her home country,

Leyla said:

Actually, my level was not so high for writing... I just try to learn from the beginning. That's why it was difficult. But we had not the exact the writing classes so it was just building vocabulary and grammar. They teach you how to talk correctly. And the sentence structure is different too. So, everything was different (laugh). (Pre-interview, lines 91-96)

When Leyla was asked to talk about her English learning experience in the U.S., she said, "Here

is more intensive because on the street and everywhere you can listen to the real English

speakers" (Pre-interview, lines 99-100). When she was asked to explain what real English

speakers are, she said:

They are native English speakers. In their whole entire life, they talk in English. You can catch the words by the way (they speak). It's easier for me. For example, I know there are people they can learn the verbs and memorize but it's hard for me. It's easier when I catch words from where you know from the situation. (Pre-interview, lines 102-105)

She said that she could remember better if someone corrected her speech during the conversation so she could learn much faster than in her home country.

When Leyla was asked to describe herself as an international student, she shared her first experience in the U.S. She said with laughter:

It was terrible at the beginning. It was really terrible because my first experience of hearing English language (laugh)... I came. My plane was landed. A guy in the airport said, "Welcome to A-la-na". I was like (confused). But I came to Atlanta. Where is the "A-la-na". I must have arrived at a different city. Oh my God (laugh). (Pre-interview, lines 115-118)

She then added, "Then I realized "A-la-na" is Atlanta (big laugh). It was very scary. And you know the real speech is too fast and people cut the ends and sound words stronger, the words from some parts of the words" (Pre-interview, lines 120-122).

Then she transitioned to talk about her English learning challenges. She said, "in the street, I feel like I learn English but everybody talks in Chinese. I cannot get anything... It was really terrible and after two or three sentences, my brain was stuck... I feel I totally lost in somewhere" (Pre-interview, lines 124-127, and line 129). However, her listening skills improved after two to three months. She shared that "sometimes you can just guess what people say. For example, in the coffee shops, where they have the slangs, but you can guess by hearing "a small one, medium one". I didn't get what he say, but I can guess and it became easier" (Pre-interview, lines 130-133). When she was asked about her English writing progress, Leyla said:

Yes. It is improved but it's not good. I am not satisfied with my writing. But I feel like I improved it because sometimes I read my first essays and it's really funny (laugh)... (laugh) Because it was like a kid wrote then, kid writing. But now it is kid writing too but it is now quite improved. Now I know how to write. Now I know the structure of the essay. I know how to create the essay. Now it's easier for me. (Pre-interview, lines 139-144)

She then shared her experience of receiving help from her writing professor. Leyla stated:

She kind of built my skills. It was the basis of my skills. And she really did a good job because after the first composition class... and she really did a good job. And sometimes I just know I remember something but I did not remember how she teaches... she did it very easily. (Pre-interview, lines 146-149)

Finally, when I explained to her what we were going to do in the workshop and asked about her perspectives of using multimodal resources to write her English learning experiences, she said, "This is my first time. I will see (laugh). I don't know (laugh)" (Pre-interview, line 164).

Reflection on Leyla's English Learning Experiences

Leyla started learning English in her fifth grade. However, due to the social and political issue at that controversial time in her country, she was "trying to be safe" instead of paying attention to learning the language. She learned grammar, vocabulary and basic speaking skills from her teacher at home but she forgot most of her skills since she did not use English for a long time in her country. Leyla had a challenging time understanding English when she first came to the U.S. She felt lost and helpless. But after a few months, she gradually improved her listening skills and could understand more. It seems that she felt more beneficial learning English in the U.S. by speaking to American people (what she called "real English speakers") and learning from the conversations. It seems that she felt so grateful to her first English teacher in the U.S. because she helped her build her English skills especially writing skills. She joked about her first

essay and said it was like "kids writing", but now her writing had been improved even though she was still not satisfied with it. It seems that she had still been struggling with her English writing because it was so different from the writing in her native language Azerbaijani with which she could freely express as many ideas as she liked without explaining her points in detail with examples.

Leyla's MM Text I

Figure 24. Leyla's MM Text I
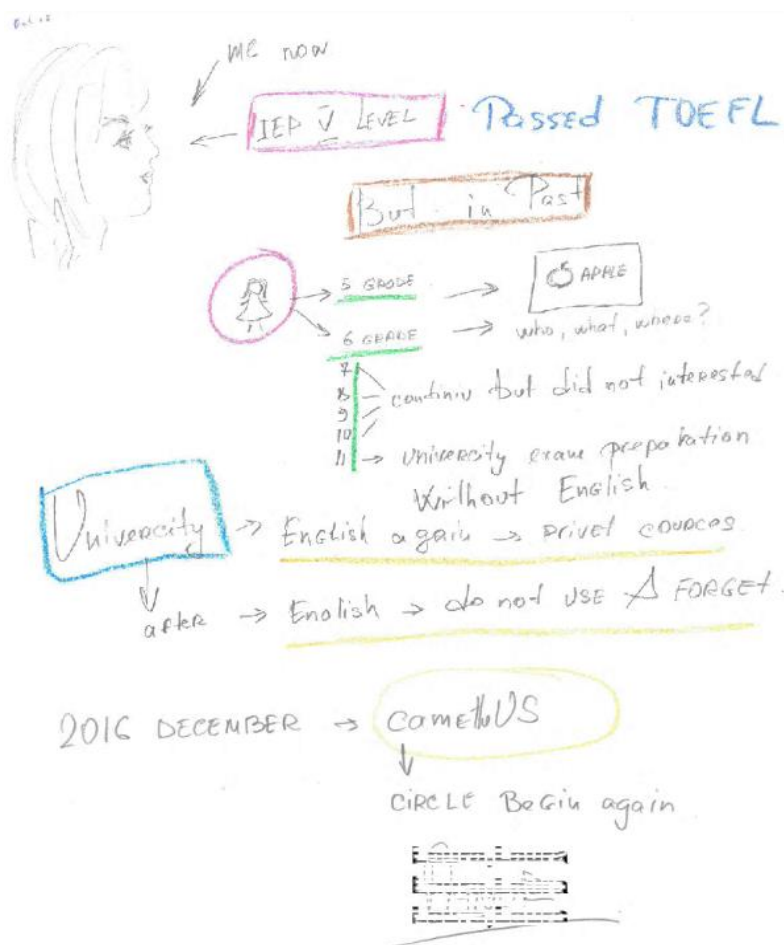
Leyla chose to use an A3 size paper, a pencil and some crayons to create her first multimodal text. She drew the side profile of a girl facing to the right with a pencil. Next to the

image on the right side, she wrote "me now" on top of the paper and "IEP V level" underneath. The words "IEP V Level" was circled by a pink rectangle. She used two arrows to point the words to the image on the left. Next to the pink rectangle on the right, she wrote "Passed TOEFL" in blue crayon. Below the pink rectangle to the right, she put "But in Past" and used brown crayon to draw a rectangle to circle the words. Underneath the brown rectangle to the left, she drew a little girl with long hair dressing up with a long skirt and circled the image with pink crayon. She used two arrows starting from the circle to point to the words "5 Grade" and two other words "6 Grade" below. She used an arrow to direct the words "5 Grade" to a small "apple" image and the word "apple" next to it. The apple image and the word "apple" were circled by a rectangle drawn with the pencil. Another arrow was directing the words "6 Grade" to "who, what, where?" on the right next to it. Underneath the number "6", she listed the number "7. 8, 9, 10, 11" vertically and used several short lines to connect the first four numbers to the words "continue but did not interested". Another arrow was used to connect the number "11" to the words on the right which says, "university exam preparation without English". She used a green crayon to underline "5 Grade" and "6 Grade" and she used the same color to draw a vertical line to separate the numbers "7, 8, 9, 10, 11" and the information on the right side of those numbers. Underneath the number "11" and the words on its right side, she wrote "University" towards the left margin of the paper and circled it with a blue rectangle. An arrow was used to direct "University" to the words on its right -- "English again". Another arrow was used to connect these two words to "private courses" on the right. The words "English again", the arrow and the words "private courses" were underlined by a yellow crayon. Another arrow coming out of the word "University" was pointing down to the word "after", then the word "after" was connected by a right-directed arrow to the word "English", and then the word "English" was connected by

another right-directed arrow to the words "do not use & Forget". The words "English, an arrow,

and the words "do not use & Forget" were underlined by a yellow crayon. Underneath the yellow

line, she started a new line towards the left margin of the paper and wrote "2016 DECEMBER"

and used a right-directed arrow to point to the words "Came to US". The words "Came to US"

were circled by an oval in yellow. A final arrow was used to point down to the words "CIRCLE

Begin again" from the words "Came to US". She signed her name below the words "CIRCLE

Begin again".

Researcher's Reflection

Leyla took an A3-sized paper on my desk and placed it vertically on her desk. She drew a

girl showing the side profile of her face at the top left corner of the paper. Then she wrote down

some words and numbers. She finished her text in about 15 minutes. I asked her why she used

only pencil but no color. She said that she thought color would only distract people's attention.

She also shared that she never used highlighter or marker when she was reading English text.

Her book was as new as it was first bought. She said she could use some color to make it look

better if I wish to. I told her she did not have to color it because she had a reason to make her text

the way she wanted. It was her own choice. However, she took her work from my hand and used

some crayons to revise it. She spent another 2 minutes to finish her revision and turned in her

work to me.

Leyla chose to use paper to create her first multimodal text. She chose to use a pencil at

first to write the words and draw the images, lines and arrows. She started from her current

English learning status in the U.S. and transitioned to her English learning experiences in the

past. She used numbers, hand drawing images, lines, arrows and key words to describe her

English learning experiences from grade 5 to grade 11 in her high school. Then she used key words, arrows, rectangle and lines to describe her English learning experiences in her university. Towards the end, she used key words, arrows and circle to mention the time she came to the U.S. to study English. She used the metaphor to describe her English learning experience was like a circle and she put at the end "circle begin again". It seems that Leyla learned English well in her middle school but she lost her interest in high school. Since she did not have to take English test for her university exam, she forgot quickly and had to take private courses to pick up English again in her university. However, after university, she did not use English for a long time, so her English skills declined again until she came to the U.S. to restart learning English in 2016. It seems that her English learning experiences were interrupted and she had to pick up the language and restart learning it multiple times.

Leyla's MM Text II

Figure 25. Leyla's MM Text II
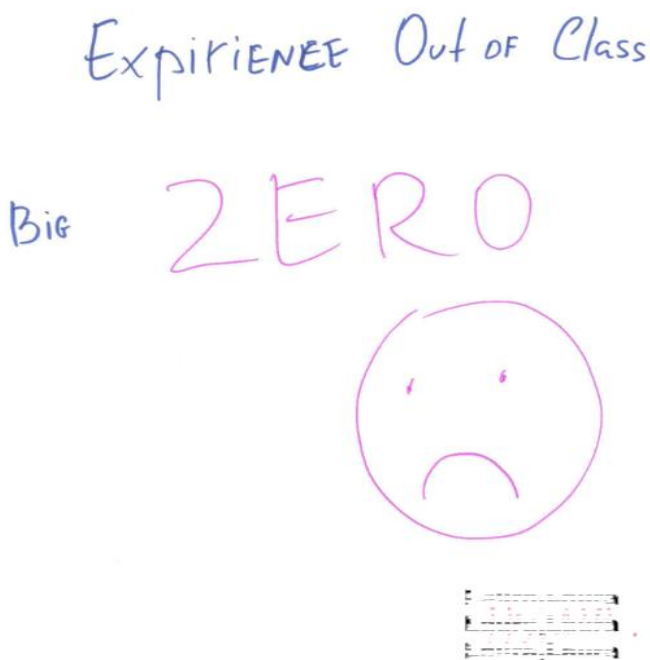
For her second multimodal text, Leyla was asked to write about her English learning experiences out of the classrooms in her home country. Again, she chose to use an A3 size paper. She used a blue marker to write the words "Experience Out of Class" on top of the paper and left a big space and then wrote "Big" towards the left margin of the paper. She used a purple marker to write four big letters "ZERO" on the right side of the word "Big". She drew a big sad face with two dotted eyes with the purple marker underneath "ZERO" to the right. She signed her name below the sad face.

Researcher's Reflection

Leyla's second multimodal text was created within two minutes. She simply used words to write the title, and used two other words to describe her English learning experiences in her home country. She drew a sad face to express her feeling of not having opportunities to learn English out of the class. She purposefully wrote the word "ZERO" in big-sized letters and used all uppercase letters to stress it. When she turned in her work, I asked her why she did not mention any of her experiences in Europe she just shared with the group, she explained that because she did not really learn anything from that trip. It seems that Leyla did not have many experiences related to her English learning in her home country. It might due to the fact that her country experienced the social and political unrests so she was not given the ideal condition to learn English as a foreign language. It might also because she forgot many of her previous experiences that happened many years ago, so she could remember nothing to write about in her multimodal text.

Leyla's MM Text III

Figure 26. Leyla′s MM Text III
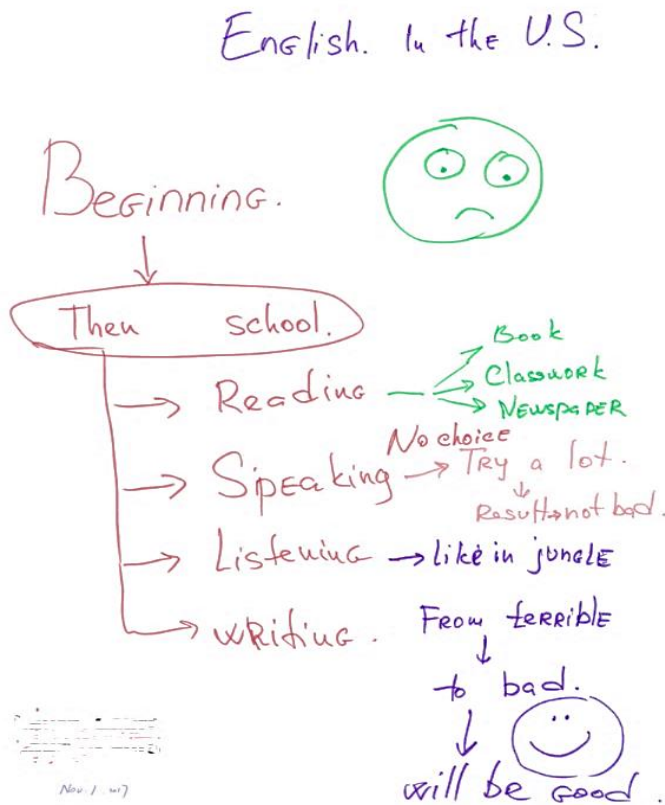
Leyla chose to create her third multimodal text on the paper again. The title "English in the U.S." was written at the top of the page in purple. Underneath the title, the word "Beginning" was written towards the left margin of the paper in red. A sad face with round eyes was drawn on the right side of the word "Beginning" in green. A red arrow was pointing from the word "Beginning" down to the words circled by a red oval "The School" in red letters. A red vertical line about 1.5 inch was drawn starting from the side of the oval and was separated evenly by four horizontal arrows with each directing to a red word. The first arrow on the top was pointing to the word "Reading". The second arrow underneath was pointing to the word "Speaking". The third arrow below it was pointing to the word "Listening" and the final arrow on the line was

pointing to the word "Writing". Next to the word "Reading" on the right, a short green line was connected by three green arrows each pointing to a green word. The three green words "Book, Classwork, Newspaper" were listed vertically. On the right side of the word "Speaking", a red arrow was used to point to the red words on the right "Try a lot". Two red words "No choice" were written above the arrow. Underneath "Try a lot", a short arrow was used to point down to the red words "Results not bad". On the right side of the word "Listening", a purple arrow was used to point to the words "like in jungle". On the right side of the word "Writing", she wrote the words "From terrible" then two words underneath connected by a purple arrow "to bad" and then connected by another purple arrow to the words below "will be Good". She drew a happy face with two dotted eyes between the words "to bad" and "will be Good" next to the arrow on the right. She signed her name towards the left margin of the paper to the bottom.

Researcher's Reflection

Leyla chose to use markers to create a paper-based text to write about her English learning experiences in the U.S. classrooms. She started with her experience at the beginning and listed all she experienced in the classroom "reading, speaking, listening and writing" She used key words to describe what she did for each area or what she felt about each area. She used many arrows to connect the related information and make her text flow. She drew two images: a sad face at the beginning and a happy face at the end to show her different feelings. When she turned in her work, I asked her to explain what she wrote and drew about her writing experience, she said, ""My writing was too bad when I first started. It is still bad now, and it will be good in the future" (Workshop Session 6).

Leyla's MM Text IV

Figure 27. Leyla's MM Text IV

English out of
Class.
→ Beverly
(Native Speaker)
→ Grossery store.
→ Restorants org
food stores.
→ Uber drivers.
→ Random people
in the street.
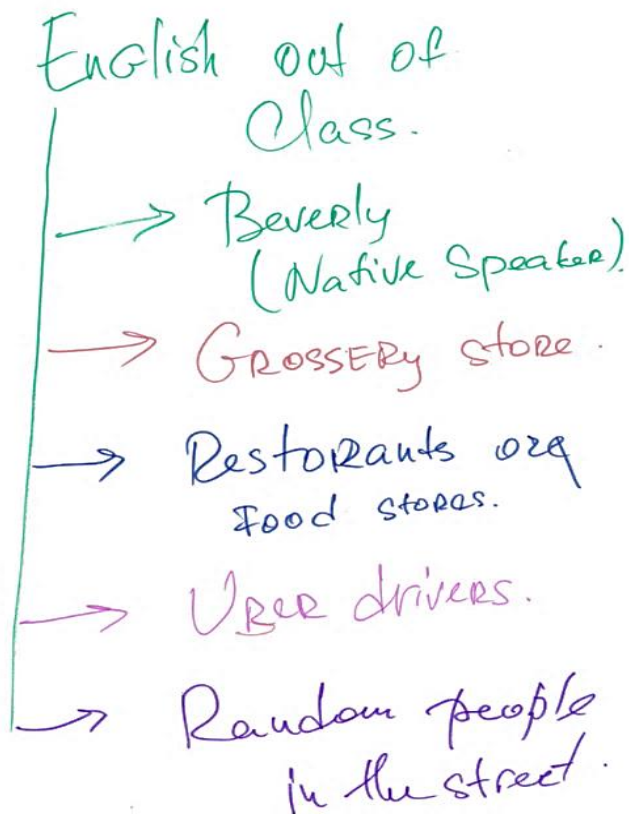
Leyla chose to create her final multimodal text on an A3-sized paper as she previously

did. The title "English out of Class" was placed on top of the page in green. A green vertical line

about 2.5 inches was drawn from the letter "E" down towards the bottom of the page. The line

was separated by five horizontal arrows with each one pointing to some words. The first green

arrow on the top was pointing to the green word "Nancy (name of her American Friend)" and

two green words in parenthesis "Native Speaker" underneath. The second red arrow was pointing

to the red words "Grocery Store". The third blue arrow was pointing to the blue words

"Restaurants or Food stores". The fourth pink arrow was pointing to the pink words "Uber drivers". The final purple arrow was pointing to the purple words "Random people in the street".

Researcher's Reflection

Leyla chose to use markers again to create her final multimodal text on a sheet of paper. She used only words, line and arrows to make her text this time. She did not use any images. She created a list of information to display her English learning experiences. She also used five colors to distinguish each different experience. When she was asked to share why she chose to use the textual and visual resources in her multimodal texts and if those selected resources could help express herself, Leyla shared that she used to work in the medical field as a nurse so there was a lot of things for her to do, which was one of the most important reasons she chose the fastest and easiest way to complete her tasks. Also, she said that if she was learning human anatomy, she would use pictures and visuals to help her learn the parts of human body. However, for English learning purposes, she said it was not necessary to draw pictures or find visuals because it was a waste of time and the results (final product) would be the same. She gave me the example and said that if she was asked to make a PPT to write the same experiences of learning English in the U.S. out of the classrooms, she would put exactly the same words on the slides with no pictures. However, she mentioned that if she was asked to do a class presentation by the professor, she would spend time looking for pictures to make the PPT slides look fancy but she actually did not like doing that.

Leyla Reflects on Her MM Texts and Workshop Experience

I interviewed Leyla after the final workshop session to learn more about her workshop experiences and her perception about multimodal writing. I first asked her to share something

she learned from the workshops, she said, "It's kind of using words, not for me but the other students kind of they explain themselves by the pictures or something" (Post-interview, lines 11-12). She said she preferred to use words. When she was asked about her feeling about multimodal composing, she said, "It's ok. Very interesting. You have to think about the different ways to express yourself or tell the story. It's ok" (Post-interview, lines 16-17). When she was asked to talk about the challenges she experienced in the workshop, she said, "For me you know I tried to explain in different words in simple way or use one-color pen (laugh) and in the shortest way... this time you kind of have to explain something in colorful but I have to think to do that" (Post-interview, lines 20-24). Then she explained the reason and said, "We have talked about that before. Because of my experience, I am kind of doing anything in anytime fast. I have to explain the shortest way of mine. So, you know now I am kind of trying to make things prettier and colorful" (Post-interview, lines 28-30). Other than the challenge of trying to make her texts prettier and colorful, she did not share any other challenges working on her multimodal texts in the workshop. When she was asked if multimodal composing may help her with her English writing, she said:

> No. Because for writing I have to see words. Because otherwise I cannot... I have this assumption in my head for the writing you know, I have to see words, it's kind of direct. I am this kind of person I don't know (laugh). But you know I have to see words in the appropriate order to understand the sentence and also to kind of analyze my writing. (Post-interview, lines 37-40)

I reminded her that even though she used only words, her texts were considered multimodal texts. She said, "I used that kind of writing for taking notes. But for writing, for writing an essay, I don't do that" (Post-interview, lines 44-45). When she was asked if she would use multimodal resources to express herself, she said, "No. I don't know. I always think about that. Even it's necessary to the presentation or something I have to use pictures or something, I would. But for

me...no" (Post-interview, lines 50-51). She said she liked to use bullet points to list her points. I then asked her to confirm if she would use multimodal resources to express herself, she said, "Maybe a little bit, but I am not sure" (Post-interview, line 60).

When Layla was asked what was her most frequently used modes or resources, she responded, "I used words and also the kind of the square stress something, and like arrow" (Post-interview, line 63). I reminded her about the happy and sad faces she drew in several of her texts, she said, "It's because it's kind of I have to use it (laugh) so I did it... It's because it would make my multimodal text, my work interesting. But for me I don't care" (Post-interview, lines 66-68). When she was asked about her perception of using pictures in the multimodal text, she said, "So complicated. It's too complicated and a waste of time" (Post-interview, line 71). When she was asked about her reason of not choosing to use music or sound in her multimodal texts, she explained with a big laugh:

> With music, our relationship is kind of like a drama. Because I have no musical feeling, I have no (music) ear (laugh). That's why I am kind of, how to say, not want to choose music. But I can you know, but I don't want to... A waste of time. (Post-interview, lines 73-75 and line 77)

Then I asked her if she would use construction paper, cardboard, glue and scissors to create her multimodal texts, she said, "No. Time wasting. In my opinion, it depends on age. For example, if you do this to 6, 7, 8, year old students, they would be happy, but you know for me it's kind of...It's not necessary" (Post-interview, lines 80-81 and line 83). When she was asked about her multimodal composing process, she said, "First I think, I think how to make it easier. Then I did it. You know I always did it in a few minutes. And it's because of my experience" (Post-interview, lines 87-88). When she was asked to further explain, she said:

Because I went to the medical school, so when I looked at the information and if I had to learn and I have to complete it in a short time period. So, you kind of have to choose, quickly choose the easiest way to do it. That's it. And it's not for one year, it's for 7, 8 years so it's kind of build in so when you do it, it will automatically (snap her fingers) ... I don′t care about it. I don't think about it. I just did it that way. It's on top of my head you know. It's kind of the... how to say in English? Habit. (Post-interview, lines 90-95)

When she was asked how multimodal resources may help her in her writing, she said:

Maybe if I have to use statistics or do the organizations or something. You know when you explain something, you just come up with something to extend the information. Also in statistics, you use the table or something like that. You can use the table or something to show the structure. (Post-interview, lines 100-103)

She then added "And also when I explain something medical, for example, this kind of skin diseases, you have to show so you can use pictures. I prefer to use pictures or this kind of things when it′s necessary" (Post-interview, lines 105-107). She said that maybe other people liked to make their text or writing fancy and colorful but that would not be her choice.

When she was asked if the multimodal resources she selected could help express herself, she said:

Off course. That′s all people use to talk about and write about in the workshop... Me? Pictures if it is necessary for example, if I have to write about medical things, pictures are necessary to show that what I want to say like the part of the body in that case... If it is not necessary then I will choose to use words. Words, arrows, and squares. (Post-interview, line 113 and lines 115-120)

Then she explained why she chose to use words and how that choice help express herself. She said, "It works better. For me because... if you learn, especially if you are a new learner, it′s more helpful because you know the writing has to use words. If you use the dictionary, you learn the new ones, that′s why I always use the words" (Post-interview, lines 122-124). I told her I learned

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that it was more helpful to use pictures to teach beginning learners. She then interrupted me and

said:

> If you teach, pictures will be better. If you learn, when you write, when you learn by
> writing, you have to use the words or you don't know... so that words, you have to search
> and find new words. It's kind of the fast for your vocabulary building. (Post-interview,
> lines 129-131)

I told her she made an interesting point, and she continued to explain:

> Because if you don't know the words, you have to search about it and you kind of learn.
> And when you use it several times, you learn the words automatically. You don't have to
> memorize the words, (snap her fingers), it's right there. You can just catch it (snap her
> finger again). (Post-interview, lines 134-137)

When she was asked to share her perspectives of how effective to use multimodal resources to

express meanings, she said:

> If someone teaches you a new language, you have to memorize the words using pictures,
> then pictures are helpful. Also for example, you said the music, yeah, if you listen to the
> lyrics a lot, you kind of catch the sound words you listen, but for writing purpose, I think
> the words are more... powerful. (Post-interview, lines 140-143)

When she was asked whether five-paragraph writing or multimodal composing could better

express herself, she said, "Words. Multimodal composing is kind of easier (laugh) because you

can use pens and paper to express yourself" (Post-interview, lines 150-151). Then she said it

depends on her audience. She further explained:

> For example, now I am in the application processes for the university, now I have to
> explain my purpose with multimodal composing to the university, I cannot. I have to
> write an essay. But in your workshop, you asked me to do how I want to do it, so I did
> that. It depends on the audience. (Post-interview, lines 159-162)

When she was asked if multimodal composing changed her way of perceiving writing, she said:

No. You know. It depends on the age, too. For adults to change their habit is harder than the teenagers or the young people. Year by year, I kind of build my habit, I have a strong habit now. So, for four or five lessons, you cannot change me. (Post-interview, lines 169-171)

Then she shared what she thought writing should look like. She stated:

It should look like the text...With computers and information has changed so I don't know with pictures what writing should look like. But if you write something, it means you explain something by words. It's not drawing. It requires thinking. It's writing. (Post-interview, lines 177-179)

When Leyla was asked about her role in the workshop composing several multimodal texts, she responded "A writer, a story teller... Autobiography (big laugh)" (Post-interview, lines 192 and 194). When she was asked to describe herself as an English learner in her home country, she said:

I was a lazy student without a goal. I knew English is important to learn, but I had no goals. I didn't care. I learned for nothing. Here (raise her voice), it's for my education, here, I am kind of a lazy student but with goals (laugh). I am trying to finish all my work, but you know I always keep everything to the last minute, deadline. If it's without the deadline, I would probably not finish my education. Because in my country, if you keep everything to the deadline, it's kind of like... (laugh). (Post-interview, lines 199-204)

She then further explained "It's always. I will write my essay in the last minute. But now I have the goal, I know that my education condition here and I want to continue education here, so I need English. That's all. If I don't need it, I would not do the work (laugh)" (Post-interview, lines 206-209). When she was asked how her previous experiences may affect her English learning, she said:

I was kind of busy with my medical education. English was kind of an additional thing... I learned it myself. I went to a private teacher, private school. You know the medical education give you the experience to choose the easiest way to learn and the habit to learn fast. You have to learn fast without deadline. It's for English too. In my situation, I am

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not saying I am a wonderful student, but I know if I kind of study stable, every day for 2 to 3 hours, I will actually learn better though. (Post-interview, lines 217-221)

She shared that she actually spent less than an hour on English learning in her home country and spent less than two hours here in the U.S. to work on her homework. She said she spent most of her time on the writing assignment and explained:

> Because the classes I take now is the structure and composition of academic writing. They are teaching us to write an essay, how to write kind of the right way. Because for example, the essays in my country and in English are two completely different way of writing. I am a good writer in my language. But here I am kind of like zero. I feel like I am a kid (laugh) who doesn't know anything. Really! The English way of writing is kind of weird because when you read an essay, you don't have to think about anything, the writer gives you everything. It's kind of weird to me because our way of teaching writing is to push the readers to think, but in English it's kind of that they write everything for the kid. They explain everything. They explain the details and everything. (Post-interview, lines 232-241)

She said she had to explain everything in her writing so she had challenge with that. She further explained, "Because you know when I write, I have my habit of explaining my idea, so I kind of think if I write here in this way, the reader will understand it. but my teacher said no, you have to explain it" (Post-interview, lines 246-248). She added to her point and said:

> My reader will understand because that's my way of the thinking for writing the essay, but it's different here. My professor said you have to explain it, you have to give examples. Why, who, which, you have to... for me, it's very hard. I don't know. For 17 or 20 years during my education life, I learned to write in a different way but now it's really hard for me. (Post-interview, lines 250-253)

When she was asked if the social contexts affect her choice of multimodal resources, she said:

> No. If I were writing in my country, I would choose the words. Because I can explain myself better in words in my own language. But in English way, my purpose of choosing

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words is for learning. Because dealing with writing, I need words. I have to translate it into words. During the translation, I learn. So, in English my purpose is to learn, but in my language, I can do the multimodal text with pictures but I prefer to choose words. That helps. (Post-interview, lines 260-264)

When she was asked to describe herself, she said, "I am a student...I am a foreign student learning English in the university with a big challenge of learning (laugh)" (Post-interview, lines 266 and 268). She then shared that her biggest challenge was writing. She said, "I noticed a lot of differences especially with the article. It's impossible because in my language I have no article. It's a big challenge with it" (Post-interview, lines 270-271). When she was asked how her social and cultural experiences in the U.S. may affect her English learning, she said, "Here it's English everywhere so you have to understand people in the grocery store, in the coffee shop, in the market, in the shop, also you have to explain what you want. So, it's kind of help. It helps a lot" (Post-interview, lines 280-282). She then gave an example, "I have one friend. She is a native speaker. I always meet with her and we drink coffee. We get together for a couple of hours drinking coffee. We went shopping together. We went to the movie together. So, it helps a lot" (Post-interview, lines 284-286).

General Observations about Leyla

Leyla seems to be a very independent learner of English. She was clear about what worked for her and what did not. She always chose the easiest way and was always the first to finish her work. She explained later it was because of her previous working experience. As a nurse working in the medical field, she had to do multiple things at the same time and she had to choose the easiest and fastest way to finish her tasks. She was also a practical learner because she believed that what she composed in the workshop was a different genre that would not be accepted when she applied for the master's program in the university. Even though English was

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an optional course in her elementary school, she still chose to learn it by herself. However, she forgot it after a long time not using it. She had to pick up the language again and again at different phases in her life. She used the metaphor "circle" to express how she felt about her English learning experiences. She defined herself as "a lazy student without a goal" in her country and "a lazy student with a goal" here in the United States. It seems that she could become a more efficient English learner if she had spent more time on her English learning. She believed writing should look like the text and writers should explain something by words rather than drawings or pictures. Leyla still has challenges with her listening even though she improved a lot. In particular, she has challenges in writing since English writing was so different from writing in her home language Azerbaijani. She has been struggling with explaining everything with examples and using accurate articles.

<p style="text-align:center">Tien—Another Vietnamese Student</p>

Meeting with Tien and Learning Her English Learning Experiences and Challenges

Tien is a Vietnamese student enrolled in the level IV class in the IEP. She is in her early fortieth. She is the mother of a teenage girl who was brought by Tien to the U.S. during the time of her study. She has studied in the program for three semesters at the time I interviewed her. Tien was interested in nursing and accounting and she would apply for the nursing or accounting program in the university after she finishes her program in the IEP. She shared something in her home culture and said people cook and eat healthy with low fat. Tien took private classes back in Vietnam and she was only taught grammar and vocabulary but not speaking or story writing. She said, "They speak very rarely. It's not like now you know more foreigners come to Vietnam to teach so they have more opportunity to speak and to listen to all kinds of tape or video you know

to speak or whatever" (Pre-interview, lines 24-26). She said she learned English for two years in

Vietnam, came to the U.S. to learn English and went back home and came again after 20 years.

When she was asked about her writing experience here in the U.S. Tien said:

> First time it was really hard for me. I couldn't do anything. I had no idea. Nothing to pop
> up in my head to write and I was frustrated. I pulled my hair all the time. So, after
> the second semester, still not improve a lot but they teach you the academic writing so
> you have to prove your evidence and everything. It was kind of new for me so I was
> more stressful. I was really stressful last semester. But now when I am in the third
> semester, the teacher, his name is XXX, he is the one that wrote the book about grammar.
> So, he is really helpful and I am really confident about writing now because I can do it. I
> feel it's not frustrating as it used to be any more. (Pre-interview, lines 40-47)

She then further explained, "He really explains things well and you know very detailed and after

that, he helps after class you know. Anything you need, he provides all to you every little things.

So, he is really helpful" (Pre-interview, lines 53-55). When she was asked how her professor

taught writing in class, she responded:

> He gives you a lot of examples to see and then you can make your own idea. You don't
> have to copy his idea but that was really helpful because when you look at it you will be
> "Oh! Ok"! Then you research more at home. And then you put all together, and then he
> checks and he tells you this part is not right. So, you can rewrite, redo it before...submit.
> (Pre-interview, lines 58-61)

She compared her writing experiences back in Vietnam and said:

> My writing was in a different way. We could talk a lot of things. I circled around, around,
> and around. We are not going to the point. We don't have to go to the details or the topic.
> We don't have to. You just go back and forth, jump up and down you know. It's like too
> vague, it is not clear like in the U.S. (Pre-interview, lines 65-68)

When she was asked to share the challenges in her writing, Tien said, "It is very stressful when

you research the article to support your essay, support the points. And I think you have to end up

using academic vocabulary" (Pre-interview, lines 77-78). She said that her professor required the

number of sentences in the first paragraph but he did not require the length of the essay. She said

outline was not required either in her current semester.

When she was asked how she felt about writing in English, she said, "I feel great now. I

feel I really like to write than before. I need to practice more" (Pre-interview, line 87). After I

explained multimodal writing and asked her if she felt this type of writing may help her express

herself, she said, "Maybe. I don't know but I guess it is a great idea to use pictures and music to

write" (Pre-interview, line 92). When Tien was asked to describe herself as an international

student here in the U.S., she said:

> I don't have that experience on that but my friend I see is very stressful in studying. She
> always feels lonely. But some of them don't have that problem because they are easy to
> adapt to the U.S. lifestyle so they don't have struggles or any problems... I think
> foreigners maybe they are just here for a short time so maybe it does not affect much for
> the international students but they will have financial problems or what should they do.
> And they all try to be here so that brings more pressure for them (laugh) (Pre-interview,
> lines 98-100, lines 102-105)

She did not address any problems living in the U.S. by herself. When she was asked how her

experience of living in a foreign country affected her English learning, she stated:

> I think it's a great influence not bad one because...I remember lucky when I came here so
> I could speak a little bit, the basic. I know the basic. It's not very low but average. But the
> speaking is a little bit different here because in Vietnam they teach you the British accent
> and the way in Britain but here American way so... I have to adjust my pronunciation and
> try to listen to them when they talk. It's a good thing if you know some basic, but if you
> don't know the basic I know it's very hard for the foreigner speakers. (Pre-interview, line
> 111, and lines 115-120)

When she was asked to talk about her English learning experiences out of the classrooms in her

home country, she said, "In Vietnam it is more understandable because it is your home language

and you can translate deeply for the meaning and everything so here you translate but a little bit

but not go deep, deep like you understand your language" (Pre-interview, lines 126-128). She

also shared her experience of taking English classes from a private teacher after school. She said,

"I learned in my teacher's home so he and his daughter teach grammar and speaking" (Pre-

interview, line 131). Even though she took English classes in her middle and high school, she did

not pay attention because she hated English classes at that time.

> She told me the story about her changes from hating English to loving English. She said:

> I didn't pay attention. I hate it (laugh) I don't know why because I don't want to say anything you know. I hate it. But finally, after I graduated from high school and I started to come to my cousin's house, and she had a couple of people who rent her place to have the coffee business. So, they are really good at speaking English and writing English. Their parents used to work for the U.S. army or something back in Vietnam. And then I hang out and listen to music and they translate for me and I say "vow! It's really a nice language!" And the music is so awesome. And then it turned me on slowly, slowly back then, and then I tried to take English class and I felt I liked it. (Pre-interview, lines 134-143)

She then reiterated her experience of learning English from a private teacher and said:

> I am so lucky I met my teacher who had the business at home so he knew how to teach us speak English very well. He made us stand up and talk, talk, talk, and he gave some questions and made us group up and learn how to emphasize a page, how to question, you know, when, why, and how... but mostly in Vietnam at that time, there was no class like that. Just writing, writing and go home, do homework. That's why most Vietnamese people couldn't speak a word back then. (Pre-interview, lines 145-150)

She shared that many Vietnamese students were shy and they could only write the grammar but

not be able to speak a word. She said she was the only one in class that spoke a lot because she

was not shy. She shared gladly about her learning experience in her private teacher's house. She

said:

> The next time when you come up to class to present things he watches you learn by heart. That helped too. He said just learning the way and the structure of American and that's

how... if you learn by heart, it's in here (point at head). And your memory and you just out, pop out and when you speak, you can speak. You don't have to prepare and think, and think any more. So that's very good for quick speaking. (Pre-interview, lines 158-162)

Finally, she said she loved English writing just because she had a great teacher in the U.S.

Reflection on Tien's English Learning Experiences

Tien has been in the U.S. for ten years and in the IEP for three semesters -- the longest among all the participants. As she said, she was not shy to speak the language even though she carried Vietnamese accent and she had experienced miscommunication with native speakers of English. She was honest and said that she hated English classes in her middle school and high school years for no reasons. She then shared the story of changing her attitude of learning English by hearing the beautiful English songs at her cousin's house. She was curious about English and gradually loved English and started to take private classes to learn the language. After she came to the U.S., it seems that it was not difficult for her to adapt to American culture since she was able to use her basic speaking skills to communicate with native speakers. As a result, she did not meet many challenges in her life at the beginning. She also seems to benefit from the strategy of memorizing English expressions by heart from a private teacher in her home country, which made her life easier when she first came to the U.S. However, she had met big challenges of writing in English in the American classes and she was struggling with her writing in her previous two semesters. She was grateful to her writing professor in the current semester because she learned from him the strategy of how to write in English and she loved writing more than any time before.

Tien's MM Text I

Figure 28. Tien's MM Text I
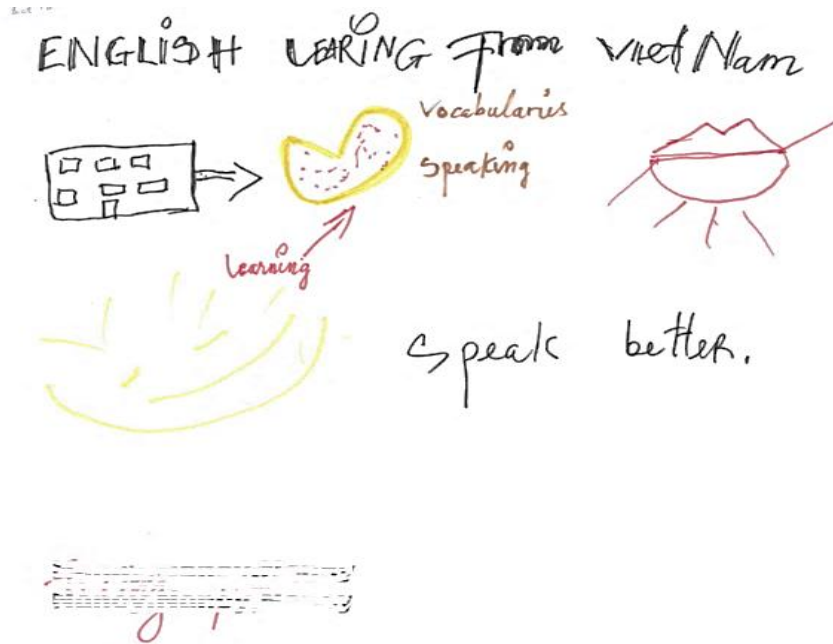
Tien chose to create her first multimodal text on an A3-sized paper. She chose a vertical

orientation (Albers, 2007) to design a multimodal text to write about her English learning

experiences in the classrooms in her home country. She used black marker to write the title

"English learning from Vietnam" on top of the paper. She used all uppercase letters to write the

first two words "English learning" and used a mix of upper and lowercase letters to write the rest

of the two words "From Vietnam". Underneath the title, an image with a big rectangle and some

small rectangles inside the big one was drawn towards the left margin of the paper. An arrow

was used to direct the image on the left to another hand drawing picture on the right which

portrayed a yellow heart-shaped image with red dots inside. Two brown words "vocabularies"

and "Speaking" were written next to the heart image on the right. Another red word "learning"

was placed below the heart image to the left and was connected by a red arrow to the heart

image. Another image of a mouth drawn in red marker was placed next to the words

"vocabularies" and "speaking" on the right. Underneath the word "learning" to the left, a smiling face was drawn with yellow marker. Two black words "Speak better" were written next to the smiling face image on the right. Her name was signed below the smiling face towards the left margin of the paper in red.

Researcher's Reflection

Tien chose to use an A3-sized paper to work on her multimodal text. She chose to use handwriting words and a few hand drawing images to create her first multimodal text writing about her English learning experiences in her home country Vietnam. She drew the image of a school building, which seems to represent where she learned basic vocabularies and speaking skills. She drew the image of a mouth to represent how she practiced English speaking. The smiling face image seems to show how she felt about learning English after speaking and learning by heart. It seems that she was satisfied with her English-speaking skills back then when she wrote "Speak better" next to the smiling face. She explained that she was taught to memorize English expressions by heart. Her teacher told them to memorize everything from text books and she could even remember the punctuation marks in the texts. She had to recite the text in front of her classmates the next day and if she did a good job, everyone would clap for her. She drew a happy face which seems to show that she was happy that she could learn fundamental English from her English teacher which made her first experience in the U.S not so frustrating.

Tien's MM Text II

Figure 29. Tien's MM Text II, Slide 3

Tien chose to create her second multimodal text on the PowerPoint. She chose the

PowerPoint template with navy blue background. On the first slide, the title "Learning English

outside class from Vietnam" were placed in the middle of the page left aligned. The date and her

name were placed underneath with smaller words left aligned. On the second slide, Tien typed

words "English learning outside class" on top of the page left aligned. A picture displaying the

image of a girl sitting next to a pile of books and a lamp writing something with a pencil on a

book was placed underneath the words. A few red words "the first method" were placed at the

top right corner within the picture. On the third slide, the words "English learning outside class"

with all uppercase letters in white were placed on top of the page centered. A picture showing the

image of a window view in front of a river and some green trees and grass with a cup of coffee

and a table stand with the name of the coffee shop was placed underneath the words. The white

words "Vietnam language" were placed out of the top left corner of the picture. The white words

"Japanese languages" were placed out of the bottom left corner of the picture. The words

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"English language" were typed next to the picture on the right. Some red words "The second method" were typed on the top right corner within the picture with all uppercase letters". On the fourth slide, she put the red words "English learning outside class" on top of the page centered. Underneath the words, a picture was placed to show the image of a park with green tropical plants and a statue made of bricks. Three white words "Nancy and Toshiba (her ex-boyfriend's name" were typed in at the bottom of the page left aligned below the picture. The red words "last method" were placed at the right top corner within the picture. On the last slide, the white words "Speaking in English in center with classmates and Toshiba" were put on top of the page left aligned. Two pictures were placed underneath the words side by side. The picture on the left was showing the image of a room with lecture-seating chairs and a big screen on the wall at the front of the room. The seats were half taken and a woman dressing up with pink skirt was standing next to the screen seems to talk to the audience. The picture on the right was showing a table with books, notebooks and study supplies. Several student-like persons were sitting around the table. One black-haired girl was reciting something with her eyes closed and her hands folded. A black-haired guy sitting next to her was facing her trying to listen. A teacher-like man with a black polo shirt was standing at the far end of the table facing a student-like female with his hands putting on the table and a big smile on his face. The girl with long black hair was holding a book in her hands showing her back profile seems to talk to the man standing in front of her.

Researcher's Reflection

Tien came late in the previous session when everyone was supposed to work on their second multimodal text due to her class conflict. She chose to create her second text in the following session. She stayed for an hour after the session while I was observing and assisting her with creating the text. Dao stayed for about 20 minutes trying to help her as well. She first

asked me to teach her how to use PowerPoint on the computer since she only had the experience of using it on her laptop. I showed her the steps and helped her open the first PPT slide. Then she worked independently on the next slides. She looked for pictures on the Internet (Google images). She talked to Dao in Vietnamese and asked him a few questions. I then approached her and asked if she needed any help. She asked me to show her how to copy and paste pictures on her slides and how to insert text next to the pictures. I showed her and sit down next to her to observe her composing process. She turned to me occasionally and explained to me why she chose to use the pictures and what those pictures represented. She left the first slide blank and added the title at the end to complete it. She made four slides in total in about an hour, sent it to me through email before she left.

Tien seems to have less experience using PowerPoint than Dao and Fanghui, but she was eager to learn how to use it to create her second multimodal text. Even though she stayed for an hour to complete her text, she seems to be tireless. While she worked on the second slide, she used a picture showing a black-haired girl studying under the lamp. She told me that girl represented herself. She then added a third slide with a picture showing a cup of coffee in front of a window which could see through a beautiful Riverview. She told me that looked like the coffee house she used to go to with her ex-boyfriend. They usually went there to practice English, Vietnamese and Japanese. Her ex-boyfriend is Japanese so he taught her how to speak Japanese. She taught him how to speak Vietnamese. His English is better than hers so he also taught her how to speak English. She also added another slide showing a picture in a Vietnamese park, where there was a lot of green grass and tropical plants. She said she used to come to the park to practice English. The last slide contained two pictures. One of the pictures was showing a girl standing in front of a big group of people presenting. She told me this represented her

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experience of learning English with her ex-boyfriend in a language training center in Vietnam. She was presenting in front of the whole group and she recited every single word including the punctuation so everyone was giving her a warm applause after she presented her assignment. She seems to be very proud of herself when she talked about this experience. She told me she studied in the training center for two years and what she learned was very helpful. When she finished all the slides, she told me she may add other things if she could think of any at home but this became her final version of multimodal text II.

Tien's MM Text III

Figure 30. Tien's MM Text III
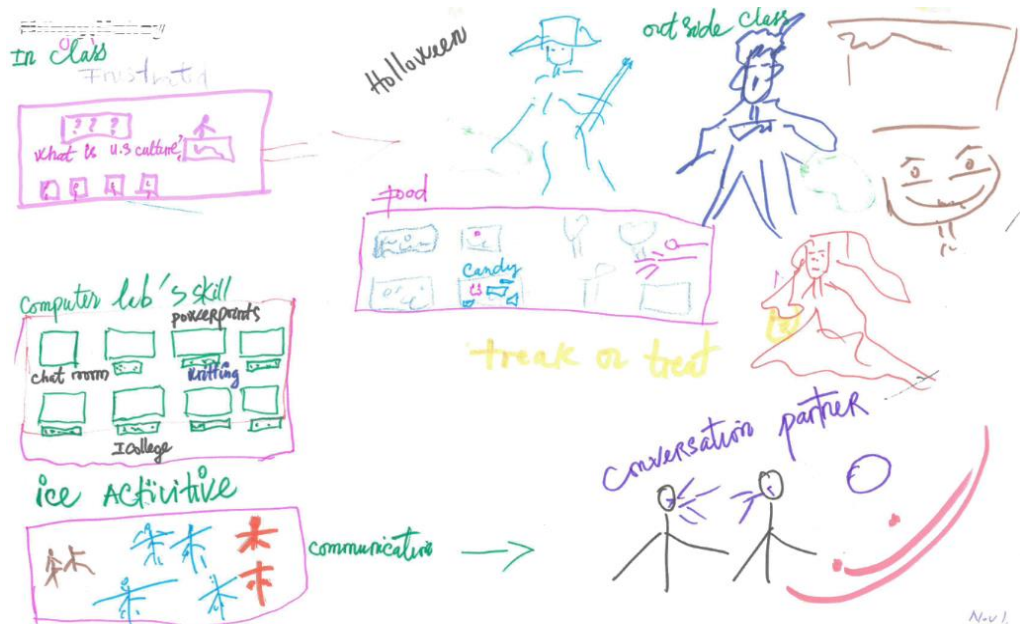
Tien chose to create her third multimodal text on an A3-sized paper. She chose the horizontal orientation (Albers, 2007) to design the multimodal text with images and words to write about her English learning experiences in the U.S. in the classrooms. She wrote in green marker "In class" at the top left corner of the page. Underneath the words, she wrote in purple

crayon "frustrated". Below the word, an image of a big rectangle with several smaller rectangles inside were drawn. A little man was drawn in front of one small rectangle at one end of the big rectangle. Three question marks were drawn inside one of the small rectangles. Below it she wrote "What is U.S culture?" Underneath the big purple rectangle, she wrote in green marker "Computer lab's skill" and drew eight smaller squares with a small rectangle below each square. She put a black word "PowerPoint" above one square, another black word "Chatroom" above another square, the third black word "I-college" below a small rectangle and the last word "writing" below one small rectangle. The eight squares were circled by a purple rectangle. Underneath the purple rectangle, she wrote "Ice Activities" in green and drew a purple rectangle below the words. Within the purple rectangle, she drew several pairs of little persons in three colors. The green word "communicate" was written outside of the purple rectangle on the right. A green arrow was used to point to the image on its right. Two persons drawn in black were standing side by side with purple lines coming out of their mouths. Above their heads, two purple words "Conversation partner" were written. A pink smiling face was drawn next to the two-person image at the right bottom corner of the paper. On top of the paper next to the big purple rectangle drawn on top of the paper, a big arrow was used to point to the next image -- a person dressing up with blue costume and wearing a blue hat. The black word "Halloween" was written on the left side of the man leaning to the left. On the right side of the man, the image of another man dressing up with navy blue costume and with his hair standing up was drawn below the green words "outside class" Then the image of a happy face was drawn next to the man in navy blue and another image of a girl dressing up with pink dress was drawn below the navy-blue man. Underneath the blue and navy-blue men to the left, a big rectangle was drawn with several smaller rectangles drawn inside. The purple word "food" was written outside the top left

corner of the big rectangle. At one of the small rectangles, the blue word "candy" was written. Below the big purple rectangle, she wrote "treat or trick" in yellow.

Researcher's Reflection

Tien chose to use paper to create her third multimodal text this time. She used markers to write key words and draw images. For example, she used markers with different colors to draw the images representing her different classroom experiences such as being confused in the classrooms when she first came, learning computer skills in the computer lab, and participating in the classroom activities to practice English with another partner. She used an arrow to connect her classroom experience to her experiences outside the classrooms. She drew several images to show the Halloween party she attended in the previous night in her professor's house. She drew people with different costumes and the food table with different types of food. At the time Tien presented her text to the group, she explained how the "ice activity" helped her with her English speaking with another American partner and how the Halloween party helped her learn the American culture.

Tien's MM Text IV A

Figure 31. Tien's MM Text IV A, Slide 3

Tien chose to use PowerPoint to create her final multimodal text. She chose a blue-background template and made five slides in total. On the first slide, she wrote the words "learning English experience outside class" with light blue centered so the words did not stand out on top of the page. Underneath the words, she used a picture with four people facing out each posing their right hand close to their mouths. At the bottom of the picture, some white words with bold stroke and big size were written "learn English by watching TV shows" with the last four words "by watching TV shows" in smaller size. She placed another picture on the right of the slide which showed the group picture of the TV show "Friends". On the second slide, she wrote "learning English at work" in white uppercase letters on top of the page centered. Underneath the words, she used a picture showing the image of a nail salon with two women serving a female customer. All three women were smiling and facing out. She wrote some white words in smaller size next to the picture on the left "Try to have conversation to practice English". Underneath the words, she wrote another line "Pick up new vocabulary and pronunciation" in white. She left some space before writing the final line "For 18 years learning English at nail shop". She used four green stars and randomly scattered them at different places of the slide. On the next slide, she wrote "Learning from partner when going out" on top of the slide all with uppercase letters. She used three pictures side by side below the words. She used the picture of an English menu on the left and some words "Understand the menu" above the picture. The picture in the middle was showing a dining table full of plates of various food and glasses of wine. The white words "Recognize different style of food" were typed in above picture. The picture on the right was showing a counter full of wine and two chefs working in the kitchen in the far background. The white words "Able to order right wine" were typed in above the picture". On the following slide, she wrote in white words "Learning English from American

partner" on top of the page with all uppercase letters. She then wrote "Culture:" underneath the title left aligned. Below the word "culture", she typed in "Thanksgiving is traditional of American Holiday" left aligned. She used a picture below the last line of words and placed the picture on the right side of the page. The picture was showing a dining table full of plates, silverwares and wine. A big group of people with male and female adults and kids were sitting around the table looking at the turkey in the middle of the table. A man was cutting the turkey with a knife smiling. On the last slide, she typed in "Learning English between 2 difference cultures" on top of the page centered. She then wrote two lines underneath. The first line said, "American culture: in most case, children don't pay for parents′ bill or help financial". The second line below said, "Asian culture: Almost children willing to pay for parents when they are retired". Those two lines of words were led by dots at the beginning.

Tien's MM Text IV B

Figure 32. Tien′s MM Text IV B, Slide 2
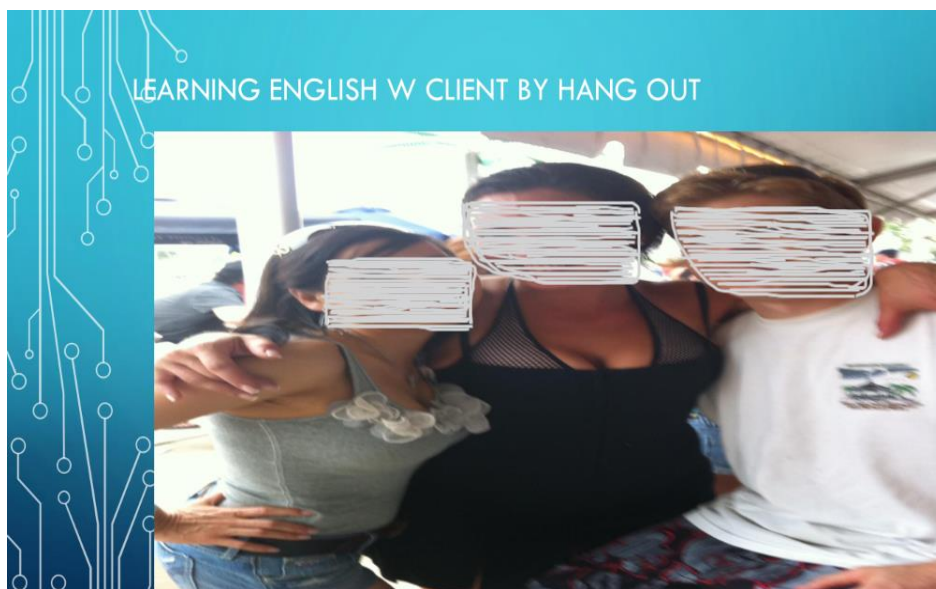
As Tien said in the email, she revised her text and resent it to me two days after she sent me the first version. In her revised text, she added two slides to the original slides. She added one slide after the first slide with the photo of her own and two of her friends. The woman and she was dressing up with tank tops and the male standing on the right was wearing a white T-shirt. All three of them were standing closely to one another smiling. She wrote the words "Learning English W client by hang out" on top of the page in white. She then added another slide afterwards which showed the nail shop image. On the slide she added, she typed in white words "Experience American's culture and style" on top of the slide and used two pictures below. The picture on the left was showing the image of herself and several of her friends sitting on a couch. The picture on the right was showing herself dressing up with black lace dress and her hair down sipping the wine from a goblet held in her right hand. She did not make changes to the original slides except for adding two new slides displaying pictures of herself.

Researcher's Reflection

Tien chose to use PowerPoint to create her final multimodal text. She chose to work on it at home rather than in the workshop due to her time conflict. In the original version of her text, she used pictures found from the Internet to show her experience of learning English in the U.S. out of the classrooms. She also used words to explain the pictures and write about her experiences. In her revised text, she added two slides with her own pictures on both of them, which seems to represent her awareness of being an International student participating in the U.S. culture.

Tien said that she liked the text she made the most recently, which was the one about her learning experience out of the classrooms in the U.S. She explained the latest text was based on her most recent experiences. The more experiences she could remember about her learning, the

more information she could include in her text. She also added more photos and words in her revised text. Since she was the only one that used her personal pictures in the multimodal text, she was asked to explain the reason of using her personal pictures and how that helped her express herself. She said:

> It was something happened in my real life, I learned a lot with my partner out dining, hanging out with friends, not only language itself, but when you look at the way they hang out, they share the laugh and joke, you know, how they talk. I pick up more experience about culture and language. (Workshop session 10)

It seems that she wanted to describe to her audience her real-life experiences by showing them the real pictures taken from her experiences. Additionally, it seems that she has been doing a good job trying to fit herself in the American culture and she was the only one that was not afraid to display her different roles and identities by showing her real-life images in the U.S. through her multimodal texts.

Tien Reflects on Her MM Texts and Workshop Experience

During the post-workshop interview, I sat down with Tien and asked her about her workshop experiences and her perceptions about using multimodal resources to express herself. She sat the coffee in front of her as she did in the pre-workshop interview. I first asked her to share something she learned from the workshop, she said, "I learned the skills about how to express your feeling by pictures instead of writing... What I was going to say about the different context of learning English, like different ways of learning English back in home country and in the U.S." (Post-interview, lines 3-7). I then asked how she felt about multimodal writing, she responded:

> One is the different way of writing. It's connected to PowerPoint but we can do it by hand by drawing the picture on the paper use marker or pencil or whatever. It's ah... you have

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more ways of expression to put on it. It's very nice to have that to help learning. (Post-interview, lines 9-11)

She addressed no challenges when writing multimodally because she could describe herself by using the pen, the letter, the pictures and the drawings to describe her stories to different audiences. When she was asked if multimodal writing may help her in any way with her classroom writing, she said, "Yes. In the class, I can be more creative with writing by drawing or combined with PowerPoint everything so it helps" (Post-interview, lines 21-22). She said she liked to use multimodal resources to express herself in writing and she explained "In my writing, I would pull out my idea about multimodal writing either by or... I never tried the sound yet but mostly I use drawing or pictures. I can do that into my writing. I applied that to my writing" (Post-interview, lines 26-28). She said she used PowerPoint and drawings the most frequently and she explained:

> Because they are useful and easy to use than the other. Because the other I never tried. If I tried, maybe I can pick up the technique but I never tried the other ones. Probably because my computer technology skill is not that great (laugh) so that's why I am afraid to try (laugh). It takes too much time to try. (Post-interview, lines 35-38)

When she was asked about her feeling of trying to use PowerPoint, she said, "I feel more confident using PowerPoint and I learned more things about PowerPoint. I could show my old pictures on the PowerPoint. I think I had more experience on it honestly than before" (Post-interview, lines 42-44). She shared that she could put words inside and outside the pictures and she could use less words to make PowerPoint. She said, "Back then when I did PowerPoint, I put a lot of words which is not good for PowerPoint presentation" (Post-interview, lines 48-49).

When she was asked the reason of not choosing sound or music in her multimodal texts, she said "Because like I said I like to use everything, new things. And because I don't have

enough time. If I have enough time, I would try to use sound you know" (Post-interview, lines 59-60). When she was asked if she would use construction paper, cardboard, glue and scissors to cut and paste in order to make her multimodal text, she said, "I would. Technically it took more time than PowerPoint but it has a different meaning of it. You know like handmade. It looks differently" (Post-interview, lines 65-66). When she was asked to share her steps of creating multimodal texts, Tien said, "I looked my topic and my experiences I told my classmates. And then just put them in order and then I try to put some words on the pictures so they can know what I am talking about. But not a lot of words" (Post-interview, lines 81-83). I asked Tien to share something she thought multimodal resources may help her do with her writing, she said:

> I think in the writing, it helps me to become more creative when I am writing... Just like when you describe your experience, you can use the pictures either by hand or PowerPoint to describe your topic or whatever you know. I had to use a lot of pictures of environment to fit with my status of Asian so I used that. It made myself more creative, my thinking what should I do to make it nicer, this and that so it helped with my writing, too. (Post-interview, lines 94-98)

When she was asked how the multimodal resources she selected could help express her meanings, she responded:

> When you select the picture or you draw the picture, you already put your idea, your mind in the picture already. So, it would show what you were going to say. So, you just put one or two word and your audience would understand what you ware saying about. The important thing is when you draw and when you put the picture, you have to make sure it's clear and make sense so the audience can understand. (Post-interview, lines 108-112)

She further explained what words and pictures could do in her multimodal texts. She said:

> I think picture is the vision. When people look at it, they will know right away. They can tell you what it is, but for the words they have to take time to read. So, I think the picture is more effective, more powerful. (Post-interview, lines 118-120)

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When she was asked whether the five-paragraph essay writing or multimodal composing may help better express herself, she said they were different ways to express herself and it depends on her purposes. She then further explained:

> For essay, maybe you can write about everything or your assignment or your journal, whatever. The multimodal writing, you can express your feeling without writing. It's interesting. But I think when you see the picture, so sometimes you don't want to talk for example, you can go over the pictures or you can send pictures to your friend or your partner you know. They understand, but it's the cute way. You don't have to write but when they look at it they might feel more, like when you are upset, you are happy through the picture...And it's a different way to express yourself, your feeling. (Post-interview, lines 125-131)

When Tien was asked about her perception of writing before attending the workshop and her perception of writing after attending the workshop, she said:

> Before I thought writing was just writing... I did not think about you can write with no handwriting but you still write. You still address to the people whoever your partner, your friend, teacher, whoever you know by picture. It's kind of cool (laugh)... Because before I didn't know what multimodal writing, what that is. Because I was confused, is it a computer skill or technique or some kind of how to use computer or some software or something. I didn't know that. It's very nice to express your feeling through the picture. (Post-interview, lines 136-138 and lines 142-145)

When she was asked what writing should look like, she said, "To me it's more interesting if you write and put some pictures in there, explain it out. It's nice to do it" (Post-interview, lines 149-150). She said the writing practice in her classroom was very different and it was all writing with words. She said she would like to try multimodal writing in her class.

When Tien was asked to describe herself in her home country as well as in the U.S., she said:

> When I was in Vietnam, I was just a regular person, no role, nothing. I studied English because I liked some of the English songs so then it made me to go to learn English. I am

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curious. I was just curious. I had no goal (laugh). But when I am learning English here, it's about … I really appreciate what I am learning. And I think this opportunity is really… and especially English. So, you live in the United States, you have to deal with and speak with Americans. And in the America, you have to use it everywhere. (Post-interview, lines 166-171)

When she was asked to further explain her point, she said:

Like in my case. I am getting older. Everybody speaks English, and if you don't speak English, it's hard for me to communicate with them. And I realize that it's really significant for me to go to take English class. And then after I take the English class, and then I think I have to have a goal. And my dream I think I really want to be graduate from any college at least. So… small dream (laugh). And then if I can go further, I can do the major accounting. (Post-interview, lines 173-178)

When she was asked how her previous social, cultural and life experiences may affect her

English learning in her home country, she said:

Back in my home, it affected my English learning because a lot of foreigners invested Vietnam when I was in Vietnam 30 or 25 years ago. And most people they go to the English center or private lesson to take the English classes because they started to know second language like English is very important for like the job. So, I just followed the train (laugh). And plus, I liked the song and I feel English is really nice music. I like the deep feeling of the words that they put together you know. Different than Vietnamese language but still deep feeling so very nice though. That's why I go to the English class. (Post-interview, lines 184-190)

However, she added to her point and said:

But back home, it did not help me much about writing, academic writing, listening you know. It's one thing they were really good about is teaching grammar… they taught me (grammar) in Vietnam. Because it's my language, so the way they explain English I could understand really well and I can recognize you know not the vague meaning like in the United States. (Post-interview, lines 192-196)

She then transitioned to talk about how her previous experience affected her English learning

here in the U.S. She said:

So, I think the best way is when you have the basic grammar, very strong knowledge. So, when you move to the U.S., it's very helpful. Even though you speak English not very well, but I am sure that after you learn here more about listening and writing, you will adapt soon than the person who doesn't have the grammar knowledge, the basic at home. Yeah. That's my opinion, my experience I think. But in the U.S., it helps English learners a lot. They have the academic writing and the way they teach, they give students a lot of homework, a lot of vocabulary because they give students especially international students so many opportunity to practice speaking, writing, listening. They have to deal with symbols, take driver's license, they have to go there to speak American English, health care, they have to learn about health care what they do about the bus, how to get the Panther card. How to order food with native American. So, I think here it helps a lot, a lot. (Post-interview, lines 202-212)

She shared that she still had problems with English writing. She said, "I am still having the problem, the problem in my writing still. I write so much with no comma. I just add a lot of ideas. You should talk one idea, stop, and another idea. But I still cannot do it well yet" (Post-interview, lines 231-233). When she was asked to talk about how her experiences in the U.S. may affect her English learning, she told me the following experiences:

In here it affects me. Before I attend IEP class, it really affected me because sometimes when I talked to somebody in the leasing apartment or lawyer or sometimes order food, because of my accent, I had to speak very clearly with my pronunciation when I speak. When they ask me 'pardon me, what did you say?' I was afraid I say it wrong. So, it affected a lot of things. First of all, I don't know what they are talking about in the news. When I listen to the news, I don't know. I couldn't understand 100% which annoyed me. I think it annoyed my brain. I never want to listen to the news. And reading, I read but I cannot understand much. Because of the words, the grammar, the structure that they use. So that's why it made me, I don't want to read, I don't want to listen to the news. And when I go to somewhere I have to talk and dealing with my stuff important. So, I have to ask my friends who are Americans or my client to help me out. Yeah. It really affected my life. (Post-interview, lines 250-261)

She said her listening skills and her knowledge about English were not good but her speaking skill was fine. She said, "Sometimes I am confused when I hear people talking. Like for our conversation, I have no problem understanding you. If I talk to other people, I may have a hard

time understanding them" (Post-interview, lines 268-270). She said her goal was to read and

write English fluently. She said:

> So that's why my goal I just want to read English and write English fluently, at least 80% you know. Off course you know you are not American native, you can't expect like a 100%, like 80 percent is enough (laugh) you know. But I mean English learning in here helps, helps a lot. I can see right away. You know myself and my teacher can see right away. They can tell I am getting better. I speak clearer, and especially I attend the pronunciation class, clinic. They use a lot of technique. They can tell what sound I cannot speak. So, they focus on it. (Post-interview, lines 271-277)

She proudly shared her different experiences before and after attending the pronunciation clinic.

She said:

> The first semester, I already can see (my progress). Before I go to Chick-Fil-A and I order. I cannot understand what they were asking me (very excited voice). I don't learn by heart you know, and I order for my step-daughter. And they ask me something that I couldn't figure out (raise her voice) what it is. But then after the pronunciation class I come back. I order and I know that word and I speak very clearly and in power (raise her voice). I am not afraid to speak any more you know. So, I thought cool you know. (Post-interview, lines 289-294)

Finally, she thought multimodal writing may bring a revolution for classroom writing. She

suggested:

> Sometimes you don't have to write (emphasizing). You know you can express your feeling. Maybe in the study you can save your time to writing, writing, writing or typing. You can do the picture you know. When everybody is learning this technique, it's going to be easier, faster on the writing, to express your feeling you don't have to sit there typing. It's too long compared to pulling up the picture and draw. So once people know about this, it's more easier to understand about things. You know you can express your feeling. Maybe in the study you can save your time to writing, writing, writing or typing. You can do the picture you know. When everybody is learning this technique, it's going to be easier, faster on the writing, to express your feeling you don't have to sit there typing. It's too long compared to pulling up the picture and draw. So once people know about this, it's more easier to understand about things. (Post-interview, lines 298-303)

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General Observations about Tien

Tien was the one that has been in the U.S. the longest. She seems to have more social and cultural experiences in the U.S. than other participants. Before she created her last multimodal text, she was known as an English learner, but after she created her final multimodal text writing and displaying her experiences with words and pictures, she was known for her life experiences and how she learned English through these experiences. Her out-of-class experience seems to play an important role in her English learning based on her depiction in the final multimodal text. Her identities as an English learner, an employee, the girlfriend of an American man were represented in her final revised text. In her self-description, she perceived herself as a regular Vietnamese person and an English learner with no role and no goals; however, her identity was shifted to an international English language learner with the goal of learning and using English to survive and achieve life goals in the U.S.

Tien was a pioneer and risk-taker with a willing heart. It seems that she was not afraid to try new things and technologies which may help her learn the language; however, she would try the things that she thought would take her less time such as PowerPoint. She said she never tried sound or music because her computer skill was not great so she was afraid that picking up the technique might take her a long time. She also said, "I like to use everything, new things. And because I don't have enough time. If I have enough time, I would try to use sound you know" (Post-interview, lines 59-60).

Tien was a strong-willed student with her own goal. She was working diligently to achieve her goal. She was also very clear about her strengths and weaknesses and she was making attempt to use her strengths to help overcome her weaknesses. She had been through a hard time with English writing after she enrolled in the IEP; however, she had improved greatly

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and found the solutions to conquer her writing difficulties after taking classes from her professor

Dr. XXX. She had problem with listening before enrolling in the IEP, but after three semesters,

she had more confidence speaking to American people and could understand much more of their

language. Now she seems to be clearer about what she is doing and what she wants to achieve in

her life.

<div align="center">**Focused Analysis of Participants' Multimodal Texts**</div>

I reviewed the multimodal texts composed by each participant for multiple times. I drew

on the social making of mode suggested by Kress (2010) – *"image, writing, layout, music,*

gesture, speech..." (p. 79) while I was analyzing participants' multimodal texts. I found

participants chose to use resources of hand-drawing pictures, color, size, underlining, arrowing,

circling and bolding to design images on their paper-based texts, and they chose to utilize

resources of digital pictures, color, size, underlining, and arrowing to design visuals on their

computer-based multimodal texts. Also, participants chose to use handwriting texts and "graphic

resources of font, size, bolding...frames, color" (Kress, 2010, p. 79) to demonstrate the written

mode while they composed paper-based multimodal texts and they chose to use resources of

typed words, font, size, italicizing, color, frames and bolding on their computer-based

multimodal texts. Furthermore, layout (spatial mode) refers to the production of "'blocks' of

writing... in different colors, on surfaces such as pages or screens" (Kress, 2009, p. 55). In this

respect, participants' choice of resources to design a layout for paper-based texts include spacing

-- the space "between words and around paragraphs" (Kress, 2009, p. 55) and positioning (space

between images and texts or between images and images). In addition, their choice of resources

to design the layout for computer-based texts include spacing and positioning as well (See Table

5).

Table 5. Checklist for counting the number of resources for the representation of each mode

Image/Visual		Writing/Written		Layout/Spatial	
Paper-based	PPT	Paper-based	PPT	Paper-based	PPT
Hand drawing	Digital pictures	Hand writing text	Types words/texts	Spacing	Spacing
Color	Color	Font	Size	Positioning	Positioning
Size	Size	Size	Italicizing		
Underlining	Underlining	Bolding	Color		
Arrowing	Arrowing	Frames	Frames		
Circling		Color	Bolding		
Bolding					

      I then counted the number of times each resource was used within each mode category in each multimodal text. I created a table for each participant to tabulate the numbers. When there was a revised version of text, I recorded the number of modes used in both versions. However, when I calculated the total number of each mode used across the four texts, I only added the number retrieved from the original text because for those who did not make any changes to their original texts, those texts were composed under the same condition so they could be fairly compared in my later analysis. For some participants, two versions of multimodal texts were created and I recorded the number of modes used in both versions. However, when I calculated the total number of each mode used across the four texts, I only added the number retrieved from the original version since those texts were composed under the same circumstances and it was fair to compare those texts in my later analysis. I recorded Fanghui's two versions of multimodal texts I but I chose to use her version created on the PowerPoint since she spent the majority of time on that version and her paper-based text was like an exploration. She tried out her initial

ideas on the paper but left it unfinished. I perceived Tien's multimodal text IV as a special case since she created that text at home, so it was not comparable to the other texts created under the same conditions. She spent about 40 minutes to work individually on her final text and spent another 15 minutes to revise her text.

After I created the table for each participant, I created four tables to record the multimodal modes used by each participant for multimodal text I, II, III and IV. I was looking for tendencies from participants attending the same session creating each multimodal text. An exception occurred for Tien since she created her second multimodal text in the following session after other participants created their second multimodal texts. Finally, I created a table to tabulate the total number of each mode type used by each participant. I was looking for patterns in the use of each mode by each participant in all their four multimodal texts.

In the following, I start with discussing the mode frequency in Dao's multimodal texts (See Table 6).

Table 6. Mode Frequency in Dao's Multimodal Texts

Mode	MM Text I (PPT)	MM Text II (PPT)	MM Text III A (Paper-based)/B (PPT)	MM Text IV (PPT)	Total
Image/Visual	15	6	8/8	12	41
Writing/Written	10	8	24/7	9	51
Layout/Spatial	18	7	17/6	6	48
Total	43	21	49/21	27	140

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2001), some modes carry more information than others in texts. It appears that in Dao's multimodal text III, written language carries the most

information and the total number of the three modes used is the biggest among all his four multimodal compositions. By the same token, in his second multimodal composition, the visual mode carries the least information since the total number of visuals in his texts were used the least. Additionally, the written mode was the most frequently used across all his four multimodal compositions and the visual mode was used the least frequently among all his four multimodal texts. It appears that the written mode was used the most frequently in Dao's third multimodal text composed on the paper. Moreover, the visual mode was used the most frequently in Dao's first multimodal text, in which the spatial mode was also used the most frequently.

It seems that in Dao's multimodal texts composed on the paper, the written mode carries more information than in his texts created on the PowerPoint. It appears that he used the written mode more than the other modes on the paper. Even though he said he preferred to use pictures in his multimodal composition, he was actually using more word-related resources to express himself.

In the following section, I address the mode frequency in Danilo's multimodal texts (See Table 7).

Table 7. Mode Frequency in Danilo's Multimodal Texts

Mode	MM Text I (Paper-based)	MM Text II (Paper-based)	MM Text III (Word Doc)	MM Text IV A/B (both PPT)	Total
Image/Visual	47	24	0	21/38	92
Writing/Written	57	21	22	51/51	151
Layout/Spatial	45	30	19	44/49	138
Total	149	75	41	116/138	381

It is revealed from Table 7 that in Danilo's first multimodal text, the written mode carries the most information among the three modes he used. Written mode was used the most frequently among the three modes across his four multimodal compositions. Similarly, in his third multimodal composition composed on a Word document, the visual mode carries the least information. Additionally, the written mode was used the most frequently across all his four multimodal compositions and the visual mode was the least frequently used across his four multimodal texts. It shows that the visual mode, written mode and spatial mode were all used the most frequently in Danilo's first paper-based multimodal text. It reveals that the three modes predominated across his first multimodal text.

It seems that in Danilo's first multimodal text, the written mode composed on the paper carries more information than the visual and spatial modes in his texts created on the PowerPoint or on the Word document. It appears that he used the written mode more than the other modes on the paper, which was consistent with what he said—he preferred to use "conceptual map" to best express himself, in which he needs to use many word-related resources.

Next, I address the mode frequency in Fanghui's multimodal texts (See Table 8).

Table 8. Mode Frequency in Fanghui's Multimodal Texts

Mode	MM Text I A (Paper-based)/ B (PPT)	MM Text II (PPT)	MM Text III (PPT)	MM Text IV A/B (both PPT)	Total
Image/Visual	0, 7	13	16	8, 11	44
Writing/Written	4, 8	5	20	10, 12	43
Layout/Spatial	1, 7	8	15	7, 10	37
Total	5, 22	26	51	25, 33	124

It is revealed that in Fanghui's third multimodal text, the written mode carries the most information and she used the three modes the most frequently among all her four multimodal compositions. Similarly, in her first multimodal composition composed on the PowerPoint slides, the visual mode carries the least information. Additionally, the visual mode was the most frequently used across all her four multimodal compositions and the spatial mode was the least frequently used across all her four multimodal texts. The visual, written and spatial modes were all used the most frequently in Fanghui's third multimodal text composed on the PowerPoint slides.

It appears that Fanghui used the visual mode more than the other modes on the PowerPoint. Even though she said she was not so good at making PowerPoint, she still chose to create all her four multimodal texts on the PowerPoint slides. She used more image-related resources, which was consistent with what she said—she preferred to use pictures and simple words in her multimodal compositions to express herself.

In the following section, I discuss the mode frequency in Sung Min's multimodal texts (See Table 9).

Table 9. Mode Frequency in Sung Min's Multimodal Texts

Mode	MM Text I (Paper-based)	MM Text II (Paper-based)	MM Text III (Paper-based)	MM Text IV (Paper-based)	Total
Image/Visual	15	30	16	30	91
Writing/Written	12	24	13	20	69
Layout/Spatial	12	26	16	17	71
Total	39	80	45	67	231

It is revealed in Table 9 that in Sung Min's second multimodal text, the visual mode carries the most information. In additional, among the three modes he used, the visual mode was the most frequently used among all his four multimodal compositions. By the same token, in his first paper-based multimodal text, the written and spatial modes carried less information since the total times of these two modes were used the least frequently. Additionally, the visual mode was used the most frequently across all his four multimodal compositions and the written mode was the least frequently used across his four multimodal texts. It shows that the written mode was used the most frequently in Sung Min's second paper-based multimodal text. Moreover, the visual mode was used the most frequently in Sung Min's second and fourth multimodal text, in which the spatial mode was also used the most frequently in his second multimodal text. This frequency reveals that of the three modes that were used in Sung Min's multimodal texts, the visual mode carries the most information.

It appears that Sung Min used the visual mode more than the other modes on the paper. He chose to compose all his multimodal texts on the paper because he said he was not familiar with PowerPoint or other tools. Even though he said it was hard for him to draw and he even laughed at his own drawings, he actually included many drawings and used more image-related resources to express himself.

Next, I address the mode frequency in Leyla's multimodal texts (See Table 10).

Table 10. Mode Frequency in Leyla's Multimodal Texts

Mode	MM Text I (Paper-based)	MM Text II (Paper-based)	MM Text III (Paper-based)	MM Text IV (Paper-based)	Total
Image/Visual	29	4	21	7	61
Writing/Written	31	5	23	14	73

| Layout/Spatial | 22 | 4 | 20 | 12 | 58 |
| Total | 82 | 13 | 64 | 33 | 192 |

It shows in Table 10 that in Leyla's first multimodal text, the written mode carries the most information and was used the most frequently among all her four multimodal compositions. Similarly, in her second paper-based multimodal text, visual and spatial modes carried the least information since the total number of times each of these modes was used was less than the visual mode. Additionally, the written mode was used the most frequently across all her four multimodal compositions and the spatial mode was the least frequently used across all her four multimodal texts. The frequency displays that the written mode was used the most frequently in Leyla's first multimodal text composed on a sheet of paper. Moreover, the visual mode was used the most frequently in Leyla's first multimodal text with the spatial mode also used frequently.

It appears that Leyla used the written mode more than the other modes on the paper. She chose to compose all her multimodal texts on the paper because she said she preferred to do it in the easiest way. She said she would include the same information if she composed her texts on the computer using PowerPoint slides. She said she preferred to use words to express herself and pictures were not necessary when she was learning English. Her preference was consistent with what she said, and she actually used more word-related resources to express herself.

In the following section, I address the mode frequency in Tien's multimodal texts (See Table 11).

Table 11. Mode Frequency in Tien's Multimodal Texts

Mode	MM Text I (Paper-based)	MM Text II (PPT)	MM Text III (Paper-based)	MM Text IV (PPT)	Total
Image/Visual	12	11	31	19, 22	73
Writing/Written	15	23	26	25, 27	89
Layout/Spatial	11	18	30	28, 33	87
Total	38	52	87	72, 82	249

It displays in Table 11 that in Tien's third multimodal text, the visual mode carries the most information as of the three modes, but the written mode was used the most frequently among all her four multimodal texts. In her first paper-based multimodal text, the spatial mode carries the least information, and the total times this mode was used appears the least frequently. Additionally, the written mode was used the most frequently across all her four multimodal compositions and the visual mode was the least frequently used across all her four multimodal texts.

Tien chose to compose two of her multimodal texts on the paper and the other two on the PowerPoint slides because she said she wanted to practice more on using PowerPoint. Even though she said it was cool to use pictures to express her ideas and she included more images than the other modes in her third multimodal text, she actually used more word-related resources to express herself.

In the following section, I discuss the mode frequency in participants' multimodal text I (See Table 12).

Table 12. Mode Frequency in Multimodal Text I

Name \ Mode	Image/Visual	Writing/Written	Layout/Spatial	Total
Dao	15 (35%)	10 (23%)	18 (42%)	43 (100%)
Danilo	47 (32%)	57 (38%)	45 (30%)	149 (100%)
Fanghui	7 (32%)	8 (36%)	7 (32%)	22 (100%)
Sung Min	15 (38%)	12 (31%)	12 (31%)	39 (100%)
Leyla	29 (35%)	31 (38%)	22 (27%)	82 (100%)
Tien	12 (32%)	15 (39%)	11 (29%)	38 (100%)
Total	125 (34%)	133 (36%)	115 (31%)	373 (100%)

To compare the frequency of multimodal resources used in all participants' first multimodal texts in the above table, among all participants, the total number of mode for writing was the largest and the total number of layout/spatial was the lowest. It shows that Danilo's multimodal texts comprised the most number of modes (image/visual, writing/written and layout/spatial) among all participants, and Fanghui used the least number of modes (image/visual, writing/written and layout/spatial) among all participants.

For the first multimodal text in which participants were writing about their English learning experiences in the classrooms in their home countries, it appears that Danilo had the most experiences to share so he composed a multimodal text which contained the most frequently used modes of writing, image and layout. However, it seems that Fanghui had the least experiences to share so she chose to use fewer modes to write about her experiences. It may due to the fact that Danilo included some of his English learning experiences out of the classrooms which made his multimodal text richer in content. It may also due to the reason that Danilo is the oldest, so he might have more experiences than Fanghui who is the youngest

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among all the participants. It was also revealed that participants chose to use the written mode the most frequently and chose to use the spatial mode the least frequently, which revealed the preference tendency of mode choice was primarily writing. Image was the second-choice preference and layout was the last in this case.

Next, I discuss the mode frequency in Participants' multimodal text II (See Table 13).

Table 13. Mode Frequency in Multimodal Text II

Mode Name	Image/Visual	Writing/Written	Layout/Spatial	Total
Dao	6 (29%)	8 (38%)	7 (33%)	21 (100%)
Danilo	24 (32%)	21 (28%)	30 (40%)	75 (100%)
Fanghui	13 (50%)	5 (19%)	8 (31%)	26 (100%)
Sung Min	30 (38%)	24 (30%)	26 (33%)	80 (100%)
Leyla	4 (31%)	5 (38%)	4 (31%)	13 (100%)
Tien	11 (21%)	23 (44%)	18 (35%)	52 (100%)
Total	88 (33%)	86 (32%)	93 (35%)	267 (100%)

In the second multimodal texts, it shows that Sung Min used the three modes the most frequently among all participants, and Leyla used these three modes the least. Among all participants, the spatial mode was used the most and the written mode was used the least. It shows that Sung Min used the visual mode and the written mode more frequently than all other participants. However, Danilo used the spatial mode the most among all participants. However, Leyla used the visual mode, writing and layout the least. Fanghui also used the written mode the least.

For the second multimodal text in which participants were writing about their English learning experiences out of the classrooms in their home countries, it appears that Sung Min and

Danilo's multimodal texts contained more multimodal resources; however, Leyla and Fanghui used fewer modes to compose their second multimodal texts. It may due to the reason that Sung Min had more stories to share about his English learning experiences out of the classrooms, so he chose to use a lot of available resources to write about his life stories. In the opposite, Leyla seems to have "zero" experience so she chose to use fewer modes to express her ideas. It seems that participants preferred to use the spatial mode the most frequently and chose to use the written mode the least frequently in their second multimodal texts.

In the following, I discuss the mode frequency in Participants' multimodal text III (See Table 14).

Table 14. Mode Frequency in Multimodal Text III

Mode \ Name	Image/Visual	Writing/Written	Layout/Spatial	Total
Dao	8 (16%)	24 (49%)	17 (35%)	49 (100%)
Danilo	0 (0%)	22 (54%)	19 (46%)	41 (100%)
Fanghui	16 (31%)	20 (39%)	15 (29%)	51 (100%)
Sung Min	16 (36%)	13 (29%)	16 (36%)	45 (100%)
Leyla	21 (33%)	23 (36%)	20 (31%)	64 (100%)
Tien	31 (36%)	26 (30%)	30 (34%)	87 (100%)
Total	92 (27%)	128 (38%)	117 (35%)	337 (100%)

Among participants' third multimodal texts, the written mode was used the most frequently and the visual mode was used the least. Tien used the visual mode the most often while the written and spatial modes were used the most frequently among the other participants.

For the third multimodal text in which participants were writing about their English learning experiences in the classrooms in the United States, it appears that Tien's multimodal text contained the most multimodal resources among all participants. Comparatively, Danilo's multimodal text contained fewer multimodal resources than others' multimodal texts. This may due to the reason that Tien had more experiences to share about her English learning experiences in the U.S. in the classrooms because she said she could memorize more about her most recent experiences. She included in her text sufficient information about the Halloween party she attended the previous night. However, Danilo chose to use fewer multimodal resources to compose his third multimodal text on a Word document after he came back from an international conference, which was the only time he used Word document. He said he was tired, so he would leave his text unfinished this time. It seems that participants had the tendency to choose the written mode the most frequently and chose the visual mode the least frequently while composing their third multimodal texts.

Next, I discuss the mode frequency in Participants' multimodal text IV (See Table 15).

Table 15. Mode Frequency in Multimodal Text IV

Mode \ Name	Image/Visual	Writing/Written	Layout/Spatial	Total
Dao	12 (45%)	9 (33%)	6 (22%)	27 (100%)
Danilo	21 (18%)	51 (44%)	44 (38%)	116 (100%)
Fanghui	8 (32%)	10 (40%)	7 (28%)	25 (100%)
Sung Min	30 (45%)	20 (30%)	17 (25%)	67 (100%)
Leyla	7 (21%)	14 (42%)	12 (36%)	33 (100%)
Tien	19 (26%)	25 (35%)	28 (39%)	72 (100%)
Total	97 (29%)	129 (38%)	114 (34%)	340 (100%)

Among participants' final multimodal texts, the written mode was used the most frequently among participants. Fanghui used the three modes the least in her multimodal texts, while Danilo used the three modes the most frequently.

For the final multimodal text in which participants were writing about their English learning experiences out of the classrooms in the United States, it appears that Danilo's multimodal texts contained more multimodal resources than other participants. Comparatively, Fanghui used fewer multimodal resources than others when composing her final multimodal text. It may due to the reason that Danilo participated in a variety of activities in and out of the university as he described in his composition in order to learn English. However, Fanghui may have fewer experiences learning English out of the U.S. classrooms compared to others, so she chose to use less multimodal resources to write about her stories. It seems that participants preferred to use the written mode the most frequently and chose to use the visual mode the least frequently when composing their final multimodal texts.

In Table 16, I discuss the mode frequency for all Participants across their four multimodal texts.

Table 16. Total Mode Frequency for All Participants

Mode Name	Image/Visual	Writing/Written	Layout/Spatial	Total
Dao	41 (29%)	51 (37%)	48 (34%)	140 (100%)
Danilo	92 (24%)	151 (40%)	138 (36%)	381 (100%)
Fanghui	44 (35%)	43 (35%)	37 (30%)	124 (100%)
Sung Min	91 (39%)	69 (30%)	71 (31%)	231 (100%)
Leyla	61 (32%)	73 (38%)	58 (30%)	192 (100%)

| Tien | 73 (29%) | 89 (36%) | 87 (35%) | 249 (100%) |
| Total | 404 (31%) | 476 (36%) | 439 (33%) | 1317 (100%) |

Across all six participants' four multimodal texts, I calculated the total number of times each mode was used (See Table 16). Danilo used the three modes the most while Fanghui's total indicated that she used the three modes the least. Her use of the written and spatial mode was the lowest among all participants. It may due to the fact that Danilo is the oldest among the participants, so he had more experiences to include in his multimodal texts. However, Fanghui is the youngest so she may have the least experiences to share in her multimodal texts. It may also due to the reason that Danilo chose to compose three of his multimodal texts on the paper which he felt comfortable to work with so that he was able to use all the available resources to support him to create the text. However, Fanghui chose to use PowerPoint, which she said she was not so good at, to compose all her multimodal texts so she might not be able to fully and specifically express herself in the multimodal texts using PowerPoint.

Major Themes Arising from Cross-Analysis of Participants

I reviewed the transcribed data and the holistic description of each participant, attempting to look for their responses to each question in the interviews and workshop sessions. I tabulated each question and the response from each participant in an Excel work sheet to look for major themes, similarities and differences. After generalizing emerging themes from the response of each question, I moved on to the focused coding phase of reviewing the initial codes, attempting to categorize and abstract prominent ones (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012; Charmaz, 2006). While the thorough cross-analysis was conducted, responses to each of my research question emerged. The following section is organized to reflect major themes found in my data analysis.

Figure 33. Cross-analysis of interviews and workshop discussion questions

	Dao	Danilo	Fanghui	Sung Min	Leyla	Tien
Q 1: Tell me something you learned from the workshop.	Yeah. I learn to remember my experience in the past. I learn about how the multimodal text is and you know the PowerPoint, talk	For me, it's an excellent experience. So when you tell me first time, I listen and I take the decision very fast to go to your workshop	For me, I learned different people have different experiences in their home culture. Also I remember something I	Yeah. I learned about the influence of the pictures. Because before when I was drawing something in middle school or high school,	It's kind of using words, not for me but the other students kind of they explain themselves by the pictures or something but I	Ah from joining this workshop, I learned the skills about how to express your feeling by pictures instead of writing. So I learned that. What I was going
Q1 Response Summary	Remember his experience in the past. He learned what multimodal text is and the PowerPoint, talk and improve his speaking	Multimodal composing is new and interesting, and it gives him the opportunity to talk about his English learning experiences in	She learned people had different experiences in their home culture. Also she remembered something she had already	He learned about the influence of the pictures. Because when I was drawing something in middle school or high school, pictures to me	She preferred to use words to compose multimodal texts but she thought others liked to use pictures.	She learned the skills about how to express her feeling by pictures instead of writing and the different context of learning English.
Q1 Response Codes	remember previous experience, multimodal text, PPT, improve English speaking skills, make friends, help learn English	new and interesting, opportunity to talk about English learning experiences, receive additional information	people's different experiences, remember previous learning experiences	influence of pictures, people's different experiences and opinions about education, different knowledge and choices of	preference of using words, perception of others' using pictures	express feelings by pictures rather than writing, different contexts and ways of learning English in different countries
Q2: Tell me how you feel about multimodal writing.	I think uh it helped and now I know about how to do the presentation. I now have a different way to do	I feel very well because I want to use different ways to express my ideas. So it's a good	I feel that it's helpful but sometimes I only use one or two modes that I prefer to use. For me, I like	Um. Compared to just writing, this multimodal text is a good way for understanding but drawing	It's ok. Very interesting. You have to think about the different ways to express yourself or tell the story. It's	One is the different way of writing. It's connected to PowerPoint but we can do it by hand by drawing the picture on

The Choices of Self-selected Multimodal Resources in MM Compositions

Kress and Leeuwen's (2001) notion of multimodality perceives a participant's multimodal text as "a semiotic product" using "several semiotic modes" (p. 20) and resources. They made their own choices of using words and images to create multimodal texts to communicate meaning to "extend the social interpretation of language" (Jewitt, 2009, p. 1). One significant theme found was that participants chose to use multimodal resources that they were familiar with and felt comfortable to satisfy their needs of meaning making. It resonates with Jewitt's (2009) third assumption of multimodality to the processes of meaning making which stressed multimodal writers' purposeful choices of modes and resources and the significance of modes integration and interaction that contribute to meaning-making.

Choices of Multimodal Resources. Four participants described their most frequently used resources as words combined with pictures or hand-drawings. For instance, Danilo explained his choices in the following excerpt from the post-workshop interview:

96. HW: So which mode or modes did you use the most frequently?
97. Danilo: Visual and textual. Both.
98. HW: Ok. So, you used both. Could you tell me more about that?
99. Danilo: The key words with combined picture. You use words to explain your idea,
100.   it's the best way. For me, it's always the key words, texts. Because I don't
101.   want to… in my experience, it's about practice to use only texts in the
102.   presentation. It's not a good way, so you need to speak to people, to my
103.   audience to connect to the audience. But you don't need to talk every time
104.   in the presentation, only key words give you the point about what you are
105.   talking about to the audience and pictures explain your point with key
106.   words, subjects and something like that. So, it's combined picture with key
             words. (p. 5-6)

Sung Min and Leyla mentioned words as their most frequently used resource. However, Tien

mentioned that she used hand-drawings and pictures the most frequently. Leyla even mentioned

her use of arrows, hand-drawing pictures and squares in her multimodal text even though she

claimed words as her most frequently used mode.

61. HW: Ok. So what multimodal resources or multimodal modes did you use the
62.   most frequently?
63. L: I used words and also the kind of the square stress something, and like arrow.
64. HW: Ok. And I saw in your first multimodal text, you used the small drawing,
65.   the pictures to show the girl's face.
66. L: It's because it's kind of I have to use it (laugh) so I did it.
67. HW: You have to use it? Why do you think you have to use it (laugh)?
68. L: It's because it would make my multimodal text, my work interesting. But
69.   for me I don't care.
70. HW: Ok. Why did you choose to use or not to use pictures?
71. L: So complicated. It's too complicated and a waste of time. (p. 4)

All participants stated that their selected multimodal resources could efficiently help

express themselves and they explained their choices. Dao mentioned that he used to use majority

of words to make his presentation but now he learned how to use less words and more drawings

and pictures to express himself to make it easier for his audience to understand. Danilo felt he

had multiple options to explain things and express his ideas and the resources he chose to use

could help express himself. Fanghui said she would like to show and explain pictures to her

audience to tell them what she wanted to say and she would like to focus on pictures to express

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herself. Sung Min felt by using pictures, he could avoid making grammar mistakes and people

would not misunderstand his ideas. Pictures could represent meaning very well.

155. HW: So do you think the multimodal resources you selected can represent what
156.   you want to express? For example, you chose to use words and you
157.   chose to use drawing. Do you think those choices can represent the
                  meaning you want to express?
158. SM: Yeah. Because I don't have to write the specific… because a lot of times, I
159.   made a lot of grammar mistakes (laugh). Or sometimes people
160.   misunderstand what I say. If I just say in lecture, like bla, bla, bla, some
161.   people misunderstand. You know they have different ways of thinking
162.   because people always have different ideas. But if I draw, they know what
163.   I am saying. So, if I say something in mistake, they will understand what I
                  say. So, pictures can represent the meaning. (p. 8)

Leyla said that she would choose to use pictures to show medical things if necessary but she

preferred to use words, arrows, and squares to express her ideas when it is not necessary such as

learning English. Tien believed that the pictures she selected could show her ideas and she only

needed to add a few key words to make it clear to the audience.

Processes of Multimodal Composing. While all participants mentioned their classroom

essay writing process being brainstorming ideas, writing down ideas, choosing main ideas related

to the topic, writing an outline (or no outline), writing a few body paragraphs and conclusion,

they shared their different writing steps using multimodal resources. Dao followed the steps of

understanding the topic, finding the information, writing down ideas and details, drawing

pictures, finding key words to connect to pictures and finally finding pictures online since he was

not confident with hand-drawing pictures.

91. HW: Ok. Tell me your multimodal composing process. Like what are the
92.   steps you used to make your text? What did you do first? What did you do
                  next?
93. Dao: First, I understand the topic. And the second step, I try to find the
94.   information about the topic. Third step, I make the idea, the main ideas,
95.   and the detail. Then I draw the picture. Next step, I find the important
96.   words with the picture to make people understand. And then finally I find

		the pictures.
97.	HW:	Oh! So, you use pictures again?
98.	Dao:	Yeah. Because my drawing skills is not that good so I find pictures on the
99.		web and use in my PowerPoint. (p. 5)

Danilo stated that he followed the steps of understanding the topic, writing the key words and main ideas about the topic, putting down details for each point and combining the text with pictures. Fanghui followed the steps of thinking about the topic, finding things from previous experiences, choosing things that suits the topic, searching for pictures on the Internet, adding key words to the pictures, and emphasizing key terms. Sung Min mentioned that he followed the steps of thinking about main ideas, listing his ideas, explaining in key words and drawing. Leyla shared that she chose to use the simple steps of thinking how to make her text easier and then writing down her thoughts in a few minutes. Tien followed the steps of reviewing the topic, putting her ideas in order, and using key words and pictures on paper or PPT to write down her ideas. Even though they followed different steps, their multimodal composing procedures highly resembled their essay writing procedures in the classrooms, which is to understand the topic, to gather ideas or information, and to explain ideas by using textual or visual resources to communicate with the audience.

Multiple Identity Representations in Multimodal Compositions and Self-descriptions

Another significant theme generated was that participants revealed multiple identities in their multimodal compositions as well as their self-descriptions. I draw on Vasudevan, Schultz and Bateman's (2010) notion that identities are "in relation to context and experience. The identities are not intrinsic or separate from social contexts and interactions; rather they are embodied and enacted in practice" (p. 445). In this respect, identities are shaped and affected by people's previous as well as current experiences (Vasudevan et al., 2010) and may shift and vary

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while participating in various sociocultural and literate activities. Participants also "'figure' who they are" (Urrieta, 2007, p. 108) in their situated sociocultural and literate contexts in which they are playing the role of "readers and writers based on the discourses of which they are a part" (Sableski, 2007, p. 20). In this perspective, participants should reveal their self-depiction in different contexts while speaking and writing about their stories of learning English.

Multimodal Compositions. In the multimodal compositions, all participants revealed their identities while they depicted themselves as English learners, their nationalities or their home cultures in one or more of their created multimodal texts. Particularly, participants who were working on the computer-based multimodal texts on the PowerPoint chose to use pictures that displayed a real-life or similar looking image that used to be part of their life experiences. For instance, when writing about his English learning experiences in high school, Dao chose a cartoon picture with a black-haired, teacher-like female character, which seems to represent his English teacher in high school. He also used real-life pictures of the beach from his hometown and the coffee house he used to go to practice his English. Additionally, in one of the multimodal text, Fanghui chose a picture displaying a Chinese-looking girl carrying a backpack, sitting next to a foreign-looking old man, talking to him, which seems to represent her own identity of being an English learner practicing English after class. In the final multimodal text, Fanghui chose an image of a food court with several Chinese eateries and many foreigners sitting down eating or standing in line waiting for their orders, which seems to represent herself being in the U.S. but still having the dietary preference of comfortable food from home. Tien chose several pictures that could represent her home country and could also match her previous experiences when she composed the second multimodal text on the PowerPoint. For example, she chose the picture of a coffee house where she used to go to with her ex-boyfriend and the park where she went to

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practice her English speaking. She also chose the image of an Asian-looking girl to represent herself learning English sitting by a desk. She chose another image with Asian-looking students to represent her previous experience of taking private classes in an English training center in Vietnam. She seems to be aware of her Asian identity and was purposefully seeking for resources that could represent her Asian female identity.

Various social, national and linguistic identities were also represented from participants' paper-based texts. For example, Danilo started his first multimodal text with a hand-drawing image of a globe showing the location of his country Columbia that seems to represent his affection to his country. Also, he emphasized the word "Spanish" by making it bold and putting a box outside of it, which seems to represent his proudness of speaking the language. Moreover, Sung Min drew smaller persons in his second multimodal text to portray himself as being minor, inferior or helpless when he was checked by an officer in customs and when he was interviewed by the employee from the HR. This suggests that he seems to be aware of his identity as a foreign traveler who was looking for job opportunities in a foreign country. In his third multimodal text writing about his English learning experiences in the U.S. classrooms, Sung Min drew two images below each of his point. The image on the left always displayed the classroom culture he experienced in his home country and the image on the right showed his classroom experiences in the U.S. He chose to draw his experiences in his home country to intentionally compare with his current classroom experiences in the U.S. without being asked to do so. In addition, Leyla drew an image of the side profile of a girl facing to the right, seems to introduce herself with the information on the right side. She drew another girl's image with long hair and dressing up with a skirt, which seemed to represent herself when she was in elementary school.

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These girls' images seemed to represent her awareness of being an English learner in the U.S. as well as in her home country.

      Self-Descriptions. *Self-Descriptions of Identities at Home Countries*. All participants mentioned their identity as an ordinary person and a citizen in their home countries. They all had varied descriptions based on their different experiences. Dao described himself as a common Vietnamese student who was trying to communicate and connect to people and become special. He was trying to learn English to become competitive. His self-depiction of social and literate identities was shifted from a common Vietnamese student to an international English learner with multilingual linguistic background due to the change of his learning context. Danilo described himself as a normal student in Columbia. He did not pay attention to English classes because it was not mandatory and had no requirement. But after he started working, he realized the significance of English and started to take English courses at work as well as with private teachers. His description revealed himself being a passive English learner in his school years but later becoming an active learner of English after he realized the significant role of English at work. Fanghui described herself as a common student learning English in China. She was not afraid of using English to communicate with English-speaking people. She planned to come to the U.S. to study so she focused on practicing English-speaking skills. She said, "I am not like others who are afraid of talking to foreigners. I am not afraid though. That was in my country" (Workshop session 10). She also shared her ideas of how different contexts affected her English learning. She mentioned that no one speaks English out of class. She had to practice English speaking while she was traveling out of the country. She was the translator and the speaker of her family. Her English learning was test-focused and grades-oriented, which drove her crazy about grades in her home country and in the U.S. classrooms. It revealed that her previous literate

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experience still affected her current learning activities even though the context has changed. She has been shifting and adjusting her literate identities in a new learning context. Sung Min was aware of his identities while studying in his home country. He described himself with multiple identities as a Korean citizen, a young person, an English learner, his parents' only child, and someone's good friend. He capped himself multiple identity hats in his home country, seems to represent his clear recognition and definition of self.

190. HW:	Does multimodal writing change the way you look at yourself? Like how	
191.	did you describe yourself before in your home country? And how do you describe yourself now?	
192. SM:	No. Because I already know my status. Before I always check my status	
193.	(laugh). Who am I?	
194. HW:	What is your status? What do you think?	
195. SM:	A student from foreign country (laugh). Yeah. And find my goal and my	
196.	purpose (laugh). I always ask myself. What is my purpose in the U.S. (laugh)?	
197. HW:	What is your purpose (laugh)?	
198. SM:	Studying and get a bachelor's degree and go back to my home country.	
199. HW:	So that's your purpose, your goal, right?	
200. SM:	Yeah. Get a job. (Post-interview)	

While Sung Min was conscious about his goal and purpose in the U.S., Leyla described herself as a lazy student without a goal in Azerbaijan. She knew the importance of English but she did not care and learned for nothing. Tien described herself as a regular person with no role in Vietnam. She also described herself as an English learner who loved English songs and had the curiosity about the deep meaning of the songs.

Self-Descriptions of Identities in the U.S. All participants perceived themselves as learners of English in a foreign country even though with different goals. Dao felt he was an international student who tried to look like a native speaker to speak fluent English. His dual identity of being a native Vietnamese speaker but trying to behave like a native English speaker was revealed in the following excerpt:

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129. HW: Ok. Who do you think you are now in the United States?
130. Dao: (Laugh). I think I am an international student.
131. HW: Ok. What else?
132. Dao: I try to look like the national, the native (laugh).
133. HW: Look like a national?
134. Dao: Yeah. Only in the study or English learning.
135. HW: Do you mean like a native speaker?
136. Dao: Yeah. Because now I am international student and I use two languages,
137.   English and the language in my home country. (Post-interview)

Danilo described himself as a student who focused on studying English with the goal of concentrating on learning only English in the U.S. Fanghui felt she had to practice English more and speak better English to achieve her goal of becoming a lawyer and compete with native speakers in the U.S. Sung Min described himself as a hard-working student with difficult life experiences in the U.S. He was aware that he had more responsibilities and had to be more independent in the U.S. It can be found that Sung Min had a clear recognition of his identities as a hard-working student with numerous life difficulties and more responsibilities living and studying in a foreign country. Leyla's identities were shifted in the U.S. context as she described herself as "a lazy student with goals". It seems that she was still wearing her identity hat of a medical employee while she was learning English, which she felt natural and habitual for her. However, she felt she had to use English everywhere in the U.S. context and it helped her tremendously to learn the language. Tien's identities were shifted while she was living and studying in the U.S. context. She stated:

> When I was in Vietnam, I was just a regular person, no role, nothing. I studied English because I liked some of the English songs so then it made me to go to learn English. I am curious. I was just curious. I had no goal (laugh). But when I am learning English here, it's about … I really appreciate what I am learning. And I think this opportunity is really… important, and especially for learning English. So, you live in the United States, you have to deal with and speak with Americans. And in the America, you have to use it everywhere. (Post-interview, lines l66-171)

It was revealed that she was aware of her English learner identity both in her home country and in the U.S; however, the different learning contexts shaped her two distinctive learner's roles and different learning purposes: learning for curiosity in Vietnam and learning for living, interest and communication in the U.S.

Perceptions of English Writing and MM Composing –Advantages and Challenges

I looked for participants' interests, preferences and cognitions as writers and semiotic multimodal sign makers (Hodge & Kress, 1988). I was also looking for their insights about using multimodal resources composing multimodal texts and the transformative perspectives from their responses. One of the significant themes revealed was that participants shared various perceptions about general English writing and multimodal writing in today's world including their specific advantages and challenges.

Perceptions about Multimodal Composing. Four participants stated that working on multimodal texts helped them remember their previous learning experiences and also brought them insights from learning other people's learning experiences. Dao perceived his composing process as making friends and improving his English-speaking skills. Sung Min and Tien mentioned the "influence of pictures". Sung Min said:

> Before when I was drawing something in middle school or high school, pictures to me was I just did it. Now I understand why they draw pictures or wanted us to draw the pictures... Because when the little child is learning languages, they always think about it when they see, or smell or feel it. But for the language, you can't see, you can't smell it or hear it. But you have something to help them understand, the signal, like the voice signal (snap with his figures) to put in the empty space in the brain. You explain it, then they translate it into visual. So that's why they use pictures. (Post-interview, lines 4-14)

Tien mentioned that she learned the skills about how to express her feeling by pictures instead of writing (post-workshop interview). Leyla perceived her multimodal composing process as "using words" but she perceived others' multimodal compositions as using "pictures".

All participants felt that multimodal composing was helpful and interesting. Three of them mentioned that multimodal composing allowed them multiple ways and options to express themselves. Dao and Tien connected their experiences to PowerPoint and thought multimodal composing helped them learn different ways of making PPT. Danilo shared his notion about multimodal composing in the following excerpt:

> I compared different ways to learn English. Multimodal text is very different. It's open options… You have open options. You can choose the resources you would like to use. I think the purpose or the goals for everybody is to learn English, but you need to show that you don't have only one way, you have another ways. So multimodal text show me or remind me all ways: graphic maps, or pictures, writing, and technology applied to learn English. (Post-interview, lines 27-32)

In addition, Dao and Sung Min considered the role of the audience and perceived multimodal composing as an effective way for audience to understand compared to traditional writing. However, Leyla perceived multimodal writing as telling her own stories.

Perceptions of Using Multimodal Resources for Self-expression. All participants expressed that multimodal resources were useful and could help them in some way in their writing practices or in the process of expressing themselves. Dao thought multimodal resources could help him clear his ideas, practice his presentation and help him remember his English learning experiences in the past. Danilo thought that all multimodal resources were useful and helpful and he used all available resources to compose multimodal texts. Fanghui felt pictures and other multimodal resources could make her writing active because she did not like to write with only words for a long time. Sung Min stated that he would use multimodal resources to

visualize things such as through the use of pictures or drawings before writing down his ideas.

Leyla felt multimodal resources may help her organize ideas, extend information or use tables to

show the structure in statistics. Tien shared that multimodal resources helped her to be more

creative. She could use digital or hand-drawing pictures to describe her topic and experiences.

She stated her notion in the following excerpt:

90. HW: Ok (laugh). So, tell me something you think multimodal resources
91.   can help you do or help you with.
92. T: Um. I think in the writing, it helps me to become more creative when I am
    writing.
93. HW: Ok. Tell me more about that.
94. T: Just like when you describe your experience, you can use the pictures either
95.   by hand or PowerPoint to describe your topic or whatever you know. I had
96.   to use a lot of pictures of environment to fit with my status of Asian so I
97.   used that. It made myself more creative, my thinking what should I do to
98.   make it nicer, this and that so it helped with my writing, too. (Post-interview)

Perceptions about Writing. Five participants described their perceptions of writing as

explaining the writers′ ideas clearly and logically by using multiple resources like words,

pictures and even videos. Five of them mentioned the purpose of writing is to make audience

understand or properly address the audience. Five of them mentioned that writing could be on

paper or on some other venues depending on the purpose of the writing pieces. Leyla stated her

different opinion and said, "It should look like the text... With computers and information has

changed so I don′t know with pictures what writing should look like. But if you write something,

it means you explain something by words. It′s not drawing... It′s writing" (Post-interview, lines

175-179). Tien also shared her ideas about writing:

> Before I thought writing was just writing you know. I did not think about you can write
> with no handwriting but you still write. You still address to the people... I didn′t know
> that. It′s very nice to express your feeling through the picture... To me it′s more
> interesting if you write and put some pictures in there, explain it out. It′s nice to do it
> (Post-interview, lines 146-149)

Perceiving the Challenges of Composing Multimodal Texts. Three participants said that there were no challenges to compose multimodal texts in the workshop. Two participants stated their difficulties of finding the exact pictures to express themselves. Dao even said he had problems finding sound to connect to the pictures. Leyla had the challenge of trying to think of using color in her multimodal texts when she preferred to explain things in words in simple ways.

All participants chose not to include music or sound in their multimodal texts. They shared various reasons of not using aural resources. Dao and Fanghui tried to include music or sound in their multimodal texts but found it difficult to do so. Dao tried to find the exact sound to connect to his pictures to explain them but later found his feeling and interpretation to the sound changed. He tried it later in another multimodal text but found the music he selected could not help him express his ideas exactly. He said:

35. HW: Ok. That's the challenge. Are there any other challenges?
36. Dao: Yeah. I think maybe the sound. Because it was so hard to connect the picture
37.   with the sound. Because some pictures need the sound to explain to people
38.   like what are people's feeling in the picture.
39. HW: Ok. So, you were trying to find the sound to connect to the picture to explain
40.   the picture but you could not.
41. Dao: Yeah. Exactly.
42. HW: Ok. That was why you did not use the sound, the aural mode or music in
43.   your text. Are there other reasons besides it was difficult to find the sound?
44. Dao: Yeah. You know a piece of music can make someone feel… but another
45.   person may have a different feeling at a different time so when I was
46.   thinking about the idea and the music, it was what I think exactly at that
47.   time, but maybe after a few minutes, it was not good for the idea.
48. HW: Ok. So maybe at the last minute, you changed your mind and thought that
49.   was not a good idea to use that music?
50. Dao: Yeah. (Post-interview)

Fanghui tried to use music in her first multimodal text but found it difficult to find free downloadable music from the Internet. She also could not find music that help explain herself exactly. She explained the reason of not using sound or music in the following excerpt:

78. HW:	Ok. Why did you choose not to use music or sound?
79. F:	Yeah. First is when I am in my pronunciation class, the teacher ask me avoid
80.	to use some other voice rather than you (laugh).
81. HW:	So your teacher asked you not to use other voice so you have to use your
	own voice?
82. F:	Yeah. And also not all the voice, the music can be downloaded exactly.
83.	Some I need to pay money (laugh), some have the protect. They cannot be
84.	downloaded. The most important reason is sometimes I cannot explain
	myself exactly with music.
85. HW:	Ok. that's the most important reason you choose not to use music?
86. F:	Yeah. (Post-interview)

Danilo felt it not common to use music in his writing and he described it as his custom not to use music in his composition. Sung Min mentioned that he did not know how, when and where to use music or sound in his multimodal texts. He also did not know how to make meaning out of the aural resources. Leyla thought it was a waste of time to use music or sound and she did not have music feeling and ears to help her choose the music. Tien mentioned she would like to try using music or sound but she did not have enough time to do so.

Perceptions about the Possibilities of Multimodal Composing and Classroom Writing. Four participants stated that multimodal composing could help them with classroom writing and becoming creative writers. Dao mentioned that pictures helped him with logical thinking, making the outline and planning. Fanghui said that pictures could help her illustrate her ideas. Danilo mentioned his use of combined modes to express himself with "conceptual maps". However, Sung Min shared his different opinion and said, "I think when I was a little kid in elementary or middle school, it may help. But right now, the topic is very serious topic... It's not good for multimodal text" (Post-workshop interview, lines 59-62). Leyla said that she had to use words to write and she preferred to use words to express herself. Fanghui stated that she was not allowed to use music or sound in class but she could search visuals and words on the Internet.

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Moreover, Tien expressed her willingness to use multimodal resources in her classroom writing in the following excerpt:

> 153. HW: Ok. So, does the writing you do in your classroom look like the
> 154.   writing you imagined or you think should look like?
> 155. T: No. Not at all. The writing I do in the classroom is different. All the writing, all the writing.
> 156. HW: Do you want to try this kind of multimodal writing in the class?
> 157. T: Yes. I will. I will. Why not, you know. I can write more affective with the
> 158.   pictures you know. (Post-interview)

Three participants felt multimodal composing could help better express themselves compared to the five-paragraph essay writing. Danilo thought multimodal composing was more open and free to help express himself. However, Sung Min, Leyla and Tien gave it a "it depends" response. Sung Min thought it was good to use pictures to teach younger kids but it may be better to use words to teach older kids since they already know the language and could explain things using the language. Leyla shared a different opinion and thought pictures are more helpful for teaching but words are more helpful for learning. She stated:

> If you teach, pictures will be better. If you learn, when you write, when you learn by writing, you have to use the words or you don't know... that words, you have to search and find new words. It's kind of the fast for your vocabulary building... Because if you don't know the words, you have to search about it and you kind of learn. And when you use it several times, you learn the words automatically. You don't have to memorize the words (snap her fingers), it's right there. You can just catch it (snap her finger again). (Post-interview, lines 129-137)

Tien mentioned the different purposes of each writing style and the different audience they may target in the following excerpt:

> 121. HW: Ok. So which way do you think can better express yourself? The
> 122.   five-paragraph essay writing or the multimodal writing?
> 123. T: Express myself? Everything has different ways to describe. Maybe different purposes.
> 124. HW: Ok. Tell me more about that.
> 125. T: For essay, maybe you can write about everything or your assignment or your

126.	journal, whatever. The multimodal writing, you can express your feeling
127.	without writing. It's interesting. But I think when you see the picture, so
128.	sometimes you don't want to talk for example, you can go over the pictures
129.	or you can send pictures to your friend or your partner you know. They
130.	understand, but it's the cute way. You don't have to write but when they
131.	look at it they might feel more, like when you are upset, you are happy
	through the picture.
132. HW:	Ok. You said it's a cute way?
133. T:	Yeah. And it's a different way to express yourself, your feeling. (Post-interview, p. 7)

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the details of the data analysis processes. I described each participant and their English learning experiences, challenges and perceptions of using multimodal resources to compose academic or non-academic texts. I also addressed how I conducted the focused analysis of each and all participants' multimodal texts. I conducted a cross analysis drawing on all participants' data sources and I identified the major themes arising from the data. In the following chapter, I summarize the study findings, answer the research questions, and discuss the implications and applications of this study. I make recommendations to the current practice as well. I also address the possibilities of future studies, the significance and limitations of the current study.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study is guided by three research questions: 1) How do English language learners use multimodal resources to write about their previous experiences of learning English in their home countries as well as in the U.S.? 2) How are their identities represented in the multimodal compositions as well as in their self-descriptions? 3) What are their perceptions of using multimodal resources to express themselves?

In Chapter four I discussed each participant′s English learning experiences in both their home countries and in the U.S. I conducted a focused analysis of the multimodal texts they produced. Also, I undertook a cross analysis to all six participants to generate the themes. In the following sections, I discuss the findings of the study and answer the research questions. I also discuss the applications, implications and my suggestions to current practice. I then make suggestions concerning ELLs′ writing instructions and practices and redefine what ″literate″ means to L2 learners. I also address the significance and limitations of the study towards the end. Finally, I provide suggestions for future research.

Findings

        Participants Chose to Use a Combination of Words and Images to Express Ideas.
Participants were found to choose the multimodal resources of words, colors, images, lines, and layout to design multimodal texts based on their previous English learning experiences. They chose to create their texts in the ways they found to be familiar and comfortable. Some of them even mentioned they were attempting to find the "easiest way" to compose. All the participants shared their preferences for using multimodal resources to express their ideas. Even though

Leyla shared her preference of using only words, she shared her experiences of using pictures and statistics to present medical-related topics to her classmates, which means she was actually utilizing multimodal resources other than words to create multimodal texts. Four of the participants felt excited about creating multimodal texts because it was new and sounded interesting to them. Leyla felt it was ok to create multimodal texts but she thought it did not work for her to use pictures and she would never choose to use pictures and color for the purpose of learning English. Dao had the experience of using pictures to help him with classroom writing before attending the workshops. He usually drew pictures to help him gain and organize ideas before he started writing his essay in class. It was found that all participants chose multimodal resources that were available to them. In other words, they did not ask for or look for more resources but chose to use those that they had access to.

Participants Revealed Similarities between Multimodal Composing Processes and Classroom Writing Processes. All participants described the same process of brainstorming ideas, outlining ideas, and choosing topic-related ideas to develop into several paragraphs while they composed essays in the classrooms. However, each of them described a slightly different process while they composed multimodal texts based on their modal choices and designs. For instance, after brainstorming and finalizing ideas, Dao first drew pictures to help him organize his ideas but later, when he transferred his ideas to PowerPoint slides, he chose to find pictures from the Internet to help explain his ideas because he was not confident about hand-drawing. However, after deciding the main ideas, Fanghui always found pictures on Google images and used those pictures to express her ideas. She also added words in or out of the pictures to explain the meaning of the pictures. In addition, Danilo chose to brainstorm ideas, list ideas and combine ideas with hand-drawing pictures. It was found that participants followed the same steps while

composing writing tasks in their classrooms. Moreover, their multimodal composing processes were similar to their classroom writing processes except that most of them inserted the steps of using pictures to explain ideas and using words to explain pictures. These findings could help answer the first research question about how ELL writers use a variety of multimodal resources to write about their previous and current experiences of learning English.

Discussion

After participants came to the U.S., their previous writing traditions clashed with the U.S. classroom writing practices in that the writing schemes and strategies are different. Most of them confronted a difficult time adapting to the American ways of writing academic genres in the Intensive English Program. The participants were all taught English in their home countries. Some of them started to learn English at an early age of 5 or 6. Some of them started learning English in their elementary school or middle school years. English was taught at school either as mandatory or selective course in their home countries. However, all of them chose to learn the language for different purposes either at school or at private teachers or institutions. They were taught various approaches of writing (words, short phrases, sentences or paragraphs) in English in their home countries with the commonality that they were all taught to write in word-based genres and thinking in the ways they thought when they wrote in their native languages. Bawarshi and Reiff (2010) claim that "students bring with them their own genre histories and, based on the intellectual and institutional context of the writing class, teachers build into the classroom certain generic expectations. As a result, classroom genres are inescapable from power, social difference, and cultural factors (p. 200)".

Different from the academic genre, participants were invited to compose a different genre which was new to most of them using multimodal resources. Several of them drew on their

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previous rhetorical knowledge of composing word-based texts as they worked on multimodal composition topics (Bawarshi & Reiff). This approach seemed to work well when they found similar aspects in the print-based texts and only needed to add a few pictures to illustrate the words, which may explain the fact that they followed similar steps of composing classroom essays while they composed multimodal texts. However, drawing on traditional print-based rhetoric knowledge did not work well "when they perceived aspects of multimodal tasks as different from their print-based composing experiences (Bawarshi & Reiff, p. 185). In fact, none of them chose to use music or sound in their multimodal texts. Except for the reason that it was challenging and may cost money, it may due to the reason that the practice of using aural resources is too far away from their previous and current experience of writing, which is too complex, requires more time and effort to accomplish. They chose not to use the unfamiliar aural resources of sound or music to avoid the experience of "frustration, anxiety, and feelings of failure" (Bawarshi & Reiff, p. 185).

Participants Revealed Multiple Identities through Multimodal Compositions and Self-descriptions. Participants in this study revealed their various identities through their multimodal compositions. Danilo used large-sized word to write the name of his national language "Spanish" and drew a picture to show the location of his country on the globe. His affection for his home country and his national identity were revealed from his composed words and images. Dao used digital pictures that showed the real-life view of his hometown and the coffee house he used to go to practice his English, which represented his identity that connected closely to his home country and his previous experiences. Sung Min drew pictures to display his inferior status of being checked at the customs and being interviewed in his job hunting process, which represented his identity of a foreigner, a helpless job hunter who was bad at speaking

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English. He also drew pictures to represent his different learning experiences in the Koran classrooms and in the U.S. classrooms, displaying his identities of living, evaluating and shifting between these two classroom cultures. Leyla drew a curly-haired female image in one of her multimodal texts and wrote down her personal information in a text box showing her current identity of an English learner who passed the TOEFL test and enrolled in the IEP level five class. Fanghui chose digital pictures that represented her previous learning experiences of having classmates from another country and used pictures that resembled herself as a black-haired, Asian-looking female. Also, Tien used digital pictures that displayed Asian-looking, black-haired females in several places of her multimodal texts and a park, a coffee house in her home country, which represented her awareness of her identity of being a Vietnamese woman learning English in her home country. She also used her own photos taken with friends in the U.S. to show her audience how she engaged with American friends to learn English and the culture, which displayed a shift of her identity in different social and cultural contexts.

Participants also described their perceptions about who they are in their home country contexts as well as in the U.S. These self-descriptions of identities can be divided into five categories: (a) identity of an international student in the U.S.; (b) identity of a home country citizen; (c) identity of an English learner; (d) identity of a learner, a writer and a researcher; (e) identity of a goal-achiever.

Participants identified themselves as international students in the U.S. All participants were aware of their identities as international students or foreign students. Most of them mentioned English was not their native language but they had to learn it to survive and better communicate with people. Dao even expressed his intention of "looking like a native English speaker" even though he speaks three languages. He also expressed his feelings of not belonging

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to the U.S. society. Some of them shared confusions, obstacles and frustrations of being international students in the U.S. However, Danilo perceived being international as "a good thing" because he enjoys learning the culture and fitting himself in this new context. Fanghui was prepared to be an international student and she was proud that she could communicate with her American roommates and local people with no issues. Tien also perceived being an international student as a learning process and she was thankful for her opportunity to learn English in U.S. classrooms.

Participants identified themselves as their home country citizens. Most participants described themselves as ordinary citizens in their home countries. Some of them mentioned their comfort and convenience of living in their home countries and compared their life situations here in the U.S., which is frustrating and challenging both in their daily and academic lives. Sung Min described himself as wearing several identity hats including a young person, a son and a good friend in his home country. Whereas, others perceived themselves as nothing different from other citizens in their home countries.

Participants identified themselves as English learners. All of the participants described themselves as learning English in their home countries as well as in the U.S. Most of them discussed their home contexts as constraining their learning since English was used only in the classroom or institutional settings, whereas, the U.S. context supports their English learning because they have to use the language in both their classrooms and in daily life. This English learner identity has shifted from being one in their home countries to being another one in the U.S., which was affected by their different learning contexts. For instance, Leyla mentioned a period of political unrest during the time she attended elementary school so "everyone was trying to be safe", which interrupted her English learning and made it less important compared to her

safety. Tien also shared her experience of "*following the train"* when a large number of young people in Vietnam started to learn English due to the foreign investment in her home country. Danilo started his English learning journey in his middle school but restarted to learn English at work due to the special need of English proficiency in his job.

  Participants identified themselves as learners, writers and researchers. Most participants perceived themselves as writers composing multimodal texts based on their previous learning experiences. Sung Min described his role as a researcher and a writer. He joked about his situation as a "lab rat" who participated in the workshop. Leyla perceived herself as a writer, a storyteller and someone who was writing her autobiography. Danilo viewed his role as a learner who was new to multimodal composing and a researcher who was exploring and researching multiple ways of learning and expressing himself. Dao also mentioned his attempt to learn and explore new ways of making PowerPoint presentation using music and video clips, which was different from the role of being a writer.

  Participants identified themselves as goal-achievers. All participants mentioned their goals of coming to the U.S. to learn English. Dao came here to improve his English and to apply for the undergraduate program in the University. He studied diligently to achieve his goal. Danilo quit his job in his home country and came to the U.S. to concentrate on learning English for the purpose of communicating fluently in English with his colleagues in his new job in the future. He took every opportunity to learn English even though he had been in the U.S. for only two months. Fanghui had her dream of becoming a lawyer in the U.S. so she set as her goal improving her English-speaking skills and competing with native English speakers. As she said, she was not afraid of speaking to American people even though she frequently made mistakes. Sung Min dreamed to be a pilot so he was aware of the importance of English. He came to the

U.S. to polish his English before he could attend a pilot training school in the future. He always brought in the sense of humor to his work evidenced from his description about previous experiences. Leyla came to the U.S. for the purpose of first finishing her intensive English Program and then applying to the university graduate program in business. Even though she self-identified as a lazy student, she made progresses in her speaking and writing and was about to apply for the business program by the time I interviewed her. Tien had the goal of getting her Bachelor's degree in accounting or nursing and speaking fluent English. She worked many hours, day and night, to finish her class assignment and she felt good about writing since she knew how to approach writing. She also attended a pronunciation clinic in the university to have her speech errors diagnosed and corrected.

Discussion

When learning an additional language, L2 learners' social and literate identities are constantly changing. These various identities depend largely on their self-portrayals based on their various life experiences (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2009). By giving participants the opportunities to recall and retrieve ideas from previous experiences and write about those experiences helped them learn from their own past. More importantly, the recalling and composing processes helped them think about who they are in different learning contexts and find out why they are learning the language. Their writing can be "benefited by lived experiences, which helped them generate relevant ideas to write about and improve the content" (Bhowmik, 2016, p. 289) of their multimodal texts. The workshop environment provided the space for these international multilingual students to learn from their own experiences, learn from others' experiences as well as discussing their understanding about who they are in different sociocultural contexts.

Although a variety of identities were revealed from participants' multimodal compositions and their self-descriptions, I did not see the authorial identity that went beyond the use of words, pictures and layout. In other words, none of them chose to utilize any sound, music or video in any of their multimodal texts. I found Shin and Cimasko (2008) might help to explain my participants' choices in regards to their authorial identities. They argue that:

> Unlike still images, audio design represents a strong departure from, and thus a potential breach of, traditional academic discourse norms. Multimodal texts that incorporate audio represent the construction of less academically viable author identities to those who are oriented toward more traditional views. (Shin & Cimasko, 2008, p. 385)

While I was recalling their responses to my questions of "which mode(s) or resources did you use the most frequently?" The majority of the answers I received was "words". Their responses suggested that even "non-linguistic elements still played a role that writing could not achieve on its own in the context of academic discourse… students drew on norms of traditional academic discourse and placed priority on linguistic design" (Shin & Cimasko, 2008, p. 388).

The development of ELLs' literate identities is a prolonged and complex social and cultural process; it is influenced by various factors of home and school literacy practices, L2 learning, race, and gender; however, the teacher and students' classroom literacy practices are the most dominant factors in their learning and identity construction (Smith, 2008; Martens & Adamson, 2001). Due to the importance of teachers and classroom practices, it suggests a significant pedagogical stance that classroom teachers set up a realistic goal, provide a meaningful learning climate, and prepare for practical literacy activities in the classroom. Additionally, teachers should "recognize that students bring funds of knowledge to their learning communities and that teachers should incorporate students' knowledge and experiences into classroom practice" (Boyd, Ariail, Williams, Jocson, Tinker Sachs & McNeal, 2006, p. 332). To

develop students' literate identities, teachers also need to be "committed to teaching and empowering students to recognize the intellectual and social competencies they bring into schools, and provide pedagogies that will propel student learning" (Lewis Ellison & Wang, 2018, p. 16). Teachers also need to keep in mind students' national, cultural and linguistic backgrounds and use their backgrounds as valuable resources to foster the development of their literate identities.

Participants Revealed Various Perceptions of Writing. Participants' perceptions about writing have shifted. Before attending the workshops, none of them had heard of "multimodal composing" even though some of them had already used multimodal resources in their courses to help with their academic writing tasks and in their daily lives as communication tools. After attending the workshops, several of them shared their perspectives that multimodal resources could help them express themselves better than the five-paragraph essay because the former was open and allowed free choices from multimodal composers. Two of them shared their understanding about using different writing forms based on audiences and purposes. Almost all agreed that multimodal composing processes helped them learn to think logically, express ideas freely, efficiently and write creatively. They all felt it was an interesting approach to writing and learning English. Almost all participants shared their preferences for using words and pictures as their primary writing resources. Even though Leyla repeatedly mentioned that she would not choose to use color, pictures or fancy stuff in her multimodal texts, she was actually using multimodal resources of lines, squares, hand-drawing images, and arrows in her multimodal texts.

Unexpectedly, participants said things that were revolutionary with respect to the practice of writing. They inspired me as I listened to their responses. Dao shared that he did not see the

use of multimodal resources as popular and encouraged in his classrooms but he believed that the use of music, videos and other multimodal resources will happen in the future, maybe in the work places. Fanghui suggested that English learners should avoid the use of two languages in their multimodal texts in order to avoid confusion. They should always display and present the target language to their audience but could use their first languages to help with self-learning. Sung Min mentioned his thoughts of using multimodal resources to communicate meanings with people who speak different first languages and encouraged the use of multimodal resources when things could not be explained by words. Leyla made an interesting point that when teachers teach, they should use pictures, but when students learn, they should use words. She explained her points with her own experience and said that as a learner, she preferred to look up words in the dictionary and find more related words to enlarge her vocabulary. Additionally, she suggested that it was better for learners to use words rather than pictures to learn and write. Tien was a risk taker and she even suggested that more people should learn the technique of composing multimodally. In that case, students could pull out the pictures or draw their ideas without the need to sit for a long time typing in words. She believed that information will be communicated more efficiently and swiftly using multimodal resources.

  Participants Revealed Awareness of Audiences. Additionally, participants were all aware that one important purpose of their writing was to convey meanings to their audiences and they were trying to do a better job showing, describing or explaining things to make their compositions easier for their audiences to understand. Their full awareness of the audience even made some of them struggle in terms of deciding what resources to choose. For instance, Dao explained that while he was trying to choose a music clip to express himself in his multimodal text; however, a few minutes later, he felt his understanding and feeling about the specific music

changed. For that reason, he doubted that his audience would also go through the same experience to understand music or sound, so he finally decided not to use music. Fanghui also mentioned the shift of her understanding about audience. She mentioned that she used to write for the purpose of making her audience think exactly the same as what she told them in her writing; however, now she changed her mind. She would like to give her audience the freedom to think beyond her writing and think whatever they wanted to think.

General Discussion

When participants were asked about their opinions of using multimodal resources to express themselves, five of them related their responses to writing except for Sung Min who shared about his experience of using multimodal resources to exchange cell phone messages with his friends. Their perceptions of using multimodal resources to express themselves were affected by their literate histories, experiences, social norms as well as "power, social difference, and cultural factors" in the specific institutional context (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010, p. 200). In this case, when a standard genre of writing is instructed in the classrooms, students would be reluctant to go beyond the wall to take the risk of writing in a different genre. Additionally, since most of them have been in the U.S. for less than a year, they may have not fully immersed in the academic community. In this respect, they "may have found it easier and more beneficial to assimilate to the perceived linear, print-based standards" (Kapp & Bangeni, 2005, cited by Shin & Cimasko, 2008, p. 290) of university and university EAP programs.

Participants viewed multimodal composing as "oppositional to 'academic' writing" (Bawarshi & Reiff, p. 186) or at least different from the writing they composed in class. Several participants perceived multimodal composing as an out-of-classroom practice or for the purpose of making PowerPoint presentation. Sung Min also mentioned the issue that multimodal writing

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may not be appropriate to deal with serious classroom writing topics and reflect the writers'

understanding to the topics. Leyla's strong attitude of not choosing to use pictures, color and

other non-linguistic resources to compose her writing tasks may be due to her preference of

being secure and practical since she had not seen the hope to replace the academic writing genre

in her enrolled program and the current academic institutions in the U.S. However, I see Tien as

more of a risk-taker because she showed her willingness to take a step forward and advocate a

change in the current writing system.

297. HW:		That's good. That's so cool. Ok. Is there anything you want to say about
	this	project?
298. T:		This project is really interesting to me. Sometimes you don't have to write
		(emphasizing). You know you can express your feeling. Maybe in the study
299.		you can save your time to write, write, or type. You can do the picture you
300.		know. When everybody is learning this technique, it's going to be easier,
301.		faster on the writing, to express your feeling you don't have to sit there
302.		typing. It's too long compared to pulling up the picture and draw.
303.		So once people know about this, it's more easier to understand about things.
		(p. 14)

Dao also supported the use of multimodal resources in the process of writing and he had taken

practices to try out the composing technique by using music and video clips in his PowerPoint

presentations. These risk takers would suggest a revolution to adjust the current writing norms

where a large number of writing teachers still stick to the traditional paper-based genre and are

reluctant to give freedom to students to choose their own genre that best suits their writing

purposes and their interests.

It could be revealed that most participants learned from their experiences or from others'

through the use of multimodal resources to write about their English learning experiences in the

workshops. However, participants were concerned about using this writing genre in their

academic writing classrooms. The most important reason might be that writing instructors are not

ready to be open to multimodal resources in the composition of academic genres. However, "semiotic modes have different potentials, so that they afford different kinds of possibilities of human expression and engagement with the world, and through this differential engagement with the world they facilitate differential possibilities of development" (Kress, 2000, p. 157). In other words, "semiotic modes have particular affordances that offer potentials and limitations for communication and representation" (Alexander, Powell, & Green, 2011-2012, p. 2). This means that the affordances of printed texts with linear and sequential logic may carry a more stable and less arbitrary meaning compared to visuals that afford "showing" or the depiction of meaning through images, which might be understood differently in varied sociocultural contexts and by different audiences. In order to avoid the misunderstanding and to rely on the current composition evaluation system, it is more likely that writing teachers are not ready to open to multimodal resources in the composition of academic genres such as essays and research papers.

Even though the current academic writing practices encompass mainly the traditional print-based genre with words being the dominant mode of expression, multimodal writing is not totally divorced from academic writing. For instance, the exposure to multimodal resources and the experience of multimodal composing may bring new insights into EL writers' academic writing practices. Particularly, while composing an academic essay, instead of only seeing words as being read, printed and comprehended, EL writers who have multimodal composing experiences may perceive words as being listened to, sensed, smelled and acted on. Multimodal composing practices may bring in multiple dimensions and possibilities to EL writers' mindset and assist with their academic writing practices. Additionally, if academic writing is not limited to the final writing product, for instance, the essay itself, then there is an open space where EL

writers, like Dao and Danilo, can utilize multimodal resources to plan, outline and draft their ideas prior to composing the final product.

Recommendations for ELLs' Writing Practices

I designed a study to investigate when given options, what are English learners' choices of multimodal resources and how they used these selected resources to design multimodal compositions to communicate meaning to their audiences. It was found that participants were interested in creating multimodal texts to write about their personal journey of English learning regardless of their age, gender, and nationality. They were given a free and comfortable space to share, discuss and write about their previous stories, which was different from what they did in their writing classes. Some of them chose to create paper-based texts with words and hand-drawn pictures; some chose to create computer-based multimodal texts using PowerPoint or Word Document; some chose to create both paper and computer-based texts at different times for different topics. Regardless of what they chose to do, they felt what they selected worked for their purposes of writing and their ideas could be communicated well from their composed texts.

If a participant's multimodal text is perceived as an art product, then the messages conveyed through the multimodal text should capture the attention of the writing teachers because those "messages conveyed visually are as important as those carried through written and oral language" (Albers, 2009, p. 14). Students should be offered the opportunities "to express their interpretations in ways that words cannot" (Albers, 2009, p. 8). By bringing the genre of multimodal composing into the ELL writing classroom and assigning experience-related writing topics, L2 writers may benefit from their composing processes since it offers them the opportunities to put their life experiences on paper, on screen or on other desirable venues. When writing is conducted with multimodal signs and resources, and when it takes place in different

venues, students may gain a critical understanding of what their choices are, why they make those choices and how those choices may help them achieve their writing purposes. More importantly, by giving the autonomy to choose their preferred genre and writing resources may "help students develop a more sophisticated sense of how to negotiate unfamiliar rhetorical contexts and understand how the genre conventions that may work in one text, for one audience, may need to be altered or adapted for the new purpose for which they are writing" (Williams, 2014, p. 119). Furthermore, as Boyd et al. (2006) suggest, "students have a right to a variety of educational experiences that help them make informed decisions about their role and participation in language, literacy, and life" (p. 332). In other words, the workshop sessions offered participants an optional but important space to play their different roles of writers, researchers as well as English learners in a different venue outside the classrooms. This space may foster their capabilities of decision making and authentic learning while engaging with multimodal literacy activities.

However, when given the autonomy to L2 writers and let them choose their preferred genre and resources, L2 writing teachers may run the risk of giving too serious inappropriate topics or losing the objective and direction of drilling in the writing curriculum. This given, when giving student writers choices, L2 writing teachers should make decisions of "how to organize a new assignment sequence that will include forms of composing not previously seen as serious, academic modes of inquiry" (Bowen & Whithaus, 2013, p. 9). More critically, "faculty and students need to explore the potentials of multimodal composing without losing the programmatic structures that facilitate the development of discrete writing skills" (Bowen & Whithaus, 2013, p. 9).

It Is Time to Redefine What "Literate" Means to L2 Learners

These six participants from the university IEP level IV and level V classes shared their understanding about what they already knew about writing, how they perceived multimodal writing, and what writing should look like based on their acquired knowledge. They also composed several multimodal texts based on their own understanding and choices of multimodal resources. Even though most of them experienced frustration and difficulties while composing the rhetorical academic writing genre in their classrooms, and their literacy level of writing might be graded low, they demonstrated few issues or challenges while composing the multimodal genre with paper or computers. Although Tien expressed her limited experiences of using PowerPoint to create multimodal texts, she displayed her *talent* and *proficiency* of using PowerPoint to make multimodal texts in the next few multimodal compositions when she created rich content with words and pictures on the PowerPoint slides. She came in the workshop with very limited expertise and experience of composing multimodal texts, but ended up with independently creating her own multimodal compositions with computer-assisted PowerPoint slides. It only took her a few weeks from being illiterate or low literate in computer-assisted multimodal composing to literate in adopting the technique. As Carpenter (2009) posits, "When it comes to electronic texts, student know far more than they realize or can express, a fact that helps explain why college students are deemed rhetorically illiterate even when their texts suggest otherwise" (p. 146).

The three modal affordances and choices in participants' multimodal composing practices makes literacy learning authentic activities. When L2 students come to the classroom with their literacy evaluation based on their print-based texts, it may be arbitrary to identify them as being illiterate or low literate because their real literacy level was not fully revealed from their self-

produced print-based texts. In this case, what *literate* means to L2 learners need to be shifted and redefined in today's multi-literacy world. Krause (2015) gave her definition of being literate in the following quote:

> Now, I view being literate as the ability to negotiate multiple forms of meaning in order to make sense of the world in order to generate new understandings. Being literate is the ability to see the overlapping and complementary nature of visual, auditory, spatial, gestural, and textual modes of communication. Ultimately, being literate means being able to adapt within the dynamic nature of our world and being able to negotiate and make meaning from experiences. This is not intended to imply print literacy isn't important, it's meant to imply it is simply not enough. (p. 76-77)

Particularly, being a language and literacy teacher of ELLs myself, I suggest the definition of *literate* to L2 learners as a holistic evaluation of an individual not only about his or her ability to interpret or compose print-based text but more significantly, it should be about the evaluation of them utilizing his or her knowledge of the sociocultural world and confidently and proficiently manipulating language and literacy skills that are multimodal in nature, and also living and interacting within his or her situated social and academic world.

To develop L2 learners' general literacy proficiency and their writing skills in particular, it is imperative and necessary to open up to multiple possibilities of writing using available multimodal resources with which students interact in their daily life. In the short term, academic writing may not reflect the multimodal genre of composing, but in the long term, it needs to be envisioned to reflect and represent the multimodal nature of texts depending on the purpose of the writing tasks. At least now, multimodal composing can play the role of a precursor for academic writing tasks as it expands writers' capacity of describing feeling, sensing, hearing and touching while producing print-based texts in the classrooms.

Significance of the Study

With the influence of computer and technology on writing practices (Selfe & Takayoshi, 2007), writing now looks different and opens up multimodal ways of expressions. According to Shin (2008), "multimodal approaches to composition provide writers who are having difficulty in using language, including those writers for whom English is a second language (ESL), with powerful tools for sharing knowledge and for self-expression" (p. 377). ELLs' academic literacy could also be acquired through the creation of multimodal texts (Danzak, 2011; Early & Marshall, 2008). Particularly, the use of different semiotic resources such as texts, sound and images can attract the interest and promote learning achievement of students (Bran, 2010). Torres, Ponce and Pastor (2012) claims that multimodal digital storytelling "draws the interest of students with diverse learning styles and can also…increase their sense of achievement. Ultimately, it also constitutes a useful way of working on how to arrange information" (p. 3).

In addition, it is important to investigate the various identities revealed through ELLs' multimodal composing practices. Shin and Cimasko (2008) claim that multimodal composing allows for better communication of knowledge and expression of personal identities through ELLs' purposeful use of non-linguistic modes to project cultural and national identities and to express their emotional connections with the topics. Also, the investigation of multimodal composing practices of multilingual international students and their use of various modes and expressions in the U.S. context represent these ELLs' understanding of themselves being in a foreign culture (Mina, 2014). Additionally, their choices of various semiotics resources revealed their self-perceptions about themselves being a "foreigner". These given, it is important to study the multimodal composing practices of ELLs and their identity representation through their multimodal compositions.

There are multiple reasons to investigate the English writing experiences of ELLs through the lens of multimodal composing in a setting where English is the mainstream language and language of classroom instruction. First, it is important to examine how ELLs use multimodal resources to write about their English learning experiences in different social and cultural contexts while living in the time when life is saturated with multimodality, digital media and technology; second, it is imperative to explore potential pedagogical strategies which can help ELLs learn to write in the mainstream language communicated at school; third, it is even more significant to penetrate into the cognitive world of this population to find out how their identities are demonstrated through their multimodal compositions by utilizing multiple modes and resources of representation.

This study is expected to make contribution to the body of literature which focuses on the examination of how ELLs utilize multimodal resources to compose, how their identities are portrayed through their multimodal compositions as well as their self-descriptions and ELLs' perceptions about using multimodal resources to express themselves. Additionally, it is expected that educators of English as a second or foreign language could benefit from the study results and think of the possibilities of implementing multimodal literacy methods in their classrooms to support literacy learning needs of ELLs in the media and technology saturated world. It is also expected that language and literacy researchers use the current study and other related studies as a springboard to continue exploring feasible instructional strategies and effective interventional procedures of English to benefit more second language educators. Finally, it is hopeful that policy makers will be motivated to enact regulations and policies which provide a satisfactory and encouraging environment for ELLs with consideration of their actual literacy learning conditions and contexts to allow them to freely express themselves.

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Limitations of Study

At the outset of the data collection phase, I attempted to schedule the workshop sessions to avoid time conflict of every participant. However, some participants still could not come to all the 10 sessions to participant with all the activities. For instance, Tien came late for the session when everyone else was composing the second multimodal text so she chose to stay after the session to compose her multimodal text. Also, she missed the session to compose the final multimodal text so she decided to compose it at home. In these cases, I had to take her work as separated from others since she was composing her work at a different time or at a different location. Even though Leyla did not miss the sessions to compose multimodal texts, but she missed two sessions for the discussion and presentation of her compositions, which made the workshop descriptive notes about her missing from those two sessions.

In addition, I offered the resources of paper, crayons, color pencils, markers, color pens, note books, and the computers which may be limited for them to choose from. However, I mentioned to all participants in the first two workshop sessions they should let me know if any other resources were needed so that I could bring them in. however, no one asked for any additional resources but chose to use the available resources that were provided. The limitation of resources might restrain their choices of multimodal resources for their compositions.

Although *generalizability* is not the main purpose of qualitative study, it is still necessary to mention that one limitation of my current study lies in that the sample size is too small which makes it less likely to be generalized in other research settings. Moreover, since all the participants were recruited from the IEP, the study results generated may not fully represent or reflect other ELLs' multimodal writing practices in other programs.

Even though no one addressed time as an issue for their composing process. It was actually reflected from participants' explanation of not using certain resources of sound, music or cardboard. For instance, Tien said that she would like to try new resources of sound or music but she did not have enough time to do it. Danilo also mentioned the limitation of time and left his third multimodal text unfinished. Dao spent extra time after the workshop researching and making attempt to use music and video in his own multimodal presentation but found it so hard to make it. Fanghui and Leyla all stated it was a waste of time to use cardboard to do cut and paste to make a multimodal text.

Future Research

One of the important features of the study was to give participants the autonomy to make their own choices among the available resources. If more resources were provided, the study may yield interesting data about their other choices. Also, to researchers who are interested in multimodal composing practices and multimodal digital composition practices, future study can be designed on the basis of training students how to use a variety of multimodal composing software which allow them to make more sophisticated multimodal texts. Additionally, each of my participant is a unique learner, I intend to re-examine each of them in the future and closely analyze each of them as a single case.

Although this study examined a group of six students with various social, cultural and linguistic background, a study with more participants will provide more insights about participants' multimodal choices and may reveal patterns about the relationship between their choices and their various experiences and backgrounds. I also suggest that future study with the similar design can assign students with other topics which are different from the topics about

their English learning experiences in and out of the classrooms in their home countries and in the U.S.

Conclusion

I designed the study with the intent to investigate international English learners' multimodal choices and how they apply these choices in their multimodal texts. I attempted to understand why they made those choices and how those choices helped them convey ideas and communicate with audiences. I also attempted to look at their representation of identities in their multimodal compositions and their self-descriptions about who they think they are in different social and cultural contexts in their home countries and in the U.S. At last, I examined their perceptions of using multimodal resources to express themselves.

It was found that participants chose to use a combination of words and images to express their ideas. Also, participants revealed similarities between multimodal composing processes and traditional classroom writing processes. In addition, participants showed multiple identities through multimodal compositions and self-descriptions. Furthermore, participants revealed various perceptions of writing. Finally, participants showed awareness of audiences.

I saw struggling L2 English writers in composing academic genre in their classrooms. I saw L2 writers with doubt whether multimodal genre should be used in the classrooms. I also saw L2 writers with hope who advocated the application of multimodal resources in academic settings. I would conclude my study with two quotes from participants: "Sometimes you don't have to write. You know, you can express your feeling. Maybe in the study you can save your time to write, write, or type. You can do the picture you know. When everybody is learning this technique, it's going to be easier, faster on the writing, to express your feeling you don't have to

sit there typing. It's too long compared to pulling up the picture and draw. So once people know about this, it's more easier to understand about things" (Tien post-workshop interview, lines 298-303). And another quote: "if I put in something interesting and in different ways, it may attract the audience. So, I prefer to do that and I hope my teacher would do that for me" (Fanghui Post-workshop interview, lines 56-57).

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Participant Recruiting Flyer

Welcome to the Multimodal Composing Workshop
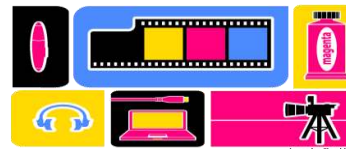
Study Purposes:

1) Study how you use multimodal resources to write about your experiences of learning English. 2) Understand how your identities are shown through your compositions. 3) Study your thoughts about using different resources to express yourself.

Who are invited:

1) Students from the Intensive English Program (IEP). 2) Non-native speakers of English who are learning English as an additional language. 3) Never studied in a high school or college in an English-speaking country before coming to GSU. We need 6 to 8 students above the age of 18.

When, Where, and How Long to Meet:

Meet twice a week for 60 minutes for 5 weeks during 2017 Fall semester at a University computer lab; being interviewed twice in a public location in the University.

What to expect:

Complete four texts about your experiences of learning English in your home country as well as in the U.S.

Benefits:

Develop your English writing, speaking, and listening skills.

Compensation:

Receive $50 gift card under completion of all the workshop sessions and interviews.

Contact:

Huan Wang (a Ph.D. student at GSU and an experienced ESOL teacher). Ask her more questions about the study at: hwang45@student.gsu.edu or 404-425-6497.

APPENDIX B

The Initial Individual Interview Questions

(This interview was conducted in English)

Self portrait

1. Could you tell me something about yourself? (briefly introduce yourself)

2. Could you tell me something that you think I should know about you and your home country?

Home Culture

3. How would you describe your home culture?

4. Tell me something that you think everyone should know about your home culture.

Literacy learning experiences

5. Please tell me something about your English learning experiences in your home country.

6. Tell me something about your English learning experiences here in the U.S.

7. Tell me your experience of writing in English in class in your home country.

8. Tell me something about your English writing experience here in the U.S.

9. How do you feel about writing in English?

10. Do you know the type of writing when writers put together words, pictures, music, sound effects etc. to express their ideas?

11. If you have heard about the above-mentioned writing practices, how do you think this type of writing would help you in your English writing?

12. If you have not heard about this type of writing, would you like to know more about it? Why or why not?

Literacy Learning Experience and Identity

13. How would you describe yourself as a foreign student in the U.S.?

14. Do you think "who you are" affect your English learning experience in your home country? If so, how? If not, why not?

15. Do you think "who you are" affect your English learning experience in the U.S.? If so, how? If not, why not?

16. How does "being an international non-native English speaker" affect your English learning in the U.S.?

Final Follow-up Interview Questions

(This interview was conducted in English)

About the Project:

1. Tell me at least one thing you have learned from doing this project.

2. Tell me how you feel about multimodal composing.

3. Did you have any challenges or difficulties working on the multimodal texts?

4. Do you think multimodal composing can help you in any way with your writing in the classroom? If so, how? If not, why not?

5. Would you like to use multimodal resources to express yourself in writing? If so, Why? If not, why not?

6. If I brought in the poster board, card board, scissors or glues, would you choose to use those resources to make multimodal text? Why or why not?

About Personal Perception and Composing Process:

7. What mode(s) or multimodal resources did you use the most frequently and why?

8. Why did you choose to use (or not to use) visual/oral/aural (sound or music) elements in your multimodal composition?

9. Tell me your multimodal composing process. Like what are the steps you used to make your text? What did you do first? What did you do next?

10. Tell me something you think multimodal resources can do or help you do in your writing?

11. Do you think the multimodal resources you selected can represent what you want to express? If so, how effective or powerful these resources are in conveying meaning? If not, why not?

12. Which way do you think can better express yourself? The traditional paper-based five-paragraph essay writing or multimodal composing or both? Why do you think so?

Multimodal Composing and Identity

13. What role do you think you were playing while you composed multimodal texts in the workshops?

14. Does working on this project change the way you look at writing? What do you think writing should look like?

15. Does this MM writing project change the way you look at yourself? Could you describe who you are here in the United States?

16. How do you describe yourself when you were back in your home country?

17. How did different contexts (your home country and the U.S.) may affect your English learning?

Workshop Sessions: Session 1 to Session 4

Session	Focus	Purpose	Activities	Session Support
1	Introduce multimodality and multimodal composing; understand participants' knowledge about multimodal composing and what tools they are interested in using to make multimodal texts;	Learn about participants' knowledge about multimodal composing and their preference of how to make multimodal text;	Idea sharing; Discussing possible ways of creating multimodal texts, and how to use multimodal resources to convey meaning;	Projector; Computer; Screen;
2	Use multimodal resources to compose a multimodal text to respond to the question: what was your English learning experience before you came to the U.S. in your home country in classrooms?	Understand participants' depiction of English learning experiences and representation of identities as ELLs in their home countries;	Having a big group discussion to share previous experiences of learning English in home countries; spending the rest of the time working on composing multimodal texts;	Projector; Cell phone; digital camera/iPad/tablet; Computer/laptop; Pens; Notebooks; Color pencils; crayons; Construction paper; scissors;
3	Sharing and presenting multimodal texts to peers and explain why certain multimodal modes are selected and the purposes of selecting certain modes;	Understand each individual's multimodal composing process: how and why do they choose certain modes and what meanings do they want to convey by selecting those modes;	Individual presentation of multimodal texts; Probing the process and purposes of making multimodal texts by using multimodal resources;	Computer/laptop; (projector);
4	Use multimodal resources to compose a multimodal text to respond to the question: what was your English learning experience in your home country out of the classrooms?	Understand participants' self-depiction and perception of being an ELL in out of classroom settings in their home countries;	Having a big group discussion about 10 to 15 minutes to share experiences of learning English out of classrooms in their home countries; spending the rest of the 45 minutes to work on composing multimodal texts;	Cell phone; digital camera/iPad/tablet; Computer/laptop; Pens; Notebooks; Color pencils; crayons; Construction paper; scissors;

APPENDIX D

Workshop Sessions: Session 5 to Session 7

Session	Focus	Purpose	Activities	Session Support
5	Sharing and presenting multimodal texts to peers and explain why certain multimodal modes are selected and the purposes of selecting certain modes;	Understand each individual's multimodal composing process: how and why do they choose certain modes and what meanings do they want to convey by selecting those modes;	Individual presentation of multimodal texts; Probing the process and purposes of making multimodal texts by using multimodal resources;	Notebooks; computer/laptop; Pens;
6	Use multimodal resources to compose a multimodal text to respond to the question: what is your English learning experience in the classrooms in the U.S.?	Understand participants' self-depiction and perception of being an ELL in classroom settings in a foreign country;	Having a big group discussion about 10 to 15 minutes to share experiences of learning English in class in the U.S.; spending the rest of the 45 minutes to work on composing multimodal texts;	Cell phone; digital camera/iPad/tablet; Computer/laptop; Pens; Notebooks; Color pencils; crayons; Construction paper; scissors;
7	Sharing and presenting multimodal texts to peers and explain why certain multimodal modes are selected and the purposes of selecting certain modes.	Understand each individual's multimodal composing process: how and why do they choose certain modes and what meanings do they want to convey by selecting those modes.	Individual presentation of multimodal texts; Probing the process and purposes of making multimodal texts by using multimodal resources	Notebooks; computer/laptop; Pens;

Workshop Sessions: Session 8 to Session 10

Session	Focus	Purpose	Activities	Session Support
8	Use multimodal resources to compose a multimodal text to respond to the question: what is your English learning experience out of the classrooms in the U.S.?	Understand participants' self-depiction and perception about being an ELL in non-class settings in a foreign country;	Having a big group discussion about 10 to 15 minutes to share English learning experiences out of classrooms in the U.S; spending the rest of the 45 minutes to work on composing multimodal texts;	Cell phone; digital camera/iPad/tablet; Computer/laptop; Pens; Notebooks; Color pencils; crayons; Construction paper; scissors;
9	Sharing and presenting multimodal texts to peers and explain why certain multimodal modes are selected and the purposes of selecting certain modes;	Understand each individual's multimodal composing process: how and why do they choose certain modes and what meanings do they want to convey by selecting those modes;	Individual presentation of multimodal texts; Probing the process and purposes of making multimodal texts by using multimodal resources;	Notebooks; computer/laptop; Pens;
10	Reflecting on multimodal texts about being English language learners at various times and contexts; Wrapping up workshop sessions and celebrating;	Understand participants' self-depiction and perception about being ELLs in different times and at various contexts;	Spend the first 20-30 minutes doing the self-reflection and the next 20-30 minutes chatting, eating, and celebrating;	computer/laptop;

APPENDIX E

Demographic Information of Participants: A Survey

(This survey was distributed after participants signed the consent form)

1. *What is your age?*

    18-22,   23-26,   27 and above

2. *Please identify your gender (circle your choice)?*

    Male   Female

3. *What is your country of origin?*

    _____ .

4. *What is your native (first) language?*

    _____ .

5. *Please list languages you can speak other than your native language.*

    _____ .

6. *What do you believe is the most important holiday (celebration/tradition) in your home culture?*

    _____ .

7. *What do you prefer to be called in this study?*

    _____ .

8. *What is your preferred email address/phone number that the researcher can reach out to you in the future?*

    _____ .

Thank you for participating in this survey. Hope you have a wonderful semester!

APPENDIX F

Key Terms and examples in Multimodal Composing

Key Terms	Definitions	Examples
Mode	A variety of culturally and socially shaped resources to make meaning (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001)	Visual, aural, gestural, textual
Modality	A particular mode in which something exists or is done	Handwriting, drawing, digital camera, digital recorder, camera
Audio	Sound that has been recorded, reproduced or transmitted	Sound effects, music, recorded voices
Video	The reproducing, recording or broadcasting of visual images that are moving	Moving images, cartoons,
Visual	Relating to sight or seeing	Picture, photograph, graphics, images, illustration, diagram
Aural	Relating to the ear or the sense of hearing	Sound, music, voice
Image	A representation of the external form of things or people in art	Picture, portrait, drawing, photograph
Photograph	a picture made by using a camera	Digital photo, photo developed from film
Drawing	A picture or diagram made by hand using a pen, pencil, or crayon	Sketch, depiction, illustration
Storyboard	A series of drawings, usually with images and texts for the purpose of planning for a movie or video production	A storyboard with drawings, decorations, dialogues, ideas to plan for the multimodal composition
Symbol	A material object that represents something abstract	Token, sign, representation, figure, image
Semiotics	The study of symbols, signs and their use of interpretation	Symbols, signs, representations
Sign	An action, gesture or visual used to convey information or instructions	Signal, cue, gesture
Digital tool	Tools that relating to or employing digital communications or signals	Digital camera, digital recorder, tablet, smartphone, computer
Multimodal text	Texts that consist of two or more semiotic modes	Texts that combines visual, aural, linguistic, gestural modes

APPENDIX G

Observation Notes Template

List of Things to Observe	Notes
I. Background	
Location:	
Time Observation Begins:	
Time Observation Ends:	
Mood:	
Temperature Outside/inside:	
II. Place	
Location Set-up:	

People at the location
   • Number of people
   • What are they?	

III. Observation Checklist	
Where do they work at?	
What do they look at/search for?	
What do they read?	
What do they listen to?	
What do they write?	
What do they say or talk about?	
What do they draw?	
What do they do with paper/digital devices? (e.g. cellphones, iPads, tablet)	
Other observation and comments	
IV. Overall Reaction	
How did you feel about the location?	
What/Who impacted you the most? Why?	

This checklist was used for each participant at each workshop session to keep record of what they did and how they did it.