

THE UNIVERSITY OF MODENA AND REGGIO EMILIA DOCTORAL SCHOOL
OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES -: LANGUAGE AND CROSS CULTURE
DOCTORAL STUDENT: NIANYU GUO
TUTOR. PROF. FRANCA POPPI

The Title of Doctoral Thesis

*A MULTIMODAL APPROACH TO IMPROVING THE INTERCULTURAL
COMPETENCE OF ITALIAN LEARNERS WHO STUDY CHINESE AS A FOREIGN
LANGUAGE – A PILOT STUDY*

Titolo della Tesi di Dottorato

*UN APPROCCIO MULTIMODALE PER MIGLIORARE LE COMPETENZE
INTERCULTURALI DEGLI APPRENDENTI ITALIANI CHE STUDIANO LA
LINGUA CINESE COME LINGUA STRANIERA - UNO STUDIO PILOTA*

ABSTRACT:

The present Ph.D. project aims at developing the intercultural competence of Italian Chinese learners, with a view at improving their language proficiency in the Chinese language and enhancing their intercultural awareness by means of a multimodal teaching approach.

In this project, the development of intercultural competence refers to the improvement of language proficiency in the target language (i.e. the phonological, semantic-pragmatic knowledge of the target language), the open attitudes towards a language and cultural knowledge, the critical awareness of the contentions related to a cultural phenomenon, the ability of self-reflection and intersubjective alignment, namely empathy and the ability to produce meanings based on each other's interests and needs.

Based on the notion of intercultural competence, I proposed a cultural model with two dimensions, namely the macro dimension and micro dimension. On the macro dimension, the effects of family parenting, school education and the influences of mass media, i.e. newspapers and magazines contribute to shaping the intercultural competence of Italian learners of Chinese by operating on their ways of conceptualizing the world. (Vygotsky, 1978; Buttjes & Byram, 1991). On the micro dimension, neurological and cognitive dispositions, specific linguistic and cultural knowledge, personal cultural trajectories and meta-cognitive capabilities (meta-pragmatic capability, self-reflection and critical cultural awareness, empathy and the motivation for language learning) are the main agents for developing students' intercultural competence.

With reference to the notion of intercultural competence, I carried out my teaching program, deploying a multimodal approach in accordance with the multimodal semiotic framework proposed by Gunther Kress (2010, 2016) and Theo van Leeuwen (2005)

The teaching program was divided into eight sessions, involving an out-of-classroom activity and We-chat online sessions. It began by distributing a questionnaire to the Italian learners and it ended by encouraging Italian learners to give feedback about my lessons. The participants of the present teaching program were Italian Chinese learners enrolled in Bachelor and Master programs in the Department of Studies on Language and Culture at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia.

I collected my data by asking the Italian Chinese learners to fill in my designed questionnaires, conducting individual and group interviews with them, initiating a role-

play with two Italian Chinese learners and observing their pragmatic performance during their interaction with a Chinese bar owner.

After that, adopting the framework of multimodal social semiotics, I described, interpreted and explained the collected data by deploying the methods of critical discourse analysis and intertextuality proposed by Norman Fairclough (1992, 1995, 2001, 2013).

The results show that through my teaching program which is multimodal-oriented, Italian Chinese learners developed their intercultural competence by improving their Chinese language proficiency at phonological, morphological and pragmatic levels and developed their intercultural awareness, especially learning how to intersubjectively align themselves with the Chinese native speakers and to view a cultural phenomenon in a dynamic and complicated way.

Keywords: foreign language teaching and learning, Italian Chinese learners, intercultural competence, multimodal communication, critical discourse analysis.

ABSTRACT ITALIANO:

Il presente progetto di dottorato ha lo scopo di sviluppare le competenze interculturali degli apprendenti italiani di cinese, con l'intento di migliorare le loro competenze nella lingua cinese e accrescere la loro consapevolezza interculturale attraverso un approccio didattico multimodale.

In questo progetto, lo sviluppo della capacità interculturale fa riferimento al miglioramento della competenza linguistica nella lingua target (i.e. la conoscenza fonologica, semantico-pragmatica della lingua target), l'atteggiamento di apertura verso una conoscenza linguistica e culturale, una consapevolezza critica dei fenomeni culturali, l'abilità di auto-riflessione e di allineamento intersoggettivo (intersubjective alignment), vale a dire l'empatia e l'abilità di produrre i significati sulla base degli interessi e dei bisogni degli interlocutori.

Con riferimento alla nozione di capacità interculturale, ho proposto un modello culturale a due dimensioni. Nella macro dimensione, ho preso in esame gli effetti dell'educazione genitoriale e scolastica e l'influenza dei mass media, come giornali e riviste, sullo sviluppo di una competenza interculturale degli apprendenti italiani di lingua cinese, influenzando la loro concettualizzazione del mondo (Vygotsky, 1978; Buttjes & Byram, 1991). Nella micro dimensione, ho fatto riferimento alle disposizioni neurologiche e cognitive, alle specifiche conoscenze linguistiche e culturali, alle traiettorie culturali personali e alle capacità meta-cognitive (capacità meta-pragmatiche, autoriflessione, consapevolezza culturale critica, empatia e motivazione all'apprendimento linguistico), che sono i principali agenti per lo sviluppo della competenza interculturale degli studenti italiani che studiano la lingua cinese come lingua straniera.

Con riferimento alla nozione di capacità interculturale, ho messo in pratica il mio programma d'insegnamento, usando un approccio multimodale ispirato dalla struttura semiotica multimodale proposta da Gunther Kress (2010, 2016) e Theo Van Leeuwen (2005)

Il programma d'insegnamento è stato diviso in otto sessioni, includendo attività fuori dalla classe e sessioni online con We-chat. È iniziato con la distribuzione di un questionario agli apprendenti e si è concluso incoraggiando gli studenti a fornire un feedback alle mie lezioni. I partecipanti al programma d'insegnamento erano gli

apprendenti italiani di lingua cinese iscritti ai corsi di laurea triennale e magistrale nel Dipartimento degli Studi Linguistici e Culturali dell'Università di Modena e Reggio Emilia.

Ho raccolto i miei dati chiedendo agli studenti italiani di lingua cinese di compilare il mio questionario, conducendo interviste individuali e di gruppo con loro. Inoltre, ho raccolto i miei dati non solo grazie a role-play con due apprendenti italiani che studiano la lingua cinese come lingua straniera, ma anche osservando la performance pragmatica degli apprendenti italiani durante l'interazione con il proprietario cinese di un bar.

In seguito, ho descritto, interpretato e spiegato i dati raccolti usando il metodo dell'analisi critica del discorso di Norman Fairclough (1992, 1995, 2001, 2013).

I risultati mostrano che attraverso il mio programma di insegnamento ispirato ad un approccio multimodale, gli apprendenti italiani di cinese hanno sviluppato la loro capacità interculturale grazie al miglioramento della competenza di lingua cinese a livello fonologico, morfologico e pragmatico e hanno sviluppato una propria consapevolezza interculturale, in particolare imparando come esercitare la lingua cinese con le persone native e come interpretare un fenomeno culturale in modo dinamico e complesso.

Parole chiavi: insegnamento e comprensione della lingua straniera, apprendenti italiani che studiano la lingua cinese come lingua straniera, competenza interculturale, comunicazione multimodale, analisi critica del discorso.

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Part I. Introduction

1. Background of the Present Project

Foreign language teaching and learning (FLTL henceforth) has long been an intriguing research field. It has inspired numerous scholars to devote themselves to exploring the mysteries of language pedagogy and language learning.

However, at the beginning of the last century, FLTL got into a predicament, that is, the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences could not conduce to successful communications. And such a difficult situation had partially to do with a limited view on language instruction and development and partially to do with a less thorough understanding of the influence that globalization has exerted on communication.

Within the remit of language education, early foreign language teaching was found wanting because it had a limited view of language learning, a process of taking in the correct linguistic patterns of a target language. Being influenced by this viewpoint, foreign instructors championed an idealized target language, reducing learning a foreign language to passively absorbing a set of rule-bounded system which had its prefixed linguistic and pragmatic rules. And the language learners who shared a similar view with language instructors tended to think that they could have smooth interaction, insofar as they had abundant linguistic knowledge, viz. phonological rules, grammatical patterns and a large scale of vocabulary repertoire.

Later, under the influence of Selinker (1992)'s interlanguage theory, FLTL saw language learning as a process that was infinitely approximated to the target language. During this process, language learners might form their own distinct language system which not only bore some features of their native language but also carried some attributes of the target language. And language instructors who favored interlanguage and the similar lines of research (Gass, 2008) thought that their responsibility was correcting students' incorrect language use from the perspective of the target language and making the utterances that language learners produced more target-like. And the language learners who concurred with their instructors took for granted that language learning was acquiring a set of prefixed and rule-bounded linguistic systems. As a result, FLTL focused on helping FL learners to reach the ideal state of the target language, barely realizing the fact that a standard and idealized target language did not

exist. (Larsen-freeman, 2014) Similarly, language learning could not be reduced into a matter of speaking or writing idealized and authorized language, as language learning was always coupled with dominating and dominated power within a given social group. (Bourdieu, 1993)

On the global landscape, FLTL was also in a tricky situation. This was because it seldom recognized the impacts that globalization had on intercultural communication and identity shaping. With the increasing globalization, people from all over the world come to study and work together in the last century. As most of these people might have their own incompatible sociopolitical stances, standards of a value system and cultural attitudes, they could face communicative problems from time to time and they were even confronted with intercultural conflicts. Consequently, they might find it hard to solve the communicational problems they faced in their daily lives.

What is more, due to the mobility brought by a large-scale of immigration, a great number of people with different backgrounds migrated to or from the other foreign countries and they found themselves in need of negotiating their identities with the local people in their daily communications because in this way they could, to some extent, adapt themselves to the local culture. By entering an ‘in-between’ space, “an alien territory and wildness” (Bhabha, 1994), these people have developed linguistic and cultural hybridity, which proves once again the impossibility to interpret an interlocutor’s intentions in a particular situation solely in reference to his or her linguistic-cultural backgrounds. Indeed, there is a mismatch between a person’s identity and his or her cultural backgrounds, as people’s identities are plural but not fixed, always being locally situated and socially constructed. Also, when people participate consciously or unconsciously in a variety of discursive practices, they keep positioning and re-positioning their identities in order to attune themselves with the other participants, changing their attitudes and sociopolitical stances on an issue constantly. (Uryu, et al. 2014).

Facing the aforesaid problems in language instruction and development, FLTL, in more recent times, has gradually improved the aims and methodologies of language instruction and development. On the part of language instructors, they realized that merely inculcating language learners with correct linguistic patterns of a target language was not enough in that students at times misinterpreted the intentions of the other interactants and did not know how to solve or deal with communicative problems in a strategic way, albeit with a wealth of linguistic knowledge. Likewise, language

learners found it insufficient to passively memorize the grammatical rules of a target language for they unconsciously threatened the positive faces of the other interlocutors at times. As for the positive face, it is implied by “the desire for approval from others and is ideally characterized by behavior between intimates. (Brown & Levison, 1987: P101) While the notion of negative face refers to the hearers’ desires for preventing the speakers from imposing some unwilling things on them. The positive and negative face, being the representatives of illocutionary speech acts, cannot be viewed in an either-or manner. This is because some speech acts – the utterances triggering actions or implying different meanings in different contexts - are conducive to interlocutors’ positive faces on one occasion may threaten the others’ faces on the other occasions, And whether a speech act facilitates a conversation or not depends on the social distance between interlocutors and the ways in which they perform a specific speech act in a particular context. In recognition of the importance of contexts and their role played in language use, language instructors taught students language by carrying out situational teaching activities, trying to mobilize language learners to participate in simultaneous or authentic interactions. And correspondingly, language learners had more opportunities to communicate with the other people and as a result, they could learn how to use language, notably grammatical patterns, formulaic expressions, sociocultural conventions to attune with the people who they are interacting with. As both language instructors and learners have shifted their attention from language itself to language use in authentic situations, FLTL had been transcended to a new era where how to interact with the other interlocutors with the similar or different lingua-cultural backgrounds in different contexts has become the new focus. With this focus, the teacher might help language learners to avoid some misinterpretations that might escalate into violent conflicts or generate distrust, which could inevitably impact on the peace and stability of a community in the long run.

Undeniably, FLTL in this new era has challenged the aims and methodologies of teaching and learning in the past two decades by encouraging language students to involve in real interactions and propelling them to use language in an appropriate way. However, language learners in this framework were still viewed as passive receivers of target language knowledge, using rule-bounded linguistic patterns in contexts.

As an emerging research area in FLTL, there were also some limitations in teaching Chinese as a foreign language (TCFL) at the present time, particularly in terms of teaching methodologies and teaching aims. As for teaching methodologies, the

previous studies in TCTL mainly focused on improving the language proficiency of the second or foreign language learners by employing translational-grammar or audio-lingual methods. (Bisong,1989; YuGuo,1997; Yonghua,1999), or by deploying the approach of digital literacy (Yanqun, 1999).

At the dawn of the 21st century, TCFL turned its spotlight on post-lingual or audio-visual approaches. (Han, 2017; Yifeng & Huizhong; 2016) The post-lingual method concerns how to make meanings of Chinese characters by associating their visual shapes and stroke principles. When it comes to teaching aims, TCFL took a target-like perspective as it aimed at improving language learners' Chinese language proficiency and making them become more native-like in the Chinese language by deploying the pedagogical methods mentioned above. Although TCFL is continuously developing its teaching methodologies and deepening its aims, it still has its limitations, in the sense that it pays little attention to developing a teaching syllabus which could tailor the learning needs of foreign students of Chinese, especially those who have low Chinese language proficiency. In terms of cultural communication, TCFL pays more heed to impart foreign learners with the factual knowledge of Chinese culture in a way of promoting Confucian culture or Chinese traditional customs and artifacts. (Chen, 2012; Confucius Institute Headquarters, 2014; Xiuli, 2017) than to empower them to critically reflect on the meta-cognitive capability that they have developed because of family parenting and higher education. This is because meta-cognitive capability is the one with which one can first reflect on his or her cultural attitudes first and self- reflection then is the first step to fostering intercultural understanding. Simply speaking, TCFL still holds a stable view on Chinese culture as it sees Chinese culture as homogenous and exotic which only has positive aspects (Xiuli, 2017; Chen, 2012; Chen, 2008; Yanqun, 1999; Zhang, 1999), barely realizing the fact that letting learners of Chinese to critically analyze Chinese societal phenomena along historical period is more important learning about the factual knowledge of Chinese culture.

In one word, although TCFL had made several attempts to improve the intercultural competence and intercultural awareness of foreign learners of Chinese in an effort of ameliorating the pedagogical methods, there is a shortage of tools to guide teachers regarding the implementation of a transcultural focused curriculum in a structured and coherent way. Specifically speaking, there are few teaching programs that could not only teach students the Chinese language and culture in a multimodal manner but also prompt learners of Chinese to know how to draw on their linguistic,

pragmatic and cultural resources for reducing the possibility of miscommunications and to learn how to solve the communicative problems they may encounter in their daily communications.

2. My Research Framework

Considering the aforesaid limitations in TCFL, I found it is necessary to enable the Italian learners of Chinese to collaborate with their interlocutors to make meanings by changing their subjective positions, flexibly manipulating the linguistic and non-linguistic resources in a specific situation. And I also argued that language learners of Chinese should know how to critically reflect on their own personal cultural trajectories, particularly their family and school education and the effects that social media have on them. That is the meta-cognitive capability that I attached great importance and it is also one of the contributors to intercultural competence, becoming indispensable in people's daily communications, especially in this "liquid" society. (Bauman, 2011)

2.1 My Research Aim

After taking account of the limitations in TCFL, I decided to deploy a multimodal approach with which I commit myself to improving the intercultural competence of Italian learners of Chinese, focusing on improving Chinese language proficiency and developing their intercultural awareness. For one reason, the Chinese language proficiency of Italian learners was low. I could arouse their motivation and make it easier for ILC to understand the knowledge that was involved in my teaching activities with a variety of modes, notably speech modes (teacher talk), audio-visual modes (film clips), gestural modes (the hand and head movements of teachers and students), digital modes (We-chat online service account). For another reason, as people are linguistically and culturally hybrid all over the world, they may find it impossible to communicate with their interlocutors merely drawing on their pre-figured viewpoints of their interlocutors' national and ethnic backgrounds and thus interpret the meanings that their interlocutors intend to convey. (Uryu et al., 2014)

2.2 My Research Questions

Bearing such an aim in mind, I proposed the following four questions for the purpose of fulfilling my research aim, that is, improving the intercultural competence of Italian learners who study Chinese as a foreign language.

- 1) Since the Chinese language proficiency of Italian learners who participated in my teaching program was low, how could I make them better acquire the knowledge related to Chinese language and culture covered in my teaching program ?
 - a. How to design my teaching program that stimulates Italian learners' motivation for learning Chinese as a foreign language?
 - b. How to design my teaching program that enables the Italian learners of Chinese to create and re-create meanings based on their interlocutors' needs and interests?
 - c. How to design a teaching program that enables Italian learners who study Chinese as a foreign language to engage in conversations despite time and space limitations
- 2) Given the cultural ideologies of Italian learners of Chinese are deep-seated and are difficult to tap into, are there any ways of developing the cultural awareness of Italian learners who study Chinese as a foreign language?
 - a. Through my teaching program, how could I learn about the personal cultural trajectory of the Italian learners of Chinese, particularly their cultural attitudes?
 - b. How could my teaching program help Italian learners of Chinese to construe a cultural phenomenon in a more complex, dynamic and comprehensive manner?

2.3 My Cultural Model

After taking consideration of the formulated my cultural model which covered macro and micro dimensions. On the macro dimension, I deem that the influences that families, schools and mass media, i.e. newspaper and radio might exert on the language learners' intercultural competence, particularly shaping their cultural attitudes towards the others with different linguacultural backgrounds.

On the micro dimension, I underpinned that students' own neurological dispositions, personal trajectory and cultural experience and meta-cognitive cognition will not only have great impacts on developing their intercultural competence but also positively change the intercultural competence that they cultivated in their primary and secondary socialization, i.e. family parenting, school education and the broader social environment.

Under the umbrella of metacognition, language learning capability, self-reflection and critical awareness, empathy i.e. emotional regulation and the motivation of learning Chinese as a foreign language are the main contributors to developing their intercultural competence and transcultural awareness.

In summary, the macro and micro dimensions are interdependent on each other and they as a whole contribute to continuously developing students' intercultural competence and sharpening their cultural awareness.

3. The Methodology and an Introduction of the Present Project

With reference to the cultural model, I designed a teaching syllabus which included an arrangement of teaching stimuli, namely pictures, video clips, songs and literary texts. In order to know whether the teaching syllabus that I had designed could really cover my research interests and be coherent with the aim of my research, I gave five teaching lessons to three Italian learners who were learning Chinese in Italy before the implementation of my teaching program at Unimore. After reflecting on the feedback that these Italian learners gave me, I fine-tuned my teaching materials with which I carried out my teaching activities at Unimore.

When it comes to the implementation of the teaching program, I deployed a multimodal approach to increasing Italian students' language and cultural knowledge

related to Chinese chopsticks, Chinese families and education; encouraging the Italian students to reflect on the Italian socio-cultural environment; deepening their understanding of the development of Chinese family parenting and the changes of the attitudes that Chinese parents and their children held towards each other.

Before the teaching intervention, I learn about the Italian participants' Chinese language proficiency, their attitudes towards people with different linguacultural backgrounds by viewing the questionnaires that they had filled in and analyzing their views on a film clip that I played to them. During the teaching intervention, I offered my interpretations and explanations about Chinese language and culture with a mixture of my facial expressions, gestures, verbal speeches and the audio-visual materials. By doing so, I improved Italian learners' Chinese language proficiency and developed their intercultural awareness in an effort of conducting interviews with the Italian learners of Chinese who participated in my teaching activities.

I measured whether they improved their Chinese language proficiency and developed their intercultural awareness by analyzing the conversations that I co-constructed with Italian learners in a role-play as well as their feedback on my lessons.

As can be seen, I adopted qualitative methods to generate data. They are questionnaires, interviews and role-plays. And adopting the framework of multimodal social semiotics, I deployed Fairclough (2001)'s critical methods to analyzing the data that I had collected in questionnaires, interviews and role-play.

After illustration of the methodology in my framework, I will offer a sketch of my teaching program. In the classroom, I helped Italian learners of Chinese to learn how to articulate the pronunciation of two Chinese characters *kuai zi* and how to logically memorize the strokes of these Chinese characters in a multimodal fashion. Besides, I carried out a situational teaching activity with a complex of the mode of gesture, that of speech and artifacts. By doing so, I enabled ILC to learn Chinese table manners concerning chopsticks and how to avoid the Chinese taboos related to chopsticks. While in the out-of-class activity, I contextualized ILC in an authentic situation and prompted them to make sense with the authentic speaker who was a Chinese bar owner in moment-to-moment conversations. The reason why I said both ILC and the situation were authentic was that they could "negotiate their own knowledge in interactions with the others by eliciting and trying on new, local interactive practices". (Comperolle & MrGregor, 2016: P184)

To accomplish my teaching activities conducted in and out of the classroom and rendered it more interesting, I opened a We-chat account and asked ILC to download the application Wechat and created their own accounts. Then, I asked them to follow that official account. I posted four messages, all of which were related to family parenting. By receiving the messages that I posted, ILC had a deeper understanding of the Chinese family parenting beyond time and space limitations.

After describing my research framework, I then gave a sketch of the whole dissertation. The whole dissertation is divided into three parts, with each part involving several sections. The first part of this dissertation is an outline, briefing on the main concerns of my project, semiotics, language and power, pragmatics and language, foreign language teaching and learning, notably teaching Chinese as a foreign language, intercultural communication and education. Part II is a literature review. With reference to each concern outlined in the first part, part II will give a critical analysis of the far-reaching studies in each of the main concern that has been outlined in Part I.

Part III is the main project. The first section of part III will make some clarifications in terms of the main concepts in my research project. They are intercultural competence and authenticity. Then, based on the limitations that have been identified in the second part, the second section of part III will put forward the research aim of the whole teaching program and section 3 of part III interpolated several research questions. In section 4, a cultural model will be postulated. Section 5 will give a detailed description of the main participants, teaching materials and their main contents. As for data generation and analysis, Then, section 6 will detail the conducted pilot study and the main procedures of the teaching program before describing students' feedback. Section 7 concerns the feedback of Italian learners of Chinese. Section 8, 9 and 10 mainly concentrate on analyzing, interpreting and explaining the collected data which were the filled questionnaires, individual and group interviews, field notes and students' feedback. First, I transcribed the data that I collected with reference to Jefferson (2004)'s transcription methodologies. Then, adopting a framework of multimodal semiotics of Gunther Kress (2010, 2016), I described, interpreted and explained the data that I had collected from questionnaires, interviews and field notes by deploying a critical discourse approach of Norman Fairclough (2001, 2013). Then, I discussed the results of the present project, mainly focusing on Italian students' opinions and feelings with respect to the designed teaching program. At last, I concluded with an analysis of

the results of my teaching program by identifying the implicatures and envisioning future studies in the field of teaching Chinese as a foreign language.

Part II . Literature Review

1. Semiotics

The present section tries to focus on language, one of the social semiotic modes in contemporary communication. Broadly speaking, language, from the semiotic viewpoint, is nothing but a complex of signs. Yet, such a definition is too vague to be used. Hence in this section, signs will be analyzed from the perspectives of semiology, linguistic semiotics and social semiotic resources respectively. Up to now, several questions are still left open: Is it possible to interpret language by drawing on the relevant knowledge concerning signs? If possible, then how; if not possible, then why not? What's the relationship between language and signs?

1.1 A Distinction between Signs, Semiology and Semiotics

To answer the aforementioned questions, a systematic inquiry into signs will be carried out in the following paragraphs as a comparatively detailed investigation into signs may serve to crystalize the definitions of semiology, semiotic and signs respectively, thereby giving an exhaustive analysis of the relations between language and signs.

To define semiology in a clearer way, some caution should be exercised: One must put aside temporarily the other two concepts "semiotics" and "sign" for otherwise confusion will reign in terms of the distinction between semiotics, signs and language. In terms of semiology, it refers to a scientific discipline dedicated to the study of signs in life. According to Fernand de Saussure (1966), semiology transcended language boundary, as it not only embraced language but also extended to the other semiology systems besides languages. (pp 16-17) Simply speaking, semiology, in general, is the means of representing a variety of societal activities, ranging from mural arts to swallow-tailed coats.

When it comes to semiotics, it can be construed as a process of showing particular meanings in particular circumstances. In short, semiotics is a field that studies signification. However, what should be noted is that the signification *per se* does not have any meanings. It is the sets of cultural resource formed within a particular social

and political structure that endow it with particular meanings. In one word, only through the process of signification shaped in a given societal environment could it bear some meanings. For instance, 旗袍 cheongsam⁶, a one-piece-made and tightly fitting silk dress, is just a kind of dress in itself. If cheongsam was perceived in the early 20th century in China, it would carry a particular meaning. During that historical period, cheongsam was the typical attire of Shanghai's mode. It symbolized Chinese people's desire for liberty and fashion as well as their outcry over revolting against decayed government. As can be seen, cheongsam per se does not indicate any meaning. It is that Chinese historical and social background that endow it with a particular meaning—to override that corrupted Qi dynasty by outlawing foot-binding and innovating clothing style. In a nutshell, semiotics dovetails with semiosis which can either be meaningful or meaningless. Only against a particular societal backdrop can a semiotic resource be rendered as meaningful.

Being different from semiotics and signs, semiology deals with meaningful embodiments in diverse genres. This contention contains two propositions: 1) signs deal with meaningful embodiments. 2) In different genres, signs may have different meaningful embodiments. In terms of the first proposition, it has been expatiated in the previous paragraphs. A sign should contain both a sign vehicle and a specific meaning. As for the second proposition, it appears to be more self-evident in media discourse. Signature tunes may contain different symbolic meanings: Some capture the main ideas of films while others foresee the personal trajectories of main characters. As for the tunes concerning the content of, say, a television serial, the theme song of that enduringly-popular American TV series *Friends* is a case in point. That piece of melody is extracted from the song *I Will Be There for You*. With the cheerful melody and repeated rhythm, that signature tune touches upon one of the characteristics of friendship which is companion, a person or a group of people with whom one can share his or her pleasure and sadness. In this sense, signature tunes, as a whole, are one sort of meaningful symbolic representations in the genres of filmmaking. As can be observed from the aforesaid case, the signature tune of *Friends* has little to do with language, even though signature tune is one of the meaningful forms in semiotics. Then, a conclusion can be drawn that the sign, being meaningful embodiment of semiotics, is a comparatively general concept as it encompasses symbolic representations in various forms and genres. Language is just one of them. So far, this section has already made a

rudimentary distinction between semiology, semiotics and signs. However, is it possible to jump to a hasty conclusion that signs entail language? The answer is no. The relationship between signs and language is so complicated that it cannot be summarized offhand. The following sections will give an elaborate analysis of language as signs.

From the angle of semiology, Winfried Noth (1995) delineated the term “sign” by classifying it in broad and narrow senses. “The word sign is ambiguous. It has either the broader sense of a semiotic entity which unites a sign vehicle with its meaning, or it has the narrow sense of sign vehicle only.” (P79) Semiology can be drawn on Noth’s conceptualization of signs in the broad sense, claiming that both sign vehicles and meanings should be conceived as indispensable contributors to the constitution of a sign with a specific meaning. For example, each toilet image on the doors of any public restrooms contain both a sign vehicle and a specific meaning. As for sign vehicles, the two icons, in their visual forms, imply that they are designated either for women or men. In terms of meanings, these two images, then, embrace two conventional connotations. With respect to the first meaning, people are allowed to enter the rooms with female and male icons painted on doors to pee or to defecate. The second meaning: You are not allowed to get into such a room that the icons are in red because it indicates that the restroom is occupied or has been locked. It is necessary to emphasize that the signs without their corresponding sign vehicles or specific meanings will not be considered in this paper because of space limitation.

1.2 Semiotics in the Early Period

The following section argues that signs could not be mapped onto linguistic forms neither could they be merely related to objects in the real world. And the way in which they could be analyzed will be presented in section 1.2.1

1.2.1 Semiotic Triangle

Ogden and Richards (1964) formulated the classical semiotic triangle which involved three elements, namely symbol, referent and sense in a way giving a thorough analysis of the relationship between signs and referential meanings. The following paragraphs may give a clearer picture of this semiotic triangle.

In the triangle, the “symbol” (or “form”) refers to the linguistic elements (word, sentence, etc.), the “referent” refers to the object in the world of experience, and “sense” refers to thought or concept. It can be observed that there are three pairs of concepts, viz., sense and symbol versus sense and reference versus symbol and reference.

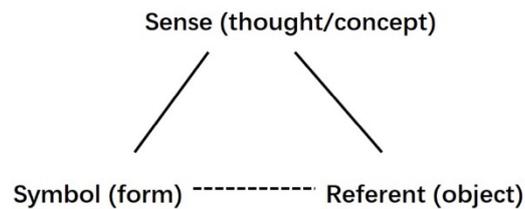


Figure 2 Ogden and Richard's Semiotic Triangle

(Retrieved from <http://www.fb10.uni-bremen.de/anglistik/ling/ws08/intro-CL-materials/quick-intro-to-logic-and-semantics.pdf> in September, 2019)

As for sense and symbol, they have a direct relation. Symbols, notably linguistic expressions, can be used to depict the mental image stored in people's mind. By saying dogs, the linguistic expression refers to an image of a four legged, usually furry animal. And this kind of image is a kind of concept or mental representation, being equivalent to sense. Likewise, when a speaker wants to describe dogs, he or she will attempt to use linguistic expressions to depict images of dogs. In short, symbol serves to provoke the formation of mental representation, namely sense, in people's mind and vice versa. It should be noted that any linguistic expressions with referents should have senses. In other words, a person can know the relationship of linguistic expressions with the world, specifically the referents, only if he or she knows the senses of them. If a speaker has a mental image of what books are (books are usually covered on the outside with paper, the sense which is related to the expression books), he will be able to pick out those things that are related to books in the world. Provided that a speaker has no sense of the image, he or she may find himself or herself unable to pick up particular book and use linguistic expressions to describe it. Therefore, any linguistic expressions with referents must exist in the real world and have their modalities. Only when they have forms and senses can the so-called mental representations be triggered in people's minds.

Not only does sense bear relation to symbol, it also has something to do with referents. However, not all senses have their corresponding referents. This can be illustrated in three conditions. In the first condition, some senses do not have their referents in the real world. Ghost is the case in point. When it comes to the mental representation of ghost, people will relate it to the creature that is horrifying which only exists in the supernatural sphere. The image that flashes through your mind is a kind of

sense. In the real world, however, there is no ghost that people can pick out. (to the best of our knowledge). In the second condition, some abstract senses do not have their referents. Love cannot be a better example. When people say 'love', they tend to describe a strong feeling of deep affection for somebody or something. It is a sense that people bear in mind. Nevertheless, love is not a visible entity that people can pick out but rather a kind of feeling that all human beings share. Therefore, it is possible to draw the conclusion that some abstract feelings like 'love' have no referents. Even though the abstract words have no referents in reality, people can still associate them with the concepts in their mind. Regarding the aforementioned two conditions, I can draw a conclusion that symbols may trigger mental representations in people's minds, yet they are not always mapped onto their corresponding referents. In the third condition, one mental representation may refer to more than one referent. When it comes to principles, it is natural to associate this kind of people with the ones who enjoys the highest rank among the whole faculty members. However, if no specific context is involved, there will be many principles working in different universities. In this sense, principles as a whole may be related to one mental representation but it has more than one referent. And only in a specific context could the symbol of "principals" denotes its sense in the real world. After elaborating on the three conditions aforesaid, I will turn the spotlight on the relationship between symbols and referents. According to the triangle above, one may easily spot that there is a dotted line between symbols and referents. This means that it is unable to deduce directly from symbols to referents or the other way around. Before demonstrating the reasons why symbols and referents bear no direct relations, a cursory glance should be given to referential approach first. By referential approach, it means that reference is the only one observable variable element in the world. In other words, referential approach endows linguistic expressions with meanings by relating them to the real world.

However, referential approach is found wanting. As for the demerits of this approach, they can be detailed in four respects. First, some linguistic expressions do have meanings, but they do not have referents in the real world. Werewolf, a person sometimes changes into a wolf at the time of full moon, has meaning indeed. Nonetheless, it does not have a referent since it only exists in folklore and it is impossible to pick out a particular werewolf in the real world. Second, in the real world, some linguistic expressions may share the same referent. "Shelly's mother" is a good example. We may use diverse expressions to identify Shelly's mother, such as my

sister's babysitter, a woman who lives next door, and a member staff who is working for a publisher and so forth. No matter what kind of expressions there are, they all refer to the same person. That is to say, a referent may possess several meanings. And it shows that referential approach is found wanting because it does not clarify the point that one referent may have many linguistic expressions, which, in consequence, may give rise to misunderstandings and confusions. Third, different referents may share the same symbol or word form. When it comes to strip, it may refer to two different referents. One is a long narrow piece of paper while the other is a long narrow area of land. These two expressions share the same word form whereas they have different referents. Within the referential framework, one may find it difficult to pick out an accurate referent, in that the word/ symbol of strip indicates diverse referents, As the referent remains unclear, semantic ambiguity may arise. Fourth, some linguistic expressions, including function words, adjectives and verbs, have no referents though they have symbols and their corresponding meanings. For instance, the preposition "with" is the complement of instrument, denoting a manner of using tools but it is beyond imagination for people to pick out a real object in the world according to referential approach. By taking the shortcomings of referential approach into consideration, one may have a clearer picture of the indirect relationship between symbols and referents in the semiotic triangle. The dotted line indicates that there's no one-to-one mapping between symbols and referents unless a specific context is given. Referential approach only claims that the meaning of an expression is what it refers to, and tackling meaning in an isolated way and ignoring context may have impact on referents and symbols. Thus, we can arrive at the conclusion that sense is related to symbol and referent while symbol bears no direct relation to referent. Admittedly, it is an insightful theory in that a thorough analysis of the tripartite notion referent-sense-symbol is detailed. Apart from the exhaustive analysis, this theory also reveals the fact that a sheer one-to-one mapping between referents and symbols is almost impossible.

1.3 Social Semiotics

As an emerging subject, social semiotics has come in the foreground as it has transcended the old-fashioned view of language which is not considered as an ensemble of encoded linguistic forms. By doing so, social semiotics has captured the denotation of language against this fluid and globalized backdrop because it enriches the traditional concept of language by reinterpreting it as an integral part of semiotic resources as a

whole. After a brief introduction to social semiotics, this section, then, continues to answer the hereunder questions: What is social semiotics? What does it study? What kind of features does social semiotics bear and for what purpose? By doing so, this section paves the way for introducing multimodal semiotics.

1.3.1 Language as Social Semiotics

First of all, it is necessary to have a basic understanding of social semiotics which, by definition, is a subject dedicated to studying the meaning-making process of semiotic signs by positing them in social interactive situations. It was Michel Alexander Kirkwood Halliday (1978) who first articulated the term social semiotics and drew it in the picture of language study. Halliday offered a more crystalized insight into the definition and the mission of social semiotic studies:

“A ‘sociosemiotic’ perspective implies an interpretation of the shifts, the irregularities, the disharmonies and the tensions that characterize human interaction and social process. It attempts to explain the semiotics of the social structure.... It attempts also to explain linguistic processes whereby the members construct the social semiotic, whereby social reality is shaped, constrained and modified” (Halliday, M.A.K.,1978: 126)

It is important to emphasize that Halliday upheld that language should be and must be studied within socially communicative contexts which involved both interactants and linguistics forms, viz. grammar, pronunciation and sentence constructions. To justify his argument, Halliday proposed a systemic functional approach, emphasizing that interaction, in its linguistic form, can only be configured within a particular social situation, as evidenced by the aforesaid quote. Then, in terms of linguistic process, Halliday interpreted it as a set of semantic systems which embraced three constituents, namely ideational, interpersonal and textual components. To find grounds for his viewpoint of the semantic system, Halliday, then, explained the meaning of these three components respectively and also elucidated the function which each component performs. By ideational, it refers to the content or the meaning of utterances produced by interlocutors (the observer function of language), whereas interpersonal addressed the relationship and power distance between interlocutors, “the intruder function” in Halliday (1978)’s term. And the textual constituent mainly deals

with the degree to which the paragraphs within a single text are coherent with each other and the textual function also concerns with the extent to which a text is relevant to the other texts (the relevance function). Yet, the semantic system just provided a framework, or a toolkit that one could capitalize on when he or she interpreted the meaning of a specific social sign. In fact, the meaning of a social sign varies from situation to situation and semantic system falls short of explaining the meaning in an exhaustive fashion. At this point, social structure came into rescue by marrying itself with the skeleton of semantic system and thereby yielding full-fledged meaning. In short, a meaning can be configured in a specific situational type, insofar as the semantic system is connected with social structure. Admittedly, the theoretical framework of Halliday was thought-provoking as it highlighted the role that social situations, viz., tenor, mode and field play in meaning-making. Nevertheless, Halliday did not go further to explore the other possible alternatives for meaning-making but focused merely on the social semiotic meaning in linguistic form. In this regard, it is necessary to highlight the main concern of social semiotics. In this increasingly globalized world, social semiotics studies not only how signs can be creatively made in order to fulfill the purpose of an on-going interaction but also how they are used in turn-taking. Based on this principle, social semiotics reiterates that language is not pre-given or static but socially formed and reformed. Similarly, the forms and the functions of language also undergo changes, being adaptive to sociocultural development. A case in point can be the evolution of Chinese inscription. The earliest Chinese inscriptions could be dated back to Shang and Zhou Dynasties, during which period of time, the Chinese people communicated with one another not with bone and shell scripts. It was not until Qin dynasty that a standard language system had been established. During that historical period, people use Xiao Zhuan (a standardized language that reigned in Qin dynasty) to interact with each other. From then on, Chinese writing system has constantly undertaken evolutions. It was not until the early 20th century that traditional Chinese characters had occupied a dominant position in classical writings. Yet, at the dawn of early 20th century, the traditional Chinese characters gradually gave way to a more simplified version, as at that time the young people, especially students called for discarding the decadent ideas of traditional Chinese culture which also included the fossilized and old-fashioned classical style of Chinese writing. As can be seen, language is socially produced and in turn reflects sociocultural evolutions. Now, it's the time to go back to social semiotics; otherwise, the whole section will go off the track, which

should cover language as semiosis, semiotics and sets of social semiotic resource. As is mentioned before, one of the limitations of Halliday's theoretical framework concerning semiotics might be language, in the sense that Halliday merely probed into the meaning-making process of linguistic forms, viz., language instead of elaborating on other means for realizing meaning-making. At this point, it is impossible to say that Halliday did not limit social semiotics within the scope of linguistics. Compared with social semiotics of Halliday, the means of realizing meaning in the field of multimodal semiotics involved not only language but also the other approaches to realizing communication, such as comic strips, songs, gestures and facial expressions. The following section will give a thorough elaboration on multimodal social semiotics, because it played a fundamental role in my research project as I deployed a multimodal approach to teaching the Italian learners of Chinese.

1.3.2 Multimodal Social Semiotics

In the early 21st century, social semiotics ushered in a new stage where linguistic forms were no longer the only means for meaning-making. Instead, it was regarded as only one of the constituents for realizing meaning-making and at the same time other alternative channels for meaning-making came in the foreground, extending the concept of social semiotics to social semiotic resources which involved not only linguistic forms but also images, songs, clothing and other modalities. With regard to social semiotic resources, Theo Van Leeuwen (2005) took the lead by pointing out the limitation of Halliday and Hasan (1989)'s understanding of signs. Then, Van Leeuwen renamed social semiotics as social semiotic resources, as he reckoned that the social semiotics confined signs to pre-existed forms which remained intact, regardless of sociocultural influence. "In social semiotics the term 'resource' is preferred, because it avoids the impression that 'what a sign stands for' is somehow pre-given, and not affected by use" (P1) So what does it mean by social semiotic resources? To what extent is it different from social semiotics in traditional sense? Here, I contend that social semiotic resource is irreducible linguistic forms. In fact, social semiotic resources can manifest themselves in a piece of melody, dance, clothing, and non-linguistic expressions, like gestures, eye contacts, postures, and facial expressions, etc. Gunther Kress (2010) was acclaimed for his interpretation of semiotic resources. He postulated that semiotic resource was supposed to fulfil the task of communication in a fluid and global landscape. He then compared and contrasted 'grammar' with 'representations' by

emphasizing that ‘grammar’ dealt with “rules, conventions, certainty: phenomena that are fixed, settled.” (P7) and the ‘representations’ concerned with the “constantly remade; never willfully, arbitrarily, anarchically but precisely” resources (P8). And the interpretation of social semiotic resources of Kress were “affordances” or the potentials for making meaning. According to Leeuwen (2005), sets of social semiotic resources were unfixed and they remained unexplored and undiscovered. As can be seen, Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen shared a similar understanding in respect to the definition of social semiotic resource. Both of them considered resources as flexible and ever-changing, being used to fulfill the specific purposes of interaction at a specific time and in a specific place. While social semiotics focused on the communicative function of language and dwelled on the recognized meanings and rules which were too fixed and latent to keep abreast with social changes. This is the reason for which multimodal semiotics differs from social semiotics. So far, this section has given a rather comprehensive answer to the question proposed above: “What is social semiotic resource and what is it used for?”

Now, this section will continue to demonstrate the ways in which semiotic resources can be used, paying special attention to the role that social semiotic resource plays in foreign language teaching and learning. By doing so, it paves the way for elaborating on the approach that I deployed in conducting my teaching activities.

Given that social semiotic resource is, to some extent, flexible and elastic, it should be fully exploited to tailor to the needs of interactants. Therefore, any other single modality, by and large, is no longer sufficient to recognize the fluid resource. Then, the notion “multimodality” emerges with the requirement of communication. Before expounding on how multimodality can be utilized to satisfy communicative need, a caution should be exerted: Modes, as a whole, is not analogous to media. Media and mode are two separate concepts and should be scrutinized seriously lest multimodality should be confused with multimedia.

First and foremost, this section will give a sketch of modes, mode ensembles and sign complexes. These three concepts are relevant to my project when the Italian learners of Chinese tried their best to communicate with their peers and with me by drawing on different kinds of modes, mode ensembles and sign complexes. For example, they narrated their own personal stories with hesitations, pauses and the changes of intonation, each of which is a sort of *mode of speech*. In the meantime, they talked with me by means of gestures. Both *mode of speeches* and that of *gestures*

altogether created an integrated meaning which is called a sign complex. (Bezemer & Kress, 2016) When an Italian student narrated (mode of speech) how his parents viewed the issues concerning marriage in my project, he moved his hands up and down (*mode of gesture*) and emphasized the positive aspects of his family education with changes of intonation (*mode of speech*). In this case, this Italian student delivered his intended meanings by associating the aforesaid two modes which constitutes mode ensembles. And the intended meanings he created were the representations of sign complexes as a whole. Besides, as the main topic of my project is a pair of chopsticks, I wrote the Chinese characters *kuai zi* with strokes on the blackboard and simultaneously pronounced its pinyin to the ILC and at the same time, I also used the chopsticks to pick up peanuts. In this case, I utilized three kinds of mode, namely *the mode of speech* (my pronunciation of chopsticks), *the visual mode* (the Chinese characters *kuai zi* written on the blackboard) and *the kinesthetic mode* which is the action of picking up peanuts. Based on these three-aspect mode ensembles, I realized a sign complex – the concept of a pair of chopsticks.

After giving a sketch of mode, mode ensembles and sign complexes, the following paragraphs will offer a more detailed and critical analysis of these three basic concepts which are fundamental in multi-modal communication.

First, mode is the basic carrier of meaning, the “best-fit” unit contributing to making signs in a specific genre or register. (Kress, 2010: 55). It should be noted that mode is the smallest unit in social semiotics and cannot be further dissected into smaller parts. With respect to mode, Kress gave a precise and concise definition:

Mode is a socially shaped and culturally given semiotic resource for making meaning. Image, writing, layout, music, gesture, speech, moving image, soundtrack and 3D objects are examples of modes used in representation and communication. (P79)

However, two caveats should be recognized in terms of mode: First, mode cannot be specified, it is just a collective term where all concrete representations of mode perform a similar function. It can be used in any situational types, being free from genres. For example, the mode of speech is demonstrated by a variety of concrete representations of this mode, such as tone, pitch, melody, timber and so forth. These

forms, as a whole can be categorized into the mode of speech as they perform the same function: articulating sounds. This type of mode can be applied in business conferences, in classrooms and even in clinical situations, as people can capitalize on it in different ways, depending on their needs and interests.

Another caveat should be noted is that mode normally co-occurs with the other kinds of modes, forming another new term that Bezemer & Kress (2016) proposed and I will explain subsequently: mode ensembles. It is undeniable that a single mode is far from being enough to realize a comprehensible meaning in a communicative situation because each mode bears distinctive features. In one specific situation, some modes may outweigh others while in another circumstance their importance will be downplayed. In this sense, one single mode (fit) falls short of providing a full picture of a semiotic landscape. (P23) Provided that the wife is complaining with her husband about the high expenditure of time and money on taking care of their garden, she may say: “What a terribly incredible garden we have!” In reference to this exclamation (mode of speech), one may find it hard to interpret the intended meaning of this wife, as the exclamation sentence denotes different meanings in different situational types. As Bezemer and Kress (2016) put it: “Without one or other of the modes, the socially complex demands of this encounter would be difficult to manage” (P22) Here comes another case: Supposing the wife frowns as she is reading a bill sent by a garden company. Suddenly, she jumped off the couch, yelling angrily at his husband: “What a terribly incredible garden we have!” In this case, it would be much easier to capture what this wife intended to convey, as in this circumstance more than one mode is used, as evidenced by *the mode of facial expression* (she frowned), *the mode of speech* (yelling) and *the mode of kinesics* (jump off the couch). The three modes are indispensable, and together they jointly facilitate the interpretation of the meaning that the interlocutor intended to convey. And this combination of modes, in Kress’s perspective, is viewed as mode ensembles or multimodalities to some extent. Once the mode ensembles are put together, they will generate a set of coherent and holistic meaning which is nothing but a sign complex. Supposing a teacher is explaining the method of articulating a sound, s(he) not only verbally illustrates some technical terms, like alveolar ridge, velar, the dorsal part of tongue and so on, but also demonstrates the specific places of these articulators by displaying a short clip concerning the process of articulation. This case involves an ensemble of modes, as verbal words can be seen as mode of speech, film clips audio-visual mode and teachers’ modes of gestures and

facial expressions as a whole form a mode ensemble. Yet, these modes are reciprocally complementary, jointly forming a sign complex. It is necessary to recognize that a sign complex cannot be simplified to an ensemble of modes. Rather, the meanings created by an ensemble of modes are much richer than those in the sign complexes. To quote an Aristotle's catchphrase, "the whole is more than the sum of its constituent parts" (n.d.)

What should be noted is that people could realize meaning in accordance with their own learning paths. A case in point can be tandem learning. Chinese Learners of English and English learners of Chinese can improve each other's L2 language and convey their ideas via computer after taking account of their distinctive learning knowledge in the past.

So far, a short summary can be made of multimodal social semiotics. In contrast with social semiotic system in traditional sense, social semiotic resource enjoys its acclaim for the following five reasons: First, sets of social semiotic resources have innovated the traditional ways for meaning making by adding the notion "resource" to the picture of social semiotics. By doing so, it has discarded the traditional view of signs which are pre-given and static, thereby emphasizing that meaning can be made in all mode forms. That is to say, multimodal social semiotics sees all modes as dynamic, fluid, open and can be made and remade constantly in this fluid and globalized landscape. Second, a multimodal lens to social semiotics shows interest in how meanings can be made or created by people based on their own needs and interests and how meaning can be realized to meet the communicative ends of a particular situation as much as possible whilst the traditional social semiotics takes less account of participants' needs, failing to point out that signs are at communication's service but not the other way around. Third, the confusing concept of "sign" which has been loosely used for a long time is challenged and redefined by multimodal social semiotics. Under the umbrella of multimodal social semiotics, the notion "sign" cannot be simply regarded as a signifier anchored to a signified concept, but rather the basic constituent of a sign complex which encompasses coherent and integrated meanings that fit a particular interactive situation best. Fourth, the tradition view of social semiotics made meanings in a mono or at best bi-modal manner, as evidenced by the role that linguistic forms play in meaning making. Multimodal social semiotics, however, is related to but differs from this traditional view because it sees each mode has its distinctive function and "each mode has specific affordances for making meaning." (Adami, 2019:37) and

linguistic forms have been degraded as one of the constituents of meaning making. Fifth, multimodal social semiotics outweighs traditional social semiotics in that it stressed the way in which modes are used depend greatly on the needs and interests of participants, which has already been mentioned.

However, no theory is perfect neither is multimodal social semiotics. It is true that Gunther Kress and Leo Van Leeuwen proposed the theory of multimodal social semiotics which offered alternative ways for making meaning, as evidenced by sets of resources in all mode forms. Yet, it is truer that Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen built their theoretical framework without fully exploring the affordances of language but turned to seek for the affordance of other modes. It is necessary to point out that Kress and Gunther emphasized that each mode had its own functional loads. Such claim presumes, however, that all modes have meaning potentials. As language is one of the constituents of meaning-making, it should be studied thoroughly as the other modes have been. In this sense, it might be possible that Kress and Van Leeuwen sidestepped the following two questions: Is language tantamount to linguistic forms? If not, are there any forms of language that could be regarded as affordances? Avoiding answering clearly the questions aforementioned, may, to some extent, indicate that they just ignored these questions by talking about the limitations of linguistic forms. A possibly potential refutation could be: Admittedly, compared with linguistic form as a whole, the other modes can make much richer meanings. Yet, as mentioned before, each mode performs its distinct function and the crux of the matter does not lie in which mode is much better than the others, but what kind of mode ensembles fit a given situation better than the others in terms of meaning-making. In this sense, a closer scrutiny should be exercised to exam the meaning potentials of language in its own right before going on with exploring the functions the other modes could perform. Another limitation is related to “the visual grammar” created by Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) reckoned that some visual texts were exclusively distinctive in certain cultures while the others were not. To render their justification more reasonable, they argued that such a visual grammar was, by no means, universal for it is merely applicable in Western visual communications. Although they kept reiterating this limitation in their visual grammar, they still missed the point which really calls for clarification: Is there one-to-one link between the types of visual texts and cultural patterns? If yes, to which extent are they arbitrary; if not, why? To answer such a question, a thickening methodology should be therewith employed. Strictly

speaking, thickening can be regarded both as a sort of methodology and a kind of phenomenon, serving to describe and analyze the issues concerning cultural communication. According to Hepp (2015), it was viewed as a sort of phenomenon as “many cultural patterns that occur empirically are characteristic of different cultures, or that they can be found in one way or another in different cultures.” (P13) In Holliday’s viewpoint, it was regarded as an interpretative methodology, serving to describe and analyze the specific problems attributed to intercultural encounters. For example, Muslim women in Holliday’s examples do not wear abaya as they are supposed to. By doing so, they are able to resist against the stereotypes that have long been imposed on them and at the same time they are able to show their identities. Thickening method can be also applied in this case. Abaya, a cultural sign which has been characterized as one element of Muslim culture for a long time has lost its dominating position in this postmodern society. Compared with the Muslim women who were forced to wear abaya in a hierarchical society, those at the present times have much more freedom. They can choose to wear or un-wear the abaya based on their own interests and needs, their distinct social political stance, and conceptualization of feminism. Another more typical case is Qipao. Qipao was usually associated with traditional Chinese culture, being characterized as the epitome of Chinese artefacts. One cannot negate that some types of visual texts, accompanied by their styles, genres and compositions, are not exclusive to certain cultures. Rather, they exist in all cultures. And what should be noted is that culture is an all-inclusive concept, involving not only the abstract value systems and ideologies but also artistic works, such as paintings, music or literature, all of which are the representations of culture at various levels. Given that culture is composed in this fluid and globalized landscape as we have elaborated hereinabove, the visual texts, as one of the manifestations of culture, cannot be immune to hybridity either. In this sense, any piece of visual text, in effect, is a conglomeration containing a cluster of diverse elements which were typical to certain cultures in the past but can be applicable in different cultures nowadays. Therefore, Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen (2006)’s visual grammar, as far as I am concerned, took the risk of essentialism. Their contention that some visual texts are typical to western communication presumed that cultures were pre-defined and fixed. However, what should be recognized is that culture is flexible and undergoes changes from time to time, especially in this postmodern society.

Such explanation, however, is still feeble as it overlooks the most salient character that this postmodern society takes on. That is, fluidity. Simply speaking, “fluidity” refers to incessantly changes. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) underpinned that a specific mode was more apt than the others in a given situation and the most appropriate mode should be given priority over the others. However, they barely realized the fact that mode, as one of the representations in the fluid society, also underwent perpetual changes. Thus, it is impossible to say which mode is more apt in a situation and which mode is not. A case in point is fashion as it always keeps abreast with the requirements of times and changes constantly. Therefore, whether it is appropriate or not depends on users’ interests and needs in an on-going interactive process.

1.3.3 Translanguaging

After re-examining Gunther Kress, Theo Van Leeuwen and other scholars’ insights into multimodal social semiotics, Ari Sherris and Elisabetta Adami (2019) observed that Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen failed to deploy social semiotic approach to describing and analyzing the intercultural phenomena in ethnographic contexts. To fill in this lacuna, Sherris and Adami argued that social semiotic multimodal approach serves to link language to cross-, trans-, intercultural communication by proposing the concept of translanguaging. However, it was Samantha Goodchild and Mirian Weidl (2019) who viewed translanguaging as an approach to analyzing fluid, dynamic and flexible linguistic practices. Although they do not describe the term in systematic way, they, indeed, explained the rationale behind the emergence of translanguaging. Due to immigration and emigration, the people whose mother languages are different from those who come to communicate frequently with one another. Through the lens of translanguaging, people with different linguacultural backgrounds come to make sense and re-make meanings that are apt for a given situation by means of code-meshing, clothing, gestures and facial expressions. Interlocutors’ linguaculture repertoire could be enriched and be expanded into because of the co-alignment of their subjective positioning and emotional tones which are contextually shaped and reshaped. Nevertheless, what should be noted is that language learning is a long haul and it takes time and energy to do so. Therefore, people cannot shift their language perfectly. In this way, these multilinguals have gradually developed a mixed language, just as what Goodchild and Weidl (2019) said:

Social interactions and behavior patterns support people's choices and the mixture of language, while influencing and probably extending their own linguistic repertoires. Communication, can therefore only be situated in context and in-depth sociolinguistic research and analysis must take account of it." (P134)

That is to say, trans-languaging captures the main features of this postmodern society which are fluid, dynamic, open and adaptive. In this global landscape, almost everyone is culturally and linguistically hybrid and any communication can only be analyzed in a particular place at a particular time. Such a fluid viewpoint is applicable across various fields. And it also gains favor in education domain.

At the end of this section, a cursory glance will be given to the role that such fluid viewpoint plays in language teaching and learning which, then, will be analyzed thoroughly in the third chapter Language Teaching and Learning. When it comes to language teaching, people tend to associate it with the instruction of grammatical rules, syntactic structures, the use of vocabulary and so forth. Such a view has long been taken for granted for a century. Nevertheless, at the dawn of 21st century, the field of language teaching has witnessed a great number of drastical changes which has transcended the traditional prescriptive teaching methods and turned into those descriptive and communicative-oriented ones. In order to adapt to such teaching approaches, instructors are expected to encourage students to voluntarily capitalize on the learning resources and to participate in teaching activities. With the formation of such learning and teaching climate, language is not regarded as a set of pre-given rules but symbolic expressions that teacher and students can creatively be made and remade as students engage themselves in learning activities. Thus, language, under the fluid scope, is not reduced to any specific language with its distinctive grammatical rules, fixed expressions and collocations anymore. Rather, it can be reckoned as the main means of language teaching and learning. At this point, particular attention should be paid to language which can be delineated in two senses. In one sense, language is considered as the means of fostering students' learning progress. That is "languaging", which will also be elaborated in the third chapter; in another sense, language is viewed as the affordances carrying meaning potentials and it is students who can decide on which kind of affordance they will take advantage of, based on their own needs and interests in a specific learning environment and so do language instructors. Both senses of language incorporated in this fluid scope serve as guidelines, according to which I conducted my teaching program, as Italian students in my class were encouraged to

convey their ideas by taking advantage of the “affordances” at hand. An Italian boy sang a song about Chinese dynasties. By doing so, he showed his knowledge about the sequential order of Chinese dynasties. Another two students, instead, designed a drama concerning the ways of educating children. In doing so, they critically reflected on their own culture and meanwhile, they have their cosmopolitan awareness aroused.

All in all, this section has interpreted language as semiotics, social semiotic resource, social semiotic modality and “translanguaging”, and also this section has introduced a fluid viewpoint of language and communication by citing and analyzing three influential theories in a chronological manner. They are the “semiotic triangle”, Halliday and Hasan’s three meta-functions of language, social semiotic multimodalities delineated by Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen as well as Elisabetta Adami’s social semiotic approach which incorporates language into communication in a multimodal manner. The present PhD research has taken account of the social semiotic multimodal approach. By combining this method with the “translanguaging” viewpoint, this PhD research attempts to make contributions to intercultural communication which calls for intersubjective alignment and can only be fulfilled in a multimodal fashion.

2. Language and Power

In the previous sections, language has been interpreted as symbolic expressions involving not only linguistic forms but also those of non-linguistics, such as artefacts, gestures, clothing and so on. (see section 1.3.3) Both linguistic and non-linguistic forms are encapsulated in the notion of multimodal resources. Undeniably, multimodal semiotic resources have enriched the traditional concept of language in a way of underpinning the indispensable role that non-linguistic factors play in realizing meanings. Nevertheless, the interpretation that takes *language as symbolic expressions* falls short of illuminating the multifarious characteristics of language, as it overlooks one of the most fundamental roles that language plays --- power sustaining, struggling and resistance. In this chapter, language will be viewed as power, the tool for legitimizing unequal power relations in society and the site for power sustaining and struggles.

2.1 Unequal Power Relations in Language

As what I have reiterated in the introduction, foreign language learning is not limited to learning the vocabularies, grammatical patterns and phonological rules of a specific language. Rather, it enables students to reflect on the power relations embedded in utterances and to critically analyze the imbalanced power which is inherent in language, as evidenced by language legitimacy (Deardorff & Arasanatnam-Smith, 2003; Kramsch, 2018). Besides, the self-reflection on the inherent power relations in language expressions is the first step for students to realize the limitations of their habitual patterns and customs that they have long taken for granted. And critical analysis enables them to further understand the communication conducted by interlocutors with different lingua-cultural backgrounds and it does not depend on the fixed values systems, etc. Confucianism that they have received and championed within a social community but on how they can flexibly negotiate and change their subjective positions according to the interests and needs of their interactants regardless of spatial and temporal limitations. A case in point is how students construct and re-construct their on-line identities according to the social distance and power positions between them and other on-line users. This flexibility in terms of meaning negotiation between the interactants with different power positions is one of the indispensable constituents of intercultural awareness, which enables students to try their best to take advantage of all kinds of communicative means at hand viz. gestures, facial expressions and to create new ways of communicating after exchanging opinions and negotiating about the intended meanings with each other. (Bakhtin, 1983) The present chapter will give a detailed analysis of Norman Fairclough (2001)'s insights into the relationship between language and power relations as well as the main ideas of the scholars who work in the field of critical discourse analysis. By doing so, this chapter will further shed light on how the power embedded in language influences the ways in which students learn their foreign languages (learning Putonghua in my case) and how they interpret and critically analyze the learning materials etc. comic strips and literary texts they have received.

2.1.1 Bourdieu's Symbolic Power

In the middle of the 20th century, a great number of scholars were influenced by constructivism, advocating the proposition that languages could be regarded as a series of pre-established codes or logical signs which is largely irrelevant to their social and historical background and they could be analyzed in isolation. (Austin, 1962) Pierre

Bourdieu (1991) enquired into the rationale of this assertion, arguing that language, instead, co-adapts to sociopolitical development and serves to unveil the ingrained ideologies or political power in a particular society. In the book *the Symbolic Power*, Pierre Bourdieu (1991) demolished the notion of “language standardization” by pinpointing that the so-called legitimate and standard language, in effect, was constantly influenced by sociopolitical power and continuously affected by economic policies. To support his argument, Bourdieu then introduced two main points, namely the formation of habitus and the symbolic capitals. However, a crystalized definition of legitimacy should be given before detailing the two key points as it paves the way for juxtaposing and therewith elaborating on the two conflictual points, viz. the legitimate and standard language versus communicative-oriented language and its variants. Revolving around this argument, he, first and foremost, proposed the notion patois, underpinning the way in which language was used and that the situations where the language was used were largely determined by political and social norms. In one word, it is the socio-economic, political and educational factors that construct and reconstruct languages but not the pre-established linguistic codes which are independent of historical evolutions and sociocultural changes. This opinion has been proved to be tenable in various fields, especially in the sphere of sociological studies. As is mentioned before, standardizing language is related to sociopolitical and economic policies and the emergence of hidden hegemony. In this regard, Pieticanien and Kelly-Holmes (2013) captured the reason for standardizing language and gave a clear account of it:

Still, as we know, standardizing language in particular was a powerful way of making nation-states, given the way it combines both centralizing and uniformizing possibilities, and simultaneously allows for the masking of the privilege and power inherent in making decisions about what counts as a (proper) language, and what does not. (p. 20)

As can be seen, standard language has been created, developed and reinforced by dominant sociopolitical power in an effort to realize social stratification. And the assertion that it is the dominating powerhouses that produce and reproduce language and its variations can also gain its grounds in the domain of foreign language teaching and learning. As a lingua franca in postmodern society, English has been regarded as the sole authorized institutionalized language that plays a dominant role in educational,

academic, and business settings. Although some European languages, say French, Spanish or German have gradually come in the foreground in academic fields, English still occupies an irreplaceable position in publishing and research domains. More job opportunities are given to native speakers of English rather than to the non-native ones, who, in fact, have reached the same language proficiency level. A batch of enterprises favor the candidates who are native speakers of English but pay little attention to their professional capabilities and technical know-how. And consequently, the native speakers of English who gain an edge only by speaking English and they also enjoy a sense of superiority when they communicate with the people whose mother tongue is another language other than English. In this circumstance, language is not an impartial medium through which individuals speak or talk with one another but a disguised legitimation for political hegemony and marketization.

Admittedly, Pierre Bourdieu (1991) pinpointed that language was co-adaptive to sociopolitical development in one way and language served to legitimize uneven powerhouses inherent in discourses and to mask the privileged who had decisive voices in social engagements in another way. My teaching program is a good case in point. As one of my teaching materials, the comic strips serve to depict Chinese sociopolitical backgrounds at the beginning of 19th century. During that period, the disparity between the rich and the poor was too large to be bridged, as the poor had to sell themselves to make a living whereas the rich wore fur coats. By showing the comic strips to the ILC, I would like to encourage them to learn about the social situation during that historical period and then to prompt them to analyze the reasons behind formation of that Chinese societal background instead of merely inculcating them with factual knowledge – the great gap between the rich and the poor. By doing so, I spurred the ILC to reflect first on this cultural phenomenon in a more complex way. Furthermore, I hoped that they could critically reflect on the comic strips which were discourses themselves and I desired to enlighten them about the fact that these comic strips were just representations of social reality (Fairclough, 2001) And other discourses, viz. literary texts, might represent this historical period in other ways. Thus, the Italian students of Chinese were required to recognize the intended meanings of these comic strips. Meanwhile, they were asked to learn the other discourses that focused on the same historical period and in this way they could develop a more critical perspective to analyze Chinese social backgrounds in that historical period. Therefore, Bourdieu (1991)'s opinions on standardization of language and legitimacy are instructive to my project design.

However, no arguments are flawless. Although Bourdieu (1991)'s opinions were insightful as they unveiled that the so-called legitimized language was the cloak for imbalanced power, they did not take one of the fundamental characteristics of human society into consideration, that is, dynamicity. From pre-history to the modern age, human society has never ceased to keep changing. This kind of evolution manifested itself in philosophical ethos, cultural artefacts, clothing and etc. As one sort of cultural artefacts and the conveyor belt to human communication, language could not only be produced and reproduced by the dominating power for its own purposes, but also be viewed as the weapon for power struggle and overriding. Language could, in return, challenge the power structure of a specific community by creatively constructing discourse forms, thereby reshaping power relations. In this sense, Bourdieu did not capture the whole picture of language as power. In one sense, he elaborated on the concept of legitimacy only from sociopolitical perspective by merely defining it as the rationalized power of officialized institutions, leaving the subjective legitimacy unmentioned. In another sense, Bourdieu paid little attention to the role that language played in shaping and reshaping discourses because he just regarded language as a mirror reflecting sociocultural changes and the means legitimizing and reinforcing hegemonic power. However, language, in effect, not only reflects imbalanced power, but also serves to reconstruct power relations by means of discourse in its diverse forms. And I reckon that such a role that language plays ought to be the guiding principle for instruction and education as it prompts students to understand that the common sense that they have long championed is, in effect, the representations of dominating ideologies of their community. In the following paragraphs, Fairclough's works will be discussed in detail as Fairclough's approaches of discourse analysis will be deployed to analyze the data that I have collected during my teaching intervention process.

2.2.2 Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis

Norman Fairclough (1992, 1995, 2001, 2013)'s approaches of *critical discourse analysis* (CDA) is used to unveil the fact that the widely recognized common sense is ideologically constructed and in my project I was able to describe the relations in the discourse of my participants and the *situation of culture* (Halliday & Hasan 1989) against which these participants relied on to interpret the teaching materials on my

pedagogical schedule. By doing so, I would like to know how participants' interpretations and explanations of the materials they received are related to the social contexts where these participants situate themselves. This relation is the main concern of CDA and it is also the method that I used to analyze the discourses that Italian learners of Chinese gave in the process of role-plays, interviews and feedbacks, all of which were covered in my teaching program. Therefore, since CDA in my project is the tool for unveiling the unequal power relations and the inherent multiples voices of a text, I would like to summarize and give a critical analysis of the three notions, viz. *member resources*, *intertextual context* and *ideological common sense* because the three notions are the main terms that I would like to use when I come to describe, interpret and explain the discourses that Italian learners of Chinese gave in my project.

When it comes to *member resources (MR)*, Fairclough saw it as the ones that “people have in their heads and draw upon when they produce or interpret texts - including their knowledge of language, representations of the natural and social worlds they inhabit, values, beliefs, assumptions, and so on” (P20) Thus, *MR* act as the frames of references with which people describe and interpret a cultural phenomenon in different ways.

Closely related to member resources is the concept *intertextual context*. By *intertextual context*, it means that the participants could draw on, (dis)agree with the common experience formulated by their assumptions brought by the interplay between their previous discourses:

participants in any discourse operate on the basis of the assumptions about the previous discourses that current one is connected to, and their assumptions determine what can be taken as given in the sense of part of common experience, what can be alluded to disagree with and so on. (P121)

As for common sense, it is part of the general knowledge with which people can make sense of the world. When it rains heavily one can bring an umbrella to prevent himself or herself from getting wet is a kind of common sense while eating fillet with forks and knives is another type of common sense. At first sight, both belong to the taken-for-granted general knowledge. If a person does not use umbrella to protect himself or herself from getting wet when it rains heavily, he or she will catch a cold due to human beings' physical limitations; similarly, if a person uses forks to slice fillet into pieces instead of using knives, he or she will be regarded a barbarian as knives are

recognized to be used to slice meat while forks to pick up food into the mouth. However, the common sense which is widely recognized is merely the naturalized ideologies shared by a group of people in a community, as evidenced by the common sense that the native speakers of Chinese may teach foreign students' Chinese linguistic grammar. However, whether they are qualified to do so or not depends on their language expertise and communicative skills. And for those Chinese people who have few opportunities to access to Chinese language, they are not capable enough to teach Chinese to foreign learners. And compared with other native speakers of Chinese, those who have a thorough understanding of Chinese will be more entitled to do so.

Since member resources and ideological common sense have been explained, it is necessary to give a cursory glance at CDA as I have reiterated above and CDA is dedicated to unveiling the naturalized, taken-for-granted views inherent in discourses and studies how this kind of views operate on people's thinking patterns, especially on their subjective positions. Specifically speaking, CDA reveals the common sense with inherent dominating ideologies by inferring the meanings of words and phrases, unmasking the social conventions that have long been recognized within a particular social community, such as social etiquette, and challenging the rules that are generally regarded as the only yardstick that measures people's behavior by identifying the imbalanced power relations contextualized in a text. For example, the following conversation is one of the discourses that ILC gave in the role-play:

- A: I do not want to teach them Italian.
- B: But you are not your teacher, you need to listen to what your teachers told you with respect to a specific topic.

Here, speaker B viewed the teachers' words concerning a particular topic as the widely recognized truth based on which students behaved. However, B's view is not critical if it is not inappropriate at all because according to him, the teachers' words are like the holy writ that cannot be challenged. However, suppose some teachers see an issue in an incomprehensive way, they will unconsciously influence their students as to view this issue in a similar way which is incomprehensive as well. In this way, the students will tend to give an incomprehensive or a less penetrating opinion on a topic if they do not have their standpoint, specifically their critical self-awareness and autonomy.

To summarize, this section briefs on Fairclough's insights into *ideological common sense*, *intertextual context* and *member resources (MR)* and then explains the reason why they are important to me when analyzing the data that I collected in my teaching program.

Since CDA can unveil the inherent power relations in written texts, I will adopt Fairclough's approaches to analyze the discourses that I transcribed.

2.2 Legitimacy and Foreign Language Teaching

By legitimacy, Longman dictionary refers to something that is reasonable and acceptable by law. (n.d.) This meaning, however, is open to doubt: To what extent can a thing be regarded as reasonable and acceptable to law? The answer varies from person to person as each person may interpret the notion legitimacy by mapping onto his or her personal and cultural trajectories or experiences. Yet, what should be recognized is that legitimacy can only be realized in a certain social and cultural society. In another words, it is an authorized social institution that entitle a social practice to be legitimate but not the other way around. And language is the major vehicle for legitimization, being socially distributed, culturally crafted and politically manipulated. Here, it is worthwhile to sketch Claire Kramsch's understanding of legitimacy. Kramsch & Zhang (2018) exhaustively analyzed the notion of legitimacy which is multi-faceted in nature. First, she viewed legitimacy as a sociopolitical power that could not be equated to credibility and entitlement, as credibility focused on subjective feelings of being legitimate whereas entitlement stressed the juridical rights that the citizens of a country could enjoy. Then, she challenged J. B. Thompson's (1993) and Bourdieu (1993)'s conceptualizations of legitimacy, claiming that Thomson's understanding of legitimacy remained unclear and casting doubts on Bourdieu's naturalized "legitimacy" which is nothing but ideological common sense (which will be detailed in Fairclough's understanding of ideology) in disguise. After analyzing critically the previous literatures, Kramsch then delineated legitimacy from subjective and objective perspectives. When it comes to legitimacy on the objective plane, it mainly refers to the taken-for-granted common sense in sociocultural environments. "It is who you are in relation to the institution" (P55). In another words, objective legitimacy can be viewed as the basic requirements a person has to meet if he or she wants to be admitted into an authorized institution. For example, LinkedIn is one of the professional social networks worldwide. Normally, the job hunters will create their own electronic profiles online.

Meanwhile, they will browse on the internet and get connected with the companies that they are interested in once they prove the objective legitimacy which is self-evident in the listed job requirements: the candidates should at least obtain the Master degree, the people who can speak Cantonese, fluent English and Mandarin may gain priority, or the candidate is supposed to master Microsoft office software. As for personalities, a requirement can be proposed in this way: “the candidate is expected to be outgoing and can develop good interpersonal relationship with both clients and co-workers.” As can be seen, objective legitimacy is the basic demands or expectations of an authorized institution. If a person lacks objective legitimacy, he or she, then, is unqualified for fulfilling the demands issued by that institution. Then, in terms of the legitimacy at subjective level, it has different meanings in different domains. In order to elaborate on the legitimacy in subjective sense, Kramsch & Zhang (2018) further categorized it into academic, experiential, professional cultural and racial level. Each type has its own prioritization, but all sorts of legitimacy share one thing in common --- unevenness. In another words, the dominated, the dominant and their relationship can be found in any sort of legitimacy in subjective sense. A case in point can be academic legitimacy in a subjective sense. It is noted that the connotation of academic legitimacy varies from field to field. And for the convenience of expression, I will only focus on higher educational institutions, say, the universities. As Kramsch & Zhang (2018) put it “While linguistic proficiency is, for language instructors, the prime source of legitimacy, academic status is an essential second source of self-respect.” (P64). In this sense, academic legitimacy is in relation to one’s subjective performance evaluation. In this regard, Kramsch quoted the words of a Vietnamese instructor who linked her academic legitimacy with students’ position evaluations: “And at the end of every course I would ask them, ‘Ok, after all those readings, has my course brought you any new idea or made you think differently about that issue, that material?’ And they say, so far, all of them, 100 per cent. “(ibid.)

This instructor’s feelings for academic legitimacy shared some similarities with me. Last semester, I taught Chinese (here putonghua) to Italian students whose Chinese language proficiency level was low. To render my teaching program more meaningful and interesting, I not only designed multiple materials, ranging from film clips and literary texts to modern Chinese songs, but also encouraged them to practice Chinese in a bar run by a boy whose mother tongue was Chinese. In the last class, when I asked students what they had learnt by attending my lessons, they gave me different yet

positive answers. Some said: “Personally I like so much your lessons, they are very interesting, and I have learnt how did chopsticks came into being and the Chinese table manner related to chopsticks.” While some focused on their increased intercultural awareness: “I’ve learnt how to view a culture, which is always dynamic and undergoes evolution. So, there should be no prejudices of people without knowing them, as we are all the same and all attach importance to families as well as family love.”

Another one is experiential legitimacy. In the field of foreign language teaching and learning, it mainly refers to the learning experience that language instructors accumulates and how they teach their students by drawing on their own learning experience. When I asked Italian students to take the floor and make some short sentences in Chinese, I found that most of them just translated Italian into Chinese, word-by-word. As a foreign language teacher, I knew how the first language affected the second language due to language interface. Instead of asking them not to do literal translation and telling them the consequences of doing so, I then shared my own personal experiences in learning Italian. I told them how I struggled with Italian syntax as I had written compositions in Italian by following English syntactic system. The reason why I did not hold back from sharing my own personal experience of learning Italian was that I wanted them to realize that it was common to encounter such kind of difficulty at the very beginning of learning a new language and what matters most is the perseverance to keep learning and not giving up. By doing so, I could establish a climate of trust between me and the Italian students and thereby encouraged them to ease themselves. Experiential legitimacy, from my standpoint, is more important than the other kinds of legitimacy in language teaching, as it allows instructors to be true both to themselves and to their students. It is the first step to build a trustful relationship between teachers and students, which makes it possible to dig students’ personal experience out and narrative, to some extent, could enable the teachers to explore students’ deep-seated ideas. These ideas are indispensable for language teachers, especially for those who would like to improve students’ intercultural understanding as it can be used to encourage students to reflect on their own culture and self-reflection is the starting point from which student could learn other cultures critically. In terms of self-reflection, it will be detailed in the section Teaching Activities. In a nutshell, Kramsch has given a thorough analysis of legitimacy by elucidating it from subjective and objective perspectives. And the reasons why this section dwells on explaining the definition of legitimacy can be summarized into the following two points: In one way,

the meaning of legitimacy differs from one field to another. For foreign language teaching and learning, legitimacy means the professional credential that a teacher can provide to their students and it plays an important role in gaining grounds for teachers' professional credential. While in the field of sociology, it refers to the taken-for-granted conventions rationalized by dominating power in a particular society. Second, language per se has no power. Unequal power relations can be legitimized via language by authorized institutions or dominating sociopolitical powers within a particular community. In this sense, legitimacy links language with power and language cannot be viewed as power unless it is used by a legitimized institution to sustain, struggle or resist against the unequal power relations of a specific society. Therefore, legitimacy is the major point of analysis, based on which language can be interpreted as power. Taking the aforesaid two reasons into consideration, I decide to clarify the fusion concept of legitimacy before continuing to interpret language as power. And crystalizing the notion of legitimacy is conducive to elaborating on the nuances of meanings that legitimacy has in different researching fields, namely in foreign education, sociopolitical studies and critical discourse analysis.

3. Language in Communication

Now, this section attempts to interpret language from a linguistic perspective. In general, linguistics is a scientific activity embracing a body of systematic studies of basic subjects, namely semantics, phonology and phonetics, syntactic and morphology. Each subject focuses on one specific aspect of language. Semantics deals with the meaning of sentences while phonetic and phonology concentrate on the ways of articulating, describing and transcribing a sound. Syntactic and morphology, then, concern the construction and dismantling of sentences and words. Since the present teaching program aims at improving the intercultural competence of Italian learners of Chinese. This section begins by elaborating on pragmatic and genetic-historical perspectives through demonstrating the similarities and differences between Italian and Chinese language systems.

3.1 Pragmatics and Pragmatic Competence

This section merely focuses on pragmatics. When it comes to pragmatics, a great number of scholars have associated it with Austin (1964) provided insights into

performative act of speech, especially his locutionary, illocutionary, perlocutionary acts. The first two acts require that specific references and social conventions should be involved in a statement as preconditions while perlocutionary mainly concerns the consequences of a performative statement.

However, it was John Searle (1969) who emphasized language use in specific contexts, admitting the significance of context which comprised an integral part in pragmatics-relevant researches. By proposing the speech act theory, John Searle (1969) emphasized the correlation between utterances and behaviors: speaking a language is rule-governed form of behavior. And speech act is the smallest unit of language. Revolving around his assumption, he further dissected the notions into proposition, assertion and the clarification the difference between these two notions served to be the ground of the proposition of rules, predictions and classification of various sorts of speech acts. (P22) His sound theory of speech act laid foundation for following linguistic researches. Yet, no proposal is watertight, the same as Searle's. A myriad of linguists at his times and successive researchers aired different views about Speech Act Theory. They challenged Searle's perception of speech acts from different perspectives. In terms of specific illocutionary act, Kasher (2004) casted doubts on Searle's understanding of performative speeches which were merely turn-taking utterances in Searle's argument. From their viewpoint, Searle illustrated perfective speech just following the routine information, delivery-information, and reception-inference instead of paying heed to the nuances and the meanings emerging from moment-by-moment interactions. Thus, they thought that performative sentences did not completely concern with conventional and cultural factors whereas Searle did so. (P542) As can be seen, Harnish and Bach's opinions diverge from those of Searle's in terms of the function of performative speech. Searle did not limit himself to performative speeches, but rather delineated it into direct and indirect speeches. In my opinion, direct speeches, in general, fall into the category of performative speeches. What Searle was really acclaimed for is his postulation of indirect speeches. As for indirect speech act, Searle contended that inferences, as an indispensable step in conceptualizing process, played a crucial part in making addressee figure out what the real meaning that addresser intended to convey. However, some scholars argued that inferences had nothing to do with linguistic ability nor with a set of linguistic rules, rather they were equivalent to general knowledge or briefly speaking common sense in that intended meaning of a speech act. In regard to Searle's speech act classification, Jacob Mey (2001) deemed

that Searle cut the interrelation between real context and language. From Mey's standpoint, Searle only analyzed statements by following the true/false criterion at a logical level, which did not hold water since a statement can be justified if and only if it represents the world in a true manner. (P164)

Similarly, Grice (1989) put forward five conversational principles in his book *Studies in the Way of Words*, arguing that people interact with each other for reciprocal understanding. Grice treated conversation as talk exchanges involving the interlocutors' mutually accepted standpoint:

Our talk exchanges.... They are characteristically, to some degree at least, cooperative efforts; and each participant recognizes in them, to some extent, a common purpose or a set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction (P26)

This common-shared purpose can only be ensured in the condition under which both addressers and addressees observed a set of rules, which is the well-known Cooperative Principles. According to Grice, the principles roughly consists of four conversational maxims. They are:

1. Maxim of Quality: Be truthful, never say something that is obviously false, or you lack enough and sound evidences.
2. Maxim of Quantity: Be neither more nor less informative according to requirements. Under this sub-principle, Grice emphasized the information should not be more than that is required, as he simply considered that being more informative is a waste of time "...it might be said that to be over – informative is not a transgression of the Cooperative Principle but merely a waste of time". (Grice, 1989:26) This defective contention was discussed by Jerrold Sadock (1990), which will be elaborated in the following paragraphs.
3. Maxim of Relevance: Be relevant. Here Grice did not go into this sub-principle and left several questions. This part was detailed and perfected by Sperber and Wilson (2012) and a rough picture will be offered subsequently.
4. Maxim of Manner: Be clear and avoid ambiguity. Be organized.

Cooperative Principles, to a larger degree, have provided a systematic theoretical framework, according to which interlocutors can operate turn-takings smoothly. Yet, there are also some loopholes in this study. In terms of the maxim of quantity, Grice did not clarify the extent to which an utterance contained information. Such limitation has been mentioned in Sadock (1990)'s discussion. In his article *On Testing for Conversational Implicature*, Sadock queried the rigorous condition under which four principles are observed because one may find it hard to satisfy all sub-principles at once and he questioned "In what way is the avoidance of prolixity different from saying only as much as is required." (P368) In the light of Maxim of Relevance, Sperber and Wilson (1996) related it to "intuition" which was, in effect, on shaky grounds. They cited a conversation (11) between Mary and Peterⁱ to clarify their point. According to Sperber and Wilson, if Peter was aware of (12), then he may infer that (b) either Mary was too tired to go to cinema or (c) Mary was really tired and did not want to go to the cinema (d) Mary did not want to go to cinema for several reasons but not because of tiredness. Similarly, if Peter is aware of (13), he could infer from Mary's response and draw a conclusion that (b) Mary did not want to go to the cinema for several reasons but not because of tiredness. From the example abovementioned, one may easily observe that there's no one-to-one mapping between the explicit meaning of Mary's utterance: "I'm tired" and the indirect meaning "I don't want to go to cinema because I don't like being pressed up". In this sense, Mary's response "I'm tired" did not directly answer Peter's question: "Do you want to go to the cinema?", instead, it triggered a variety of aforesaid inferences. At this point, Sperber and Wilson summarized:

If comprehension is to be treated as a properly inferential process, the inferences must be sound (in a sense that applies to non-demonstrative inference). From the mere fact that Mary is tired, Peter cannot soundly infer that she doesn't want to go to the cinema. For the implicatures (12b) and (12c) to be soundly derived, Mary must be understood as asserting something stronger than that she is tired tout court: her meaning must be enriched to a point where it warrants the intended inferences. The process is one of parallel adjustment: expectations of relevance warrant the derivation of specific implicatures, for which the explicit content must be adequately enriched. (P40)

Their critiques of Grice's maxim of principles are, in effect, be paralleled with their relevance principle. However, their proposal was far from being perfect in that they still confined themselves to traditional formula, paying little attention to dynamic interaction and ignoring the influence that social factors exert on language use. The loopholes in their researches, on the contrary, provide basic guidelines for the current research in that it focuses on the inter-dynamic influence between social, cultural factors and language development.

Compared with Searle's Speech Act Theory which followed the deliver-encode-output mode which regards speech simply as verbal turn-takings rather than multimodal interaction which also involves non-verbal communication, Rose and Kasper (2003) put up with a way to examine pragmatic competence by dividing it into pragmalinguistic competence and sociopragmatic competence with the former concerning the ability of using linguistic forms to perform speech act. And in terms of sociopragmatic competence, it indicates that people have the ability of using particular communicative strategies to perform a corresponding speech act in accordance with the societal norms.

In conclusion, this section has briefed on some emblematic studies in the line of pragmatics. They are Austin's performative acts (locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts) and John Searle's theory of Speech Acts. By presenting different readings and critiques about these two studies, this section has pointed out that they overlooked, to some extent, the dynamic relations between context, interlocutors and the interaction in itself. Directly or indirectly, they all follow the same input-decode-output mode while neglecting the fact that interlocutors and contexts are interdependent. As Bardovi-Harlig et al. (2006) put it: "Performing speech acts is thus theorized as a means-end relationship where speakers convey their propositional and illocutionary goals by means of linguistic expressions" (P286) In this sense, the two influential theories shared the same departure point, namely rational action model. Within the rational action model, all theories take presumption and intuition for granted, simply demonstrating that it is listeners' responsibility to interpret the mental state of speakers. The focus of analysis is not on how participants construct the interaction, but on what the speakers' intentions are. They overemphasized on "what" makes scholars who championed the rational action theory be obsessed with dissecting addresser's

intentions which can never be objectively interpreted just based on utterance in its own right. In this regard, Kasper gave a succinct explanation for this paradox: “But the intentions reside in the speaker’s head and are thus hidden from insights. The utterance alone does not give its ‘speaker meaning’ away” (Bardovi-Harlig et al. 2006: P288) Thus, the old-fashioned “intention-cum-convention” should be discarded as it falls short of showing the co-adaptive relations between interlocutors and between participants and contexts where they situate themselves. It is crucial to recognize that the context here does not refer to the physical background against which interactions take place. This is a superficial perception of contexts which calls for a co-adaptive and dynamic interpretation.

3.2 An Analysis of Chinese and Italian Linguistic Systems

Mandarin Chinese and Standard Italian fall into the categories of Sino-Tibetan language and Indo-European Language respectively. Indo-European language family can be classified into two language subgroups, namely Germanic languages and Latin languages. The standard Italian is one of the representations of Latin languages. It is widely known that Mandarin Chinese belongs to the Sino-Tibetan language family, which is a common misconception of Chinese. Strictly speaking, Mandarin Chinese can be subsumed under Tibeto-Burman languages which come to constitute the larger Sino-Tibetan language family along with Sinitic languages. (Chappell, 2015) Before elaborating on Standard Chinese, it is necessary to clarify the confusing concept of Sinitic languages first because the contention that Mandarin Chinese is equivalent to a Sinitic language is misleading, if it is not wholly fallacious. Technically speaking, Sinitic languages as a whole refer to a diversity of Chinese languages. In this sense, Standard Chinese does not enjoy a superior position to any other Chinese dialects, as Standard Mandarin Chinese and Chinese dialects as a whole are regarded as Sinitic languages, especially from the angle of dialectology. As a genetic-historical aspect of Chinese does not have a direct bearing on the main theoretical and practical issues in the present project, then only a brief linguistic analysis will be given to Chinese phonological and morphological systems because otherwise it will take the whole section away from the main focus of this literature review. When it comes to Mandarin, it can also be construed in various ways. And as the conglomeration of definition about Chinese may lead to confusions, it is necessary to make a systematic and clear-cut illustration of Chinese. As for Chinese characters, they can be divided into traditional

and simplified ones, with the former being used widely in Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan and the latter in mainland China. With respect to written Chinese, it can be divided into vernacular Chinese and classical Chinese. By vernacular Chinese, it mainly refers to the modern Chinese after “New Culture Movement”ⁱⁱ whereas classical Chinese was only used in imperial times. And as for language forms, Chinese can also be classified into oral language (kǒuyǔ), book language (shūmiànyǔ) and literary language (wényánwén). In this research, Chinese, in its written form, is merely limited to simplified characters (jiǎntǐzì). While oral Chinese is restricted to Mandarin Chinese (pǔtōnghuà). It is widely believed that Chinese written system is different from those of other Latin languages (etc. Italian) on the basis that Chinese scripts are characterized as pictographic and ideographic whereas Italian, as a neo-Latin language, contains an alphabetic written system, as it stems from Roman languages which was originally formed on Etruscan and Greek alphabets. In terms of transcription system, Hànyǔ pīnyīn in Chinese language should be illuminated. Hànyǔ pīnyīn is a constructive alphabetized system and each pinyin (the Chinese characters are alphabetized) has its own marker which indicates the corresponding tone. That is to say, PinYin Romanization is a tool with which FL learners are able to gain a preliminary perception of Chinese phonological system. The reason for briefing on this alphabetic system is that Mandarin, in a strict sense, is morph-syllabic. That is to say, the smallest unit in a Chinese sound is not syllable, although most Chinese sounds are comprised of onset consonant (shēngmǔ) and rhyming unit. In fact, the smallest unit is phono-grapheme, as it is grapheme that contains basic meaning. (Tang, 2002; Gu, et al., 2007; Wang; 2017) It is crucial to recognize that a grapheme can be part of a Chinese character, a radical of that Chinese character and a whole Chinese character. Sometimes, the Chinese character is pronounced the same as its radical, as evidenced by compound words and upper-lower structured characters. For example, the Chinese character 宵 is pronounced as xiāo and means that in the evening people eat snacks in the attic. 肖 is the radical of this character and is also pronounced as xiāo. The radical connotes night. In this case, Chinese characters are phonographic. A clearer illustration for this feature was given by G. Berrutto and M. Cerruti (2017):

Ogni carattere, cioè, è composto da un elemento di scrittura che indica l'area concettuale, lo spazio semantico, a cui appartiene la parola, è un elemento che ne indica molto approssimativamente il suono (P17)

Italian learners may not understand Chinese script and its written system, simply deeming that one Chinese character corresponds to one basic meaning. This one-to-one link is termed by some sinologists as logography. However, those who claimed that Chinese script is pictographic, ideographic or logographic failed to describe Chinese script accurately as the Chinese script can only be regarded as quasi-pictographic and quasi-ideographic. As is mentioned above, Chinese can be construed not only as characters but also radicals. In general, one Chinese character may contain more than one meaning, a case in point is aforesaid “宵”. Only a small number of Chinese characters have their one-to-one connotation. Thus, Chinese script is in sharp contrast with Italian in that its basic unit is not letter or morpheme in an alphabetic sense, but phonographs. In this regard, a Chinese character performs both phonological and semantic functions. However, it should be noted that the transcription *Hàn yǔ pīn yīn* itself may not always facilitate the learning of Chinese sounds insofar as sometimes it may hinder Italian learners from grasping the correct Chinese pronunciation. The rationale behind my viewpoint is that phonogram means that a grapheme represents a phoneme or a combination of phonemes. In addition, Chinese phonological transcription is different from Han Yu Pin Yin, as some diphthongs and triphthongs are not presented in Han Yu Pin Yin at all. This problem was discussed concisely by Bene Bassetti (2007). In his essay *Effects of Han Yu Pin Yin Pronunciation in Learners of Chinese as a Foreign Language*, Bassetti (2007) explained the reason for which *Hàn yǔ pīn yīn* could not fully represent Chinese phonemic accuracy:

Although Pinyin was created to be a phonemic transcription system and to represent the correct pronunciation of *pǔ tōng huà*, at the time when it was designed it was also meant to be a fully working writing system which could eventually replace *hàzi* (Chen, 2008). For this reason, phonemic accuracy was sometimes sacrificed to make pinyin easier to read or write. For instance, /i/ is normally spelled i, but in syllable-initial position it is spelled y. (P3)

As can be seen, *Hàn yǔ pīn yīn* does not always have positive effects on foreign language students' learning. It is true that this transcription system facilitates the process of recognizing Chinese characters, as it is tailored to the needs of learners and it is specifically designed to make it easier for foreign language learners to accept as it is an alphabetically constructed system. Nonetheless, as is mentioned above, *Hàn yǔ*

unit (vowel + consonant). A case in point is yǎn (eyes). Its transcription is /ian/. The reason why I laid too much emphasis on elaborating on Chinese phonology is that Chinese tones and syllable sequences are of paramount importance for Italian learner of Chinese, especially for beginners. As Mandarin Chinese is a tonal language, with each tone indicating a corresponding meaning. If foreign language learners, say Italian learners, confuse tones, they are doomed to misunderstand the meanings, thereby impeding their process of language acquisition. Therefore, Italian learners are encouraged to discard their old ways of studying other Roman languages like Spanish, Portuguese and so forth. Rather, they should try to perceive Chinese from the perspective of grapheme. Yet, it is not an easy task for them since Italian written system is different from that of Chinese.

In a nutshell, the preceding paragraphs give a rough explanation of the Chinese and Italian linguistic systems respectively. Nevertheless, it is far from being exhaustive. Theoretically speaking, a sounder explanation for the differences between Mandarin Chinese and standard Italian should have been given from linguistic, paralinguistic, pragmatic perspectives. However, the whole project centers on the ways of encouraging Italian learners of Chinese to critically reflect on their intercultural competence. Thus, it will touch on Chinese and Italian linguistic systems in passing lest the present section go astray from the main aim of this literature review.

4. An Analysis of Culture

After elaborating on the Italian and Chinese language systems from pragmatic and genetic-historical perspectives, this section, then, moves on to another theme: culture for language and the interrelation between cultures. Since language is the product of human activities which are the representations of human culture in society, that is, language mirrors human culture. (Kramersch, 1998). And culture in turn usually manifests itself in written texts.

Before analyzing the relationship between culture and language, one shall have a crystallized idea of culture, otherwise he or she may stay at a superficial level without capturing the essence of the issue. An array of traditional literatures view culture as a conglomeration of ideologies and material subjects, covering value systems, beliefs, cuisine, clothing and so forth. Yet, none of these perceptions of culture are clear and thorough. With the ambiguous conceptualization of culture, researchers may have

presuppositions when they conduct related empirical studies. They painstakingly devote themselves to data analysis, and then draw on conclusions which are plausibly rational at first sight yet fail to stand the test of time. *A priori* assumption, in most cases, do not fit the real situation and if researchers continually conduct researches with pre-assumptions, the results of these studies are doomed to be biased and insignificant. In this sense, if one researcher needs to take an examination on the relationship between language and culture or between language learning and intercultural communication, the first and foremost step is to have a comprehensive conceptualization of culture. Only in this way can he or she have an objective and critical analysis.

4.1 Two Viewpoints on Culture

Although the crystallized definition of culture may be an issue left open, it can be roughly interpreted from cognitive and liquid perspectives.

4.1.1 A Cognitive Point on Culture

From a cognitive perspective, culture is viewed as knowledge and consciousness. This understanding of culture was first captured in the book *Language, Thought and Reality* where culture was thoroughly analyzed from a cognitive perspective. Here, it is necessary to elucidate Sapir–Whorf hypothesis which is well–known for exploring the relations between language and cognition. When it comes to Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, it, in effect, embraces various versions. However, the variety of versions can be roughly summarized into two notions, namely linguistic determinism and linguistic relativity. The following paragraphs will elaborate on the aforementioned two notions by paying particular attention to its definition, commonality and differences. What’s more, an array of empirical studies that intended to test the validity of Sapir-Whorf hypothesis will be briefed on. With regard to linguistic determinism, it emphasizes that language determines people’s thinking. This hypothesis is further classified into a strong version and a weak one. As for the strong version, it attaches importance to the determining role that language plays and underlines that language is the only one factor in creating and controlling people’s thinking patterns. Nevertheless, the weak version of linguistic determinism does not pay much attention to the decisive role that language plays. Instead, it states that linguistic categories influence the degree of difficulty or quickness in operating conceptual process. “Alternatively, the weak version of the hypothesis states that the presence of linguistic categories influences the ease with which various cognitive operations are performed” (Carroll, 1964, P401) This version sheds light on

the relations between language and cognition further, becoming one of the guidelines for successive experiments. As regards to linguistic relativity, it also contains a strong version and a weak version. As to the strong version, it means that speakers of different languages have different cognitive inclination. To put it simply, interlocutors who speak different languages construe words, sentences or behaviors in different ways. To defend his hypothesis, Whorf put in an example of Hopi language. Hopi and American speakers showed different perception of time. "In particular, he has no general notion or intuition of TIME as a smooth flowing continuum in which everything in the universe proceeds at an equal rate" (Whorf, 1982: P57)

The detailed description about linguistic determinism and linguistic relativity above contributes to the illustration of their commonalities and differences. In the first place, they both focus on the relations between language and cognition, stressing the impacts that language makes upon cognition. It is language that influences or even determines people's thoughts but not the other way around. "This study shows that the forms of a person's thoughts are controlled by inexorable laws of pattern of which he is unconscious. These patterns are the unperceived intricate systematizations of his own language." (P252) From his statements, it is easy to spot that language plays an indispensable role in shaping a person's thinking pattern.

While it can be inferred from the hypotheses that linguistics determinism and linguistics relativity bear relation with each other, they have differences to some extent.

In one sense, linguistic determinism talks about the function or effects of language, emphasizing that language decides how people perceive objects at the beginning of their life. It is possible that the impacts that language has upon a person's conceptual process is subtle and the cognitive disposition that a person has is almost static. "There will probably be general assent to the proposition that an accepted pattern of using words is often prior to certain lines of thinking and forms of behavior" (P134) Linguistic relativity, however, concerns the relationship between language and cognition in particular social contexts. A good case in point is gender classification. Native speakers of English regard gender as established in rapport whereas Chinese or Hopi consider gender as a symbol of sexual image. In short, different cultures lead to different uses of language, thereby giving rise to different thinking patterns.

In another sense, linguistic determinism centers on the determining trait that language possesses, implying that it is language but not the other factors that shapes people's conception. That is to say, linguistic determinism denies the fact that social,

political, economic and cultural factors exert great influence on the formation of a person's conception. What should be noted that the term "social background" used here particularly refers to a mixture of political, racial, religious and economic elements. In respect to linguistic relativity, it highlights that language does not play a dominant role but rather serves as a supplementary factor in shaping people's thinking patterns. It influences people's cognition. And in some cases, it alters a person's thoughts and gradually shapes his or her world-outlook. In one word, language influences a person's cognition and vice versa. This argument was reinforced in the following words. "Religious attitude towards the forces of nature, especially prayer and religion directed toward the ever – needed blessing, rain – these things interact with Hopi linguistic patterns to mold them, to be mold by them, and so little by little to shape the Hopi world-outlook."(P157-158) In addition, linguistic relativity underlined that there is no one-to-one mapping between different languages at semantic, morphological or syntactic levels. A case in point can be literal translation which may lead to bewilderment to some extent. English makes very little distinction between this construction and the one expressed in Hopi by the agentive sentences, so that bewildering changes of construction may result from translating a number of outwardly similar relative clauses into Hopi. (P117)

In short, linguistic determinism and linguistic relativity have commonalities. Both of them underline the impacts that language has upon cognition. However, linguistic determinism is different from linguistic relativity since determinism inclines to emphasize the decisive role that language plays whereas relativity weakens the role languages play, stressing that language only exerts influence on people's cognition but not determine it.

It should be noticed that Whorf did not take either Sinitic languages or Roman languages into consideration, merely paying attention to a small number of languages, notably Hopi, Eskimo and American English. In this sense, he failed to provide a reasonable and strong hypothesis with such a small number of languages. What's more, Whorf did not expatiate on the concept of culture systematically nor did he holds that culture was more than intuition despite the fact that he made a penetrating analysis of the differences and similarities between Hopi and SAE (Southern American English) from the perspective of time and kinesthesia. The Achilles's heel in Sapir- Whorf hypothesis is that it presumes both language and culture are fixed but not open. In this regard, this hypothesis falls into the essentialist trap, as it overlooks the fact that

language is, in effect, dynamic, complex, open and adaptive. Fresh insights into language will be detailed in the section Foreign language teaching and learning. Now, it's time to go back to the interpretation of culture.

Based on Whorf's theoretical ideas, W. Goodenough (1956) took this concept further by associating culture with knowledge and consciousness:

Culture, what people have to learn as different from their biologically innate ability, consists of the end product of learning: knowledge, in the most general, if relative, sense of the term. By this definition, we should note that culture is not a tangible combination; it does not include things, people, behavior and emotions. Rather, it is an organization of these things that people have in mind, that is, their models for perceiving, relating and otherwise interpreting them. (P36)

Although this cognitive concept of culture is far from clear, it has been proved to be the prototype of Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence in which knowledge is an necessary constituent, being culture-laden and as the mediator in intercultural communication. As for Byram's model, it will be discussed later.

Admittedly, both Whorf and Goodenough construed culture as thinking patterns, a sort of knowledge that determines the way in which individuals perceive the world. Yet, neither of them explicitly pointed out that culture could be a cluster of knowledge, a set of beliefs, values and traditional norms that are shared by a variety of social groups. This interpretation has been said and written by Kovecses who argued that culture was frame-based and could be regarded as models. "...that culture can be defined as a collection of shared understanding represented by frames and cultural models." (Kövecses, 2006, P70) In the book *Communication Power* (2009), Manuel Castell concurred with the viewpoint that culture could be frames. Against multicultural and globalized backgrounds, Castell (2009) clarified the amorphous and frame-based concept of culture by categorizing it into global culture and local cultures. He pointed out that global culture was "a culture of protocols" (in Castell's terms, 36), being shared by network society whereas local cultures are heterogeneous and diversified, being shaped and reshaped during the process of historical and geographical development. (ibid.) Similarly, the prototypical concept of culture is also mentioned in the literatures by Edward Hall and Geert Hofstede. In respect to cultural dimension, Hall (1977) roughly divided it into two parts which can be construed as two "frames". They are high

context and low context. In high context, the ideas conveyed by interlocutors are always implicit. Only when one draws inferences from their shared knowledge can he or she understand the meaning of the message. On the contrary, the information delivered by speakers in low context is explicit and it is not necessary to draw on background knowledge for the purpose of inferring the meaning of the information articulated. (see a discussion in Martinez-Flor & Esther Uso-Juan, 2010: 77) Likewise, Hofstede (2010) proposed collectivistic and individualistic tendencies in terms of cultural dimensions. He echoed the ideas of Hall, positing that individualistic tendency is applicable to the groups who pursue rights and liberty while collectivistic tendency manifests itself in the individuals who give priority to collectivistic interests over theirs. It cannot be denied that Hall and Hofstede dealt with culture in a systematic fashion. Nonetheless, their standpoints of culture are, to some extent, monocentric and dichotomous. This kind of claim may lead to untenable arguments which may not be applicable to explaining cultural-related phenomena, particularly in a world where cultures tend to be diversified and ever-changing. Moreover, Hofstede's theories and contentions are more applicable to business domain which may be incapable of elaborating on the relationship between culture and language in pedagogical field. Although the aforesaid literatures have cast light on the concept of culture, they fall short of expounding on culture against the globalized backdrop. Culture cannot be represented in its own right. Rather, it is the human beings who portray culture in this or in that way. In another words, the way how people interpret the connotations of culture determines how culture can be interpreted. In this regard, Gunther Kress and Norman Fairclough shared similar opinions despite the fact that Kress elaborated on from the aforementioned social semiotic perspective whilst Fairclough from an angle of critical discourse. From a social semiotic viewpoint, Kress (2010) construed "cultural differences" as "representation and meaning differences" Although Kress' argument is, to some extent, generic, he highlighted the point that cultural differences could be ascribed to different use of cultural representations. Norman Fairclough (1995) claimed that "changes in society and culture manifest themselves in all their tentativeness, incompleteness and contradictory nature in the heterogeneous and shifting discursive practices of media." (P52) As can be construed from the abovementioned words of Fairclough, contradictory thoughts and sociocultural changes can be reflected in discourse practice. To put it in simple words, media texts may mirror the contradictory ideas, thereby being proved to be the showcase of culture. Yet, the "frames" aforementioned are not only pre-shaped

principles or rules to which one may adhere, but also are emotionally tinged, which in return may influence the ways in which individuals construe situations. “It is our emotional attitude to the situation that leads us to frame the situation in a particular way (...) we choose different words in debates because we profile them against different frames.” (Kövecses, 2006: 80)

Thus, the importance of emotional characteristics of culture should not be underestimated. Emotions, in nature, are a kind of biological responses that contribute to the shaping of peoples’ thinking models with which they can adapt themselves to various scenarios. “Emotion is conceptualized cross culturally. Studies in numerous languages show emotions to be thought of as a personal response that mediates the episodic scenes and events of everyday life.” (Kitayama & Markus, 1994: 4073). In addition, emotions are also the carriers of cultures, acting as prisms through which one can glimpse diverse cultures. Anna Wierzbicka (2005) claimed that the way of expressing emotions varied from culture to culture. She gave an exhaustive analysis of the argument by comparing the emotion-laden lexica in Anglo American culture with those of Polish culture. Through analyzing the denotations of the word anger in English and Polish, she asserted:

An apparent basic and innocent concept of anger is in fact linked with a certain culture of models and so cannot be taken for granted as a culture-free analytical tool or as a universal standard for describing human emotions. (Wierzbicka, 2005: 32)

Therefore, emotion is correlated with cultural models and different cultures may channel different concepts of emotions. (Guo, 2019: PP150-160)

4.1.2 A Liquid Viewpoint on Culture

When it comes to liquid viewpoint on culture, it was the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (2003, 2011, 2000) who succinctly described the main idea of liquidity. By creating the pair metaphors “liquid” and “solid”, Bauman attempted to portray diverse representations of postmodernism along with its distinctiveness. In the book *Culture in a Liquid Modern World*, Bauman (2011) defined liquid as “the eventuality of existing in a constant state of flux (that is, eternally performing its work)” (P18) He utilized pendulum’s kinetic notion and noted the perpetual craze for fashion in the way that he illustrated how the social life and culture could be like in this postmodern era.

According to Bauman, endless changes present themselves in the tradeoffs between humans' yearnings for gaining a comparatively recognizable identity and their desires to enjoy a particular identity in this ever-changing society. (P20)

To take a step further, Bauman pointed out it was the contradiction that hastened the emergence of creative and renewed relations which can be encapsulated in the term "perpetuum mobile". From Bauman's point of view, human beings lived in a world which called for constant tradeoffs, as evidenced by the fashion field. Fashion can never be "*in situ*", as it undergoes continuous changes over time. It cannot be denied that fashion can be static temporarily, as every period of time bears its distinctive fashionable hallmarks. A case in point can be CHANEL. However, this "perpetuum mobile" (in Bauman's term) or temporary "inertia" always tends to be broken from time to time and it will never cease to oscillate or to change. That is the showcase of postmodern culture insofar as it calls for endless compromises, such as the tradeoffs between global citizenship and ethnic identities quoted above by Bauman. By associating the consumer market with the ever-changing culture, Bauman opined that uncertainty and ever-lasting progress were two major driving forces bringing unprecedented changes to people's lives, especially at the dawn of this millennium. Nowadays, people in every countries all live in a globe-cum-locus nexus where various diasporas contemporarily coexist. It is a prevailing phenomenon that people keep adapting themselves to the persistent changes taken place not only in surface culture (food, music, costumes. etc.) but also in deep culture (beliefs and ideas). People used to play tapes to listen to music while in this globalized world people may find it convenient to download songs directly from the Internet. Such liquid changes also manifest themselves in people's ideas, beliefs and social and political stances. In another book translated into Italian, Bauman (2003) elaborated on the meaning of "love" against the globalized backdrop. He argued that the concept of love had to be renewed, as progress and speed were the fundamental flywheels in the process of postmodern love. (P8)

As can be seen, it is the globalized world where people live in endows love with new meanings. This case concerning love can be the epitome of the liquidity of deep culture. In a nutshell, Zygmunt Bauman's constructive illustration of the liquidity of postmodern society allows the researchers to take a step further, particularly taking a look at culture not only at a temporal level but also at a spatial level.

In conclusion, culture can be mainly interpreted from cognitive and liquid perspectives. When it comes to cognitive viewpoint, culture is viewed as knowledge, frames and is emotion-laden. A liquid viewpoint sees culture as changing constantly and make it clear the fact that it is fraught with uncertainties, contradictions and compromises. Then, cultural can also be interpreted as “transited” and this “trans-” viewpoint moves a step further, highlighting that culture goes through non-linear development.

5. The Critical Relations between Culture and Language

As mentioned earlier, semantics, as one of the representations of language, plays an indispensable role in describing culturally related phenomena. So, language is closely tied with culture.

5.1 Language is Inseparable from Culture

What should be noted is that the relationship between language and culture is complicated, and therefore can be interpreted in many ways. The majority of literatures viewed language and culture as profoundly interconnected. In most cases, language is considered as “the window” through which one could learn another’s culture and socio-cultural norms. In short, language reflects culture. This interpretation resonates with that of McWhorter (2016). He criticized Whorfian’s tradition, which postulates that language might influence people’s thinking patterns and vice versa. He acutely pinpointed that language merely reflected culture but not the other way around (Kramsch, 2014). From a semiotic perspective, language can be viewed as linguistic signs mirroring culture. An emblematic study is Vygotsky’s conceptualization of internal language. According to Vygotsky (1978), inner language was a system of signs, acting as cognitive mediator and transforming external information into inner psychological mechanism. The psychological mechanism (perception, attention and memory) acted as a mediator linking children and sociocultural world where there were abundant semiotic resources. A case in point could be caregivers’ language whose meanings were gradually understood by children. In another words, only an individual positions himself or herself in a sociocultural environment can he or she be able to transform or internalize the new language patterns, which also include intercultural competence. To put it simply, the external world provides individuals with

transformational resources with which they can reorganize their inner orders and regulate their minds. Therefore, the key to bolstering students' language acquisition is to improve intrapersonal and interpersonal interconnection. The intra/interpersonal link was interpreted by Lantolf and Thorne (2006) as "mediation", a kind of psychological means regulating people's mental activities. Meanwhile they took a particular look at the ways in which individuals perform the mediational functions. To give a thorough analysis of the role that mediation plays, Lantolf and Thorne classified mediational functions into inner speech, private speech, second language speakers and speech-gesture interface. The ways aforementioned can all be subsumed under the first sort of symbolic mediation. And when it comes to the second sort of symbolic mediation, they underscored the learnability of metaphorical knowledge, *inter alia*, lexical notions, lexical association networks and word association. They called this kind of metaphorical forms as conceptual metaphors and at the same time they posited that conceptual metaphors served as a point of departure from which learners could no longer be disturbed by their L1 and tend to gradually mediate their L2 learning. To justify their assumption, they looked into Grabois' empirical study, highlighting that the participants preferred using L2 word associations more frequently. Then, to further prove the rationality of their assumption, Lantolf and Thorne took a similar position as Grabois who argued that the frequent use of L2 lexicons was learners' first step to avoid to get bogged down solely in L1 concepts. By illustrating the case mentioned above, Lantolf and Thorne claimed that learners might mediate their second language learning in an effort to use L2 and grasping conceptual metaphors in the second language. The reason for which I refer to the notion mediation and the second sort of symbolic mediation time and again is that they pave the way for elucidating the first kind of symbolic mediation, namely inner speech, private speech and speech-gesture interface. The three mediation forms play a fundamental role in students' language acquisition and their improvement of intercultural competence. In the following paragraphs, I will explain the reasons in detail. In terms of inner speech, it refers to the pure meaning that students would like to express, even though it is not encoded in linguistic forms. As for private speech, however, it indicates the speech articulated by people for the purpose of mediating their minds. Standing in a sharp contrast with inner speech, private speech is encoded in linguistic forms and can be articulated in sub-vocal or whispering manners. It is noted that the production of either inner speech or private speech is attributable to sociocultural contacts. Another group of researchers that championed the

sociocultural viewpoint belong to Sydney's Schools whose most representative studies are Basil Bernstein (1971)'s Theory of Language Code (TLC) and Karl Marton (2014b)'s Legitimation of Code Theory (LCT). The line of research pertinent to TLC can be traced back to as early as the 1970s. It was Bernstein (1971) who first set to probe into the relationship between sociocultural factors and language usages and thereby exploring how societal factors can inflict impacts on the way of using linguistic expressions. "Forms of spoken language in the process of their learning initiate, generalize and reinforce special types of relationship with the environment and thus create for the individual particular forms of significance" (P76) Then, this theoretical ground witnessed a transition to a semantic variation, to which Halliday M.H.K and Ruquiya Hasan (1989) made an outstanding contribution for they examined the main issue of which kind of people use which kind of language. By the same token, Bernstein (2003) reframed Hasan's theoretical framework of code theory, emphasizing that culture and personal trajectory had a great impact not only on people's modality of language use but also on individuals' language production. He cited several cases in a way that he drew a generalization that there was a relationship between social class and language use and the language code would be an indicator of individual identity. (p172).

In parallel with Bernstein's work, Marton & Hood (2016) dug deep into the importance of Code Theory as the world was being ushered into a fluid and globalized landscape. He argued that his reformulated version of Code Theory served not only to unveil the potential interplay between social stratification and the variation of language usage, but also to manifest justice "Code Theory has evolved into a multidimensional concept toolkit" (in Marton's terms, 2014b, 2016) As can be seen, code theory is not regarded as an indicator of personal identity anymore, rather it has become the main approach to achieving social justice. That is also the rationale behind which code theory should be legitimated in the 21st century.

In a similar vein, Zhabayeva (2014) emphasized that language, in its spoken and written forms, mirrored culture: For native speakers, the dominant symbolic code was their language which was divided into spoken and written forms. The language reflects the cultural reality and social codes diachronically. (P222)

From the semantic-pragmatic perspective, language can be construed as metaphorical-cognitive interface which reflects culture. Moser (2000) pointed out that one of the value of metaphors was reflecting social and cultural possession of understanding. This point of view is compatible with that of Kövecses who postulated

that metaphors presented themselves in socio-physical practice and were the epitome of culture. In addition, language does not only reflect culture but also facilitates culturally relevant communication and conceptualization. Barker and Galasiński (2001) hypothesized that figuring out the way that how language can be used in specific contexts might contribute to cultural understanding. Joan Kelly Hall (2014) pointed out that the sociocultural aspect of language was the major tool enabling individuals to fulfill their goals:

A sociocultural perspective on human action locates the essence of social life in communication. Through our use of linguistic symbols with others, we establish goals, negotiate the means of reaching them, and re-conceptualize those we have set. (pp. 8-9)

Besides, language *per se* is powerful and ideologically related. It serves with communication permeated in culture in a way of enabling people to articulate personal identities and manage their membership in social communities. In the book *Culture and Language*, Kramsch and Widdowson (1998) succinctly illustrated the relationship between culture and language by emphasizing that language served as a tool disclosing power and hegemony. She postulated that language was the outlet of the powerful and the powerless that was shaping and reshaping cultures. “Both words and their silences contribute to shaping one’s own and others’ cultures” (P9) This viewpoint is compatible with that of Holliday. Revolving around these two pairs of dichotomous concepts, viz. Periphery versus Center and “othering” versus “us”. Holliday (2010) opined that language could be the channel through which the hegemonic culture exercised power and control while the unnoticed and powerless cultures struggled against the dominant and powerful identities.

5.2 Culture is more than Language

As is previously mentioned, language can be separated from culture, but it does not mean that language can exist in isolation, being independent of culture. In the book *Language and Culture*, Kramsch (1993) argued that it was human activities that had given birth to language. As is mentioned in the second section, productivity is one of the properties of language because language is the fruit yielded and recreated by human beings during the process of interaction. In this sense, language is not an atomic concept in its own right, but the product of social activities. In Neolithic times, people

communicated with each other using objects. Yet, with the evolution of human society, language has gradually substituted objects, being the main means of communication. In the second chapter, language has been interpreted in different ways and it is not equivalent to an array of codes. This viewpoint gains favor with Karen Risager (2006)'s work.

Based on Ager's "languaculture" and Friedrich's "linguaculture", Risager succinctly opined that the contestation that language and culture were inseparable could only gain its grounds from a psychological perspective. To support her argument, Risager, first and foremost, dissected Ager's version's languaculture into "language" and "culture". By doing so, Risager clarified that "langua" had something to do with discourses as a whole while "culture" referred to cultural related phenomena. Back on Arger's view, Risager, then, moved a step further by putting sociolinguistics into the picture of language and culture. By reiterating Harder's arguments that language could be considered either as linguistic structures (forms) or content-laden ones, Risager elucidated that language can be independent of culture. She argued that language, as a sort of linguistic form, could be linked to culture only under the condition that both the language and the culture were on the basis of the first language. "These lexicalizations are part of the common linguacultural resources that have been developed in the various social networks." (P166) She articulated that language could be used either in the first language dominated context, or in other contexts dominated by other foreign languages by claiming that there was no one-to-one mapping between language and culture. (P167)

From the angle of cultural representations, Risager, then, argued that the first language could not denote the meanings permeated in foreign language dominated contexts. She stressed that only the first language acted as the basis for people to obtain cultural related experiences in a first language environment. To put it simply, it is firstly the socialization that links language with culture:

But this (the inseparability between language and culture) can happen only because at the same time one is subjected to a first-language bias and therefore only considers each of the languages in its capacity as the first language. If, as a Danish speaker, one reads a text about Denmark but in a language that is foreign language to one, such as French. There is not necessarily a basis for such an experience (i.e. an experience of unity between French language and French 'content') (pp.168-169)

It cannot be denied that Risager's insights into the relationship between language and culture are thought-provoking, in the sense that she has overridden the traditional viewpoint that language could be separable from culture and instead proposed the concept of "linguaculture" which distinguishes itself from the traditional and amorphous definition of language. Furthermore, she gave a fine-grained analysis of the critical relations between language and culture by interpreting it from three perspectives; namely the sociological point of view; the psychological point of view and the system-oriented point of view. Her unconventional arguments contribute greatly to research concerning language and cultural pedagogy. This is evidenced by Risager's identification of the culturally related difficulties that L2 learners encounter when they engage themselves in intercultural activities. According to her, the reasons why L2 learners fail to tackle intercultural issues is that they are incapable of grasping the cultural references and representations of the foreign language. Italian gestures can be a case in point. It seems that Risager's arguments have challenged the orthodox view of language and culture by laboriously yet seriously demonstrating "linguaculture" and "linguacultuee" respectively. Nevertheless, her claim that language was separable from culture just put on an unconventional coat in postmodern wrappings without essentially changing the theoretical basis that language and culture were intertwined, as she said language was separable from culture, insofar as it could be reckoned as "linguaculture". Thus, Risager, in effect, presumed the inseparability between language and culture. This limitation was also noticed by Risager in one of her later pieces of literatures. In the book *Researching Identity and Interculturality*, Fred Dervin and Karen Risager (2015) provided a clarified definition of the reformulated concept of "linguaculture".

Inspired by the work of Argar (1994), I further developed the concept of 'linguaculture' (in my later writings I prefer the term 'linguaculture'). Linguaculture (or in other words: 'culture in language' or 'the culturality of language') is in my view carried by subjects, including of course when they move or from one cultural context to another. (P5)

In balance, it may be possible to conclude that Risager offered fresh insights into the relationship between culture and language by claiming that culture includes languages yet is more than language. This claim is also self-evident in her revised version of "linguaculture".

In conclusion, sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 were devoted to illuminating on the critical relationship between culture and language. They set about sketching Kramsch's views

on language in a way that challenges the prevailing acknowledgment that language is inextricably linked with culture. By doing so, they underpinned that culture, in effect, can be separated from language. To further support this contention, these two sections then concentrated on dissecting Risager's insights into languaculture as well as her reformulated version of languaculture.

6. The Precondition for Language Teaching and Learning

As the teaching program of this Ph.D. research aims at improving Italian learners' intercultural competence and sharpening their intercultural awareness, then it is a must to elaborate on language teaching methodologies because only efficient teaching approaches can bolster language learning. By marshaling classic teaching methods in a chronological manner, this section serves to elucidate the theoretical basis of language teaching and unveil the drawbacks of these methods. Although the approaches of language teaching are found wanting, they serve as the springboard to ameliorate and even perfect teaching approaches. In this way, more full-fledged methods can fill in the methodological lacuna of the precedent literature concerning language teaching.

6.1 The Neurological and Cognitive Bases

During the process in which a person is learning a language, he or she needs to activate a series of "networks", ranging from the basic neurological and cognitive system to the highest system of ideological and global position and stance. Larsen Freeman, *et al.* (2016) pinpointed that language acquisition and learning should call for integrative consideration. She postulated that language learning was, in essence, multifaceted. To support her contention, Larsen Freeman, *et al.* put forward three levels, namely micro level, meso level and macro level. Each level performs its distinctive function and three levels are interdependent on one another. At the micro level, an individual, for example, may operate his or her neurological and cognitive functions in a way of encoding the inner speech into semiotic resources. While at the meso and macro levels, societal factors and deep-seated ideologies come into the picture of language learning. (P24) And the three levels, as is mentioned above, are interrelated with one another for they cannot be deemed as equal to the mechanical viewpoint that the sum is equivalent with a conglomeration of parts. Instead, the relationship between these three levels can be encapsulated into "the sum is more than the parts". As can be

seen, language learning should be considered in a holistic manner. Therefore, it is necessary to know the role that neurology and cognition play in language learning because neurological and meta-cognition are the higher cognitive system with which ILC are able to perceive, interpret and compare and contrast Italian with Chinese family parenting. And meta-cognition in my cultural model, notably self-reflection and critical cultural awareness enable ILC to improve their cultural understanding for language learning, acquisition and development under my guidance.

Within the neurological remit, the relationship between brain and language is bi-directional: language change is constrained by the existing capacity of brains, yet language also has an effect upon brain evolution. Since human beings situate themselves in a social and communicative environment. Thus, these two-way processes occur simultaneously and are co-adaptive to each other. (Schumann, 2001; Berroir, et al., 2017)

With respect to the relationship between language and brains, Schonemann (2009) gave an accurate term “co-evolutionary”, (P126) which can be further explained in terms of the brain size and mutual relations between the correlation effects of neurological areas and language processing.

On the one side, the brain size determines the performance of the cognitive function. Here, cortical areas could be a good case in point. The functions of cortical regions largely determine an individual’s physical and psychological performance. If the cortical areas are distinct from one another, these regions can function independently and efficiently. And if the neural area of a person processes in a more specialized manner, the cognitive function of that person will run in a more complicated and detailed way. And that will foster understanding since the cognitive function is closely bound up with semantic processing which deals with understanding.

On the other side, this section then briefs on the relationship between neurological areas and language processing because one’s neurological system has effects on his or her cognitive capabilities, viz. processing, interpretation, analysis and evaluation. And since the cognitive capability is one of the constituents that shape cultural awareness, the activation of the neurologic system is the prerequisite for people to develop their cultural awareness. At this point, neurological disposition is necessary to be sketched albeit the fact that it varies from person to person. The extent to which one processes or analyzes a specific language depends on this person’s neurological mechanism. Prefrontal cortex, as one of the major areas of neurological mechanism, involves

semantic, syntactic and high-level linguistic processing (understanding the intended meaning in a conversation) (Caplan & Dapretto, 2001:173) Apart from that, it also deals with other crucial nonlinguistic aspects, such as planning, social information processing, memory and attention. As for perceiving prosody, right prefrontal lobe located in the right hemisphere plays an important role as “The right prefrontal lobe mediates aspects of prosody which is critically to understand intended meaning” (Ellis & Larsen-Freeman, 2009; Alexander, Benson & Stuss, 1989; Novoa & Ardila, 1987)

As can be seen, a body of evidence show that one’s neurological mechanism concerns not only language production but also language comprehension, in particular grasping syntactic and semantic connotations. In this sense, the neurological mechanism is the *sine qua none* of the cognitive activity. And any lesion in the cortical areas aforesaid will cause language deficits. (Schonemann, 2009; Lieberman, 2000)

What should be noted is that the co-evolutionary process between brain and language can be construed as a co-adaptive system. By interacting with others and by taking others’ new linguistic and non-linguistic patterns into account, one’s brain regions function in a more efficient way and thus act on one’s cognitive mechanism which enables this individual to process and acquire new linguistic and non- linguistic knowledge. That is to say, neural development bolsters an individual’s ability to percept and process acoustic signals much rapidly while the later signifies that others can better perceive the production of linguistic signals.

6.1.1 Attention Allocation and Distribution

In terms of cognition, briefly speaking, it involves perception, processing, analyzing, evaluation and output. Each step does not function in a sequential manner but executes concurrently with the other steps. However, human cognition cannot be reduced to the aforementioned system, as it operates in a holistic fashion. Since learning a second or a foreign language is, in effect, one of the cognitive activities, and attention allocation proves to be important because only when students pay attention to a grammatical or cultural knowledge could they have the chance to learn it. Thus, attention allocation is conducive to my project design whose concern is teaching and learning Chinese as a foreign language. Therefore, attention allocation is worthwhile to be mentioned in this literature review.

A great number of scholars have delved into studying cognitive capability, trying to unravel the mysteries of human cognition. Kaheman (1976), however, was the first

person who gave a comparatively exhaustive analysis of human cognition. Kahneman was credited with his allocation policy.

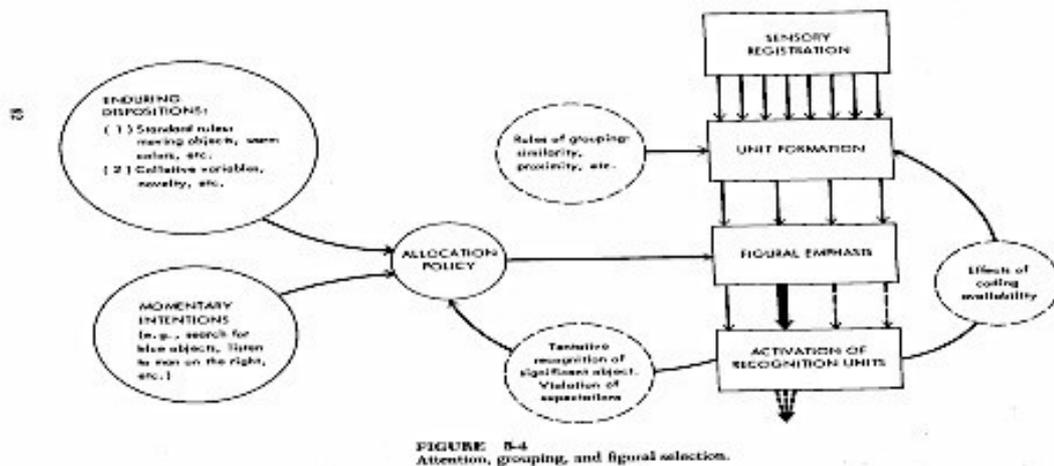


Figure 1 Kahneman's "Pool of Attention" and Allocation Policy (1976: 10)

The bare bones of his theoretical framework can be boiled down to one sentence: the pool of attention is limited. The degree to which the attention and effort are deployed depends largely on how demanding a task is: if the tasks are demanding, the level of effort and attention will increase correspondingly. To realize optimal performance, individuals must allocate their attention to the most relevant stimuli and simultaneously inhibit irrelevant ones. The fulfillment of procedure roughly involves sensory input, figural emphasis and response selection. In one word, Kahneman's schema of attention allocation (See Figure 2) unveiled the fact that attention was limited but interposed between sensory input and cognitive performance. Nonetheless, it was greatly influenced by the "stimuli-reaction" behaviorism because the policy mechanized human cognition, regarding it as an analytical system which can be simply divided into small parts. However, human cognition is far more complicated than a system. It is the result brought by the interaction between the attention of people and the external environment where people situate themselves. And the complex interrelation between attention and external environment, however, is one of the main concerns of my teaching project as ILC are expected to improve their intercultural competence by reflecting on how their families educated them the ways to treat others with diverse linguacultural backgrounds and on how Italy and China share some affinities in terms of family parenting after having an understanding of Chinese family education. And by

reviewing the relationship between their identities, i.e. national and global identity and the socio-cultural environment where ILC situate themselves, they improve intercultural competence by regulating their emotional tones, manipulating the semiotic resources *in situ* to align themselves with the other interlocutors from different cultural backgrounds. Here, the Italian learners who study Chinese as a foreign language could activate their cognitive network to reflect on the Italian sociocultural background only if they allocated their attention to the teaching stimuli that I showed to them and pay attention to the sociocultural environment where they situate themselves.

Besides, attention concerns language learning for the reason that language learners' attention determined how they drew on the potential learning resources. (Schmidt, 2007:22) That is to say, the speed to which a person learns a language is greatly determined by the way in which s(he) allocates his or her attention to the gap abovementioned.

6.1.2 Subjectivity and Subjectification Versus Intersubjectivity and Intersubjectification

Theoretically, human cognition can be dissected into perception, interpretation, analysis, evaluation and inference. However, human cognition is not an atomic term and it, in its own right, plays its role nowhere except in anatomic domain where it can be treated as an independent but isolated part of human bodies and can be dissected during the surgical procedure. Simply speaking, human beings can only exercise their cognitive functions, insofar as they situate themselves in the real world, say, the society.

Although Roland Langacker (1998, 2008) shared a similar line of research with Leonard Talmy "subjectivity and "subjectification". However, different with Tomly, Langacker, instead, paid a special attention to the way in which people construed the real world on the intrapersonal plane. In the book *Cognitive Grammar*, Langacker (2008) elucidated that the objective world was, in effect, subjectively construed. He introduced the concept "subjectification" which was defined as follows:

Mental operations inherent in a certain kind of experience are applied to situations with respect to which their occurrence is extrinsic. This is called subjectification, indicating that the operations come to be independent of the objective circumstances where they initially occur and whose apprehension they partially constitute. (Langacker, 1998: 528)

Simply speaking, people subjectively construed the objective world. At first sight, “subjectification” has little to do with intercultural communication. However, if one pays a closer look at the illustration of “subjectification”, he or she will find out that it is closely bound up with it. Provided that listeners and speakers have different cultural backgrounds, listeners perceive and construe the words the speakers said by first reflecting on a corresponding mapping in his or her mind. In this regard, “subjectification” can also be considered as a cognitive and communicative alignment with speakers. The degree to which the listeners align (attenuate in Langacker’s term) with their speakers determine whether the interaction will go smoothly or not, as it is the listeners’ reactions that prompt speakers to decide how to continue the conversation. Karolina Krawczak (2016) interpreted Langacker’s opinions as “mental transfer”. According to him, “subjectification” is functional/intersubjective orientated. He argued that the alignment of listeners, to some extent, accentuated the viewpoint of speakers, thereby giving rise to meaning negotiation and turn-taking. (P181)

There is no doubt that attention attribution theory and the notion “subjectification” shed light on the way in which human cognitive disposition performs its function. They contributed to flourishing the research field of cognitive linguistics. The attention attribution theory was proved to be the first attempt to dissect the semantic relations in a sentence by representing them with spatial structure. Ronland Langacker’s “intersubjectification” married cognitive semantics with psychology, emphasizing that every individual has his or her way of construing the extrinsic world. And it is one’s mental state that exerts an influence on his or her mode of conceptualization. However, these two theories, in effect, just gave a glimpse to the whole picture of attention, as they only elaborated it at the semantic level. Langacker’s contention on “subjectification” has its limitations, as this notion was only illustrated at the semantic level and most examples were made out of context. In short, Roland Langacker’s “subjectification” paid less heed to interaction.

With Langacker’s groundwork, Elizabeth Gloss Traugott and Richard B. Dasher (2004) moved a step further by putting forward the notion “intersubjectivity” or specifically speaking “intersubjective alignment”. Traugott and Dasher do not discard lexemes, personal pronouns and verbs also from the perspective of cognitive semantics, but she highlighted that listeners did not only have access to their own minds (subjectification), but also keep adapting themselves to speakers’ mental state by

inferring, judging and evaluation, irrespective of cultural differences. In this regard, “intersubjectivity” is functional-orientated, involving listeners’ alignment to the whole communicative activity. From a discourse perspective, Traugott posited that not all words could be construed objectively or subjectively. Rather, their meanings can only emerge themselves in the on-going interaction. The scholar Karolina Krawczak (2016) captured the essence of “intersubjectivity” which is nothing but “interactive-collective” Simply speaking, “intersubjectivity” is “(...) the speaker orients him-/herself towards the interlocutor and the discourse they co-construct. (P189)

In the paragraphs mentioned above, human cognition has been dissected into a neurological basis, attention. Yet, this does not mean that human cognition works in a sequential manner. The reason why this section elucidated the preconditions for language teaching and learning by delineating it into neurological and cognitive dispositions is that it attempted to provide a clearer picture of the sine qua non for learning and teaching.

Apart from memory, emotion is another driving force for the function of human cognition. On the semantic plane, the people whose mother languages are different and who have different cultural backgrounds tend to share some emotional commonalities whereas the linguistic forms used to express their emotional commonalities vary from culture to culture. Albeit the emotional-laden expressions connote different things in different cultures, some emotional concepts, however, are free from the impacts that languages and cultures have on them for they indicate similar meanings across cultures and are most self-evident in semantic primitives. Anna Wierzbicka (2003)’s surmised the concept “Emotional Universality” by postulating the semantic meta-language. In her account, words like “go” “take” and “wish” are semantic primitives, sharing similar emotional attributors which are, however, encoded in different linguistic forms in different languages and cultures.

Music is another evidence which can support the contestation that emotional activities are the integral constituents of the human cognitive mechanism. (Large, 2010; Schafer, et al., 2013)

Within the remit of language education, music could facilitate the language learning process by inducing learners’ emotions. In the book *Suggestopedic Methods and Applications* Schiffler (1992) pointed out “baroque music had a positive effect at the beginning of foreign language instruction under specific conditions.” (P1935). As can be seen, music assisted language teaching, which indirectly expedited the language

acquisition process. (Carlyn, 2004) By the same token, Hi Jee Kang and Victoria J. Williamson (2014) proved that background music could exert influences on foreign verbal learning. That essay indicated that music could ameliorate cognitive function, which was self-evident in the verbal learning of a foreign language: Music conduced to promoting foreign verbal learning at the initial stage. Another neurologically-based research demystified that it was the impacts of music on working memory that facilitated a foreign language. Emotion plays an indispensable role in background music for it can facilitate second language learning.

In the field of cultural education, music not only has effects on language learning but also acts as one of the contributors to promote language learners' cultural understanding and well-being. Maria (2017) emphasized that touching music enabled students to vent their feelings "Bebe's songs were very moving to students (...) many could not contain their emotions." (P502) From this article, a possible postulation can be made that music is a powerful tool since it can improve students' socio-emotional health and make them gain awareness of their own culture. (ibid.) Similarly, Anna Nizegorodcew (2013) also highlighted that emotion serves as a facilitator for intercultural communication for it unveils the underlying value systems of other cultures. In this sense, better emotional conceptualization will help one to enhance his or her intercultural awareness. (Franco, et al., 2014) Such a standpoint is very beneficial for it has proved that music is one of the favorable agents for intercultural communication.

In conclusion, music plays a potential role in inducing emotion which could facilitate the process of language learning and acquisition and enhance cultural awareness. A caution, however, should be exercised: music is just a trigger for improving human cognition performance by inducing human beings' emotion. It is neither the imperative factor nor the sufficient condition for language learning as the degree to which music influences people's cognitive performance and cultural recognition depends largely on personal traits and neurological endowment. (Clark, et al., 2016: P9)

6.2 Motivation

Motivation plays a decisive role in language teaching and learning, as it determines whether language instructors and learners continuously invest efforts in language teaching and learning. A demotivated student may perform poorly not only in schools

but also in other social engagements and demotivating teaching and teaching situations may also bring harm to students' wellbeing. According to the traditional viewpoint of motivation put forward by Robert Gardner (1986), pragmatic motivation could be simply paraphrased as utilitarian benefits. And for Italian students, it can mean getting more credits, passing Chinese language exams and getting higher grades, finding a part-time job in restaurants run by Chinese. On the contrary, integrative motivation can be interpreted as a positive outlook on the L2 and its culture. However, it is necessary to underline that the two types of motivation, viz., integrated motivation and pragmatic motivation are not mutually exclusive but serve as the premise for each other. What is more, these two types of motivation also warrant inspection because the concept of pragmatic-driven motivation is amorphous on the one hand. On the other hand, either integrative-laden motivation or pragmatic-orientated motivation is only applicable in non-situation-specific, stable and generalized conditions.

6.2.1 L2 Motivational Self System

The two sorts of motivation have been incorporated into the theory "L2 Motivation Self System" proposed by Zoltán Dörnyei. (Dörnyei, 2005: 105-106) According to Dörnyei, motivation is not static but context-specific, dynamic and specific, varying from learner to learner. As learners' motivation keeps changing in different time periods and in different places, and the motivation fluctuation has effects on learners' language learning process. Dörnyei and MacIntyre and Alastair Henry (2015) posited that motivation was fluid, being varied from time to time. And a comparative stable motivation can only be captured temporarily on a rather short timescale. (P4) At the same year, Dörnyei (2015) underpinned his position, saying that "motivation is less a trait than fluid play, an ever-changing one that emerges from the processes of interaction of many agents, internal and external, in the ever-changing complex world of the learner" (P93) Note that such position is the tenet of Dörnyei's whole theoretical system. The advent of L2 Motivation Self System has deepened Dörnyei's insights into positive psychology which lied at the heart of self-efficacy theory. Self-efficacy theory attaches great importance to people's sense of efficacy for it views it as the major cognitive tool regulating people's behavioral and the course of action (Bandura, 1995) Similarly, Hockey (2011) argued that fatigue acted as a compensatory control system "that manages goal activity in the service of motivational requirements" (P3) By making a trade-off between people's goals, values and costs, fatigue also contributes to

people's sense of self-efficacy in that it suppresses the less important goal in favor of the most urgent ones and thereby maximizes working efficiency.

Inspired by Mihály Csíkszentmihályi (2008)'s theoretical architecture of "flowing state", Dörnyei (2014, 2015) then put forward another two far-reaching frameworks which were "Directed Motivational Currents" and Motivational Agency". Both were interrelated with each another, providing roads to uncharted areas. By "flowing state", it mainly refers to an optimal psychological state that a person has. Once this person enters such a state, he or she will concentrate so much on what he or she is doing that barely realizes the elapsing of time. "Concentration is so intense that there is no attention left over to think about anything irrelevant. Self-consciousness disappears, and the sense of time becomes distorted." (Csíkszentmihályi, 2008:71) Yet, a proviso should be noted: a person who is in that flow state is capable enough to deal with the thing he or she is doing. In other words, the task is neither demanding nor beyond a person's capability. Standing a contrast with the flow state, the Directed Motivational Currents, however, points out that a person may also concentrate on one thing without being conscious of the external environment even if he or she has to constantly make endeavors to fulfill that task. Zoltan Dörnyei, Alastair Henry and Christine Muir (2015) explained that the rationale behind this contradictory postulation was related to one's eudaemonia. Different from hedonic happiness, a short but intense pleasure, eudaemonia has to do with one's future self or ideal self. It is the happiness brought by self-realization and it is also viewed as the most important reason for remaining in a state of DMC.

It is this type of profound feeling which is experienced in a DMC. That is, it is not a sense of euphoria or the giddy state of happiness that can, for example, be momentarily experienced during pleasurable activities. Rather, it is a feeling of being in a state of harmony, of doing something that is personally rewarding, and which connects with an individual's true sense of who they really are and where they are going in life. (P103)

Closely related to the framework, DMC is the concept of "Motivation Agency" which is regarded as the departure point from which language learners can build their ideal self and thereby gain eudemonic happiness. Dörnyei argued that language learners should build a motivational vision with which one can "taste" his or her ideal self by creating mental imagery. With that image, one may have a look at some desirable scenarios which are, by no means, muted, but with a plethora of voices and colors. (P46)

What should be recognized is that teachers play an imperative role in building students' motivational vision. They not only need to give assistance to students, encouraging them to sow the seeds for their ideal self, but also have to deploy techniques steering students to the right direction of building motivational vision. This is, guided imagery. According to Dörnyei, "guided imagery" could be interpreted as a teaching technique that "directs students in controlled daydreaming, that is, helping them to consciously generate imagines of desired (language) self" (P49) The guided imagery can be categorized into scripted fantasy, scripted imagery and imaging streaming. All three are the main means for achieving guided imagery. The DMC and motivational agency are in praise for the fact that they help language learners to build a clear future picture about their desired selves, to let them collect future-relevant resources and to enable them to capitalize on these affordances as much as possible.(Dörnyei, 2015:398) Hence a language learner with such motivational vision can have a clear understanding of himself or herself and know what a kind of person he or she would like to be in the future and how to achieve self-realization at last. All in all, the motivational theories of Dörnyei offered a new and different way of understanding motivation. What is more, his insights aspired me to know in which manner I could use motivation to facilitate the process of language learning. At this point, the motivational theory of Dörnyei's spurred me to adopt a more dynamic and situational-oriented viewpoint of motivation.

6.2.2 Motivation as Ecosystem

Admittedly, language learning and development is attributable to building motivational vision or specifically speaking establishing desired self. Nevertheless, as is mentioned above, language learning and developing involve a complex process calling for an integrative account of a plethora of societal and psychological factors. Dörnyei only probed into motivational issues at the micro level by positing it in specific situations while he barely realized that parents and the peers of language learners also played a pivotal role in arousing language learners' motivation. And that limitation has been spotted by Ema Ushioda (2014) who cast doubts on the effects that "purposeful effortful striving" (in Ushioda's term) had on the regulation language learners' motivation by arguing that language learners can only build a motivational vision and thereby regulate their motivation, insofar as they have well-developed metacognition awareness and skills. For one reason, students' language proficiency and their capability for regulating their emotions and cognitive activities decide the extent to

which students can invest their efforts into language learning. For another reason, students' personalities also affect language learners' purposeful and effortful striving. (P45) Furthermore, Ema Usioda (2015) considered learning contexts like ecosystems, arguing that there was a dynamic relationship between the external environment and learners. She posited that learners, on the one hand, were influenced by the contexts in which they situated themselves; on the other hand, the learners acted as social agency, inflicting impacts upon the learning environment where they situate themselves. (P51) Thus, learners are interdependent on contexts. Therefore, how to contribute greatly to learning from the angle of contexts is the first issue that should be considered in my teaching activities.

In this regard, audio-visual materials are proved to be efficient. In foreign language teaching and learning, audio-visual materials are multimodal, stimulating students' motivation and encouraging them to participate in teaching activities in comparison with the traditional materials which are mono-modal. Video clip is in itself an audio-visual form. The precedent studies have proven that video clip could contribute to stimulating students' motivation. (Yuan & Shen, 2016; Jacobsson, 2017; Kaiser, 2018) And raising and maintaining students' motivation is critical in teaching activities as only when students are highly motivated could they allocate their attention to the most important knowledge, whereby improving their language proficiency in the long term. Uley, et al., (2015) claimed that video clips facilitated language learning, by way of arousing students' motivation. "In other words, the findings of the present study reveal that the use of video as an information and communication technology is very beneficial and motivating in teaching and learning Aviation English." (P137) Second, the teacher can encourage the learners to learn and acquire the second and foreign language in various manners because by doing so he or she may arouse the learners' interest. In Kress' words, interest is helpful to second language learners since "it initiates an urge to speak and provokes speakers to draw on any communicative resources to hand"(Kress, 2004; Routhwell Julia, 2011). Asking students to play drama is a constructive teaching method, as learners can fully expose themselves to a second and foreign language by engaging in the dram and thus learning and acquiring a foreign language gradually.

In addition, drama can also enrich one's identity. Italian learners of Chinese may have deeper perception of Chinese table manners by acting as a Chinese person. He or she may take a perspective of Chinese people, as he or she may try to consider cultural

related things (table manners about chopsticks) from Chinese perspective and to behave and speak in the Chinese way. Since comparison and contrast between different cultural backgrounds contribute to fostering intercultural communication and enriching identities, comparing and contrast cannot be a better way of looking inside and outside of one's own culture. And as playing drama serves as a catalyst for enriching one's identities, it will also contribute to intercultural education. Riviere (2005) opined that drama could prompt learners to "wear" different identities, including those of foreign cultures. It is believed that playing drama is an authentic multi-modal interaction which incorporated language into a kinesthetic mode and prompt people who "wear" different ethnic identities to put themselves into the shoes of others with different ethnic backgrounds. Thus, identity is proved to hold an imperative position in fostering intercultural communication.

Although Ema Ushioda observed the limitation existing in Dörnyei's theories, she did not challenge the basis of Dörnyei's theoretical frameworks for she still focused on students' cognitive dispositions and capabilities which are, in effect, just two of the constituents of making continuous endeavors purposely. (Giere, 2006) The other constituents besides metacognition, on the contrary, has been elaborated in my Ph.D. project. Since this Ph.D. research takes account of not only cognitive-intrapersonal but also collective-interpersonal contributors to students' motivation for learning Chinese. This project has scrutinized the motivation of Italian learners of Chinese by situating it in school, family and social landscapes. Supportive evidence comes from the book *Children Policy*. In that book, Allison James and Adrian L. James (2004) focused on the point that children and sociocultural environments where these children were born and grew up were interconnected and mutually constitutive. Children were shaped by culture because of cultural politics and they in return shaped culture and rendered it more diversified. (P70)

To sum up, Dörnyei's theoretical framework, in this sense, has contributed to the present Ph.D. research, as it elaborates on self-motivation by further dividing it into ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self. And L2 learning experience may, to some degree, inflicts impacts on the degree to which Italian learners of Chinese can improve their intercultural competence and sharpen their intercultural awareness.

Apart from L2 motivation self-system and ecosystems, self-motivation is also important as it matters one's positive psychological state. Positive psychology brings benefits to one's self-motivation, in a way of reinforcing his or her self-esteem, self-

concept and self-confidence. (Muro et al., 2018: 127) However, *positive psychological state* merely does so in the short term. (Nurra and Oyserman, 2018) And it is eudemonia that boosts one's self-motivation in the long term. Since eudemonia concerns little with my project, this section will brief on it. As eudemonia can be construed from diverse perspectives, the current section herewith limits its connotation to eudemonic well-being (EWB). What should be emphasized is that eudemonic wellbeing embraces but goes beyond positive psychology. (Kelly, 2003; Tiberius, 2013a; Waterman, 2013b) Compared with positive psychology, EWT involves two ingredients, namely eudemonic feelings and optimal function. The rationale behind this motivation lies in the eudemonic feelings driving her to relish the process of exploring the unknown. With respect to optimal functioning, Vitterso (2013) delineated it into two senses. They were dimensions of social goodness and the competence of the former, both of which differ from one another. Social goodness extends to perseverance, resiliency and diligence whereas competence has to do with being skillful and imaginative. The distinction, in my opinion, is too ambiguous to point out the role that optimal functioning plays in one's eudemonic well-being, in self-motivation as well as to in lifelong learning.

6.2.3 The Willingness of Communication

As long term and short-term goals have distinctive effects on learners' language acquisition, they also influence how much attention can be paid to the foreign culture. Suppose that a learner is driven by ought-to motivation, he or she mainly regards learning a foreign language as an obligatory task. A case in point is Chinese students who spare no efforts in studying English. As the grades of English has a bearing on the final scores that determine whether students can go to prestigious universities or the universities of low quality, these Chinese students may concentrate on improving their language proficiency while they, however, may show little interest in British culture, or specifically Anglo Saxon history. In this way, learners may not invest much of their efforts into culture learning, let alone giving an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of a specific cultural event/phenomenon. As can be seen from above, motivation plays an indispensable role in language learning and acquisition. Suppose that language learners are not inspired or motivated, they may have no willingness to communicate. The notion "willingness to communicate (WTC)" was first proposed by McCroskey and Richmond (1990).

By definition, WTC means that “an individual’s predisposition to initiate communication with others“ (Nourollah, Ketabi & Tavakoli, 2019, P19)

Nevertheless, the abovementioned definition is rooted in scholars’ intuition and presumption, and it is over-simplified and thus cannot hold water. Provided that a person is supposed to chat with his or her peers but s(he) chose to remain silent in the class, especially when the teacher asks some students to take the floor and express his or her ideas. The reason why this person is unwilling to speak depends greatly on his affective state and his background knowledge. If s(he) feels nervous and don’t know how to answer the question because of his or her lack of knowledge, then, it is imaginable that this person chooses to be silent. Therefore, one’s willingness to do anything in the world, albeit having to do with his or her disposition, is determined by a conglomeration of factors, such as the relaxing or stressful environment, the affective state and cognitive capability of a person and so forth. At this point, MacIntyre, *et.al.* (1998) offered more comprehensive insights into the determiners of WTC in his pyramid of L2 model.

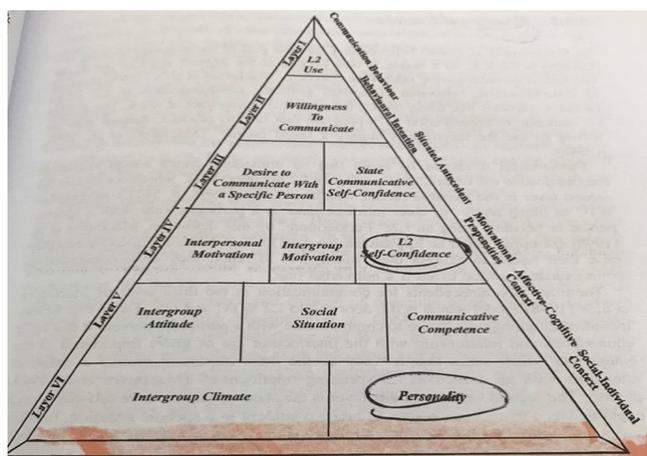


Figure 2 Pyramid model of L2 WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998: P36)

The model is dissected into six layers that can be categorized into situational factors and personal ones. These factors not only decide whether a person wants to speak or not but also determines the degree to which a person would like to invest his or her efforts into doing a thing. In one word, these factors are proved to be facilitators to language learning and acquisition only under the condition that language learners are motivated. Therefore, motivation should be given prominence in terms of language learning and development.

From a situational viewpoint, a simulation situation should be provided because language learners can immerse themselves in that environment where they can put what they learned into practice.

According to Kramsch's (1993) communicative discourse, only when second language learners used some linguistic knowledge in a concrete context can they gradually and truly acquire the language knowledge. In addition, only they use some linguistic knowledge in a context can they know how to use the language appropriately at that time and in that context. In the present Ph.D. project, a cooking lesson is covered in the teaching program. Students are expected to imitate the researcher's gestures and make rice dumplings. Another rationale behind this lesson is that it will contribute greatly to learners' acquisition because 'speeches + gestures' serve to foster language learning in that people are able to not only decompose complicated actions into easier components in a short time, but also to integrate vocal and sensorial movements and whereby to generate referents according to the vocalizations and gestures integrated before. Likewise, Tai and Khabbazzbashi (2019) also emphasized that the integrative consideration of "speeches + gestures" by marrying the method conversation analysis with the theoretical basis micro-genesis which refers to "the instances of learning as they occur in 'in flight' during interpsychological activities over a short period of time" (P446) Based on the empirical studies that had done, Tai and Khabbazzbashi construed the integrative consideration of "speech and gesture" as embodied enactments which manifested themselves in a variety of gestural, verbal and kinesthetic resources. By deploying micro-genetic analysis, they found out that metaphorical and deictic gestures as well as their use outweighed verbal speeches. Based on their observation, they highlighted that language instructors and learners' gestures and their role are still uncharted territory that should gain much more attention in SLA.

6.3 Autonomy

As mentioned above, motivation plays a decisive role in foreign language learning and teaching. This section, then, gives a cursory glance at another determinative factor for foreign language learning and teaching which is autonomy. With respect of autonomy, self-directed and self-organized learning and teaching will be illustrated for they concern my teaching program in which I designed a drama involving Chinese table manner in a way of facilitating Italian learners of Chinese's cultural knowledge concerning Chinese table manner and enabling them to reflect on how to respect the

positive face of guests and hosts based on their needs and interests. The Italian learners of Chinese were encouraged to interact with a Chinese bar owner by flexibly drawing on pragmatic knowledge of making requests in Chinese and by manipulating their linguistic and non-linguistic resources to negotiate the meanings with that bar owner.

6.3.1 Self Directedness and Self-organized Learning

Briefly speaking, learning autonomy refers to one's self-control, monitoring and evaluation over his or her learning process. Yet, it is necessary to note that both language teachers and learners play an indispensable role in developing learning autonomy. In fact, the fulfillment of learning autonomy depends on the efforts on both sides.

For teachers, they are supposed to know how to develop their students' autonomy in a way of facilitating their learning process to the greatest extent possible. Little (2007) pinpointed three guidelines for developing autonomy. They are:

- 1) learner involvement of empowerment. It is done by encouraging students to become personally and collectively response as well as by creating appropriate conditions for students so that they are more involved.

- 2) learner reflection. By learner reflection, it means that learners should be mobilized to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning on their own. It is crucial to recognize that autonomy is not only beneficial to one's language learning but also is proved to be indispensable in life-long learning, as the ultimate goal of teaching is not imparting students with specific knowledge but aspiring and enlightening them to explore and learn knowledge by themselves. In other words, learners need to know how to learn but not what to learn. (PP14-29)

From the angle of teachers, they can act as coordinators, helping language learning to take in linguistic, pragmatic and cultural knowledge. Granted, it is language learners who capitalize on the potential learning resources. Nevertheless, it does not mean that the role that teachers play has nothing to do with language learning and acquisition. They cannot replace students to think, to reflect, to evaluate and to analyze, yet they can provide language learners with rich learning resources which learners can draw on and thus facilitate their learning and acquisition process. First, the teacher could present learners the stimuli that may interest them most. The audio-visual stimuli cannot be a better choice, as they bolster language learning and acquisition. By drawing on the

notion “autonomy” into the picture of foreign language teaching, Pawel Sobkowiak (2017) conducted an ethnographic project with an attempt to explore the role that learner autonomy plays in developing intercultural competence. He claimed that the agency of foreign language students could work at several levels. First, learners develop their designs by proposing research questions and setting goals. Second, they put their ideas into practice by conducting empirical research. Third, they reflect, discuss, criticize, analyze, conceptualize and synthesize all the data that they collect, and according to the results they report in their finding.

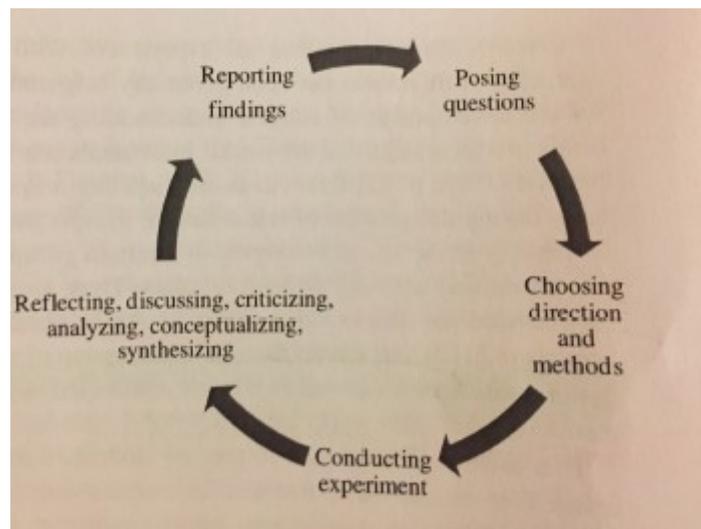


Figure 3 Stages of ethnographic projects fostering students’ autonomy (Sobkowiak, 2017: pp. 56-57)

With the direction of language teachers, language learners should know how to direct and organize their learning pathways. Thus, for learners, self-directedness and self-organization matter their language learning most. Self-directedness always comes hand in hand with self-organized learning. Both of them underpin that an individual is responsible for monitoring and taking control of his or her learning process. Yet, self-organized learning is devoted to studying how one organizes his or her learning within a timescale. A case in point can be learning strategies. That is, in which way a person set which type of agenda for achieving what kind of goal. Thus, self-organized learning acts as a vehicle for self-directedness. Compared with self-directed learning, self-organized learning puts more weight on one’s self-responsibility for his or her learning process, enabling a person to have an overview of the whole learning process and prompting him or her to clearly realize what is worthwhile to do and what is not. As can be seen, self-organized learning, in spite of being the agency of self-directedness,

accompanies with self-directedness focusing on one's evaluation and judgment of his or her learning activity as well as its rewarding effects within a limited time.

7. Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language

As People's Republic of China has become one of the economic powerhouses in the past 50 years, the world has witnessed an increasing demand for Chinese knowledge. Many people whose first language is not Chinese choose to study this language for they can gain more study and work opportunities and thereby improve themselves. What is more, with the establishment of the Chinese government's global Confucian Institutes(Cis), Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCFL) has come under the spotlight of foreign language teaching and learning, prevailing in the United States, UK and Australia and therewith being identified as the Hanyu Re (Chinese language fever) phenomenon. (Han, 2017; Gao, 2011). The following sections give an overview of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language, sketching its historical development, main teaching objectives, contents as well as approaches. Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCFL) can date back to as early as the 16th century, during which period the Italian bishop Matteo Ricci came to China to learn Chinese language and culture. Then, he also introduced the Chinese language and culture systematically to Italy and the other Western countries at that time and he died in 1610 in Beijing.

7.1 The Aims and Methodologies of TCFL – An Overview

In the last five decades, imparting the non-native Chinese learners (NCL henceforth) with the grammatical knowledge of Chinese has long been the ultimate goal of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (with the abbreviation of TCFL henceforth). Yet, with the burgeoning globalization, the aims of TCFL have been shifted from inculcating NCL learners with fixed grammatical patterns to improving their communicative competence. This is because the principles, methods and techniques of foreign language education, as is mentioned in precedent paragraphs, have undergone a drastic reformation over the centuries, from a prescriptive-directed pedagogy to a communicative-oriented one. Such evaluation in the domain of foreign language teaching has also exerted a great influence on TCFL, especially on its aims and methodologies.

Chronologically speaking, TCFL has gone through three major reformations in respect of the teaching aims as well as methodologies. Before 1990, TCFL mainly focused on improving NCL basic language competences with the aim of enhancing Chinese learners' language capability of writing, listening, speaking and reading in Chinese, among which writing and speaking gained particular attention in the field of TCFL, as NCL were expected not only to learn how to write standard Chinese characters, viz, Chinese orthography in technical term, but also to have sufficient knowledge of how Chinese words could be articulated in a correct and even standard fashion. (Bisong, 1989; Yuguo, 1995)

Nevertheless, the aims and methodologies of TCFL before 1990 were found wanting, as they viewed language learning as a sum of several disintegrated parts and could be simply regarded as two dyads, namely listening-reading and speaking-writing, both of which might be one of the possible criteria for evaluating a learners' language performance and competence. However, the two dyads mentioned above cannot be the sole yardstick to measure a student's language capability. And a comprehensive ability as a whole involves not only the basic language skills but also the capability of using language appropriately in different situations. By appropriation, it means that language learners can participate in the discursive practices in target language in reference to the socio-cultural norms which may, to some extent, determine the way in which the native interactants express their feelings, project their identities, present their attitudes, socio-political stance and so forth (Uryu, et al. 2014) In one word, the aim of TCFL should be in line with that of foreign language teaching, that is, to cultivate NC learners who are able to use Chinese to deal with the problems they encounter, especially in the unfamiliar situations where the language they are learning is mainly spoken. In effect, as can be observed in the introduction part, foreign language teaching (with TCFL being involved) is more than sharpening learners' language skills which, in my opinion, might be the starting point from which language instructors conduce to the relevant teaching practices but it cannot be regarded as the ultimate goal of foreign language teaching nor the guideline based on which language teachers deploy a variety of approaches to facilitating the process of students' language learning. One of the possible explanations for my argument is that foreign language learners who studied Chinese cannot use language appropriately in an authentic situation, although the language they speak or write is grammatically correct. A similar argument was also pronounced loudly in an article named *Teaching Chinese as a second or a foreign*

language: a systematic review of the literature 2005-2015 where Ma et al. (2017) gave an exhaustive analysis of Chinese language pedagogy after conducting a systematic review on the researches concerning TCFL. After summarizing the opinions shared in the precedent researches, they drew a conclusion that developing Chinese learners' communicative competence and their capability of using Chinese in authentic situations gained much more weights over merely teaching them how to write and articulate Chinese characters. (P 817- 818)

At this point, TCFL at the first stage (before the 1990s) calls for great remediation on its teaching aims.

And it was because of this appealing for a reformation that TCFL entered into the second stage (during the period 1990s --- 2000s). In the second phase, TCFL shifted its spotlight to ameliorating Chinese language learners' communicative and pragmatic competence, arguing that developing NC learners' communicative competence in authentic situations was supposed to be more significant than merely sharpening their respective language skills. For example, Cheng Shang, (1999) underpinned that one of the aims of TCFL was to improve NC learners' oral competence. And she reckoned that involving Chinese learners in daily conversations could be a good way to realize such an aim. To justify her contention, Cheng Shang (1999) conducted a series of instructional practices attempting to encourage students to engage themselves in the discursive practices in Chinese. In doing so, she could mobilize language learners of Chinese to practice this target language. Jian hua (2013) opined that Chinese language learners should communicate politely with the native speakers with reference to the social conventions about the use of Chinese expressions. However, he did not point out that politeness varies from person to person. A social behavior which was regarded as polite for a Chinese person may be impolite for another one. At this point, this author did not underpin that a language learner who study Chinese should use a Chinese expression based on his or her interlocutor's specific understanding of politeness. Unlike to him, I offered my account that one should express a Chinese expression based on his interests and needs in movement-to-moment interactions.

However, what should be noted is that the aims and methodologies of TCFL were still far from being satisfying, albeit with a focus on language learning environment and its role in promoting language learners' communicative competence. This is because students' language performance and competence were overemphasized so much that

their intercultural awareness got little attention in the field of TCFL. Nevertheless, this aim of language teaching, in my opinion, presents a very narrow view of language instruction and learning for it takes little account for critical education which should be the most integral part of foreign language teaching. (Hong, 2016) As Dasli and Raquel Diaz (2015) pinpointed that foreign language teaching and learning (with TCFL being included) should go beyond a proficient-oriented model which overemphasized foreign language learners' language skills and underscored that language learning was a process of producing chunks of fixed sentences and grammatical patterns. This model presumes an ideal native-like speakership, as it draws two polar points with one being the non-native level and other the native-like state.

Such ignorance of students' intercultural awareness created a false impression that intercultural teaching was not as important as reinforcing students' language proficiency. And developing the intercultural awareness of Chinese language learners gave away to improving language students' basic language skills, namely writing, listening, speaking and reading or developing their communicative competence in an authentic situation. Such a false impression may prompt both teachers and students to shape a narrow and limited view on language and culture, as language was reduced to a set of structural systems involving grammatical rules, vocabulary knowledge, phonological patterns and a great quantity of factual knowledge.

The language instructors who were under the influence of this false impression tended to isolate language from culture. From their point of view, language could exist independently and remain intact from the cultural changes over time. Nevertheless, as can be seen in the second chapter, the issue pertinent to the relationship between language and culture has long been studied by scholars from all walks of life for decades. And in most cases, language and culture are interwoven with one another (Whorf, 1945; Kramsch, 1998) and can be at best analyzed separately at semiotic or poetic levels¹ (Risager, 2006a, 2015b). At this point, it is better to view language and culture in a holistic fashion, as is the case with language relativity. By language relativity, it underpinned that the value system and the outlook championed by a group of people might affect their use of language and vice versa. And the empirical studies

¹ For an exhaustive analysis of the relationship between language and culture, please review Agar's (1994) and Risager (2006)'s elaboration on the concepts of linguaculture and languaculture respectively. And on the difference between these two concepts as well as a more critical revision of "linguaculture", please refer to the book "Literary pedagogy" published by Risager in 2015.

used to testify the validity of the Sapir-Whorf hypotheses also rationalize the fact that language and culture are interrelated with one another.

Since learning a second or foreign language always goes hand in hand with gaining a deeper understanding of the culture behind that language. (Kramersch, 2013; Risager, 2018) Both the Chinese instructors and Chinese learners may find it inevitable to learn about Chinese culture. When a student begins to learn Chinese, he or she may begin to learn the vocabularies and grammatical patterns, viz., the way of pronunciation, the collocation between words and words or between words and phrases and so on by accessing to a variety of resources, for example, reading the textbooks written in Chinese, listening to the songs sung in Chinese or simply imitating the way in which native speakers speak Chinese.³ In doing so, language learners may, in varying degrees, learn about and gain a sharper insight into the general socio-cultural situation of the nations where Chinese is widely used. This is because music and literary texts, as elaborated in the second chapter, are cultural artifacts and the production of human activities, being the epitome of a country's culture. And it is also for this reason that music and literature of a nation, say, China, may serve as the prism through which one could have a rough understanding of a nation's status quo, particularly its sociopolitical and lingua-cultural situation. Language and culture, as elucidated above, are interrelated with each other, and the aims of TCFL will be transcended inevitably from teaching NCL Chinese grammar to developing their intercultural awareness.

And on the side of language students who study Chinese as a second or foreign language, they might learn about the Chinese sociocultural situations at that time via foreign media and they might consequently tend to analyze Chinese culture in an essentialist way, on the grounds that the majority of foreign media, say, newspapers, magazines and television programs, are biased to portray Chinese sociopolitical condition in an essentialist way. Consequently, the negative effects of foreign media might affect FL learners, especially those who did not fully develop the capability of making a clear distinction between right and wrong. As a result, those learners who have not already developed their discerning attitudes towards foreign media might merely view Chinese sociocultural phenomena in a stereotypical or even prejudicial manner.

³ Here, Chinese merely refers mandarin Chinese or PuTonghua, the other ethnic Chinese languages are excluded.

It is due to these methodological drawbacks that TCFL called for an urgent reformation in respect of the teaching approaches and aims. At the dawn of 20th century, TCFL had been ushered by the third stage in which foreign language learners' intercultural awareness gained increasing attention in the domain of TCFL. During this time, a great number of Chinese teachers tried to teach Chinese to foreign language learners by incorporating Chinese historical knowledge into their teaching activities. For example, De Xin (1999) suggested that Chinese instructors should introduce the six principles of Chinese characters before teaching them how to correctly write Chinese characters for Xu Shen (1989) underpinned in his book *Shuo Wen Jie Zi*: “Wén zì zhě, jīng yì zhī běn, wáng zhèng zhī shǐ, qián rén suǒ yǐ chuī hòu, hòu rén suǒ yǐ shí gǔ. [The writing system, as an aesthetic form and the building block of a nations' sociopolitical structure, can be passed down from generation to generation. And through a national script, people can have a rough picture of their country's historical and cultural evolution] (Shixian, 2016, my translation) In another word, the six principles of Chinese characters, viz. pictography, ideography, semantic-phonology compounds, transfer, and derivative cognates prove to be the major cultural representation from which one can have sharper insights into Chinese pre-history as well as the sociocultural norms of ancient China. (P83). As mentioned in the second chapter, Chinese radicals occupy an important position in the Chinese writing system as they perform the function of deixis in most cases. Thus, one may guess the meaning of a Chinese character after learning the meaning of its radical constituent, as evidenced by the Chinese character “膏”. Here, it is necessary to exert caution on the study of Chinese character, as it cannot be simply translated or equalized to hàn zì. The study of Chinese characters is a generic discipline embracing the following four specific categories: hàn zì formation, hàn zì morphology, hàn zì etymology, and the study of hàn zì culture. (Wang, 2015: pp 2-6). And since Chinese characters are quasi-pictographic and quasi-ideographic, then, one of the ways for teachers to improve learners of Chinese's intercultural competence is teaching them Chinese characters in a logical way. That is, the teachers can teach students a Chinese character by encouraging them to divide it into different components, to observe them, and to guess the meanings that these components refer to in the real world. According to *Shuo Wen Jie Zi* (Xu, 1985), Chinese characters are constructed based on the shapes of real objects. In reference to such an opinion, Han (2017) proposed a post-lingual approach

to teaching Chinese characters against an Australian backdrop. For Han (2017), a post-lingual approach to teaching Chinese provides learners of Chinese with the tools to look into meaning-making through the connections between symbols hàn zì and their referents; through the connection between learners' shared logical thinking patterns and the attribute built-in hàn zì; and also through students' analysis of their perception, conceptions, interpretations and the connotations that a hàn zì may have. (P59). With respect to improving students' intercultural competence, teachers can also employ this post-lingual method to encourage learners to memorize Chinese characters as well as their strokes in a way of enlightening the students to associate them with Chinese cultural and socio-historical backgrounds. A case in point can be 筷子(kuài zi), a hàn zì being comprised of two components, viz. “艹” and “快”, with 艹 being the radical part. With respect to this character, students can apply to their logical thoughts and have a direct perception of this hàn zì after observing its referent and its made-up material: a pair of chopsticks made of bamboo. That is the first two connections in realizing meaning-making, through which the teachers can help learners of Chinese in a much better way.

As for the third connection, it can be applied to analyze the hàn zì 男. Since Chinese agriculture has long been dominated by small-scale family farms, it is a must for people to cultivate fields, especially in north-western China, such as Shaanxi, Gansu, and Qinghai. What is more, it was the males in a family who took the responsibility for cultivating fields in ancient times. These two layers of meaning, accompanied by the old Chinese proverb “男耕女织” (men tilling and women weaving) contribute to enriching the connotation of 男 which is related to masculinity, the sense of responsibility, and the head of a family.

To recap, the aims and pedagogical methodologies of TCFL have undergone three major developmental flows as they shifted its focus from solely teaching Chinese grammatical patterns to cultivating their communicative competence and to promoting their intercultural awareness in an authentic situation. Although the teaching objectives and approaches of TCFL had been continuously changed, the pedagogical methodologies of TCFL left room for criticism, in the sense that Chinese instructors paid too much heed to the factual knowledge of Chinese culture which had long been

regarded as the only means for improving foreign language learners' intercultural awareness before 2005. However, imparting language learners with the factual knowledge of Chinese culture was far from enough because in doing so Chinese instructors might take the risk of reinforcing the cultural stereotypes of foreign language students or making FL students run into the slippery slope of oversimplifying or overgeneralizing Chinese culture with a few words. Ganassin (2020) opined that reducing Chinese culture into the features that characterize Chinese people was a kind of essentialist viewpoint, as it negated the fact that Chinese culture could be flexible as it was and creatively constructed by interlocutors at a particular moment and in a particular place. Her opinion echoed that of Argar et al. (2010) who argued that "constructing Chinese culture as homogeneous and universal failed to appreciate the shifting and processual production and negotiation of culture." (pp 90-91)

In my opinion, however, the factual knowledge of Chinese culture could be introduced, only if the foreign language learners of Chinese have enhanced their criticality and have had a deeper understanding of Chinese sociocultural evolution along with the historical development; otherwise, foreign language learners of Chinese may fall into an essentialist trap where all cultures can be simply homogenized as British culture, American culture, Italian culture or any culture as such. One of the possible reasons is that those who believe in the contestation that the culture is monolithic may incline to stick to his or her national identity by simply addressing that "since I am a Chinese, I am supposed to be...". It is necessary to note that this intention, in effect, can be also applied to people of different nationalities. For example, Amadasi and Holliday (2018) gave a thorough analysis of the intercultural experience of Italian postgraduates when they studied in the foreign sojourn. They found out that foreign participants who studied in a foreign country chose to present their national identities according to their perception of culture that they had long shaped within a particular sociopolitical structure. In most cases, this kind of sociopolitical structure is oversimplified as culture, as can be seen from the interviewing excerpt as followed:

I really wanted to tell her that who told you that I'm that I want to be a part of this culture. I already have a culture. I don't need to belong. I already belong to a culture. I don't need to belong." (Amadasi & Holliday, 2018: P247)

From the aforesaid transcript, this participant did not concur with the interviewers' opinion that the small culture is always on the go², as she aired her view on culture "I already have a culture. I do not need to belong...". The reason why this student chose to believe in her (fixed) cultural identity is that she had developed a kind of essentialist and dualistic perception of culture and simply saw it as "we" *versus* "othering". (Amadasi & Holliday, 2017) By making the aforementioned cultural statement, this interviewee tended to believe that she already had a culture to which she belonged, barely realizing the fact that culture could be engaged with, learned from and indeed expanded into. That is to say, this student failed to take a critical attitude towards culture by merely thinking that her "home culture" is incompatible with the "host culture". And because of this viewpoint, this student held disbelief in the culture itself for she purposefully imaged another culture that should be completely different from hers and she did not believe that culture could be flexible in its own right. The reasons why she made such a cultural statement are that she lacked a critical insight into the culture.

As I have reiterated, a critical perspective is one of the prerequisites for having foreign students of Chinese to learn the factual knowledge of a particular culture. Here, I prefer the term *criticality* to *a critical perspective* with the former embracing two respects, viz, critical thinking and critical actions. (Barnett, 1997) And as for critical thinking, the main center of interests lies in people's deep reflection on their personal trajectories, affection mechanism, cultural attitudes and their world outlook in general, all of which can be encapsulated into the term "member resources" in the term of Fairclough³ (2001).

Here, I will zoom in on the cultural related issues and language from the perspective of criticality. However, I feel it necessary to crystalize the term criticality before going on to elaborate on culture and language from the viewpoint of criticality.

By criticality, it can be interpreted at levels of cognition and action. And reconceptualization and reflection are the main kernels of criticality. While in terms of critical action, it can be constructed as the social practices in which people can agentively participate in the process of interpreting and (re)creating meanings with an attempt of deploying their critical awareness in solving the intercultural problems that

² For a detailed explanation, please refer to the Section 3

³ See 2.1 Unequal Power Relations

they have encountered in their daily lives. “They have been expected to be able to size up a situation in which they are placed and to act appropriately in it” (Barnett, 1997: 68)

After giving a cursory glance at the meanings of criticality, I will deal with language with a critical slant before moving on to elaborate on culture.

With respect to language, the criticality focuses on a reflection on language *per se*, on the use of language in meaning-making and on how language users choose to present their identities in alignment with the regulative norms of the contexts where they situate themselves. (Uryr, 2014) For example, *bricolage*, by default, is part of art terminology which refers to the jumbled effect produced by the proximity of buildings from different periods and in different architecture (Collin, n.d.) Yet, the extended meanings of bricolage vary from one scientific discipline to another. In the field of foreign language teaching and learning, the term *bricolage*, however, refers to the linguistic systems that have been created during the process of language contacts. (Thomas & Kaufman, 1988) Here, linguists usually use bricolage to indicate a new language phenomenon brought by language transfer, as evidenced by that of pidginizing and creolization which have already been elaborated in the preceding chapters. In intercultural communication, however, bricolage can be used to explain the new cultural identities which were creatively created in the discourse practices that people of different cultural backgrounds engage in. (Holliday, 2010) Apart from reflection, criticality also lays an emphasis on people’s reconceptualization of the language knowledge they have acquired, including not only the grammatical patterns, vocabularies and phonological systems of a specific language but also the use of the language in social practices. Simply speaking, the criticality, in one sense, places an emphasis on how people present their identities by using language; in another sense, the critical insight underpins how people use language to resist against or (re)construct the ideologies championed by a social group. In one word, the critical perspective, however, focuses on how language can be used to realize meanings in a particular situation.

It is necessary to note that the assumptions they have already formed in their early childhood play a pivotal role in the attitudes that Chinese learners held towards China, Chinese culture and their logical thinking of a cultural argument. For instance, the Chinese population was labeled as *Dōng yà Bìng fū* (Sick man of Asia) in the late 19th century.

One possible reason why China was portrayed as such is that the Chinese people during the period of Qing Dynasty (since 1840 the Opium War) suffered from health problems as they were addicted to opium-smoking and Qing Dynasty was confronted with internal disturbance and foreign aggression brought by trade deficits as well as the other socio-political problems, among which the incapability for enhancing martial strength was acutest. It is because of Chinese people's weak constitution and Qing Dynasty's weak economic situation and martial strength, China took the risk of being carved up by the empirical powers, undergoing a turbulent historical period. Here, an immediate caution should be exerted:

This explanation for the term *Dōng yà Bìng fū* (sick man of Asia), however, was far from being satisfying, on the grounds that it neither raised foreign students' critical awareness of this addressing (*Dōng yà Bìng fū*,) nor prompted them to explore sociopolitical backgrounds of China and of the western worlds in the late of 19th century. What should be noted is that the term *Dōng yà Bìng fū* was first mentioned in London School Times. In that newspaper, China was regarded as a sick man because it lost the battle in the Sino – Japanese War of 1894-1895. Noted that this term was exclusively used by Western powers who nurtured great ambition for conquering China, especially in that period of historical time. Thus, only NCL learn about the origin of the term *a sick man of Asia* and the places where this term was mainly used could they have a less biased viewpoint of China as well as Chinese culture. In this sense, a Chinese cultural phenomenon can only be described, analyzed and interpreted once it is contextualized in the socio-political environment where this phenomenon began to prevail. In the case of *Dōng yà Bìng fū*, the socio-political environment is posted Sino-Japanese war.

Thus, when NCL is encountered with factual knowledge as such, the Chinese instructors should find it necessary to propel students to fully explore the historical, social and political backgrounds related to the factual knowledge of the culture. What is more, Chinese language learners are required to view culture as complex and heterogeneous. Only by doing so, the students can be willing to take account of all the possible explanations about a factual knowledge of the culture. Once the foreign language learners of Chinese know how to view the culturally related factual knowledge, they will have a growing insight into the pre-assumptions of *Dōng yà Bìng fū*, viz., the sick man of Asia.

Paralleled with the abovementioned growing insight was the criticality in the field of culture. Noted that the criticality and “the growing insight” illuminated above shares some affinities as both concern people’s reflection and reconceptualization of a cultural phenomenon. The only difference is that cultural criticality demolishes cultural essentialism or neo-essentialism. By neo-essentialism, it refers to a variant of national culture which is always construed as homogenized and the so-called cultural diversity is just an exception of national culture. (Holliday, 2010)

Within the cultural domain, criticality is understood as the attitudes that people can hold to struggle against their presumptions about culture and the desires for “suspending the belief about the other’s culture the belief about one’s own” (Holliday, P41), as culture is too complex to be dichotomously divided into “the other’s” and “one’s own” cultures.

In the domain of intercultural education, criticality is both a methodological and ethical issue. It is an ethical issue in that students are expected to realize the complexity of a cultural reality, to view criticality as the toolkit for justice.

What is more, criticality can be seen from a methodological perspective for it encourages both language instructors and students to employ an interpretative approach to analyzing the cultural phenomenon. An interpretative approach challenged any familiar or easy answers about culture and encourages people to analyze a cultural phenomenon in a bottom-up manner.

As the large scale of globalization, migration and diaspora worldwide, a nation which was characterized by a particular set of linguistic, cultural and discursive patterns in the past is now becoming culturally and linguistically heterogeneous and complex. For this reason, one may find it less possible to analyze a cultural-linguistic phenomenon with reference to a national framework --- the pre-established habitual behaviors, world outlook and costumes that once represented a country’s culture or specifically speaking its value systems. Here, the presumed value systems can be associated with the concept member resources that dwelt on language as power. (Fairclough, 1993) Thus, it seems less possible to find an arbitrary relationship between the value system that a nation has championed in the last decade and the observed sociocultural and linguistic phenomena.

TCFL at the present time focuses not only on the improvements of intercultural competence and awareness of NCL learners but also on constructing the identities of Chinese learners themselves. (Tsung & Cruickshank, 2011)

Developing cultural awareness always goes hand in hand with improving nonnative learners of Chinese. Broadly speaking, it is normal for people with different ethnic backgrounds to face cultural conflicts, which, in effect, is the starting point from which they can gradually find out some shared cultural universalities. One of the most interesting parts in intercultural learning is not learning about the factual knowledge of a foreign culture, say, Chinese lantern festivals but the process during which one is able to reflect on and construe a cultural issue from diverse perspectives and in a more comprehensive and critical manner. (Yang, et al.,2013; Jin, T, 2017; Jin, L, 2018; Sun, 2006) In this respect, Claire Kramersch (1998) coined the notion “cultural fault lines” whereby arguing that cultural conflicts are inevitable. The best way for coping with such conflicts is by construing them from an insider-outsider perspective contemporarily. By doing so, students may gain a deeper insight into both their own culture and the target one. Of course, it is unwarranted to claim that taking an insider and outsider viewpoints is the panacea for all kinds of cultural problems, as viewing a cultural fact from diverse angles is also a metacognitive capability that may vary from person to person. This capability plays a pivotal role not only in intercultural communication but also in language learning and acquisition. A case in point is how to view and value the “purposeful effortful striving relies greatly on one’s meta-cognitive awareness. However, this does not mean that taking an insider-outsider viewpoint at the same time is not applicable in intercultural education, rather than taking such a perspective is the first step for students to get to know the target culture and thereby foster their intercultural understanding. And that is also applicable in Teaching Chinese as a foreign language. Chen (2013) took a similar line with Kramersch (1993, 1998), arguing that the inevitable yet necessary cultural conflicts were the departure point from which one can reflect and reexamine his or her own cultural merits and demerits and then foster their intercultural understanding in a way of understanding how the target people may think or do. Only in this way can learners of Chinese break the ice, taking the first step of deepening their understanding of the others with lingua-cultural backgrounds and then handle with the possible misconceptions or conflicts when they are encountered with “cultural fault lines”. That is also one of the indispensable constituents of language capability on my account (as for language capability, I will illuminate on it in the second chapter)

Noted that the teachers should help students learn how to listen to different opinions and put themselves into the shoes of the others. The first step to teach

intercultural awareness is associating the specific cultural costumes and products with their embodied cultural concepts or connotations. (Chen, 2012:144)

My teaching program has sucked the marrow of three teaching patterns and tends to be multifarious.

However, Chen (2012) did not cut the umbilic cord of essentialism for her appealing for being tolerant to cultural differences indicates an uncrossable boundary between the “Self” and the “Other” cultures which cannot be applicable on this fluid landscape. In this society, each individual is cultural travelers or culturally hybrid, having his or her distinct personal cultural trajectory. (Risager, 2007, 2014) Therefore, there are no clear-cut differences between the so-called Self and We because “In the late modern world, it has become more difficult to distinguish what is specifically one’s own and what is the foreign culture. Through the internet and mass media, people’s cultures histories, memories, aspirations are now imbricated in one another” (Urger, et al. 2014: P42)

7.2 WeChat for Chinese Language Learning

With the emergence of digital humanities, a variety of technologies have been applied to foreign language teaching and learning, the cases in point can be digital monographs (Scalar), tandem learning, telecollaboration teaching and We-chat learning. We-chat, as one of the multi-modal online applications, gains favor in a variety of fields, ranging from electronic transactions to on-line identity constructions. Among all disciplines, we-chat plays a constructive role in foreign language teaching and learning.

We-chat expands the scope of affordance by incorporating linguistic and non-linguistic means into on-line communication. Here, the non-linguistic means can be emoticons, audio-visual resources, stickers and the other textual-visual messages, among which emoticons and their effects on on-line interactions are supposed to be mentioned. Emoticons serve to enrich the original meanings of a message by adding the ironic, satiric, poignant or amusing effects to the normal conversations in one sense; in another sense, they can also perform pragmatic functions. (Han, 2014; Sandel, et al., 2019)  denotes “smiling” and it is originally used to create a harmonious and friendly environment. Besides, this emoji, to my knowledge, can also indicate a

stance on avoiding conflicts or unnecessary quarrels. We-chat user A may ask another user B to pay the printing fee to A. Then, user A sends a vocal or written message to B:



A: Ok, thank you.↵
[please may I ask to whom I can pay the printing fees?↵
To you or to the hotel?↵
B: you could pay it to me.↵
A: ok, once I receive my paper, I will do so.↵
B: No problem, take it easy. ↵
↵

Figure 4 Retrieved from a chat made between a client and an administrator in the quarantine in China.

Here, neither A nor B were unwilling to challenge the positive faces of each other and thus created distrust between each other. Then, instead of responding to B “wo gei ni duo shao qian?”, A used the phrase: “once I receive the paper I will pay it to you. with the emoji 😊. In this way, A avoided unnecessary misunderstandings that might arise during her interaction with B.

As can be seen from this case, emojis or emoticons afford a wealth of explicit and implicit meanings. Besides, this example also demonstrates that We-chat can be used to arouse students’ socio-pragmatic awareness and develop their multiliteracy skills in FLTL. Jin (2017) argued that We-chat might provide foreign language learners with four sorts of affordances: First, the stickers and animated images might render the on-line conversations on We-chat engaging and fun; second, We-chat communication could create authentic and meaning-focused situations where learners can exchange their ideas and feelings; third, We-Chat communication involves rich linguistic resources, enabling foreign language learners to get access to new or colloquial vocabularies. Fourth, We-chat communication dealt with identity construction and reconstruction. (PP 9-17) Admittedly, Jin (2017) gave an exhaustive analysis of We-chat’s communications by summarizing its linguistic, literary and social affordances.

He only gave a cursory glance at how We-chat could develop students' socio-pragmatic awareness instead of moving further to elaborate on the role We-chat might play in promoting foreign language learners' intercultural awareness and competence. He did not succinctly point out how this digital landscape might be conducive to developing FL learners' intercultural awareness.

Furthermore, the linguistic means can be realized by a mixed-language and the other trans-linguaging messages. The mixed-language texts are those which contain at least two kinds of written or discursive codes. They can be used by We-chat participants for their purposes and interests. Cheng (2019) pointed out that co-switching helped Chinese instructors to direct the attention of FL learners of Chinese to the "pedagogical foci" and to solve the communicational problems that teachers and learners might encounter. (P97) When a teacher explains to the Italian learners of Chinese the reason why the Chinese character “箸” gradually changed into “筷”, he or she may switch from English to Italian from time to time. In doing so, the teachers could help the learners understand the reasons as much as possible, insofar as he or she has limited English or Italian proficiency. On the other hand, the rich affordances on We-chat could also mobilize language instructors and learners to involve themselves in on-line interactions. Language learners and teachers could do so by negotiating the meanings they have encountered. In this way, they may establish a friendly climate in We-chat as they can exchange their ideas and feelings with each other by posting their photos, recording their day-by-day state and sharing interesting things. An immediate caution should be exerted that not all on-line meaning negotiations could bring positive results. Each person has his or her sociopolitical stance which is contextual and contingent. People can choose to posit their stances in synch with those of their interlocutors.

Apart from providing rich affordances, we-chat learning also contributes to enriching the identity of a person and constantly changing his or her identity in line with the contingent on-line environments. (Han, 2020; Xiong, 2019) Wang Qixiao (2019) recounted a financial sophomore's academic life and how Morgan --- this college student who majored in Finance--- crafted her hybrid identity during her sojourn in the United States. By recording the Wechat moments of Morgan and her daily diaries pertinent to her academic life, Wang (2019) discussed how Morgan gradually created her identity by capitalizing on a myriad of semiotic and discursive resources across a range of online spaces, and a case in point can be We-chat on-line situations. "Morgan

discursive construction of her identity as a skilled professional in the global marketplace was mediated by semiotic and identity resources located at (scalar) different scales.” (P262) And the family story of Morgan nested in one of the scales, as she detached herself away from the “grass-root” social class represented by her mother. She constructed her multiple identity by combining her professional identity with that in her family and she conveyed the ideas pertaining to identity constitution via We-chat or through individual interviews.

Undeniably, Wang (2019) minutely described Morgan’s personal cultural trajectory and attempted to argue that multiple discursive scalars of an individual’s personal trajectory offered avenues for crafting this person’s cosmopolitan identity. However, he did not successfully justify his argument, as one may find it hard to understand why Morgan shaped her cosmopolitan identity from his description of Morgan’s personal cultural trajectory. It is true that Morgan would like to instill into herself a tint of transculturalism by going sightseeing in the Times Square in New York, a cosmopolitan hub where a *mélange* of cultures coexist with one another. Yet, it is truer that she just had a “sightseeing” ---a superficial impression--- on how a metropolis could be. Cosmopolitan identity, in effect, is more than a perception of how a cosmopolitan city. Cosmopolitanism, according to Delanty (2012), was complicated and should be interpreted at the geopolitical, cultural, economic and social levels. While Wang’s viewpoint of cosmopolitan identity was less thorough as Wang’s saw it as a kind of “disposition that embraces openness to new people and new ideas while preserving loyalty to local values, interests, and commitments” (P261)

To summarize, Wang (2019) demonstrated how Morgan deepened her insight into the culture in the way that she could display her *We-chat Moments*. And Morgan’s interaction with the other We-chat users through We-chat moments showed that Morgan was able to manipulate her identities (i.e. cosmopolitan identity) to co-align with the other users via We-chat. And this co-alignment is one of the representations of her intercultural awareness that I will illuminate in the third part – The theoretical framework.

Similarly, we-chat can also be viewed as a platform on which the young people may tend to shape their disparate personalities which manifest themselves in positioning and subjectivity. Guo et al. (2017) opined that unsupervised Internet using might inflict impacts on adolescent’s well-being, especially on their mental health. Chinese senior high students preferred to post selfies via We-chat for the purpose of

showing their daily lives. By doing so, these high school students would like to attract the others' attention to engage themselves in social activities.

To recap, We-chat learning offers a possible avenue for instructors who have dedicated themselves to foreign language teaching and learning, in the sense that We-chat communication affords rich learning and teaching resources, shapes We-chat users' identity and their personalities.

Nevertheless, these studies which concern We-chat communication did not succinctly demonstrate how foreign-language instructors could improve FL learners' intercultural competences by drawing on the affordances nested within this on-line space, a case in point can be Xiaoyi's analysis of Morgan's personal cultural trajectory. Neither of them viewed We-chat Communication as one of the pedagogical means for developing language learners' critical awareness and for encouraging them to analyze a sociocultural phenomenon at large.

In my opinion, any digital pedagogical approaches should not only help foreign language learners to learn about multiculturalism or the significance of being a cosmopolitan, but also prompt students to develop their metacognitive awareness. For example, language learners are able to foster their critical thinking, which is one of the instructional goals of FLTL. What is more, I argued that digital pedagogy should be incorporated into the teaching syllabus, being an integral part of the whole teaching program.

To summarize, language teaching has undergone a fundamental shift from grammar-oriented methods to communicative-oriented approaches over time. The section language teaching methods, approaches and techniques---a historical overview has made a thumbnail sketch of four classical language teaching methods in a chronological fashion. By doing so, this section has presented a rough picture of language teaching in a general sense. What we should bear in mind is that language teaching and learning are interrelated. Although this section focused on language teaching, along with the related methods, approaches, and techniques, it also touched on language learning. Students in early historical periods were required to memorize grammatical and syntactic rules mechanically. While this learning mode was discouraged in the 20th and 21st centuries. During that period, students were inspired not only to use authentic words to express themselves but also to explore the logic behind some linguistic constructions on their own. In respect of language teaching and

learning, this section is a good departure point, as it explained how language teaching and learning are interrelated along the time of history.

8. Language Acquisition, Learning and Development

As can be deduced from the preceding sections, language teaching is closely related to learning. However, neither language teachers nor language teaching methods can successfully conduce to students' language learning. Here it is a must to clarify my position in language teaching and learning: On my stance, students are the main agents for language learning while teachers just act as participants, giving necessary assistance to students and guaranteeing that students are on the right track of language learning. Therefore, I assume that language teaching should be learner-oriented, serving not only improve language students' communicative competence but also sharpen their critical cultural awareness. They should not focus on learning the grammatical rules of a specific language or regard the grammatical rules of a specific language as the means of getting a job. That is to say, language learning does not mean memorizing some grammatical patterns or viewing good language proficiency as an edge for job hunting which is not helpful to students' language learning, Rather, they are important and even play a decisive role in learners' learning in the initial condition. (as for initial condition, please see below) What I mean is that the focus of language teaching and learning should not be limited to linguistic patterns. The main concern of Language education in this fluid and the globalized landscape is helping students to see through discourses and to critically reflect on the ideologies, power relations inherent in them, so as to challenge the received knowledge and analyze it critically from multiple perspectives. In one word, language education should commit itself to support students' autonomy and self-directedness learning. In this regard, Terry Lamb and Hayo Leinders (2011) hinged on the importance of autonomy for language learning and even for life-long learning. They laboriously but succinctly dissected the term autonomy. By quoting Young (2003)'s claim that "the individual should freely direct the course of his or her own life", Lamb and Leinders emphasized that autonomy was nothing but a life-long capability for learning and living and could not be simply reduced to "freedom of action" in a neo-liberal sense because just as what Lindley (1986) suggested:

An educational system which was geared to promote widespread autonomy amongst its pupils would provide an environment which stimulated critical self-awareness, a desire to question received wisdom, and self-directedness, a desire to question received wisdom, and self-directedness. (P136)

Therefore, teaching and learning co-adapt with one another. Teachers should tailor to students' needs and design syllabus based on their uptake and feedback on whether the teaching input is comprehensible or not. Similarly, students are expected to follow teachers' arrangements for learning activities and meanwhile, they should keep adjusting their learning goals from time to time for keeping pace with teaching progress.

In this sense, language teaching and language learning are closely interrelated with one another and neither can they be analyzed in isolation. The following sections will give a précis of major lines of research on language learning, paying particular attention to the most representative studies related to language learning, acquisition and development.

With respect to second language acquisition (SLA), people tend to associate it with language learning or attainment, taking it for granted that the three notions are interchangeable with one another. Such view, however, is too naïve to clarify the fusion concepts of “acquisition” and “learning”, thereby legitimating the loose use of the two notions abovementioned. As a result, a misunderstanding that language acquisition and language learning are the same things may prevail in the domain of language teaching and learning, making teachers or laymen believe that as long as students can accomplish a gap-filling task by only using the linguistic expressions provided by teachers, they will prove that they have acquired that language. That misbelief is, in any case, oversimplified. The next section herewith is devoted to crystalizing the conceptual pairs language learning and language acquisition. After crystalizing the aforesaid concepts, this chapter, then, continues to elaborate on the important literature concerning SLA.

Second language acquisition and language learning have long been the topic studied in the field of language teaching and learning. A great number of linguists have conducted numerous researches concerning this issue. Generally, they use the two terms in an interchangeable way without bothering to give a closer look at their definitions. At this point, it is worthy to mention Stephen Krashen (1982) who made a clear and simple distinction between ‘language acquisition’ and ‘language learning’ in the book

Principle and Practice in Second Language Acquisition. According to Krashen, language acquisition was a natural and unconscious process whereas language learning, called for conscious and agentive study. That is to say, language learning means the endeavour to grasp with grammatical rules of a language. Note that Krashen did not merely delve into clarifying the two terms but focused on how to facilitate the language learning process and how to help language learners acquire a language as much as possible. He highlighted that language can not only be acquired in the four-walls classroom but in daily conversations. And only language learners themselves can facilitate their language acquisition process and teachers can do nothing but only provide students with sufficient learning affordances. By doing so, teachers can help and only help students to accelerate their language learning process. Since this section focuses on clarifying the definitions of language acquisition and learning, Krashen's main theoretical thoughts herewith will not be illustrated at large but will be demonstrated in the following paragraphs.

In terms of another pair of concepts, one may find it easier to explain the second language than the foreign language. Diana Larsen-Freeman and Michael H Long (2014) gave a precise and concise definition of the second language: "A second language is one being acquired in an environment in which the language is spoken natively" (P43) Standing a contrast with a second language, a foreign language is learned and acquired in an environment where the language is not natively spoken. For example, if a native speaker of Italian learns Chinese in Italy, then Chinese will be the foreign language.

To summarize, this part has shed light on the differences between the two pairs of concepts aforementioned. The next section will concentrate on second language acquisition as well as the most influential literature in the field of SLA.

8.1 A Target-Like Viewpoint on Foreign Language Learning and Teaching

In the middle and late 20th century, the studies of SLA were mostly based on Structuralism. Within the philosophy of structuralism, language acquisition was interpreted as a process from A to B. A represents the second language proficiency at the very beginning of language learning whereas B indicates the total acquisition of a second language. The complete acquisition can be interchanged with the notion "target language" or "the language level of native speakers". That is to say, language acquisition was viewed mechanically as an ensemble of a series of stages being

independent with each other. A student's language proficiency at the present stage is totally different from that at the preceding stage because each stage represents a distinctive language system. In short, the second language acquisition is read as a "small parts make a whole" issue.

8.1.1 Stephen Krashen's "i+1" Structure and Five Hypotheses

Krashen (1982) emphasized that before scaffolding the structure of language knowledge, language practitioners and teachers should pay more attention to comprehensible content of input than to structure, notably forms and collocations. It should be noted that the structure in Krashen's account should be treated with caution because the degree of difficulty of a kind of language structure is closely related to L2 learners' acquisition: If the structure is far beyond L2 learners' capability, the learners will be at sea, let alone acquire that knowledge; if the structure is too easy, L2 learners will lose their motivation and pay less or even no attention to that structure. In this way, they would at best acquire the knowledge but not learn it. Therefore, the structure, as Krashen suggested, should be a little bit beyond L2 learners' capability "We acquire by understanding language that contains structure a little beyond our current level of competence ($i + 1$). This is done with the help of context or extra-linguistic information." (P21)

From the "i+1" structure, one can learn that L2 learners should comprehend a word or a phrase whose structures are a little beyond their current competence since L2 learners will understand them by taking advantage of multiple clues, for instance, contexts, gestures, expressions and so forth, to name just a few. Apart from the "i+1" structure, another major contribution is in Krashen (1982)'s theoretical framework which can be boiled down to two notions, one is interaction and the other input. Krashen proposed several hypotheses with respect to second language acquisition, laying the foundation to successive fruitful researches in the field of second language acquisition. Regarding SLA, Krashen highlights two principles that have been proved to be crucial in foreign language teaching, namely comprehensible input and low affective filters, based on which he elucidated the following hypotheses

- 1) the natural order hypothesis
- 2) monitor hypothesis

- 3) the input hypothesis
- 4) the affective filter hypothesis (pp 31-71)

Among these five hypotheses, he underscored the significance of comprehensible input. To give supportive evidence to his argument, Krashen cited a number of empirical cases. One cannot negate that Krashen's hypotheses concerning SLA have some upsides for they have examined carefully the complicated and non-linear learning process by underpinning the "i+1" structure. Such structure highlights that teachers should take account of not only what students can do but also what students will be able to do in the future, as in this way they could design and keep modifying the syllabus in line with students' learning progress. Nevertheless, Krashen's hypotheses have some limitations. For one reason, the hypothesis is a kind of postulation proposed by people based on their relevant knowledge and experiences. It is subjective to some extent and calls for verification in empirical studies. In this sense, Krashen's hypotheses are just useful pointers to successive researches, especially empirical studies. For another reason, Krashen's hypotheses just explained the possible process of language acquisition and the possible factors affecting this process. Language learners, however, are viewed as a collective. At this point, Krashen's hypotheses paid little attention to the individual student nor did they analyze the individual variants in psychological or sociocultural respects. On balance, Krashen's hypotheses have laid the foundation for the successive researches concerning language teaching and learning, and a case in point is Zoltan Donyei (2015)'s *Direct Motivational Currents*. After illustrating Krashen's (1982) frameworks, this section, then, could draw a possible conclusion on their shared main ideas. Both Krashen's "input hypothesis" and Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" enjoyed their prominence in that they all emphasized that language acquisition was a natural process that could only be facilitated with the help of caregivers or teachers. That is to say, language learners may find it possible to acquire a language under the condition that they are offered the opportunities with which they can communicate with others. In short, the main ideas detailed in these two hypotheses emphasized that interaction is the precondition of language acquisition.

8.1.2 Interlanguage

This viewpoint that a student could reach the target language level was pronounced in the book *Rediscovering Interlanguage*. In that book, Selinker (2013) argued that language learners' mental grammars were always in the state of change and second language acquisition should be learner-oriented. "where the learner will tend to end up, not where we would like him to end up" (P224) Besides, Selinker also proposed the notion "interlanguage fossilization", contending that second language acquisition was totally determined by L2 learners. (ibid.) According to Selinker's doctrine, one's language attainment can be approximately close to the target language level. However, this process of L2 learners can be forever ceased only if L2 learners are impeded from learning language continuously.

I followed Selinker (2013) with reference to his Interlanguage Theory, as it was the first attempt to explore the internal process of language acquisition. What's more, it highlighted that L2 learners should monitor their learning process by capitalizing on affordances in all mode forms at hand, especially when they found it difficult to express themselves in L2. Nevertheless, the demerits of Interlanguage Theory outweighed the aforesaid merits. The interlanguage theory viewed the process of second language acquisition in a dichotomous manner, as evidenced by the two polar notions, namely native language and target language. Language acquisition is a never-ending process. Native-like language proficiency cannot be regarded as the only yardstick to evaluate one's language attainment. On balance, Selinker (2013)'s Interlanguage Theory sowed the seeds for successive researches pertaining to second language acquisition, although it had its salient limitations in terms of how to view the process of students' language learning. Susan Gass (2013) took a similar position as Larry Selinker in terms of the process of second language acquisition. However, being slightly different from Selinker's insights into language acquisition, she moved a step further by arguing that language learning should be more communicative-orientated. Gass (2013) argued that only when L2 learners engaged themselves in the communication with native speakers (NS) could they facilitate language acquisition because in the on-going interaction L2 learners deployed various strategies to render the input comprehensible---meaning negotiation. And they may notice the expressions that yet not have been acquired, whereby facilitating their language acquisition. The unacquainted knowledge is the gap, the distance between the first language and the target language (in Schmidt's term,

1990) “Aware of the gap, the learner may pay more attention to the subsequent input, something that is believed to be essential for L2 acquisition.” (Gass & Mackey, 2013: P9) In this sense, meaning negotiation proves to be an imperative constituent in language study. And the theories elaborated above introduce the first linchpin of language learning and acquisition: Interaction is a driving force behind language acquisition.

Meaning negotiation is one of the pedagogical strategies put forward by Susan Gass but it is crucial to recognize that Non-native speakers (NNS) and native speakers (NS) align with each other. Not only does NNS use a series of strategies to fulfill meaning negotiation but also do NS reconstruct and repair the unintelligible and fragmental words uttered by NNS. As for the issue of NS versus NNS, Claire Kramersch challenged the traditional dichotomous viewpoint, strongly arguing that NS/NNS distinction cannot hold water, especially in this transcultural, fluid and globalized world. Kramersch (2015) reckoned that it was sociopolitical power and economic marketization that legitimate native-speakership and thereby fuels the distinction between NS/NNS:

The idea that students will be more motivated to learn with a native instructor (and many parents do insist on native instructors) is a marketing poly...and one’s native speakership is immensely enhanced by additional symbolic capital (socioeconomic power and marketization) (P4)

To ground her argument, Kramersch (2015) claimed that the main mission of the second/foreign language education is empowering students to have the capability for communicating with the people with different personal cultural trajectories, to see through discourses and realize the embedded ideologies inherent in these discourses, to critically reflect themselves and others, and to put themselves in others’ shoes, along with developing students cosmopolitan viewpoint. Then, Kramersch (2015) quoted Ricento (2014)’s words to underpin her opinion that language was not only the vehicle for idea transmission but also the tools for people to critically reflect on the imbalanced power relations that were inherent in any kinds of genres. (P345)

Thus, it is easy to observe that Kramersch and Ricento shared a similar opinion on language education. Both argued that foreign language teaching should not be the vehicle for reinforcing unequal power relations. Kramersch and Ricento’s

conceptualization of language as well as language education, to some extent, echoed mine. From my standpoint, critical cultural awareness and the learning ability to take advantage of the learning affordances which make meanings are supposed to be the main center of interests and even the urgent agent of language teaching and learning.

Now, it is necessary to turn back to Susan Gass (2013)'s opinions on SLA for otherwise this section will go afar from the main topic which is nothing but second language acquisition and influential literature. Apart from meaning negotiation, Gass (2013) also articulated a series of techniques for second language teaching, notably recasting and unnatural foreign language and meaning reconstruction. As for methodologies, Gass (2013) employed error analysis and contrastive analysis methods. It is noted that error analysis dealt with the comparison between the errors that L2 learners make when they speak in the target language and the correct expressions that native speakers could produce. (need to be explained) The teaching techniques mentioned above can be also applicable to foreign language teaching. Compared with second language teaching, foreign language teachers may attach greater importance to the reconstruction of incorrect or inappropriate linguistic expressions produced by foreign language learners, in that FL learners are not exposed to an environment where FL is spoken. In consequence, they have few opportunities to practice their foreign language. As can be seen, Selinker's and Susan Gass' Interlanguage Theory mainly concentrated on learners' internal learning process but paid little attention to the dynamic and co-adaptive relations between language acquisition and the external learning environment. To fill the lacuna in Selinker's Theory, the successive researchers turn their spotlight on interaction, paying a particular look at motivational factors. A premier study in this line of research is Zoltan Donyei's and "Second Language Self-Motivation".

To summarize, this section has demonstrated the Second Language Acquisition from a target-like perspective, paying particular attention to the most representative literature concerning SLA. The next section, however, will shift its spotlight on language learning and development.

8.2 A Sociocultural Viewpoint

Language learning and acquisition is a major branch in which many linguists have conducted researches when it comes to the relationship between language and conceptualization. Briefly speaking, second language learning and acquisition is the

process in which a person learns a second or a foreign language by selectively internalizing the external knowledge as their own. However, this construal of language learning and acquisition is not clear, as it takes little account for the effects that societal factors have on one's language learning. Besides, it does not illuminate the mediational tools that language learners can use to transform what they have perceived into their own language system. This section will give an exhaustive analysis of the language process from the sociocultural viewpoint. (Ackerman, 2010; Cho & Castaneda, 2019; Ruan, Duan, & Du, 2015)

By doing so, it emphasizes that there are diverse social factors that serve as the driving factors for language learning and acquisition, apart from students' cognitive development. What is more, the section will also underpin that the pedagogical contributors are those with which teachers could accelerate learners' "mediation" process. The next section then goes further by analyzing some influential theories in a way of explaining the reasons why social and cultural factors are indispensable to language learning and acquisition and how they act as the mediational a venue for facilitating students' learning process.

8.2.1 The Sociocultural Theory in Foreign Language Learning

A sociocultural insight into the second language acquisition views language learning as a process during which people transform or internalize new knowledge into their own. People do so by keeping interacting with their sociocultural environments via metaphorical mediation, such as imitating other people's gestures and ways of speaking.

The following sections will give a critical analysis of the main ideas of the epitomic studies in the sociocultural field.

In the book *Mind in society---The development of higher psychological process*, Vygotsky and Cole (1981) mainly illuminated the notion "internalization". By internalization, it means that learners had "extensive cultural immersion". (in Lantolf's terms, 2014) That is to say, they could internalize cultural-bound meanings and use them to mediate their cognitive activities. Vygotsky and Cole (1981) claimed that children consciously transformed the external input in societal environment into their inner repertoire through the mediation of higher psychological mechanisms, namely perception, attention and memory. "...higher mental processes is the transformation of sign-using activity, the history and characteristics of which illustrated by the

development of practical intelligence, voluntary attention and memory” (Vygotsky, 1978: 57) That contention became one of the building blocks of my project, as the center of interest of this project was investigating the sociocultural influences on the Chinese language learning of Italian students. What’s more, as mentioned before, the zone of proximal development is another key point in Vygotsky’s theoretical framework. By “zone of proximal development”, it means that there was a distance between the current competence of learners and the potential competence that learners could attain. “It is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (P86) However, Vygotsky (1978) did not take the complexity of learning environment into consideration, viz. the moment-to-moment emotional state, fatigue and motivational fluctuations (i.e. demotivation and motivation), simply thinking that a student can improve his or her capability for dealing with problems, under the condition of instructors’ guidance. In this sense, he laid more emphasis on human mental function and studying its law of development in an isolated manner.

At this point, it was James Lantolf and Thorne (2006) who first drew sociocultural theory into the picture of second language teaching and acquisition. They demonstrated how sociocultural environment exerted influences on language acquisition by paying particular attention to the concepts of mediation and private speech.

By mediation, it mainly indicates that a person is able to transform or internalize the new language patterns by positing himself or herself in a sociocultural environment. In other words, the external world provides individuals with transformational resources with which they can reorganize their inner orders and regulate their minds. Therefore, the key to bolstering students’ language acquisition is the intrapersonal and interpersonal interconnection. The intra/interpersonal link is interpreted by Lantolf and Thorne (2006) as “mediation”, which is a psychological means regulating people’s mental activities. Meanwhile, they paid a particular look at the ways in which individuals perform the mediation function. With respect to symbolic mediation, Lantolf and Thorne categorized it into inner speech, private speech and speech-gesture interface in a way of giving a thorough analysis of the role that mediation plays. The ways aforementioned can all be subsumed into the first sort of symbolic mediation. And when it comes to the second sort of symbolic mediation, they underscored the learnability of metaphorical knowledge, *inter alia*, lexical notions, lexical association

networks and word association. They viewed this kind of metaphorical form as conceptual metaphors and at the same time, they posited that conceptual metaphors served as the point of departure from which learners could be no longer hampered by their L1 and tend to gradually mediate their L2 learning. According to Lantolf and Thorne, learners might mediate their language learning in an effort to use the target language and grasp conceptual metaphors in that language. As a mediation form, inner speech refers to the pure meaning that students would like to express notwithstanding the meaning that has not yet been not encoded in linguistic forms. As for private speech, however, it indicates the speech articulated by people for the purpose of mediating their minds. Standing a sharp contrast with inner speech, private speech is encoded in linguistic forms and can be articulated in sub-vocal or whispering manners. Lantolf and Thorne (2006) elucidated Lev Vygotsky (1978)' s sociocultural theories, students' private and inner speeches were regarded as a kind of the mediation toolkit with which learners could transform and internalize the external information to their inner knowledge. Nevertheless, it is noted that the production of either inner speech or private speech was in relation to socio-cultural contacts. Only when people immerse themselves in sociocultural activities could they know how to make an advance of the resources provided by the external environment. Lantolf and Thorne (2006) underpinned this point by dissecting Eva Hoffman's narratives. According to their interpretation, Hoffman was struggling with her native language Polish and American English when she lived in North America. She found out that her L1 could not serve as a psychological tool with which she can grasp the new events and American English in the new environment. At last, she had gradually transformed the new language using patterns by integrating herself into the life of North America:

she describes her appropriation of a new inner voice from the voices around her, precisely captured by Vygotsky's concept of ontogenesis as children develop their inner speech from the social speech of others. (P141)

Nevertheless, what should be noted is that the symbolic mediations illustrated above may exert little influence on learners' language acquisition if learners do not invest their efforts in the on-going activities. In other words, if foreign language students do not have the motivation to fulfill the tasks, they will not deploy their

mediation ‘tools’, let alone transformation. In this regard, motivation is the prerequisite for learners’ internalization.

Apart from the aforementioned symbolic and metaphorical mediation, imitation, as a form of mediation, plays a fundamental role in students’ language acquisition. Imitation is regarded not only as a major agent in forming individuals’ inner world but also as a facilitator for early education. In the light of language learning, Gampe, A. et al. (2016) gave an exhaustive analysis of the role that imitation plays in language attainment. By conducting an empirical study, they observed that the kids who observed and imitated a series of path actions proved to be more successful in verb learning than those who merely observed the path actions presented in the experiment. Based on the results, they contended that imitation also facilitated the language learning of very young children. From the viewpoint of intersubjectivity, imitation also enables individuals to align with others by interacting with them in an appropriate and accurate fashion. Lantolf and Poehner (2006) highlighted the importance of imitation in a way of putting a specific example in the empirical studies of Tomasello:

However, in the case of language a particular variant of imitation is needed; what Tomasello (2003, p. 27) calls “role reversal imitation”, which entails understanding the complex relationship between the “I/you” pattern in discourse. Thus, when a child attempts to imitate an adult utterance such as “I want you to put your toys away” the child needs to understand that the referent of the “I” and “you” must reverse. Through role reversal imitation, children learn that in conversations interlocutors produce and comprehend the same forms and in this way they establish intersubjectivity, an important aspect of social interaction. (P51)

As can be seen, the notion “imitation” is so amorphous that it leads to various interpretations. What should be noted is that imitation cannot be reduced to parroting behaviors. No matter what kind of interpretation that “imitation” has, imitation is only a mimic behavior conducted by people who pay attention to the things that are most important based on their needs and interests. And the extent to which the attention is allocated, to some extent, is determined by the eagerness of a person who is handling a task. In terms of transformation, McNeil (2017) took a similar position to John Lantolf. Unlike Lantolf who viewed transformation as the process of achieving language

socialization, McNeil, by contrast, regarded transformation (which in his account called “languaging” as the main means for fostering cultural understanding. McNeil used “languaging” to indicate the tool mediating L2 learning and fostering one’s intra-cultural understanding, a contributor to intercultural understanding. The reason is that languages (in my case could be English or Italian) can serve as a toolkit enabling foreign language learners to think, to request and to allocate their attention to the most important things. (P13) In a nutshell, the preceding paragraphs have expounded on influential studies which are related to sociocultural theory. By giving a thorough analysis of sociocultural theory and its representative studies, this section viewed that how students capitalized on the affordances inherent in a sociocultural environment influences the degree to which they learn a second and a foreign language. In one word, this section attaches great importance to mediation, focusing on its effects on how students grasp language knowledge and foster intercultural understanding by making an advance of a variety of mediational tools, notably inner speech, gestural imitations and a mixture of languages.

8.2.2 Kolb’s Experiential Learning Theory

This section will illustrate Kolb (2015)’s ELT developmental model as it is related to my teaching project. Based on Italian learners of students’ *a priori* knowledge of the Chinese language, I prompted them to reflect on what they have learned first before increasing their knowledge in terms of Chinese chopsticks. For instance, the Italian learners of Chinese were asked to reflect on how the Chinese characters 筷子 *kuaizi* had evolved along with historical development. They were encouraged to take the floor and convey their ideas with reference to their previous knowledge concerning the evolution of the Chinese characters *kuaizi*. And based on what they had learned, I continue to explain the reasons why the character 箸 *zhù* had changed into 筷 *kuài* by distributing them audio-visual materials. During this period of time, the Italian students of Chinese observed the material and at the same time reflected on what they had learned with respect to the evolution of the character 筷. The observation and reflection on the concept that one had learned are one of the main ideas of Kolb (2014)’s ELT developmental model.

When it comes to ELT developmental model, it emphasizes that knowledge gained is attributable to two kinds of experience, namely grasping experience and transforming one. As for grasping experience, it is characterized by Concrete Experience (CE) and Abstract Conceptualization (AC) while Reflective Observation (RO) and Active experimentation (AE) --- new knowledge created in the process of internalization (in Lev Vygotskian term) --- epitomizes the transformational experience.

According to Kolb (2014), experiential learning was “a process of constructing knowledge that involved a creative tension among the four learning modes that is responsive to contextual demands” (Pisserelli & Kolb, 2014: 6) With his ELT developmental model, Kolb argued that the past concrete experiences triggered reflected observation on new experiences, arousing the abstract concepts in one’s knowledge system and thereby contributing to generating new knowledge in a given situation. That is the Experiential Learning Circle (ELC) characterized by the recursive process CE- AC-RO-AE.

By proposing this circle, Kolb attempted to illustrate his ELT developmental model. Here, two cautions should be exerted: First, ELT developmental model accompanied by ELC cannot be equalized to Sociocultural theory. What should be recognized is that they share some affinities with sociocultural theory in terms of knowledge transformation for they both focus on how an individual internalizes new concepts into their own by interacting with his or her situated sociocultural environments. However, ECT and (ELC) stand a contrast with SLT in that they are humanistic oriented, emphasizing learning autonomy, and upholding individual’s agency as well as his or her direction of the learning process (which includes but goes beyond language learning) whereas SCT pays heed to one’s transformation process solely from the perspective of language acquisition without succinctly underpinning the role that self-directedness plays in knowledge learning as a whole. Thus, experiential learning circle concerns an individual’s learning process spanning one’s lifetime but not within a specific timescale. Another viewpoint from which Kolb demonstrated his ELT developmental model is individuation. By individuation, it underscores that a person’s learning development should be incorporated into a holistic stage which embraces three cognitive activities aforementioned, namely acquisition, specialization and integration. Since the first two deal with the primary and secondary socialization, it is unnecessary to go into details. What should be noted is integration, a cognitive stage that concerns the learning patterns developed in mid-career and later personal life.

Integration indicates knowledge construction, but this building-up procedure cannot be, in my opinion, analyzed mechanically. So far, this section has shed light on Kolb (1984)'s ELT developmental model by introducing experiential learning circle and individuation. As observed above, ELT developmental model, to some extent, touched on the kernel of life-long learning which was self-directedness and self-organized learning. However, it was found wanting to some extent. On the one hand, this model emphasized knowledge construction so much that it overlooked the fact that the learning process---as mentioned in the first section --- is an open and dynamic system. It delved into knowledge learning in isolation, barely realizing the influences that meta-cognitive factors (i.e. empathy) may exert on one's learning process. (Dornyei and Kubanyioya; 2014; Dornyei et al., 2015) On the other hand, this model merely dwelled on knowledge construction under the cover of holistic development without really changing its dialectical basis. Undeniably, Kolb's ELT developmental model mentioned the role that integration played in knowledge construction, it, in essence, still viewed the learning process as mechanical construction, as evidenced by the two dialectical concepts, namely grasping and transformational experience. It overemphasized the four stages with the premise that experience is pre-established, fixed and can be learned from, insofar as one follows the given learning path CE – AC - RO- AE. It is noteworthy that neither experience nor knowledge can be generalized or learned in this postmodern society where both experience and knowledge are unknown. (explanation) In other words, they are created in an improvised manner and used to tailor to people's communicative needs that are apt for a specific situation. (Bezemer and Gunther, 2016; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006; Van Leeuwen, 2005) In this sense, Kolb's ELT developmental model fell short of not only portraying the multifarious nature of the learning process but also clarifying the meaning of knowledge and experience in this fluid world.

8.3 A Dynamic Viewpoint in Postmodern Society

In this fluid and globalized postmodern society, most people are multilingual, being culturally and linguistically hybrid to some extent. Against this backdrop, language learning has gradually been regarded as a capability of life-long learning. Language, in this ever-changing world, cannot be acquired but to know, as it constructs and is constructed moment-by-moment, being in service of communication but not the other way around. (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006)

The following sections will illustrate the representative works of literature that favor language development. Those studies, then, will also be described and analyzed after being classified into the following three orientations, namely Complex and Dynamic orientation, Situational and Communicative orientation as well as Eco-Systematic orientation. What should be noted is that the three orientations are not exclusive to one another but have its distinctive prioritization on language learning and development. They jointly contribute to explaining the reasons for which second language acquisition lost its dominating position and has given way to language development in the field of foreign language teaching and learning. Besides, the third Orientation will shed light on the significance of language development from the perspective of life-long learning. By doing so, it will pave the way for introducing and justifying the first goal of the present Ph.D. project --- The mindsets of Italian learners who study Chinese as a foreign language will be examined.

8.3.1 The Complex Dynamic and Systematic Theory (CDST)

In the previous section, language acquisition has been viewed as a process ending point. This process could be finally attained and one of the indicators of that attainment is fluent language proficiency which is native-like. However, such an interpretation of SLA cannot be too simplified and feeble as it assumes that the language acquisition process can be mechanically analyzed and dismantled into several isolated pieces. What should be recognized is that the process of language acquisition is a holistic system and it is more than the sum of the parts. Larsen-Freeman (2014, 2015, 2017) named two pillars that matter most to the future development of SLA, namely ecological orientation and sociological and political contexts. In the article: *looking ahead: Future Directions in, and future research into, second language acquisition*, Larsen-Freeman succinctly expressed her understanding of language learning which are emerged, ecological and dynamic. Such renewed insights into language learning has been viewed by Larsen-Freeman as “zeitgeist”, increasing complexity of language use due to the ever-changing technologies, frequent international travels and transcultural encounters. By putting forward this term, Larsen-Freeman clarified her position in terms of SLA and its development, arguing that “Language learning does not occur in an ideological vacuum but rather is affected in a serious way by prevailing beliefs held by others.” (P6) That is to say, the ultimate goal of language learning is challenging the

imbalanced power behind language rather than learning and acquiring the language itself.

Two years ago, a similar viewpoint is also pronounced loudly in the article *The ecology of intercultural interaction: timescale, temporal ranges and identity dynamics*. In that paper, Uryu et al. (2014) believed that the meanings could emerge from the interactions only in multiple timescales.

Under a complex and dynamic lens, language acquisition neither has an ending point, say, the native-like level nor can it be simply divided into different subsystems. Supportive evidence for this contestation comes from Larsen Freeman's complex theory. Based on basic concepts in biology and genealogy, Larsen-Freeman (2008) formulated her theoretical framework, postulating that language learning and acquisition was a complex, dynamic, non-linear, open and co-adaptive system. Larsen-Freeman emphasized that language was a holistic system that was more than the sum of its parts. At the internal level, different linguistic constituents are interrelated with one another, as evidenced by Clitics. Clitics in itself is morphologically free but phonologically bound, being the result of the interaction between phonology and morphology. At the external level, language is always co-adaptive to contexts and vice versa. In this regard, language is undergoing perpetual changes and how it develops always depends on contexts. A case in point is American-born Chinese who are unable to speak Chinese fluently, as they situate themselves in an environment where American English is the dominant language. At the same token, Kees De Bot (2015) interpreted the process of language learning from mathematic perspective, viewing language learning as scalar free. By scalar-free, it means that students' language development is ever-changing. And even the language performance of students in multiple timescales can only offer a partial viewpoint of their real language learning process. And in the regard of these ever-changing characteristics of language learning, I favor Kees De Bot's opinions, as I also reckon that language teachers may find it less possible to know whether students get their language improved and cultural awareness sharpened only in a short period of time, i.e. a semester long, because language learning is a lifelong process and no student can fully attain a second or a foreign language within 'dense time scales' (de Bot, 2017: P56). Therefore, I posit that language teachers can only observe and record their students' moment-by-moment language learning changes instead of merely emphasizing their language performance in class or in language tests within the discrete timescale. I will not deny that the negative factors, i.e. psychological

dysfunction or turbulent social environment could retard the process of language acquisition, as the language learning process can also be in a “deep attractor basin”. (Larsen-Freeman & de Bot, 2007, 2015, 2017). That is, students will be demotivated and make less endeavor to continue to improve their language compared with what they did in the past. If the learning task is so demanding and students are very demotivated, then language learners will be in a deep attractor basin. Nevertheless, in my opinion, language learning is ever-developing in the long term no matter how negative factors affect the process of language learning.

So far, this part, viz. language learning and development, has mainly expounded on Larsen-Freeman, Kees De Bot’s complex Dynamic Systematic Theory with an eye on the co-adaptive and dynamic relationship between teachers, learners and learning contexts. They argued that learning contexts should not be viewed as physical environments but rather one of the integral constituents of the whole learning system. It is noteworthy that the CDST laid a cornerstone for language development, transcending the traditional view of language acquisition to a more dynamic landscape where the language is irreducible to any specific language with fixed grammatical rules but constantly reframed. What’s more, CDST has laid the foundation for the successive researches concerning language developments, and Kramersch’s ecological theory of foreign language instruction is a case in point. Although the second language acquisition is assigned to a less important position in the present paper, it does not mean that SLA is completely out of the picture of foreign language teaching and learning, as the second language acquisition and learning, in effect, serve as useful pointers according to which foreign language learning and teaching can be studied in a scientific and rational manner.

8.3.2 A Critical Analysis of CDST

As I have reiterated, no theoretical ideas can be untenable. Here, I would like to analyze CDST in a critical manner.

The reason why I am doing so is that I would like to shed light on the limitations and constructive parts of CDST and to further explain why my teaching program will be proved to be more contributive compared with CDST.

The limitations of CDST lie in the following two points, one is the significance of learning and the other is the unit of analysis.

For the first point, CDST, as a far-reaching theory at this postmodern turn, does not really go to the heart of learning which was empowering students to critically challenge their received wisdom, to know how to make meanings based on their needs and interests in that place at that time, to capitalize on the semiotic resource at disposition and to make the meaning that may be apt most for a given situation. Note that CDST stresses communicative-oriented learning and upholds that learning could only take place once one engaged himself or herself in interactive activities as it views learning as a dynamic system and talking about it in a mathematical and philosophical fashion. (de Bot, 2017: pp51-58) Rather than clarifying what and to what extent learning can bring benefits to people once they dedicate themselves to learning, DSCT, in my opinion, mainly focuses on what kind of learning activities that people undertake and in which way they do it by minutely describing the learning system and how it undergoes changes within a limited timescale. In fact, DSCT touches little upon the intrinsic motivation that enables people to keep investing their efforts in learning thorough their life, except for the directed motivational currents postulated by Donyei (2015) and meta-cognitive awareness highlighted by Ushioda (2014) For the questions: Does learning only conduce to accumulating knowledge, to developing professional knowhow or anything else? With respect to these questions, DSCT does not give a crystal clear answer nor does it take a clear stance on the significance of learning. As the founding father of experiential learning, John Dewey (2012) claimed that the part and parcel of learning lies in thinking:

The sole direct path to enduring improvement in the methods of instruction and learning consists in centering upon the conditions which exact, promote, and test thinking. Thinking is the method of intelligent learning, of learning that employs and rewards mind. (Dewey, 2012: pp339-340)

Simply speaking, learning enables people to think. And it is thinking that empowers people to educate themselves continuously, to cultivate their own nature and to be mentally and physically healthy. As can be seen, the insights into the dependence on initial conditions expounded by DSCT is not new in the field of language education. And what can be said therewith is that DSCT does not offer ground-breaking ideas to educational philosophy in this connection. Simply speaking, CDST, in my opinion, does not go to the heart of language learning but stands still in terms of educational philosophy.

Such a limitation also restrains CDST from making learners realize the significance of learning. Therefore, for the first point, although DSCT is regarded as the trailblazer for the other studies concerning language teaching and learning, such as ecological theory, it mainly dwelled on where the learning process takes place but touched little on self-conceptualization, which, however, has been dissected by ELT, as evidenced by autonomous self and mind-body interrelation.

For the second point, DSCT just told a partial story of learning albeit the fact that it has offered a complex and dynamic approach to learning, a case in point can be systematic L2 self-motivation. The reason is that CDST mainly focuses on analyzing language learning and views it as a system, paying attention to how the elements pertaining to language learning within a learning system co-adapt to and interdependent on the other elements in or beyond this system. However, CDST does not emphasize that learning runs through one's lifetime, including but going beyond language learning nor does it explore the contributors to an individual's learning by illustrating the fundamental role that the wider socio-cultural environment, viz. family-community-school triad, plays in this person's learning development. In this regard, CDST only told a partial story by merely dwelling on the dynamic language learning process as well as its facilitators while few teaching programs involving the main ideas of CDST have been implemented. (Aarsen-freeman & Camwron, 2008) Although several teaching syllabi have been conducted in recent years (Donyeri, et al. 2015; Ortega & Han, 2017), few researches have been conducted within the remit of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language.

Based on CDST, my teaching project is more constructive. On the one hand, CDST is process oriented as it pays more heed to describe the characteristics of the language learning process than to give practical suggestions on how to incorporate the ideas of CDST in the teaching syllabus. Based on this theory, I move a step further by postulating a multimodal approach to improving Italian learners of Chinese' s intercultural competence. On the other hand, compared with CDST whose main focus is improving students' language learning, my project takes another perspective by drawing intercultural communication into the picture of foreign language learning. This is because, in addition to improving Italian learners of Chinese' s proficiency in Chinese, my teaching program also attempts to increase their transcultural sensitivity. Third, in the field of TCFL, how to incorporate the ideas of CDST into teaching programs is still an area left uncharted. At this point, my teaching program is an attempt

to incorporate the ideas of CDST to enable Italian students to become better Chinese learners by deploying a multimodal approach.

9. Intercultural Communication

At the dawn of the 20th century, the world witnessed a large-scale migration as a result of wars or political conflicts, such as the Diaspora ^X, an exclusive term referring to Jews' great migration, refugees and political exiles. (Cohen, 2008) The diaspora led to ethnic dispersion, giving rise to cultural assimilation and diffusion, which thereby increases the frequent communication between different cultures. Since Edward Hall (1959) established cultural studies, intercultural communication has become increasingly important, being assigned to the top agenda of foreign language teaching and learning. After elaborating on the interpretations of language, culture as well as language teaching and learning respectively, chapter 10, then, shifts its attention to cultural communication and education.

9.1 Essentialism – A Critical Review

At this postmodern turn, a great number of scholars who specialized in intercultural communication and education discarded essentialism and its negative effects on cultural communication with an effort to put forward their own theories. However, they barely realize that their doctrines involve essentialist viewpoints in varying degrees, which, in my opinion, indicates some theoretical problems that should be dealt with.

9.1.1 The Interpretations of Essentialism

In order to justify my argument further, I find it necessary to crystalize the definition of essentialism first. By doing so, I will give a finer analysis of the relations between essentialism and mindset, thereby demonstrating how a person's mindset inflicts impacts on his or her cultural awareness development and which role essentialism plays in this process.

From my point of view, I reckon that essentialism was a thinking pattern. It is viewed as pre-established, static and mutually exclusive, existing in isolation from sociocultural environments and remaining intact over the course of history.

In one word, I view essentialism as a kind of pre-established and clear-cut viewpoint or thinking mode. However, my conceptualization is far from being deep and thorough for it triggers the three questions hereunder:

- 1) How can essentialism be construed? Can it be interpreted differently in different disciplines?
- 2) How does essentialism come into being?
- 3) What kind of function does essentialism perform in this globalized world?

It is noteworthy that all questions are interrelated and should be taken into consideration as a whole.

To respond to the questions hereinabove, I will illustrate some literature devoted to studying essentialism from the perspectives of critical language discourse and post-colonialism. By doing so, I hope the concept of essentialism can be illustrated in a clearer fashion.

From the angle of critical discourse analysis, essentialism manifests itself in language, specifically discourse. In the second chapter, I have given an exhaustive analysis of Fairclough's insights into the power which resides in discourses, notably written texts. It is important to note that Fairclough attached great importance to ideological diversity with the caveat that people's member resources (MR) may, in varying degrees, inflict impacts on people's ways of interpreting a piece of discourse. Here, member resources, from my viewpoint, is one of the representations of essentialist viewpoints, as they are socially determined and ideologically shaped. They are a plethora of regulated routines, sociocultural conventions and costumes, remain static as time goes by. (n.d.) They are the automatic reactions that people conduct unconsciously or the habitual patterns they take for granted. (Boas, 2017) Apart from member resources, Fairclough (2001) also mentioned ideological diversity. For him, the diverse ideologies were the representatives of different social groupings, each of which has its own interests and needs. Here, social grouping should come under scrutiny on the grounds that it is itself essentialist. As elaborated in Literature Review, a deconstruction or non-essentialist interpretation of culture puts more weight to individuals than to groups, focusing on an individual's discursive practices conducted

in a specific context. Yet, this is not the case in Fairclough's account. In fact, Fairclough's attempt to generalize people with shared MR into one 'social grouping, to some extent, is acquiescence in the inertia state of social structures, which are discarded by non-essentialist or deconstructive viewpoints aforementioned. In this sense, social grouping epitomizes essentialism. Similarly, the social groupings having their distinctive interests presume the existence of the mutually exclusive communities. Thus, in this sense, social groupings where different ideologies reside in and co-exist are essentially slant in its own right.

Under the umbrella of post-colonialism, the concept of essentialism can also be categorized into various or even opposite political camps, serving to meet the needs and interests of different sociopolitical blocs. From the previous paragraphs, one may find it easy to spot that essentialism or essentialist viewpoints are in service of sociocultural power. And due to this reason, they inflict impacts on sociopolitical relations worldwide, a case in point can be the Cold War, the polar powerhouses, viz. Pre-Soviet Union *Versus* the United States. Another case in point is Orientalism, a scientific field devotes to studying the geographical, linguistic and cultural issues of Asian and Islamic countries. Theoretically speaking, Orientalism can be interpreted in three ways, namely academic profession, world outlook and hegemonic mode. (Güven, 2019: 419) All of the three are the main concerns of Oriental School which has been developed into full-fledged field thanks to Edward W. Said (1978,1992,2003).

As a forerunner of modern Orientalism, Said (1978) put forward the term imaginative geography, whereby he elaborated on his theoretical framework concerning Orientalism. Then, what does it mean by imaginative geography? For Said, imaginative geography was a reframed concept of geographical mapping with the latter dealing solely with the relations between different socio-political blocs. By contrast, imaginative geography, on Said's account, has enriched the definition of geography in default sense by incorporating also the intersectional factors, viz. social classes, professions, educational levels:

Said invites us to imagine new topographies, in which units heretofore deemed separate -- cultures, professions, realms of experience -- become inescapably hybrid and interpenetrating, or what he terms as 'intertwined histories and overlapping territories. (Al-Mahfedi, 2011:2)

Juxtaposing with imaginative geography is Said (1978)'s modern Oriental approach. This method serves to reconstrue and reconstitutes the aforesaid Oriental structure which had long been portrayed by Europe as inferior in the fields of politics, culture and economics. According to Said, the modern Oriental method helps the people who come from Asian and the other Islamic countries to reexamine their own identities but not dwell on their past images depicted by European countries. "What I shall try to show is that this impulse in Orientalism is resided in the Orientalist's conception of himself, of the Orient, and his discipline." (Said, Bayoumi, & Rubin, 2000) In a word, modern Oriental method, through the lens of imaginative geography, sheds light on the superior position that European countries enjoy by depicting the Asian and Islamic countries as alienated, powerless and peripheral. What's more, such a method enables Orientals to realize that the imaginative geography was, in effect, the embellished masking of sociopolitical monopolies patronized by the Western on moral grounds. "The modern Orientalist was, in his view, a hero rescuing the Orient from the obscurity, alienation and strangeness which himself had properly distinguished (by Europe)" (ibid.) Granted, Said's arguments on Orientalism underpinned that discourse, as one of the language forms, was framed by the dominated sociopolitical and economic power. However, neither the modern Orientalism nor the classic one elucidated by Said could get rid of the shackles of essentialism.

First, imaginative geography, by default, is essentialist oriented. What should be recognized is that sociocultural phenomena in this fluid and transcultural world can neither be simply construed from the angle of geography nor can it be delineated according to competing civilizations (in Huntington's term which was also essentialist, 1992). As I have reiterated before, interlocutors' identities and self-perceptions are always on the go in the sense that only they situate themselves in a specific context can they know how to represent their identities in alignment with the other interactants. (See chapter 2) Thus, it seems impossible to foresee an individual's possible identities or sociopolitical stances a priori, as they can only be observed directly in the on-going conversations. "As ordinary social actors, we constantly attribute internal states --- motives, intentions, beliefs, affect --- to each other and we appeal to these internal states as explanatory resources for the behavior we observe, including our own." (Kasper, 2016: 287) In this sense, Said only elucidated imaginative geographies on a post-

colonial wrapping without cutting completely the umbilical cord of the essentialist basis.

Second, Said (2000)'s modern Oriental method does not escape from the shadow of the essentialism, or specifically speaking, the binarism of the East Versus the West. For one reason, Said took the risk of oversimplicity by overemphasizing solely the European sociopolitical blocs and the Oriental ones and incorporating it into imaginative geography. It seems that imaginative geography is in service of depicting the well-intentioned Orientals *ad hoc* and sinuate European dominating power with respect to sociopolitical issues. And the advent of this terminology had, indeed, invited fierce critiques. A great number of scholars criticized that Said elucidated the concept of Orientalism for the sake of Orientalism, deliberately portraying Orientals as innocent and thereby reinforcing the stereotypes of Orientalism in return. (Bayumi and Rubin, 2000: 65) That is to say, the stance Said took when he painstakingly proved what an Oriental really was in itself a kind of cultural disbelief, falling into the trap of essentialism. Here, I would like to dwell on cultural disbelief illuminated by Holliday in his cultural grammar (See chapter 2, P) Holliday (2019) viewed cultural disbelief as a kind of prejudice which is nothing but bi-directional. In one sense, it refers to the lack of appreciation of another person's cultural backgrounds; in another sense, it emphasized that the cultural background of any person is monolithic and cannot be engaged with, learned from or expanded into. In this sense, cultural disbelief also falls into essentialism as it negates the fact that culture is flexible, elastic and keeps changing unremittingly from time to time. All in all, although Said aimed to "liberate intellectuals from the shackles of systems of thought like Orientalism" (Bayumi and Rubin, 2000: 65), postulating the concept of imaginative geography, he paid little attention to a person's possible identities and sociopolitical stances that could present themselves in a specific situation at a particular time but just dwelled on the Orientals' well-intentioned image which, in effect, cannot be portrayed and described unless it is construed in a given situation.

To summarize, the main ideas of essentialism may boil down to the three following senses:

- 1) Essentialism is a sort of thinking pattern; a particular attitude held towards people of different nationalities and a world outlook in general; a way of dealing

with a variety of sociocultural issues. i.e. sets of member resource; cultural disbelief; dichotomous and clear-cut viewpoints (to answer the first question)

2) Essentialism being developed and shaped in visible or invisible sociocultural structures within which people are brought up. i.e. different social groupings, Oriental countries (to answer the second question)

3) Essentialism is in service of power domination and resistance, patronized by sociopolitical powerhouses and the channel of resisting against sociocultural hegemony. i.e. Orientalism, “transculturality (to answer the third question)

9.2 Intercultural Interaction

9.2.1 The Interdiscourse System

When it comes to intercultural communication, one of the most recognized studies should be that of Scollon, Wong Scollon and Jones (2012) In one of their intercultural studies, they suggested that culture should be understood as a verb because they deemed that the two concepts language and culture could be viewed as a whole. By “a verb”, it did not refer to a single verb at the grammatical level, but rather discourses. Subsequently, they interpreted intercultural communication to be inter-discourse communication. On the one hand, discourses are regarded as a set of sociological systems including a group of different identities, such as sexual identities, professional identities and so forth (see a discussion in Holliday, 2016) Discourses can also be understood to be cognitive systems. Each group has its own different cognitive system, which manifests itself in different thinking patterns and different ways in which people treat others and so forth. (pp. 268-270) Hence intercultural communication can happen between groups, whilst each still has its own distinctive discourse, as well as cognitive and sociological systems. Individuals in each group share similar cognitive and sociological traits, however, these traits are not pre-established. Instead, they emerge themselves during the process of interaction. Thus, Scollon et al. (2012) appealed that one should pay more attention to what people were doing, or which tool they may deploy when they interact with one another, rather than painstakingly describing the concept of culture itself and analyzing people’s behaviors based on the culture that they belong to. (P5) In addition, they coined the term “cultural tools” in a way of replacing

the loosely used word “tools” in traditional literature. The cultural tools can be either visible or invisible, and language is just one kind of tool in its abstract form.

Scollon et al. (2012)’s assertions contributed greatly to cultural studies. They enriched the concept of culture by interpreting it as discourse systems varying from one situation to another. In the book *Intercultural Communication--- A Discourse Approach*, they discarded the essential and reductive viewpoint respectively in favor of a constructive approach to analyzing intercultural communication. They first dismissed the essentialist view of culture, which asserted that people who belong to different cultures must possess different traits. Instead, they decided that describing what people do during the process of interaction should be the focus of analysis. With regard to the reductive viewpoint, they underscored that interpreting intercultural communication is a separate entity from which international interaction might provide researchers with convenience when it comes to analysis. Yet, this interpretation would give rise to biased data. The role that idiosyncrasy and specific contexts play in intercultural communication was not taken into consideration. In this way, Scollon, *et al.* (2012) found out that this conceptualization of intercultural communication might end up with an over-simplistic claim, which could not stand up to scrutiny. However, the viewpoint that intercultural communication can be regarded as discourse systems is also reductive. IC is more than discourses. What they really deal with is merely the cognitive and sociological viewpoints of intercultural communication. In other words, their arguments just handle a fragment of the whole picture, running risks of being over-generalized. Overall, Scollon *et al.* (2012) understanding of intercultural communication were inspirational. This is because they analyzed intercultural communication in a critical manner, which offered renewed impetus to cross-cultural studies. The following paragraphs devote exclusively to three influential theoretical frameworks in the field of Intercultural Communication.

9.2.2 Rapport Management

Helen Spence-Oatey and Perter Franklin (2009) focused on intercultural interaction, suggesting the significance of promoting rapport between people with different linguacultural backgrounds. To further elaborate on their observations on intercultural interaction, they proposed the notion “rapport management competence”. These two scholars defined “rapport management” as “the ways in which (dis)harmony (in intercultural interaction) is (mis)managed” (P102) Furthermore, based on the

concepts of *Politeness Theory*, Spence-Oatey and Franklin (2009) suggested that contextual awareness, interpersonal attentiveness, social information gathering, social attuning, emotion regulation and stylistic flexibility can all be conceived as contributors to facilitating intercultural interaction and fixing communication breakdowns.(ibid.)

As can be seen, to deal with the relationship between people with different cultural backgrounds, people need to carry out cognitive functions to align themselves with the whole interaction. Thus, I concurred with Spence-Oatey’s insights into IC, reckoning that Italian learners of Chinese intercultural competence can be improved at interactive level.

9.2.3 The Grammar of Culture

In terms of IC, it can be inscribed into the essence of “similarities of differences”. In another words, the similar respects shared by two different cultures, say Italian and Chinese cultures, are the point of departure from which a compare and contrast can be made afterwards. It was Adrian Holliday (2019a) formulated his grammar of “culture” and interpreted succinctly the connotation of “similarities” and “differences” respectively. The grammar is consisted of the following four constituents:

- Small culture formation
- Underlying Universal Cultural Process
- Cultural resources:
- Global position and politics:

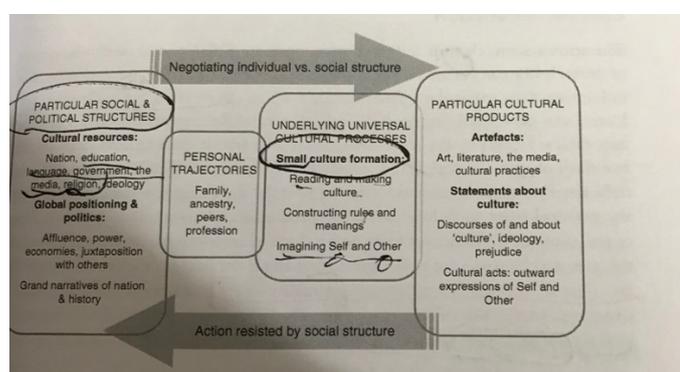


Figure 5 A Grammar of Culture (Holliday, 2013: P137)

Small culture can be formed by a group of people of different origins. They share similar cultural behaviors in a specific context and conform to the rules of behavior

required by that context. A case in point is the ways of getting along with neighbors with different cultural backgrounds in Italy.

According to Holliday (2019), the underlying universal cultural process is the “basic fabrics of people’s daily lives” shared by people with different cultural backgrounds. (P3) A case in point could be etiquette. During the process of interaction, people with different linguacultural backgrounds may find it necessary to be conform to rules for polite behavior despite the fact they they follow their etiquette in different ways. Then, in order to form cohesive collaboration, they may change, adapt or transform the conventions that they have long taken for granted. Therefore, in some sense, etiquette could be an underlying universal cultural process, as people with different cultural background all value etiquette; however, their ways of conducting social practices that are related to etiquette are different.

With respect to cultural resources, it could be subsumed into “the first and second socialization.” That is to say, cultural resources can be construed as the particular sociocultural structure and ideology that keep influencing the people who are born and raised up against that sociocultural backdrop. For example, Confucianism in China.

When it comes to IC, it always goes hand in hand with cultural attitudes and political stances, as people from different cultural backgrounds need to take the other’s local cultural norm into consideration. The cultural attitudes, power and political relations cannot be construed in traditional way and they have nothing to do with the dichotomous connotations Westernization or Orientalism, but rather they are born in a particular cultural landscape and can be interpreted creatively by people who prefer situating themselves in the globe but not in particular nations.

Holliday should be regarded as the trailblazer in the field of IC. His thought-provoking and critical insights into intercultural communication overrode the traditional perception of IC. Intercultural communication, by definition, means the communication between two cultures. And based on this definition, IC was traditionally regarded as territory-bounded communication, the one takes place between “us” and “the other” versus “national culture” and “foreign cultures” Yet, this yesteryear notion cannot be applicable anymore in this globalized world.

9.3 A Critical Review of Intercultural Communication

As can be seen, essentialism is not only construed as pre-fixed and dualistic viewpoints in a negative sense, like prejudices, stereotypes and so forth but also

regarded as theoretical bases back on which scholars, especially those specializing in cultural communications, proposed their own theories.

Homi Bahba (1994) postulated the third space theory, attaching great importance to the be-twist space where people with different ethnic backgrounds can get connected with one another by sharing their similar experiences. (see The Third Space Theory) Notwithstanding the third space theory has exerted far-reaching influences on successive literature concerning intercultural communication, it still reckons culture as inflexible or inelastic. Under the lens of the third space theory, the conceptual boundary of culture cannot be extended. (Holliday, 2019) Note that it was Holliday (2013) who pointed out the theoretical fallacy of the third space theory, as it presupposes the existence of uncrossable boundaries between cultures. By doing so, Holliday (2013, 2016, 2019) discarded ‘the third space theory’ which conspires with essentialism and thereby championed bottom-up methodologies. Although Holliday’s insights into culture are thought-provoking, his grammar of culture, however, is not completely immune to the influences of essentialism either. As an integral part of cultural grammar, “cultural resources” are construed as the social structures within which a person was born and grew up, getting too difficult to be changed as time goes by. Thus, cultural resources, in this sense, has not yet completely abandoned essentialist viewpoints. Similarly, Scollon et al. (2011) emphasized that the people who came from the same social class and shared similar educational backgrounds could be classified into the same discourse system. And intercultural communication, according to Scollon et al. (2011), took place between two discourse systems. Nonetheless, Scollon et al. (2011) did not cut the umbilical cord of essentialism in that they untangled the fusion concept of culture with the premise that cultural boundaries were uncrossable.

It is significant to justify one’s arguments by pointing out the limitations existing in the previous theoretical literature, as it is the indispensable step to do scientific studies. My point here is that the precedent researches have not yet escaped from the shadow of essentialism, even though they kept underpinning that essentialism was, by no means, applicable in this postmodern society. In other words, the theoretical premises of intercultural communication need to be examined lest one commit methodologies fallacy before delving into a cultural issue from different lights. If one pays particular attention to the literature pertaining to cultural communication, he or she may find out a great number of scholars have delved into cultural issues within a given situation or a social grouping. They have studied cultural communication from

diverse perspectives yet with a shared presupposition that culture per se is too generic to shed light on the ways of facilitating inter- or transcultural communication and only if it is posited within a specific remit can it be dissected clearly. Undeniably, these scholars have debunked the essentialist view that culture preexisted and monolithic and regarded this viewpoint as the starting point from which they began illuminating their theoretical frameworks from different angles. Nevertheless, they barely realized the methodological fallacy they committed. Holliday (2009, 2013, 2016, 2017, 2019)'s grammar of culture cannot be a better case in point. Holliday debunked essentialist and neo-essentialism viewpoints whilst he illustrated his understanding of cultural resources/the grand narratives with the premise that people who were born and grew up within a particular sociopolitical structure still preserved some distinctive features related to that structure. For example, it seems that the majority of people who were born and raised in Italy have a fancy for Renaissance and ancient Rome's civilizations in varying degrees. However, this does not mean that the people who were born and grew up out of Italy do not show affection for Renaissance nor Roman's civilization. Rather, they might be keener to learn about the knowledge related to these two historical periods than those who were born in Italy. In this sense, "preserving the positive aspects of cultural diversity" is, from my point of view, still essentialist oriented. I do not grab one of his statements and cast doubts on the rationality of his whole arguments. In fact, as can be seen from his recent articles, Holliday et al. (2017, 2018) have reformulated this theoretical framework, renaming "cultural resources" as "the grand narratives" (aiming to open dialogues and fostering understandings between the people with different ethnic backgrounds from the perspective of narration. At this point, rather than completely cutting the umbilical cord of essentialist viewpoints illuminated above, Holliday, in my opinion, just probed into the issues concerning intercultural education, deploying bottom-up methodologies which are nothing but "direct observation, thick description and critical cosmopolitan stances". Therefore, Holliday made improvements in the methodological of intercultural communication but still retain the theoretical basis of intercultural communication, which is "the diversity of universality"

To recap, the aforesaid studies pertaining to cultural education have not yet completely got rid of essentialist ideologies.

10. Intercultural Education

Foreign language teaching is more than imparting students with linguistic knowledge. Similarly, second language acquisition should not be limited to grammar learning. That does not mean that teaching and learning linguistic knowledge is not important. On the contrary, it lays the foundation for the further cultural learning and teaching. Only when L2 learners have sufficient language proficiency can they have in-depth exchanges with native speakers. Once they reach this point, they are able to come to understand the cultural differences and similarities between themselves and the locals. (Gorski, 2008; Jin, 2016) Yet, it should be acknowledged that the ultimate goal of foreign language teaching and cultural pedagogy, is cultivating language learners into the ones who think critically and who are open-minded to the others with different linguacultural backgrounds when they engage in cultural-related activities. (Campos, 2009; De Bot, et al., 1991; Phipps, 2013; Ros, I Sole, 2013; Hawkins, 2014; Boni and Calabuig, 2017)

10.1 The Third Space

The “third space” theory proposed by Homi K. Bhaba (1994) and renewed by Claire Kramsch (1998) offered new impetus to IC studies, as it highlighted IC can be negotiated and people from different linguacultural backgrounds can interact with each other by seeking for a “third space” viz. the shared similar experience. Claire Kramsch (1993, 1998, 2013, 2015) has made significant contribution in the field of cultural pedagogy and language learning. Kramsch (1993) highlighted that the people in a country reshaped the extrinsic reality of a foreign country’s cultural and history according to their own perceptions of that country. She clarified this point with an attempt to introduce two concepts, namely cultural reality and cultural imagination.

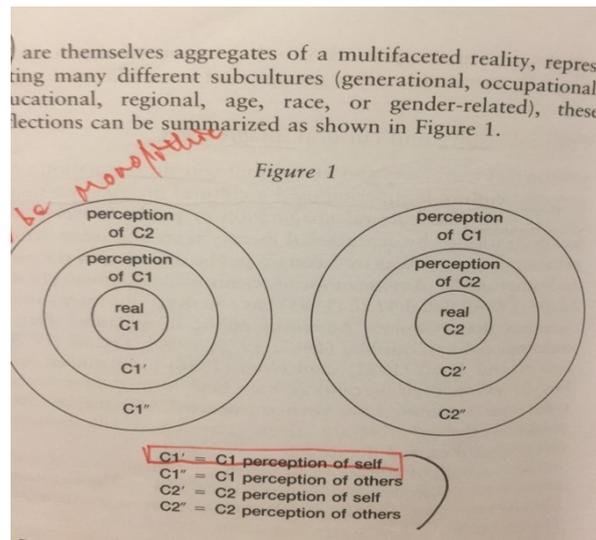


Figure 6 Cultural reality and cultural Imagination (Kramersch, 1993: pp 207-208)

Cultural reality is the country's objective culture whereas cultural imaging refers to the "the culture of that nation" in foreigners' eyes. Kramersch shed light on the difference between the aforesaid concepts by labeling cultural reality as C1, cultural perception of self as C1', cultural imagination as C1''. Kramersch crystalized the three notions by exemplifying German's perceptions of America and at the same time she demonstrated these perceptions with the figure quoted above.

Kramersch's understandings of cultural reality and imagination serve to state one of the present research objectives. The objective is that Italian learners can promote their intercultural understanding by reflecting on their own identities and concepts of the cultural values that have long been shaped and reshaped by family education, school formation and the influences of mass media. And then, by doing so, ILC can view Chinese family parenting by taking different perspectives and thus interpret and analyze it in dynamic and complex manners. To further elucidate the ways of being an "outsider" in intercultural communication, Claire Kramersch (1993) drawn the concept "the third space" into the picture of cultural pedagogy. Before illuminating Kramersch's opinion on 'the third space', I would like to brief on the *Theory of Third Space* which was originally proposed by Bhabha. By doing so, I may enable readers to have a clearer understanding of notion "the third space" and the role it plays in IC. As a cultural critic, Bahaba (1994) claimed that there are always "betwist and between" meanings in all cultures (P37). Simple speaking, the clear-cut cultural statements and the meanings never exist in any culture. The majority of cultural meanings are more or less ambiguous. Yet, it is this kind of ambivalence that contributes to creating a third space

where individuals of different origins may share similar frame of references i.e. cultural values, habitual customs etc. in a particular context. Based on Bhabha's theory, Kramsch further indicated that "the third place" served as a catalyst for fostering intercultural understanding. What's more, she also pointed out that only people realize that "contextual frame" (in Kramsch term) played an indispensable role in intercultural communication can they put themselves in a third space. The contextual frame is the one that is constructed by the people who narrated their own personal experiences and share some similarities

They belong to a stock of narratives that attempt to create a third culture, made of common memory beyond time and place among people with similar experiences...Indeed, the telling of these boundary experiences makes participants become conscious of the paramount importance of context and how manipulating contextual frames and perspectives through language can give people power and control, as they try to make themselves at home in a culture "of a third kind" (P235)

Nonetheless, this theory is not untenable in that the so-called "third space", in fact, does not exist as people are lingua-culturally hybrid as they work and study all over the world.

Besides, by criticizing pungently essentialist views, Holliday's suggested that people be cultural travelers who are able to innovate themselves within new cultural realities from time to time. To be brief, people are adaptable to any new cultural contexts and all cultures are plastic, open and hybrid to some extents. Kumaravadivelu (2005) also echoed Holliday's opinions, emphasizing that "...then we easily realize that human communities are not mono-cultural cocoons but multi-cultural mosaics." (P5).

10.2 Michael Byram's Intercultural Communicative Competence(modified)

Michael Byram (1997) put forward a model for intercultural communicative competence.

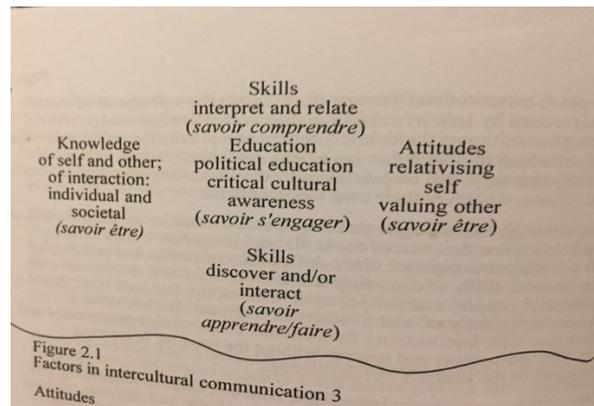


Figure 7 The model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (Byram, 1997: P34)

In this model, knowledge and attitude are the prerequisites for L2 learners who want to develop high-leveled intercultural communicative competence. Attitude plays a pivotal role in gaining intercultural awareness. When the interlocutors interact with one other, their ideas are always colored by ideology, viz. stereotypes and prejudices. It is these ideological barriers that lead to unsuccessful interaction. In this sense, the first step of teaching intercultural awareness and language competence is to help L2 learners get rid of the ingrained preconceptions and discriminations. By attitude, it does not refer to any cultural preferences, but rather to curiosity and openness to the target language that they are studying and the embedded culture. In other words, attitudes in this model, indicates that L2 learners should discard a priori beliefs or disbeliefs of other cultures in an effort of fully engaging themselves in a particular interaction:

They need to be attitudes of curiosity and openness, of readiness to suspend disbelief and judgment with respect to others' meanings, beliefs and behaviors. There also needs to be a willingness to suspend belief in one's own meanings and behaviors, and to analyze them from the viewpoint of the others with whom one is engaging (Byram, 1997).

That is to say, L2 learners may gradually shape and reshape their beliefs or understandings of the target culture by analyzing the viewpoints of interlocutors in the on-going interactions. Knowledge is closely linked with attitudes. The knowledge that individuals bring to the interaction can be categorized into two types. One is the knowledge obtained during the process of socialization. Interlocutors gain and share this type of knowledge, both consciously and unconsciously, with other individuals in the same social groups during the process of primary (family) and secondary (from

social and school) socialization. The shared knowledge serves as a group label on the one hand, and as a way to be distinguished from different social groups on the other. Most of the time, this kind of knowledge is obtained unconsciously. Only in the condition where there is a need to make a comparison between different groups, can the awareness of the individuals in one group be aroused. Under these circumstances they may have a more comprehensive perception of their own national, social and personal identity. The other can be termed as the knowledge of the processes of interaction at an individual, and societal level. Interlocutors carry different cultural knowledge. When they interact with one another, one serves as a prism through which another speaker can gradually obtain the cultural knowledge of his or her interlocutor. (UNESCO, 2009) The more contact they make, the more knowledge will be obtained. Media and politics determine the degree to which this knowledge can be gained. Some cultural knowledge like American knowledge is universal and is shared by many individuals, whereas some is rarely known by people, and interaction with the interlocutor of that culture shall be a necessary step for those who are lack of that kind of cultural knowledge. Skills are also an imperative constituent in Byram's model. When an individual is presented a written material s(he) may interpret it with common sense, priori knowledge gained owe to socialization. When they are doing translation, they may clarify contradictory meanings they have noticed by applying interpretative skills. This kind of skill is different from that of discovery and interaction, with the latter requiring the engagement of another interlocutor. The second type of skill could be acquired in social interaction. When interlocutors communicate with one another, one may draw on his or her knowledge which his or her interlocutor may lack, then the "dysfunction" emerges, and one needs to mediate the "abnormal" part of communication by employing his or her interpretive skills. As the indispensable factor for Byram's (1998, 2017) intercultural communicative competence, critical cultural awareness refers to the ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries. (P53)

Although Byram's model served as a conceptual toolkit in relation to cultural pedagogy, as he clarified the amorphous concept of intercultural communicative competence by dissecting it into four constituents, namely attitudes, knowledge and skills. Each of the three components can be the departure point from which culturally sensitive researchers may venture an examination on intercultural competence.

Nevertheless, when it comes to Byram's insights into intercultural competence, there are some limitations that need to be dealt with.

With respect to the first limitation, although Byram emphasized that developing students' intercultural competence could not be reduced to imitating the communicative ways of native speakers, he still presumed the clear-cut cultural boundaries. His presupposition manifests itself in holding open and curious attitudes towards the other foreign cultures. As people at present times work and study worldwide, they keep adapting themselves with those with different linguacultural backgrounds to such an extent that they have developed their in-between identity. Thus, people's life trajectories are imbricated in each other and as a result they are lingua-culturally hybrid in varying degrees. At this point, there are no foreign cultures for people may find themselves being 'foreign' even within a small group which they belong to.

As for the second limitation, Byram (1998)'s understanding of critical cultural awareness was limited as it only emphasized the evaluative analysis of a specific knowledge and the mediation of some cultural practices, rather than specifying the ways in which one could make evaluation. In my opinion, critical cultural awareness also involves the ability to challenge the taken-for-granted views or the common senses in people's daily lives (i.e. being civilized) and meta-cognitive capability for seeing through the dominating power that are embedded in a piece of discourse from multiple perspectives. What is more, critical cultural awareness is the ability to know the cultural practices which have long been legitimized are just the representation of the naturalized dominating ideology, such as social conventions and interactional routines. However, critical cultural awareness should be the capability to probe and challenge the dominant orders of discourse rather than simply being trained to be civilized with reference to the social conventional of a given community. (Fairclough, 2001)

In terms of the third limitation, Byram's ICC model gave so much attention to the mutual understanding and respect between the people with different lingua-cultural backgrounds that a deeper understanding of self is ignored. In the article named *A critical discussion of Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence in the light of bildung theories*. Elisabeth Hoff (2015) gave a critical analysis of Michael Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence (ICC). By drawing on Bildung theory, Hoff (2015) argued that Byram's model solely paid too much attention to the role that an intercultural speaker played in mediating the two different cultures,

viz. the self versus the Other. To better justify her argument, Hoff (2015) pointed out two problems in Byram's model of ICC.

The first concerns Byram's neglect of personal growth and its influences on IC promotion.

According to Hoff, Byram merely laid emphasis on the open attitudes towards the other foreign cultures and the importance of mutual respect and understanding, barely realizing that the focus of IC lies in gaining a deeper understanding of self through the interaction with others. In order to shed light on her opinions better, Hoff clearly pinpointed that although seeking for an agreed end with the others with different cultural backgrounds was important, having complex and multiple world views was vital. This is because one may turn to reflect on his or her ways of thinking under the condition that he or she encountered diversified and conflictual viewpoints as a myriad of viewpoints may reveal a person's presumptions of a cultural issue and enable this person to reflect on his or her own culture. Nevertheless, Hoff noted that self-examination was imperative compared with being open and having a critical awareness of the other foreign cultures. (P512)

In one word, through self-reflection, a person will be able to know how to positively participate in intercultural communication after having multiple and even conflictual viewpoints of a given issue.

The second problem, instead, dealt with Byram's overemphasis on the empathy for the other. Undeniably, empathy has effects on promoting IC as people can imagine what the other people think and feel and thereby show solidarity with the others. (Leiberg & Anders, 2006)

Yet, compared with empathy, Hoff reiterated that equality should be the prerequisite for IC because an overemphasis on empathy would not only make people think that IC is reduced to seeking for harmonies, but also reinforced the unequal power relations between the self and the other

In another words, Hoff reckoned that Byram overlooked the fact that equality should be the point of departure from which people can develop their intercultural awareness apart from empathy.

To summary, drawing on Bildung theory, Hoff emphasized the importance of personal growth and explained the reason why personal growth could contribute to promoting IC.

With reference to Hoff's analysis of Byram's ICC, I agreed with her arguments about the importance of taking a variety of viewpoints and how different perspectives may conduce to IC. She mentioned that one could have a deeper understanding of himself or herself through an interaction with the others. And the people who reconcile different viewpoints may propel them to exam their own culture and then actively reflect on their own ways of thinking. However, Hoff still presumed a clear-cut distinction between the self and other and did a critical analysis of Byram's ICC in recognition of Byram's interpretations of the binary notion self Versus other.

Unlike Hoff's analyses, I offered another possible account by emphasizing that people's cultural backgrounds are imbricated with one another as they travel, study and work worldwide. (Holliday, 2013, 2019) This is because people with different lingua-cultural backgrounds immigrated to foreign countries where they encountered people who held different cultural attitudes, ways of thinking and so forth. Given the differences in terms of cultural values and habitual thoughts, people may find it inevitably to avoid miscommunication because of conflictual viewpoints.

And to avoid misfiring communication or to seek for an agreed end, people need to co-align with their interlocutors by re-positing, counter-positing or changing their identity in an effort of making alliance with their interlocutors. (Kadinaki, et al., 2015) Thus, people may gradually internalize the words, ways of thinking of the others with or without different cultural backgrounds. As a result, they may find out that they 'have the words of someone else', carrying more than two cultural attributes at the same time. (Harvey, 2016) In another word, people may find out that they belong to more than two cultures – the self and the other- contemporarily. Therefore, it might be less possible to distinguish the self and the other, as people always develop their 'in-between' identity (Bahaba, 1994; Mercer & Williams, 2014)

What is more, culture cannot be reduced to the triad self/other. Since people with different lingua-cultural backgrounds travel, work and study all around the world, they keep resisting with and struggling against their national identities by redefining their cultural backgrounds that have long been stigmatized and simply classified into the pre-fixed tablet self/Other. The reason is that the binary logic self/other does not exist, in the sense that people are lingua-culturally hybrid, sharing similar cultural attitudes, historical background and societal attributes, i.e. both share some affinities in terms of social class, sociopolitical stances etc:

I believe I live in several cultural domains at the same time --- jumping in and out of them (...) then we easily realize that human communities are not monocultural cocoons but rather multicultural mosaics. (Kumaravadivelu, 2005: P5)

Furthermore, culture is not static and pre-defined. Rather, it is elastic, undergoing changes as time goes by. People who live together within a community may conduct collaborative practices and then gradually form sets of particular rules, with reference to which people know how to do social behaviors. (Holliday, 2019) Such rules are so rich to the extent that they can be renewed and expanded during the periods of historical changes. (Holliday, 2019)

That is to say, interactants coming from different foreign countries are constantly endowing their cultural backgrounds with new meanings by engaging themselves in several situations.

Second, although Hoff (2014) emphasized the importance of self-conception and its effects on promoting IC, she did not clearly emphasize that the process of self-conceptualization varies from person to person. Admittedly, Hoff (2014) touched on the ways of conducting self-examination, notably the critical discussions over ‘a fusion of different viewpoints’ and the struggles against stereotypes. However, she did not mention that how and to which extent they reflect on themselves is greatly restrained by their neurological and cognitive systems. Some people may actively sharpen their insights into their own selves, while the others may pretend to recognize they have reflected on their own ways of thinking without really examining their world views or cultural attitudes that had long been formed in primary and secondary socialization, i.e. early child formation and school education.

10.3 Literature and Cultural Pedagogy

Intercultural communication can be multimodal, involving verbal/ non-verbal communication, internet-mediated communication, audiovisual interaction and so forth. Among all kinds of forms of intercultural communication, foreign literary readings may be a classical modal of intercultural encounters. (Kramsch, 2000; Matos, 2011; Borsheim-Black, et al., 2014) In the light of literature and cultural studies, foreign language learners may have a better understanding of foreign language culture through reading literary texts or canons written in foreign language.

10.3.1 The Transactional Theory

The Transactional Theory advanced by Louise M. Rosenblatt (1994) is worthwhile to be mentioned. In the book *The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work*, Rosenblatt (1994) introduced two concepts, namely aesthetic reading and efferent reading. By aesthetic reading, it means that readers interact with the texts by aligning their personal experience, emotions and political stances with those of the protagonists, thereby developing a deeper insight into the implicit meaning of the texts. While efferent reading can be subsumed into “information retrieval”. In other word, people read a text as quickly as they can and extract the useful information that serves their certain purposes. A case in point can be reading comprehension. The theory can also be applied in foreign language teaching, as teachers should not only inculcate students with certain knowledge and let them get the information as much as possible, just like doing efferent reading, but also spur them to immerse themselves into the cultural knowledge by imagination or by recalling their own personal experience which maybe similar to that of protagonists.

10.3.2 Lothar Bredella’s Model of Flexible Mind

When it comes to frames of reference, Bredella is acclaimed for his emphasis on humanism and the model of flexible mind. According to Bredella (2012), intercultural competence was always misunderstood as linguistic skills and grammatical knowledge. (P146) Moreover, Bredella underscored that humanistic involvement in intercultural education could be regarded as the outcry against ethnocentrism and cultural determinism. This idea is further clarified in the flexible model for intercultural understanding. The main center of interest in Bredella’s flexible model is reconstructing “a third space”. To build a third space requires identity imagination and enrichment. As far as imagination concerned, Bredella opined that foreign language readers were expected to put themselves into others’ shoes. That is to say, it is necessary for foreign language readers/learners to suspend disbeliefs and discard essentialist presupposition in an effort of imagining the experience that the cultural otherness has undergone and understanding the people with foreign languaculture from their perspective not from the readers’ “taken for granted” perspective. (Wallace, 2003)

However, what should be noted that Bredella’s model of flexible mind did not cut the umbilical cord from essentialism, as it admitted the existence of cultural otherness which presumes the uncrossable boundaries between two cultural patterns.

10.3.3 The Intercultural Readers

With respect to one specific topic, writers who come from different culture may write their essays in different languages and air different views. Learners could compare and contrast these opinions (students know the languages) and discuss over them with their classmates who may have a very different interpretation of these opinions. In this way, learners may have a thorough understanding of Chinese culture.

I came up with this idea thanks to Hild Elisabeth Hoff (2016)'s schema of "intercultural reader" which helped me to design and carry out my teaching program.

For one reason, Hoff deemed that the readers need to compare a language text with the others written in contemporary era or in the past. "This venture involves exploring the effects of her own cultural, social and historical subjects' positions as well as those of the FL text itself, other texts, and other readers." (Hoff, 2016: 61)

For another reason, the reader could be exposed to multiple perspectives related to a literary text by communicating with the other readers, according to Hoff (2016). And then, this reader could deepen his or her understanding of the literary text by re-conceptualizing the multiple perspectives or the interpretations that the other readers offered. And the process of reconceptualization could be viewed as kind of improvement of intercultural understanding on part of this reader, as this reader may form new insights into a given literary text by associating with or disagreeing with his or her own cultural, social and subjective positions and those of the other readers.

To recap, the present section has offered a literary insight into intercultural communication by elaborating on three influential studies, namely Rosenblatt's Transactional theory, Bredella's model of flexible minds and Hoff's intercultural reader. In doing so, this section shows how literary texts in their written form can promote intercultural communication and at the same time it paves the way for shifting the monomodal literacy into multiliteracies, a case in point can be digital literacy which will be illustrated on in the next section.

10.4 Tellecollaboration

Intercultural communication has been transcended into a digital landscape in this postmodern society. A great number of high-end applications has come into being and serve as a catalyst for facilitating IC. The present section will turn to demonstrate two major lines of research in the domain of digital literacy, viz. telecollaboration and

mobile learning. (Blake, 2013; Domingo, et al., 2014; Ligorio et al., 2018a; Pachler, et al., 2009; Papamichael, et al., 2018)

As a forerunner in the field of language and intercultural communication, O'Dowd (2005) renewed the concept of intercultural communication by drawing Internet into the picture. By virtue of videoconferencing and emails, O'Dowd (2005) conducted semester-long ethnographic interviews. His aim was to explore the intercultural awareness and critical thinking of native German-speaking learners of English. He suggests that the influence of internet-mediated communication be double-edged. On the one hand, it serves as a platform upon which learners could explore other world outlooks whilst still remaining firmly rooted in interaction and development linguistic competencies. Compared with the traditional face-to-face interaction, the practice of videoconferences and emails contributes to enhancing the authenticity of participants' language speaking. It provides English learners from different cultural backgrounds with opportunities with which they can fully express themselves. However, he also acknowledged that the instantaneous nature of internet-based interaction has the potential to fuel tension between two cultural groups, which he argued, impeded students from analyzing the cultural related issues of their counterparts in critical ways:

However, the immediacy of the medium in conjunction with the visual cues meant that students were often unable to avoid or ignore awkward subjects and this, in turn, gave rise to misunderstandings and moments of tension between the two groups. (P116)

O'Dowd's arguments that internet-based interaction between two cultural groups may promote intercultural communication are noteworthy. This is due to the environment that internet-mediated intercultural communication provides for sharpening an individuals' critical awareness and improving their communicative skills. However, O'Dowd failed to capture the essence intercultural communication. It is personal trajectories, face relationships, cultural customs, educational backgrounds, family backgrounds and moral values that influence intercultural communication but not internet-based media like emails, videoconference and so on. Internet-mediated communication can be conceived as a contributor to intercultural communication, but it plays a subtle role in fulfilling successful intercultural communication. After all, they are instruments with which researchers can probe into the issues concerning intercultural communication. Paying too much attention to the effects of medium while

ignoring the crux of the matter is apparently putting the cart before the horse. Dervin and Liddicoat (2013) emphasized that intercultural communication should not be considered as static. Rather, it should be construed as subjective based. “We need to move beyond seeing cultures as discrete, static entities and see cultures as varied, subjective and power –based constructions of lived experience” (P7) It is in-person interaction that constructs “lived experience” because it could enable interlocutors to communicate promptly with one another. In this way, they will feel less confused in their moment-by-moment interactions for there are no meaningless delays nor fuzzy sounds which are unavoidable if interlocutors are in computer-mediated communication as network is far more than stable. Under unstable conditions, neither listeners nor speakers can hear each other’s words clearly due to poor connection. As a result, they may find it hard to understand the meanings conveyed by the other person.

To summarize, the present literature review has illustrated on some thought-provoking insights into multimodal semiotics, second language learning and teaching, teaching Chinese as a foreign or a second language, intercultural communication and education.

Part III. A Sketch of My Theoretical Framework

The third part will demonstrate the theoretical framework of my Ph.D. project. In this part, the research aim, research questions, a detailed description of the whole research procedure, the research methods of data generation and the approaches of data discussion will be detailed.

1. Some Clarifications

To reiterate my theoretical framework, my project attempted to explore the ways of making Italian learners become better Chinese learners. Bearing such an aim in mind, I improved the intercultural competence of Italian learners of Chinese and thereby I increased their intercultural sensitivity.

Before giving a detailed account of my empirical research, I would like to rationalize my researching methodology by discussing the issues concerning intercultural competence and authenticity, otherwise all the data I gleaned in the process during which I carried out teaching activities and semi-structured interviews will be unconvincing.

1.1 My Understanding of Intercultural Competence

The first clarification concerns how to interpret intercultural competence and how to trace the development of an individual's intercultural competence along his or her learning path.

As far as I am concerned, intercultural competence includes language and cultural knowledge and competence, the attitudes towards the people with different linguacultural backgrounds, the ability to do self-reflection and critical thinking, the intersubjective alignments, viz., the empathy towards the others and the ability to creatively produce meanings based on each other's needs and interests.

1.2 My Understanding of Authenticity

Based on my understanding of IC, I clarified my construal of authenticity. By authenticity, it means to the way in which people construe authenticity within the scope of intercultural education (IE) and evaluate whether an interaction is authentic or not. By describing and analyzing ILC's interaction with the Chinese barkeeper, I suggest that authenticity be illuminated from three perspectives, namely authentic contents,

authentic participants, and authentic context. For authentic contents, they refer to the expressions that the participants in a discursive practice not only accord with the social conventions of a culture but also meet the communicational needs of interactants. As for authentic participants, it means that the participants are not the ideal native speakers. In other words, all participants have their own complex linguistic backgrounds for they incorporate their distinct linguistic experiences into their personal cultural trajectories. In this way, each interactant has a mixed linguistic repertoire in varying degrees. When it comes to authentic contexts, interlocutors' intended meanings cannot be presumed. Rather, they show themselves in the on-going interactions. (Kasper, 2016) Besides, meanings can be created by interlocutors who engage themselves in multimodal communications. Interactants can make meanings that are apt best for their situated contexts via multimodal means, viz., facial expressions, gestures as well as linguistic and paralinguistic expressions. (Kress, 2016; Spencer-Oatey, 2018) In respect of authenticity, I share a similar viewpoint with Van Compernelle and Henry (2015) as they saw authenticity as a relationship between correspondence and genesis – the motives for which the learners choose a linguistic patterns are in line with “some set of recognizable patterns of meanings and language within the second languaculture (P15) Simply speaking, whether the ideas they intend to convey by using some particular linguistic expressions agree with the meanings of some recognizable patterns within a given community.

1.3 My Understanding of a Multimodal Approach

In my opinion, the multimodal approach means multimodal engagement. On the part of foreign language instructors, multimodal approach means that the foreign language instructors could use their facial expressions, posture and hand movements (the mode of gesture) to complement their oral explanations (mode of speech) on the teaching materials, namely audio-visual clips, the literary texts and so forth. In this way, they let the foreign language learners fully capture the meanings that were inherent in different multimodal discourses and get a deeper understanding of the meanings that the language instructors intended to convey.

On the part of language learners who study Chinese as a foreign or a second language, they transformed the meanings related to Chinese language and culture into their own by capitalizing on the multimodal resources that the language instructors created for them. In the present study, as a language instructor, I created the semiotic

potential (Van Leeuwen, 2005) with which Italian learners could create new meanings with reference to their own past learning experience and my explanations on the teaching stimuli that I presented to them in different teaching activities.

Therefore, I argue that speech, facial expressions, eye contacts, and gestures as a whole could be interpreted as multimodal means with which I made meanings for the Italian learners who study Chinese as a foreign language.

2. The Research Aim

My PhD project is a teaching program. With this project, I aim at developing the intercultural competence of Italian learners of Chinese, with a view at improving their language proficiency in the Chinese language and enhancing their intercultural awareness by adopting the multimodal approach based on the multimodal semiotics proposed by Bezemer and Kress (2016) and Theo Van Leeuwen (2005).

3. Research Questions

I would like to know how to design a teaching program in service of the aim of the research from the perspectives of language and cultural awareness. Then, I proposed the following three questions:

- 1) Since the Chinese language proficiency of Italian learners who participated in my teaching program was low, how could I make them better acquire the knowledge related to Chinese language and culture covered in my teaching program ?
 - a. How to design my teaching program that stimulates Italian learners' motivation for learning Chinese as a foreign language?
 - b. How to design my teaching program that enables the Italian learners of Chinese to create and re-create meanings based on their interlocutors' needs and interests?
 - c. How to design a teaching program that enables Italian learners who study Chinese as a foreign language to engage in conversations despite time and space limitations

2) Given the cultural ideologies of Italian learners of Chinese are deep-seated and are difficult to tap into, are there any ways of developing the cultural awareness of Italian learners who study Chinese as a foreign language?

- a. Through my teaching program, how could I learn about the personal cultural trajectory of the Italian learners of Chinese, particularly their cultural attitudes?
- b. How could my teaching program help Italian learners of Chinese to construe a cultural phenomenon in a more complex, dynamic and comprehensive manner?

4. My Hypothesis

I posit that sociocultural environment where the foreign language learners were born and grew up could be the point of departure from which the foreign language instructors could tap into their personal cultural trajectories, especially their cultural attitudes. This is because, due to rapid globalization, the spread of global information and the large-scale of immigration, language learners have more opportunities to interact with the people who speak different language and have distinct cultural backgrounds. And based on the sociocultural theory, foreign language learners may transform the sign-making activities in the environment where they situate themselves. The foreign language learners, on this globalized landscape, may expand their linguistic repertoire and enrich their cultural baggage. In this sense, they are linguistically and cultural hybrid during their primary and secondary socialization.

I argued that foreign language learners' personal cultural trajectory and their deep-seated ideas about culture can be explored when it comes to the factors for shaping their *member resources* that they drew on when they came to interact with the multimodal texts that the language instructors presented to them. Therefore, I hypothesized a cultural model to illuminate on the agents for shaping the intercultural competence of foreign language learners, especially from the perspective of their primary and secondary socialization. This is because one needs to go back to himself, knowing how he unconsciously formulated his mindset and how he conduct behaviors based on the

member resources which gradually took shape during his primary and secondary socialization . Only in this way could he comes to realize that his long-upheld common sense is, in effect, ideological uneven and cannot be taken for granted (Fairclough, 2001) Admittedly, one can shun cultural conflicts by deploying some strategies to avoid threatening people’s face. (Brown & Levinson, 1978; Jwa, 2016) Yet, the face-saving strategies, sometimes, are just means for realizing manipulation or control. (Sorlin, 2017) What is necessary to note is that one needs to deconstruct his deep-seated mental programming (a term used by Hofstede (2010) when he narrates his own stories (Baraldi, 2019; Gavioli; 2009) or seeks for the cultural threads but not blocks (Amadasi & Holliday, 2017, Holliday, 2018), otherwise one can only be “hostilely friendly” to the people with different cultural backgrounds by taking a moral ground which has embellished the dichotomous notions “we” Versus “othering” .

4.1 On Macro Dimension

Note that in the second part, I elaborate on sociocultural theory whose main point is that children begin to learn new things by imitating their caregivers’ expressions and behaviors and therewith transform them into their own. This view presumes that a person’s family plays a pivotal role in shaping this person’s ways of conceptualizing the world, of conducting behaviors, of expressing their feelings and forming this person’s outlook on money, friendship, and love.

Therefore, I posit that one could reflect on how his r families treat him is the starting point from which he can gradually gain an understanding of his personalities, emotional tones and outlook on the world. In other words, how one perceives his identities and how he posits himself in this world may enable him to spot the formation of his mindset, which may also influence his attitudes towards the people of different nationalities and religions. Thus, self-reflection is the first step for one to know how to change his deep-seated ideologies, viz., cultural attitudes. To give supportive evidence to my position, I herewith brief on two theories, one is John Bowlby (1988)’s parent-child attachment theory and the other is the model of mind-body connection. Bowlby believed that a person had already begun to form his or her mode of attachment as early as the fourth year of the postnatal period, during which this person was greatly affected by the way in which his or her parents treated him or her. “In high degree, indeed, a person’s whole emotional life – the underlying tone of how he feels – is determined by

the state of this long-term, committed relationships.” (P79) Likewise, Kotaman (2018) pointed out that parent-children attachment could also exert influences on the children’s achievement on task persistence. That is, whether these kids would like to invest their efforts consistently in a task is related to the way that their parents treat them. (P74) Does this indicate that people are solely determined by their families? No, as Bowley emphasized:

A principle means by which such experiences influence personality development is held to be through their effects on how a person construes the world about him and on how he expected persons to whom he might become attached to behave, both of which are derivatives of the representational models of his parents that he has built up during his childhood. (P64)

Thus, I argue that foreign language learners’ personal cultural trajectories and their own meta-cognitive capabilities are affected by their own family education, schooling and sociocultural environments. And in my opinion, they will in turn change their outlooks on the world as they keep interacting with others with different lingua-cultural backgrounds and as a result of shaping and reshaping their own national identities. And since their meta-cognitive capability is one of the contributors to their awareness, I posit that family parenting is the point of entry from which I would know how the family members of foreign language learners contribute to shaping their cognitive development. Cognitive development, as far as I am concerned, is one of the agents for improving the intercultural competence of foreign language learners.

4.2 On Micro Dimension

Tara Westover (2018) wrote a book called *Educated: a memoir* in which she depicted a girl who was born in rural Idaho and deprived of the rights of going to schools and going to hospitals. Her parents did not allow her to read books but asked her to help them do heavy chores. When the protagonist was a little girl, she had already been required to learn how to be a qualified wife and mother in the future. It seemed that her destiny had already been arranged and she could do nothing but submit to it until the day when this protagonist decided to leave her hometown and her family. She set out on her journey of pursuing knowledge. At the end of this book, Tara confessed that although the impacts of her father’s parenting mode were still lingering in her memory,

she, indeed, set forth to lead a new life with her own agency. “I learned to accept my decision for my own sake, because of me, not because of him. Because I needed it, not because he deserved it.” (P375) As can be seen, children have their own autonomy and can agentively choose how to construe their lives and which decisions they could make instead of being subjected to their parents’ control. For example, the Italian learners of Chinese, in the present project, are able to improve their intercultural competence by reflecting on the influences that their parents and social environment have on them, knowing how to view a cultural phenomenon from different perspectives, thereby they could know how to critically analyze it in a more complex, dynamic and comprehensive manner.

4.2.1 Language and Cultural knowledge of a Specific country

The language and culture knowledge of a country plays a fundamental role in helping foreign language learners to explore the cultural artifacts related to the target culture, i.e. films, literature, and food.

4.2.2 Neurological and Cognitive Dispositions

Before fostering a better intercultural understanding, I need to emphasize that each person has limitations in terms of neurological and cognitive systems. That is to say, the extent to which a person improves his linguacultural competence and develops his intercultural awareness is restrained by his biological and genetic dispositions. Although people’s neurological and cognitive system or ‘higher mental system’ in Vygostky (1978)’s term will undergo evaluation owe to the influences of societal factors, they are the factors that affect people’s intercultural interaction in a discrete timescale. Simply speaking, in an on-going interaction, people’s neurological and cognitive systems at that time will affect the degree to which they perceive, interpret, explain and analyze a cultural phenomenon. Therefore, before developing students’ intercultural competence, foreign language instructors need to recognize the fact that both foreign language learners and they have their own neurological and cognitive limitations.

4.2.3 Meta-cognitive Capability

Meta-cognitive capability, as far as I am concerned, involves the ability of reflection and critical cultural awareness, empathy, capability of thinking in Bottom-up way and the motivation for learning a foreign language.

Meta-pragmatic capability: meta-pragmatic can be viewed as an ability to know how to flexibly deal with the communicative problems an individual may encounterin

daily life after following the social conventions that he or she has been introduced. For example, students who were introduced Chinese taboos concerning chopsticks i.e. inserting chopsticks vertically in the rice and knowing the reason why it is impolite to some Chinese people might know that not all Chinese people regarded it as an impolite behavior and whether it was impolite or not depends on person's education, this person's conceptualization of this social behavior and what the addresser intended to convey to the addressee (normally it is used to threaten the positive face of the addressee). Some Chinese people who have never been educated to avoid this norm may not be aware of its impoliteness and inappropriateness. While the others who have this cultural knowledge and intend to curse another interlocutor to die will deliberately conduct this behavior, despite that it is a very rare phenomenon in Chinese society. Therefore, students could use meta-pragmatic ability to co-construct the meaning with their interlocutors in a specific contextual situation by taking account of a given social convention on the one hand and by manipulating their affordances - potential learning opportunities in that context of situation (Halliday & Hasan, 1989). Besides, in meta-cognition, the meta-pragmatic capability is interrelated with flexibility at linguistic and cultural levels. Under the guidance of teachers, students know that their identities are socially constructed and contextually given. And it is necessary to keep shifting one's identities with reference to his or her interlocutors' face and preferences. That is to say, what kind of contextual identities that people take, what kind of sociopolitical stances and emotion tones they and their interlocutors depend on how they co-adapt to one another.

Reflection and critical cultural awareness: reflection could be seen as the integral parts of meta-cognition. By reflection, it means the ability to retrospect and then reflect on one's personal cultural trajectories. That is, an individual is able to recollect the memories during the primary and secondary socialization and the ways in which this person reflects on how the schools, families and mass media directedly and indirectly educate him or her the ways of getting along with the others, especially on how to treat the others with different lingua-cultural backgrounds. Besides, reflection also refers to the ability to re-conceptualize the the interpretations offered the other people.

When it comes to critical cultural awareness, it is not only a thinking pattern with which one could remain suspicious of the other countries' linguacultural knowledge that he or she has received or the information he or she has recognized, but also the cognitive ability to challenge the taken-for-granted viewpoints about the other cultures

and know that these views, in effect, are the ideological common sense that have long been legitimized in different discourse registers.

Capability of thinking in Bottom-up way: It is a cognitive ability to observe the social behaviors of the people with different linguacultural backgrounds and to take action to understand their social behaviors. As for taking action to understand a particular social behavior, it means that one is able to know the reason for which that a person or a group of people make a particular behavior in a particular way. Furthermore, it is an ability to view a cultural phenomenon or an issue from multiple perspectives. For instance, an Italian learner of Chinese could view the people coming from the other countries as alienated foreigners, or they could also see them as the brothers and sisters with whom he or she shares a similar community, or this learner also views them as friends with similar lingua-cultural experiences. As for intercultural communication, one is able to reflect on a cultural phenomenon by taking the historical, economic and social backgrounds against which a specific cultural phenomenon is gradually taking into shape, rather than solely leaning on their presumptions of that cultural phenomenon.

Empathy: By empathy, it roughly refers to the ability to experience the inner worlds of the other people in a way of feeling and understanding their emotional fluctuations and inner sufferings. Empathy means that people could be in synch with the roles in the discourse in different genres and with their interactant, foreign language learners can have a deeper understanding of the subjective positions and emotional states of the characters in multimodal discourses and those of their interlocutors.

In brief, empathy helps foreign language learners to see things from the perspective of the people who use the target language that they are learning. It is true that empathy is an ability for people to detect others' mental state but more importantly it is a sort of genetic endowment, which means that some people may find it easier to empathize while others cannot do so. However, it is undoubtedly that the majority of people, more or less, have the ability of empathy. I also contend that empathy should be given prominence when it comes to designing teaching activities for it proves to be indispensable for mutual understanding and respect. In one word, it is the *sine qua none* of promoting intercultural understanding.

Motivation for learning a foreign language

Since motivation is not static but context-specific, dynamic and specific, varying from learner to learner, the external motivation (i.e. teaching and learning environment) and the intrinsic motivation (learners' ought-to self and ideal self) may decide on the

extent to which foreign language learners make more or less endeavor in their own foreign language learning process. Since language proficiency, as elaborated above, is one of the imperative constituents of intercultural competence, motivation may have effects on the improvement of the intercultural competence of foreign language learners as it spurs language learners to make constantly endeavours to improve their language proficiency, despite whether the process of foreign language learning is painstaking or enjoyable.

To summarize, it is noted that the meta-cognitive capabilities are illuminated in a general sense, which means that individuals' variants (i.e. hearing impairment and cognitive disorder) will not be taken into account.

4.2.4 Personal Cultural Experience

I delineate this concept into two senses. One is cultural experience and the other is personal trajectory.

Cultural experience: This kind of experience can be construed as traveling in another foreign country, contacting people of different origins, studying abroad and students' exchange programs (a case in point is the program Erasmus), along with the sojourn in foreign families. Since having this kind of intercultural experience may provide foreign language students with the opportunities to learn other cultures, cultural experience could benefit ones' cultural openness to some extent,. (It is important to remember that whilst intercultural experience may serve to shape foreign language learners' mental system pertaining to IC, it does not sufficiently contribute to shaping their inner world concerning IC. The reason will be explained when I analyze the on-line interviews that I have conducted.)

Personal trajectory: By personal trajectory, I merely refer to the life experience and inner feelings of students, that is, how they construe the other foreign cultures by getting access to media texts and evaluating people with different lingua-cultural backgrounds. What should be noted is that the attitudes they hold towards the people of different origins are different from the first constituent "intercultural experience". As to intercultural experience, it emphasizes that learners as social agents can interact with people with different cultural backgrounds by aligning themselves with these people. While the "personal trajectory" refers to "self", that is, subjective aspects of an individual which, in a strict sense, can be construed as people's context-specific reactions provoked by their past experience. To clarify my point, I would like to

expound on the socio-cognitive approach employed by van Dijk (2001). He assumed that a person's memory would have impact on the attitudes that he or she holds towards the ethnic groups. To examine the relationship between memory and prejudice, van Dijk dissected memory into semantic memory and episodic memory and proposed a context model (van Dijk, 2014). In respect to semantic memory, it refers to the dominant cultural belief in a particular society. By episodic memory, it means that people can extract relevant memories concerning their narrated or personal experiences in a particular context. And in accordance with the feeling they have in that context, they decide how to treat minority groups. And his context model embraces contextual orientation. When an individual interacts with the people with different cultural backgrounds, this person may perform his or her cognitive functions in accordance with the specific context where s(he) situates, s(he) may deploy some communicative strategies for negotiating meaning and continuing intercultural interaction. (van Dijk, 2014: pp. 379-380) The rationale behind my minute elaboration on van Dijk's ideas is that van Dijk illuminated the memorial and context types from an individual-cognitive perspective, which sheds light on my interpretation of "personal trajectory", that is, Italian learners' past experience pertaining to intercultural communication may, which to some extent, determine what kind of attitudes they can take towards other foreign cultures, thereby impeding or fostering their intercultural understanding.

A Summary:

As can be seen from this model, apart from family, I posit that the second socialization, notably educational institutions and social environment where we grow up also play a fundamental role in building our mindset and they can be nested on macro dimension. On micro dimension, I underpinned that developing intercultural competence lies in how to develop one's meta-cognitive capabilities as much as possible after taking account of a person's neurological and cognitive restraints.

My cultural model can be demonstrated in the double circles and a rectangle :

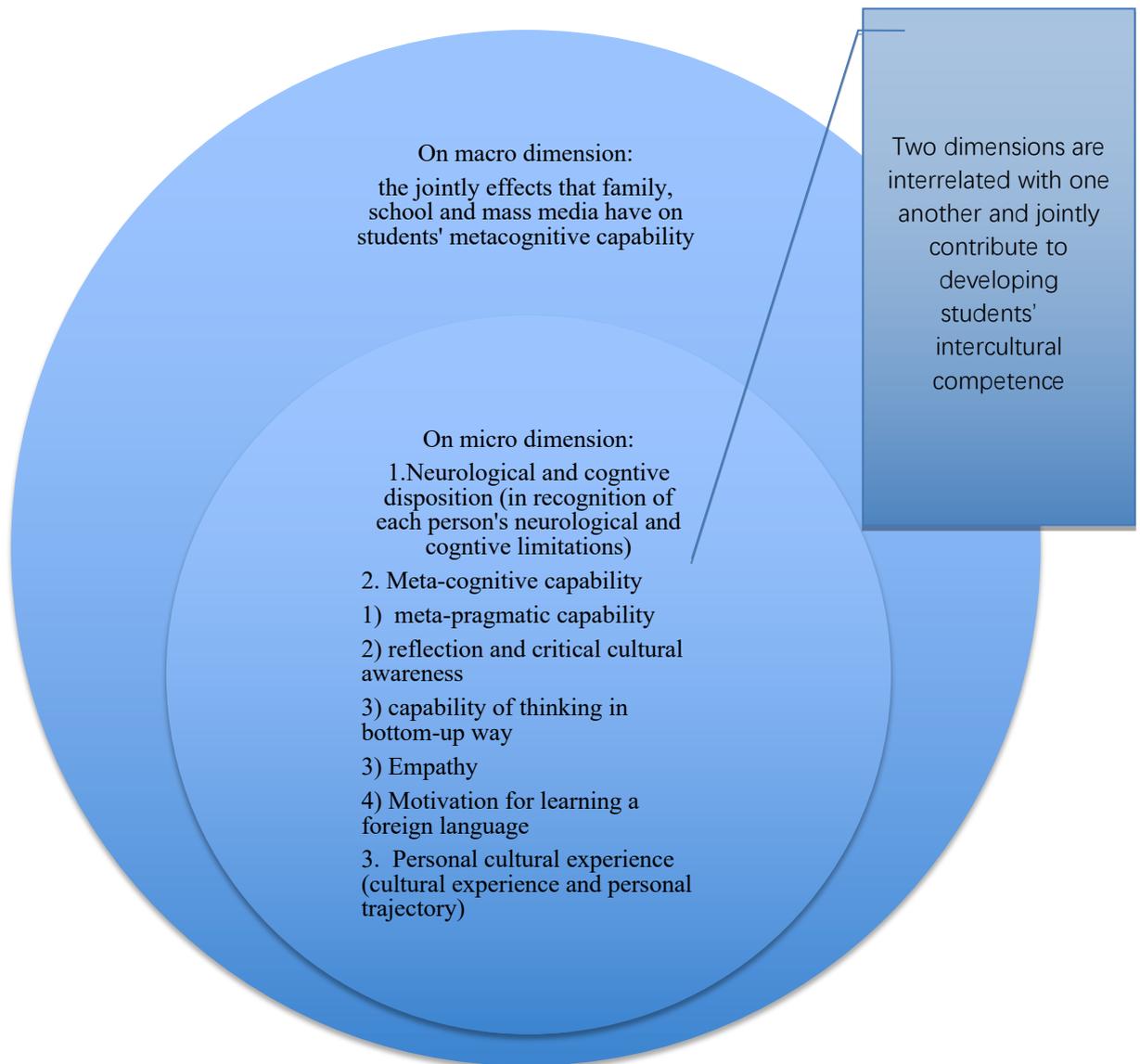


Figure 8 My Cultural Model

5. Methodology – An Introduction

The whole project includes two phases, namely the phase before the implementation of the teaching program and the phase during which I carried out my teaching program at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia.

With reference to the framework of multimodal social semiotics (Kress, 2010) and

(Bezemer & Kress, 2016), I carried out my teaching program adopting a multimodal teaching approach.

With a variety of multimedia materials, I directed students' attention to the commonalities that Italian and Chinese family education shared. (i.e. the communicative problems between parents and their children and the ways of family parenting) By doing so, I propelled them to view Chinese family parenting and the relationship between parents and their children in different historical periods in a critical, dynamic and complex manner.

As for data generation, I employed qualitative methods. They are questionnaires, individual or group interviews, the role-play that I carried out with the Italian learners of Chinese. By conducting questionnaires, I could, first and foremost, have a basic understanding of Italian students' language backgrounds and their cultural experiences; second, I was able to learn about these learners' past knowledge of Chinese language and culture as well as their cultural attitudes towards China; third, I could understand how Italian socio-cultural environment influences their cultural attitudes. By conducting interviews with Italian learners of Chinese and mobilizing them to do role-play with me, I, on the one hand, could learn the extent to which Italian learners of Chinese increased their knowledge about the Chinese language and culture; on the other hand, I was able to know the degree to which Italian learners of Chinese developed their intercultural awareness after the Italian learners of Chinese participated in my multimodal teaching program. For example, I was able to know how Italian learners of Chinese changed their viewpoints of Chinese family education and viewed the relationship between Chinese parents and their children in dynamic and complex manner by conducting interviews and role-play with the Italian learners who participated in my teaching program.

As for data analysis, with reference to the intercultural theories that I have elaborated on this present literature review, I analyzed my collected data by deploying the approaches of Fairclough's (2001, 2013) critical discourse analysis within the framework of multimodal social semiotics. By doing so, I could demonstrate how I improved the intercultural competence of Italian learners of Chinese by deploying a multimodal approach.

6. Participants, Duration and Teaching Materials

The selected participants were Italian learners who were studying Chinese as a foreign language. There were fourteen people who participated in my research, seven females and seven males, whose ages varied between 22 and 32. Among these participants, three were Bachelor students enrolled in the bachelor program in European Languages and Cultures, and the bachelor program in Economics respectively. Two were Master students majoring in *Language for communication in international enterprises and organizations*, among which one student had studied Chinese for three years and had already passed HSK 3 before taking part in the present research. One participant was the employee who was working at the international welcoming desk and had studied Chinese for 2 years before joining in my research. And the other 9 participants were Italian learners of Chinese who were attending Chinese classes in other Italian places, viz., Rome, Venice, Bologna and Forli. The language proficiency in Chinese of these 9 participants was at the elementary level. And among these language beginners, three had not yet taken the HSK 1 exam before 15, July 2019.

This is a one-year research project which began in July 2018 and ended on 16 July 2019. Before starting the teaching program at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (Unimore henceforth), I conducted a series of teaching activities with the Italian learners of Chinese based on the questionnaires and teaching program I had designed.

The main teaching materials include: two pictures related to Chinese chopsticks (please see figure 13 and 14); the slides (the use of Chinese four tones, the origin and the function of Chinese chopsticks, the evolutionary process during which the Chinese character 箸 was changed into 筷, the ways of articulating Chinese sounds); a commercial pertaining to the connotations of Chinese chopsticks; a film in Italian (the main content: how parents teach the protagonist to treat the kids with different cultural backgrounds); a set of drawings (Chinese comic strips, an image which depicted a woman who wore a fur coat and a boy who wore nothing and shaking, an image where a mother is holding her son crying silently); a Chinese documentary *Mirror* (the main content: the attitudes that Chinese adolescents and their parents held towards each other); a written text adapted from the novel *Jia* which was written by a Chinese writer *Ba Jin* and another text extracted from the novel *Joy Luck Club*; a Chinese song with lyrics.

7. Research Procedure

In the following two sections, the main research procedure will be illustrated. They were several teaching activities that I conducted before the implementation of my teaching program and my teaching intervention in the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia. The results of the teaching program will manifest itself in students' feedback.

7.1 Preparatory Stage

At the preparatory stage, I carried out several teaching activities in Beijing and Modena in a way to know whether some of my teaching materials were valid and reliable enough to improve the Chinese language proficiency of Italian learners of Chinese and develop their awareness for intercultural sensitivity. During this period, I had five teaching lessons via Skype and We-chat in a way of teaching and interviewing the Italian students who were studying Chinese in other Italian cities.

Each session was one-hour long and involved a questionnaire, eight teaching activities and individual interviews. The teaching materials covered some photographs related to chopsticks (see figure 12 and 13), a commercial concerning the relationship between chopsticks and Chinese culture, and an Italian film clip named *Genitori e figli, agitare bene prima dell'uso*. (Parents and Children: a necessity to deal with the relationship), the film

At the beginning of each teaching session at the preparatory stage, the participants, say Italian learners who study Chinese as a foreign language were expected to fill the questionnaire. And I asked them to clarify some arguments based on the answers they had given in the questionnaire.

The first activity was Picture Talk. During this step, I presented them with two pictures, using them as the prompts for eliciting the students' answers pertinent to Chinese chopsticks. The first one depicts a group of Chinese children who wear ethnic costumes and perform chopstick dance. (see figure 13) The second one is a mural painting where a Chinese maid in ancient times is picking up the food with a pair of chopsticks. To avoid any unexpected situations, I also prepared an alternative, a video-clip which concerns the funny mistakes that non-native Chinese language learners

made.⁴ Then, these Italian students were invited to observe the affinity shared between these two pictures and guess what the pictures were concerned with. The reason why they were expected to do so is that they needed to share with me their construal in regard to the meanings shared by these two pictures. Although the inherent meanings in these pictures were different from what they would have construed (the reason will be explained below), they would arouse their cultural awareness in varying degrees, as they prompted Italian students of Chinese to have a basic understanding of some factual knowledge concerning the Chinese chopsticks culture, notably Chinese folk dance and mural arts. And the acquaintance of this knowledge, from my viewpoint, is the starting point from which Italian learners of Chinese are able to explore further the Chinese culture by themselves.

Normally speaking, pictures as a whole, are the major representations of the image which can be subsumed to visual texts par excellence and fall into the category of discourse - a portmanteau of semiotic resources involving audio-visual, gestural, linguistic and para-linguistic elements. The reason why I construe discourse in such a way is that Kress (2015) and Fairclough (1993, 2010, 2013)'s interpretations of discourse helped me to extend the border of texts i.e. a written and spoken text to those with multiple modes. A case in point can be audio-visual film clips. And since discourse may be regarded as genres and inculcated with styles, there is a dialectical relationship between discourse, genres and styles, all of which are indispensable constituents when doing a critical discourse analysis. (Fairclough, 2013). Go back to Fairclough's tenet on the relationship between discourse, genres and style, I reckon that the pictures, as an ensemble of visual elements, could be a particular type of genre which serves to enact a specific discourse which is visual text in my pilot study. And as a visual text is normally concurrent with another visual or written text, they may jointly contribute to generating novel meanings for "the meanings of any one discursive image or text depend not only on that one text or image, but also on the meanings carried by other images and texts." (Rose, 2016: P187) At my preparatory stage, as the inherent meanings of the first picture are articulated with and in relation to those in the second picture, they can be recontextualized and re-interpreted by image viewers. And the interpretations that each viewer gave will not be the same as those given by the image viewers when they selectively interact with each other and transform the meanings they

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=feGVLoQdwAg>

have captured. As a result, the inherent meanings of the pictures are superimposed on Italian students' interpretations, generating a variety of meanings. (Campos, 2009) And since these meanings have stimulated Italian students' motivation and aroused their intercultural awareness, the pictures could be one of my possible teaching stimuli with which I could direct the attention of ILC of Unimore to Chinese culture utilizing chopsticks.

The second was a commercial delivered by CCTV. It showed how a pair of chopsticks passed on Chinese heritage, connecting the hearts of Chinese families and bringing together the Chinese nation as a whole.⁵ The participants were encouraged to summarize the main contents of that advertisement after watching it. Then, in regard to how a pair of chopsticks epitomize Chinese heritage and connect Chinese people, they were encouraged to take the floor, sharing the feelings and ideas with me in Italian and English. As can be observed, the first and second steps were interdiscursively related with each other, in the sense that the pictures and the commercial not only shared the same topic which was Chinese chopstick culture but also endowed chopsticks with new meanings, as evidenced by the family reunion and the affection for family members. By taking the implicit meanings of these two pictures and that commercial into consideration, ILC were able to predict that the following teaching activities would be related to chopsticks on the one hand; on the other hand, they could deal with Chinese culture in a progressive manner, in the sense that they shifted their focus from Chinese artifacts and costumes, viz., Chinese chopstick dance, to symbolic meanings of chopsticks, say the family love that parents showed to their children. In this way, I could capture Italian participants' changes in intercultural competence at the moment in time and in the meantime, I could also unveil the developing process of Italian participants' IC by conducting my teaching activities. I could also rationalize these participants' developmental trajectories by exemplifying two scenes of that video. In the second scene, the son who had been away from home for ten years came home and his mother prepared meals for him using a pair of chopsticks. In that situation, a pair of chopsticks symbolized the love between the mother and that son. Similarly, as can be analyzed in the fourth scene, a pregnant wife prepared dinner and passed a pair of chopsticks to her

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8uG7AvXQYIk>

husband, a deliveryman who always came home late. The tenderness between them can also be associated with the symbolic meaning of chopsticks which was the warmth of family. What should be noted is that I was the one who made the aforesaid interpretations. Limited as they were, they acted as the prompts eliciting participants' interpretations of this commercial, propelling them to have a more comprehensive understanding of Chinese chopstick and its implied meanings. And because of the reasons mentioned above, this commercial was an appropriate and valid teaching stimulus used in my teaching program at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia.

I presumed that the Italian participants who partook of the second teaching activity would construe that video from multiple perspectives and gave distinct interpretations based on their own interests. However, the fact is that they just narrated the main contents of that clip without further exploring the potential meanings in that video. For example, when the participant FG was asked the reason why Chinese little kids had to learn how to use chopsticks, he explained it was a just traditional Chinese habit and when he was asked to further illustrate the meanings of traditional Chinese habit, he remained silent and uttered it was just something concerning Confucianism. What is worse, he also oversimplified traditional Chinese values and reduced them to the notion "respecting the old and taking care of the young" after noticing the scene (When a Chinese family celebrated the Spring Festival, the parents of a little boy did not allow him to pick up the chopsticks until the grandfather gave his blessing)

His answer, in my opinion, revealed two problems. First, FG's background knowledge related to Chinese culture was found wanting. Second, I should have directed the Italian participants' attention to the connection between Chinese family love and chopsticks. And in doing so, I could connect chopstick, a cultural artifact in Holliday (2010)'s term, to family and family education, which is a cultural universal that can be compared, contrasted, reflected and analyzed by people with different cultural backgrounds. (Risager, 2006) In one word, since the essence of IC is the difference of similarities, that is, "people from diverse backgrounds can find common intercultural ground while at the same time reserving the most positive aspects of cultural diversity" (Holliday, 2019b), I planned to move from the shallower, cultural artifact, to the deeper, people's software of mind, in Hofstede (2010)'s terms, from the perspective of family education and the relationship between parents and children.

The third activity was an Italian film clip named *Genitori e figli: agitare bene prima dell'uso* (parents and children: shake well before use). The film narrates how Italian

parents educate their kids to behave when he communicates with kids with diverse cultural backgrounds. I had a very clear aim of playing this clip to the Italian participants: to encourage them to reflect on Italian family education, especially the ways of treating people with different cultural backgrounds. It is necessary to emphasize that Italian students' reflection on their own cultural backgrounds is the first step for them to understand the other cultural patterns and to foster their intercultural understanding. Through reflection, students were able to contemplate on the flexibility of their own culture and to know how they can shift their own attitudes and skills to partake in effective intercultural communication by taking appropriate communication styles and behaviors into consideration. (Byram, 1997; Bredella, 2003; Hager, 2017) What is more, as reflection involves perspective-taking – how an individual imagines another person would feel in a given situation, it also conduces to promoting empathy, the capability for understanding the others' emotions and comprehending the other interlocutors' intentions and behaviors. By doing so, he or she adapted himself or herself to his or her interactants. (Leiberg & Anders, 2005) And since empathy lies at the heart of intersubjective alignment, an integral part of IC, it also, to some extent, contributes to accelerating the process of IC.

The fourth activity involved an individual interview whose main topic was the relationship between Chinese parents and their children. By inviting them to share with me their knowledge of Chinese family education and comparing and contrasting the differences and similarities between Chinese and Italian family education, I would like to tap into their personal cultural trajectory, especially their attitudes towards a sociocultural issue, i.e. the relationship between the parents and their children.

7.1.1 An Example

Basic information: Name: Elisa, Age: 23, place of birth: Rome, Chinese language proficiency: elementary level

After I played the film clip parents and children: shake well before the use, I asked this participant to tell me how her parents taught her how to treat people with different cultural backgrounds, and she told me that her parents did not talk much about this issue and she explained that people always tended to lean on stereotypes of the people with different cultural backgrounds before making judgments. (In the following dialogue, the names of interviewer and interviewee respectively were abbreviated to the first letter)

Transcription:

E: because...um... many people in Italy do not have their real opinions on other people from other countries but they did not have many occasions of meeting them, especially in small cities. So...they lean on stereotypes to try to understand other people but they make these stereotypes to be true

GNV: hum

E:And... in most of the times, they just teach these stereotypes to their kids.

GNV: hum

E: So kids go to school and probably they will tell them this kind of information that they got from their parents and they spread them. As a result, they think the same, because when you go to school...many people tend to create a group of people and tend to avoid who is different (from us)

GNV: Hum... Ok. What do you think of stereotypes? Do you think they were fixed?

E. um,...I thought they did not change...not specific, they are just..an opinioner....
you cannot break until you truly know somebody from a specific country.

Founding:

From this interview, I was convinced that the topic family parenting and the influences that school exerted on Italian children's cultural attitudes could be a "cue", triggering this participant to narrate her perception of the socio-cultural environment of Italy. Then, after she narrated her personal experience, I asked her to air her views on the issues concerning stereotypes and Chinese family education. She gave a very general description of stereotypes. And as for family parenting, she said Chinese parents were too severe, as they pushed their children to study so hard that the Chinese children did not have too much leisure time to enjoy themselves. As can be seen, the participant compared and contrasted the differences and similarities between the Italian and Chinese culture from the perspective of family parenting. Therefore, considering her feedback on the topic family parenting, I was convinced that the case material I selected, viz., *Genitori e figli: agitare bene prima dell'uso* (English version: parents and children: shake well before use.) really covered my research interest, that is, how to improve develop the intercultural awareness of the Italian learners of Chinese. Thus, the film clip: parents and children: shake well before use could be a valid teaching material with which I would carry out the teaching program at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia. Besides, as I also found out that the film clip could unveil her deep-seated cultural ideologies, and I thought that this film clip could be an efficient method with

which I could enable the Italian learners who would study Chinese at Unimore to reflect on Italian family education.

7.2 The Teaching Program (A Multimodal Approach)

I will describe the teaching activities that I carried out in the past semester at Unimore. The main themes of my teaching activities are family parenting and the relationship between parents and children in different historical periods. Revolving around these themes, my teaching activities are divided into eight lessons which could also be categorized into three modules in accordance with the objectives of each session. The first three lessons serve to improve the Chinese linguistic capability of Italian learners and increase their cultural knowledge concerning kuaizi, the fourth lesson concentrates on arousing the critical and reflective awareness of Italian learners of Chinese, and the last four lessons are dedicated to improving the intercultural competence of Italian learners of Chinese and sharpening their sensitivity for transcultural awareness. The teaching materials are inspired by the criteria of multiliteracy, as they encompassed film clips, literary texts, comic strips and a song with Chinese lyrics. In sum, only a few students chose to attend my course. Three were Bachelor students and the other was a Master student. Before attending my classes, the beginners had only studied the Chinese language for half a semester. Thus, their language proficiency level of Chinese was low. While the other three Italian learners whose Chinese proficiency was at an intermediate level had studied Chinese for three years before they attended my lessons.

The whole teaching program is comprised of three sessions: In the first session, I distributed my designed questionnaires to the Italian learners who studied Chinese as a foreign language and asked them to fill it in. Then, I collected the questionnaires. In the second session, I carried out my teaching activities in and out of the classroom. My teaching activities in the second session were comprised of 8 lessons. Each lesson lasted 75 minutes. Apart from the activities that I carried out within and beyond the classroom, I also had the other lessons with the Italian learners of Chinese on We-chat digital platforms in order to increase the comprehensible input related to Chinese family education and the relationship between parents and their children. By conducting my teaching program in, outside and on the We-chat digital platform, I expanded and sharpened the insights of Italian learners of Chinese into the connotation of chopsticks and the social issues pertaining to Chinese family and education. I embarked on my

teaching program at the beginning of March and finished all the activities by the end of October. I conducted the whole teaching program by deploying a multimodal approach. **Explantion:** Lucas Bietti (2016) co-authored with Baker and Datienne and classified the multimodal metaphors into four kinds, namely visual metaphors, spatial metaphors, verbal-gesture metaphors, and oral-aural metaphors. By drawing on these metaphors, participants fulfilled their learning activities that were designed by teachers. In this sense, these metaphors could also be regarded as collaborative embodied resources at a semiotic level. By elucidating the notions multi-modal metaphors and collaborative embodied resources, Luca (2016) attempted to explore the central role that the integration of linguistic, embodied, social and material resources played in collaborative learning activities by transforming them into distributed practices across space and time. In this regard, I also take a similar line with him, as the multimodal approach has enlightened me to learn about the intercultural competence and awareness of Italian learners of Chinese by audio and video-recording their gestures, facial expressions, eye contacts, intonations (like prosody) and speech. In this way, I could examine the intercultural competence of students in a way of encouraging them to engage themselves in collaborative activities.

7.2.1 The First Session

I distributed anonymous questionnaires to the Italian learners of Chinese and after one week and I only collected six questionnaires that had been filled in. They were put in a file that I had created and I marked this file as A (Please See Appendix A)

7.2.2 The Second Session – Teaching Activities

Lesson 1 (75min')

Objectives:

1. The Italian learners of Chinese could understand the importance of articulating tones in an accurate manner.
2. The Italian learners of Chinese are able to review and practice the basic four tones that they had learned in the last semester.
3. The Italian learners of Chinese are able to know in which situation one could articulate the Chinese neutral tones.

Main procedures:

At the beginning of the first lesson, I introduced the Chinese four tones and a variant tone, viz. the neutral tone, to the Italian learners of Chinese by letting them realize that inaccurately pronouncing Chinese four tones might trigger miscommunication.

- Teaching presentation:

Step 1: Starter used to arouse the Chinese linguistic awareness of Italian learners of Chinese

Detailed procedure: I first showed them a video that talked about the mistakes that foreign language learners might make when they were studying Chinese⁶. Regarding it as a prompt, I then asked Italian students whose Chinese language proficiency was at the beginning and medium-high levels to interpret what they had learned from that film clip:

- For the beginners, I played the video clip twice (from the beginning to 02:04 min) and at the same time, I asked the Italian learners to tell me what they could tell from that video, particularly in terms of tone articulation.

- For the Italian learners who had medium Chinese language proficiency, I played the video clip twice and asked them to make a summary of the main content of that video clip.

My words: Could you please tell me what you can learn from this film? Have you

noticed the jokes of 元yuán 小xiǎo 姐jiě and the misunderstanding of 冷气团

lěngqìtuán 冷集团lěngjítuán? (Meanwhile, I pointed at the frame at 00:52, 01:34

and that at 02:04 sequentially with a mouse) The frames can be seen as followed:

⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=feGVLQdwAg> (from the beginning to 02:04 min)

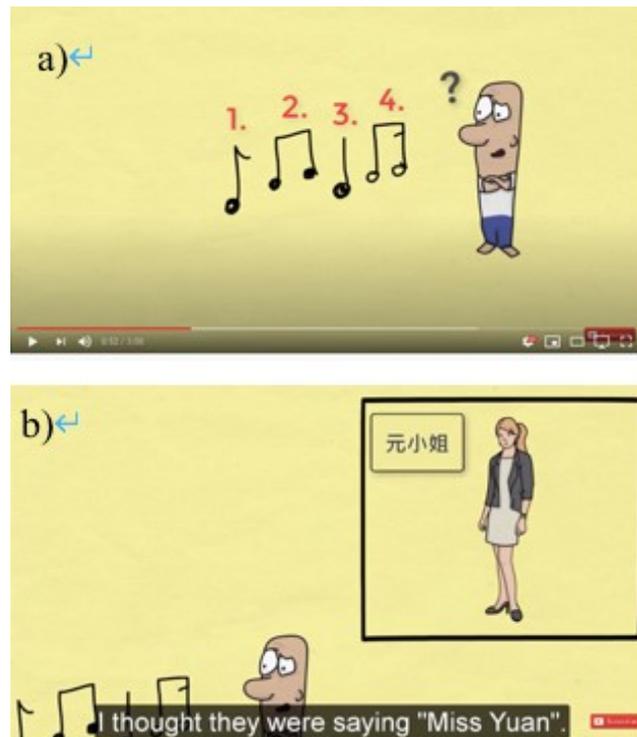


Figure 9 a) Shows the Chinese four tones; b) Shows the mistakes made by foreigners during the process of learning Chinese.

As can be seen, I directed the attention of Italian learners of Chinese to the consequences (i.e. jokes and embarrassing moments) brought by the inaccurate pronunciation of Chinese tones in an effort of letting ILC focus on the importance of articulating accurate Chinese tones and to avoid letting them interpret the things that were irrelevant with tone articulation in that video clip,

Thus, during this process, by virtue of the audio-visual material – the film clip, I asked ILC to pay heed to the misunderstandings caused by the incorrect pronunciations of Chinese sounds. They were 元小(xiǎo)姐 versus 元宵(xiāo)节; 冷气(qì)团 versus 冷集(jí)团—

In this case, the verbal speeches “I asked...” and the audio-visual material-film clip were regarded as the multimodal means with which I realized meaning-making which was the miscommunication brought by wrong ways of articulating Chinese sounds to the Italian learners of Chinese. At the end of this first step, ILC took the floor and conveyed their ideas. Meanwhile, I gave them feedback by correcting their inaccurate tones when they spoke in Chinese.

Step 2: Presentation of Chinese basic tones

- a) By making an example of the four sounds *mā má mǎ mà*, I helped ILC to review and practice Chinese four tones that they had learned with the following image:



Figure 10 The Chinese four tones

- b) with the abovementioned image, I asked ILC to make some examples containing the four tones and I gave them feedback from time to time

Step 3: The Introduction of neutral tones

Detailed procedure:

- a) I asked them whether they had learned the other tones apart from the four tones I mentioned in the first and the second steps. The majority part of the beginners told me that they only knew the four tones. Based on their feedback, I introduced the neutral tones to ILC and explained the knowledge concerning the neutral tone to them and taught them how to articulate it (compared with the other four tones, the tone should be pronounced lightly).
- b) I taught them the rules of using Chinese neutral tones and explained to them in which situations one needed to articulate the Chinese neutral tone that I had introduced to them with the following slide:

Il tono neutro

- 1) Si appoggia alla sillaba che la precede.
- Ripetizioni bisillabiche cinesi eg? Yòng yong 用用
- 看看——
- La differenza tra 看一看 vs 看看

- 2) le particelle finali 呢,吗,吧
- 3) 的 nei pronomi possessivi eg. 我的书
- 4) I pronomi plurali “们” eg. 我们,他们,你们
- la differenza tra 我们 e 咱们

Figure 11 The rules of using Chinese neutral tones.

I gave feedback to them with respect to their articulation of the neutral tone and the situations in which language learners of Chinese could use the neutral tones. And meanwhile, I paid attention to the feedback of ILC and their gestures and facial expressions (i.e. whether they had blank faces or whether they nodded their heads in a way of showing that they understood what I meant or their back-channeling words “um”, “yes” “Ok”)

With the same slide showed above, I made an example ‘儿子’, a semantic constituent. With reference to this semantic constituent, I first articulated the sounds /er/ /zi/ and at the same time I asked Italian learners of Chinese to pay attention to my pronunciation of the Chinese character ‘zi’. And I encouraged ILC to imitate my pronunciation of the Chinese sound “zi”. Meanwhile, I corrected the pronunciation of ‘儿子’ of two Italian learners who studied Chinese at elementary and medium-high levels. I not only explained to LC the situations in which the sound ‘zi’ should be pronounced lightly, but also told them the cases in which “zi” should be pronounced with the third tone. Then, I made a summary of the two uses of ‘zi’

I made some examples and asked Italian learners of Chinese to discern in which situations zi which should be pronounced in a light way and in which cases /zi/ should be articulated with the third tone.

c) I gave them feedback and made them understand how to articulate ‘zi’ in different cases

Explanation: Although I introduced ILC some basic linguistic rules concerning Chinese tone articulation, I did not impose on them the knowledge and require them to memorize pinyin and tones mechanically. Instead, I stimulated the motivation of ILC to learn Chinese in a way of showing ILC a video clip (from 00:00 min to 02:04 min) first. Here, the video clip as a mediational tool with which I aroused their linguistic awareness of Chinese tones. Then, my verbal speeches – asking ILC to listen to and to articulate the Chinese four tones before ILC imitated my pronunciation; and our gestural alignment, i.e. eye contacts, gestural imitation (I pointed out my index finger and identify the falling-rising movement of the third tone and some students’ imitation of my gestures about this tonic movement) as a whole can be viewed as an admixture of multimodal metaphors for realizing communication – how to pronounce Chinese four tones in an accurate manner.

Assignments: a) I asked Italian learners to practice the Chinese four tones. B) The learners were asked to surf the internet and search for the names of Chinese cutlery.

Lesson 2 (75min’)

Objectives:

1. Italian learners of Chinese are able to learn how to write the Chinese character 箸 zhù by understanding it from etymological and historical perspectives.
2. Italian learners of Chinese are able to understand how “筷” evolved from “箸”
3. Students can learn how to use chopsticks

Step 1: Review

Detailed Procedure:

- a) I asked students to tell me what they had learned in the first lesson for the purpose of drawing their attention to the fact that Chinese tones mattered most in successful communication.

Meanwhile, I gave them two hints: The first one was the video clip concerning the mistakes that foreigners made when they were studying Chinese. The second one was the slide (adapted from lectorate ppt 13/03/2019)

- b) I asked students to recollect the memory concerning the bi-syllabic and reduplicated Chinese characters which were related to family members, and encouraged them to identify the characters that should be pronounced lightly in the semantic constituent 爸爸, and prompted them to make a summary of the other cases of the use of neutral tones.

Step 2: The presentation of the pictures of chopsticks:

Detailed Procedure:

- a) I showed the students three pictures and let them observe the internal association between them.

My verbal speech: “Let’s see some pictures before the beginning of the class. We need to observe and describe the pictures first and after that, we can discuss with each other what the similarities that these photos share”.



Figure 12 Chinese chopstick dance



Figure 13 Four sets of Chinese chopsticks with Chinese nodes embroidered on them.

I concluded what students said and introduced the main theme of the lesson: chopsticks

- b) I wrote the Chinese characters 筷子 kuài zi and its pronunciation on the blackboard, and read the Chinese characters to students who were required to listen

carefully to the pronunciation. Then, I let students read 筷kuài子zi one-by-one and then I corrected their pronunciation.

Step 3: I taught them how to write the Chinese characters 筷子 in a logical manner.

- a) I told students 箸 was composed of the upper-lower parts, one is the radical 𦵏 and the other is the compound part which is “者”

Then, I directed students' attention to the six writing principles before elaborating on the Chinese character 箸. With respect to 箸, I said that it was the semantic-semantic compound word which was comprised of the radical 𦵏 and the other semantic part – “者”.

- b) By showing Italian learners of Chinese an image which concerned bamboos, I associated it with the symbol, viz., radical 𦵏. By doing so, I told them it was mapped on to the referent which was a green ‘bamboo’. The bamboos were demonstrated as followed:



Figure 14 Bamboo.

- c) Apart from 𦵏, I then explained 者 (zhě) to students. First, I told them that ‘者’ acted as an inflectional verb, connotating the people or the things as a whole only under the condition it was preceded by a noun or an adjective. Then, to let students have a better understanding of the use of zhe, I made an example of二者 which meant ‘both’ or ‘two entities’.

- d)

Then, to reinforce the use of “者”, I made another example, 陈胜者,阳城人也 with its English version: the person who is called Chen Sheng comes from Yangcheng

City) with which I explained that zhe in this example was served as a demonstrative pronoun, referring to the person who named 陈胜. Similarly, as 者 connotated the things and people, a bronze vessel was also one of the representations of the meanings of 者. (He Nan Bo Wu Yuan; 2016) To clarify this meaning, I made an example 鼎者, 国之重器也. (By 鼎 dǐng, it refers to the most important instrument of a state.). According to the dictionary of Xian Dai Han Yu Da Ci Dian (2007), 鼎 referred to the utensil which was used to cook and pick up food in ancient China. And as 鼎者, according to the grammatical knowledge that I illustrated above, referred to the utensil with which one could pick up and cook food or soup. Then, in this lesson, I associated 鼎者 with this cooking vessel in ancient China.

- e) In this way, I demonstrated the following picture⁷ to students in a way of asking them to allocate their attention to it and to let them have a concrete understanding of the utensil – a bronze vessel that was used to cook food and soup in ancient China.

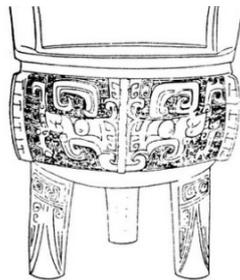


Figure 15 Chinese Ancient Vessel.

As can be seen, the picture abovementioned is a sketch of ding. The thick and thin lines were regarded as a mode ensemble that signified the exquisite sculpture whereas the black and white shade indicated the intricate carves. Besides, accompanied by the thick and thin lines, my verbal speech is another modal ensemble, enabling me to help students to have a better understanding of this ancient cooking vessel ding.

- f) After explaining the meanings of “[^]” and “者”, I emphasized that both “[^]” and “者” as a whole connotated the meanings which were related to plants, and a case in point was a pair of branches.

⁷ <https://sucai.redocn.com/tupian/1466995.html>

g) To let ILC have a better understanding of the function of 箸 – a pair of chopsticks which were used to pick up food from a utensil, I designed a picture by turning around the green bamboos and attaching it with the vessel, viz. a bronze utensil in ancient China. (Wang, 2015; He Nan Bo Wu Yuan, 2016) By doing so, I created a meaning of 箸, that is, the instrument with which the ancient Chinese people picked up and transported food. By creating a picture: a pair of chopsticks being inserted in a bronze vessel, I helped ILC to have a better understanding of the original of chopsticks --- a kind of cutlery which was used to take food from the utensils in ancient China.



Figure 16 An illustration of the pictographic meaning of 箸 kuai.

h) Then, to let students understand the meaning of 箸 and to enable them to know that it is a kind of cutlery with which one could pick up scalding food, I shared with ILC a historical story concerning the origin of chopsticks based on Wang (2015)'s book *A Cutlery and a Culinary Culture of Chopsticks*.

“During the Spring and Autumn Warring State periods, the generals and their soldiers fought with their enemies. Since at that time, they did not have appropriate cutlery to eat and they had to take the hot food from the ancient utensil, they created an instrument with which they could pick up the food. (Wang, 2015) That instrument was a pair of branches. And since that time, branches had become the earliest chopsticks, acting as a kind of cutlery.”

Production: An Italian boy mistook the use of radical 𠂇 and regarded it as the radical 𠂇 while the others confused the correct order of strikes.

Step 3: The evolution of 箸 and the reason for which 箸 was changed into 筷

a) I explained the reason for which the Chinese character 箸 evolved from 箸. However, before doing so, I asked ILC whether they knew the historical knowledge related to the character evolution from 箸 to 筷. And at the same time, I gave them a hint with the written words “nell’ambito di barche” in the following slide:

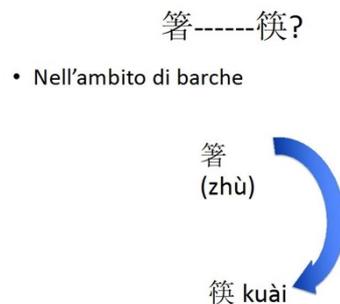


Figure 17 The evolution of 箸 to 筷.

I asked them: “Is there anyone who could tell me the reason for which Chinese character 筷 evolved from 箸 ? ” And at the same time, I accentuated that there was an evolutonal process during which 箸 was changed into 筷 by virtue of both the arrow and the six short hyphens, viz., “-----”.

To recap, I communicated with ILC by virtue of multimodal resources. The resources were: a picture – the green bamboos turned around 360 degrees; a sketch of a bronze vessel, the written words I had typed in the abovementioned slide and my verbal speech “Is there anyone who knew how 筷 evolved from 箸” and two icons, viz. arrow and six short hyphens. With the two pictures and my verbal explanation for the reason for which a pair of chopsticks came into existence, I enabled students to understand that the chopsticks in ancient China acted as an instrument that was used to cook and transport food. And with the verbal speeches and the icons mentioned above, I elicited students’ answers concerning the cultural knowledge which was how the Chinese

character 箸 changed into 筷.

- b) I asked students to write the Chinese character ‘筷子 kuai zi’ and checked them whether they had learned how to write them in a logical manner. I asked students to write the 箸 according to Chinese stroke orders. Some students mistook the radical 艹, while the others mistook the orders of strokes of the Chinese character 筷

Step 3: I taught students how to use chopsticks

- a) I distributed pairs of chopsticks to every student and tried to teach them how to use a pair of chopsticks correctly and appropriately. I told students that they could use a pair of chopsticks based on their needs and interests, under the condition that they could pick up the peanuts as many as possible.

Reason: According to Bezemer and Kress (2016), the learners might show different interest with respect to a topic based on their own previous knowledge in this regard. And each learner participated in the activity of meaning-making (i.e. how to use chopsticks) in accordance with his or her ‘trajectory of prior learning’. (P49)

Some students could choose to learn how to use pairs of chopsticks based on their personal experiences of using chopsticks in the Japanese restaurants run by Chinese or their sense of comfort when they are using pairs of chopsticks.

Step 4 Production:

- a) The students were asked to practice the Chinese character “箸” and make a summary of the origin of chopsticks and the reason for which 箸 was changed into 筷.

Assignment: The students were asked to research for the information concerning the reason for which 箸 was changed into 筷.

Lesson 3 (75min’)

Objectives:

1. Italian learners of Chinese (ILC) are able to pronounce the Chinese character 筷 with the scientific methods of pronouncing a sound.

- 1) ILC are able to know how to divide the Chinese sound into the Chinese consonant /k/ and the rime /uai/.
- 2) ILC are able to learn how to describe and pronounce the Chinese consonant /k/ from two perspectives, namely the place of articulation and the manner of articulation. They know how to pronounce the rhyme – the compounded trisyllable vowels - /uai/ from the perspectives, viz. round versus unrounded and voiced and voiceless.

Step 1: Review

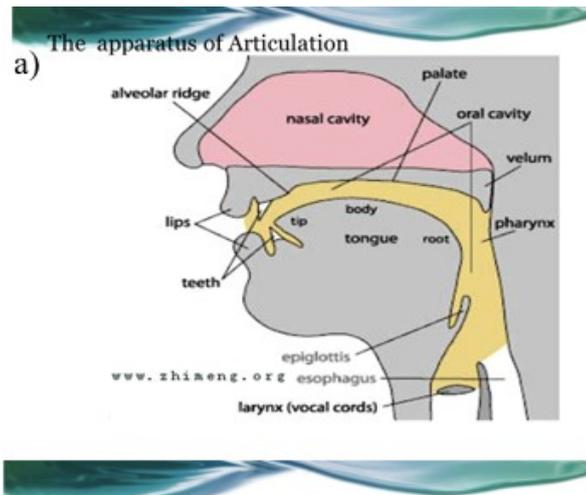
- a) I helped students to review the main contents of the last lesson.

I asked them to write the Chinese character “筷” and checked them whether they had already learned the stroke order of the origin of chopsticks by showing them the picture: the bamboos which were inserted in a cooking vessel in ancient China.

- b) Check assignment, I asked ILC the reason for which 箸 was changed into 筷.

Step 2: I taught Italian students the methods of articulating Chinese syllables

- a) I taught some methods of articulating Chinese consonants and vowels to the Italian students of Chinese by demonstrating a picture of the human apparatus. These methods are the place of articulation; the method of articulation; voiced and voiceless; aspirated and unaspirated; rounded and unrounded (the shape of the mouth)



b) The scientific methods of describing a sound

- **1. Place of Articulation** (bi-labial, denti-alveolar, aveolo-palatal, velar)
- **2. Manner of Articulation** (stop, affricative, fricative, approximant)
- **3. Vibration and Non Vibration of Vocal Cords**
- (voiced VS. voiceless)
- **4. Aspirated and non-aspirated**
- **5. The Shape of the Mouth** (rounded or unrounded)

Figure 18 a) The human apparatus of Articulation. B) The phonetic methods to describe a sound.

b) I taught them the syllable 筷 which could be divided into two parts, one was the

Chinese consonant initial /k/ and the other was a Chinese rhyme /uai/ which is a Chinese triphthong in this rhyme. And then, I taught them the sound /k/. It is pronounced by the oral articulators, viz., velar and the back of the tongue. It is a stop for a flow of air passes through the oral cavity and it is released abruptly.

I articulated the consonant /k/ and required them to imitate my articulations and at the same time I gave feedback to them when they pronounced it in wrong ways by asking them to pay attention to the place of articulation: “The part after the hard palate should be touched by the back of the tongue”.

c) I also illustrated three methods of describing Chinese vowels, one is rounded versus unrounded (whether the shape of lips is rounded or not), the second is the front/back (the front, central and the back of the tongue) and the third is open versus close with the Chinese triphthong /uai/. The vowel /u/ is rounded and is given less amount of stress compared with the bi-syllabic vowel /ai/. Then, with my verbal speeches,

I made students notice the consonant /k/ which is assimilated by the glide /u/. And /u/ is followed by another vowel compound /ai/.

“Let’s pay attention to the Chinese sounds. They are generally comprised of two parts, namely Chinese initials (声母shengmu) and Chinese finals or rhyme (韵母yunmu). In the case of /kuai/, it is comprised of two parts, namely the Chinese initial and the other is the rhyme /uai/. (in this case, it is the vowel without any codas)” (Duanmu, 2007) And in the meantime, I articulated /kuai/ and let students pay attention to the ways in which I pronounced the sound /kuai/, notably the place of articulation.

d) I wrote the Chinese character “筷子” on the blackboard and asked them to pronounce the sound “kuai zi”.

Explanation: Here, my utterance and the gestures of my mouth as a whole was a multimodal means with which I enabled students to know how to articulate 筷/kuai/ by employing the aforesaid phonetic and phonological methods.

Assignment: I asked students to find a homophone of 筷. Besides, they were required to search for information concerning Chinese table manners on the website. I said: you may surf the Internet or consult some books or even talk about that with your Chinese classmates.

Lesson 4 (75 min')

Objective:

1. Students may learn that chopsticks represent family love
2. Students learn about relevant taboos and table manners concerning chopsticks, in particular, know how the taboos and tables manners are gradually formed
1. By interacting with a Chinese bar owner, Italian Learners of Chinese (ILC) are able to use the Chinese word “请” to make requests in Chinese

2. By interacting with a Chinese bar owner, ILC are able to interact with their interlocutors by taking specific contexts of the situation (Halliday & Hasan, 1989) and their interlocutors' face into consideration.

Step 1: Review of the pronunciation of the Chinese character 筷 kuai

Step 2: Learning the symbolic meaning of Chinese chopsticks

- a) I asked students to watch an advertisement for Chinese chopsticks⁸ and at the same time I asked them to pay attention to the scenes concerning chopsticks and let them describe the main contents of the Chinese advertisement
- b) I asked students to pay attention to the ways in which the main characters in that video clip expressed their feelings or conveyed their ideas by asking them some questions with the frame at 02:03:

My questions: “Let’s watch this scenario: the mother welcomed her son with a rich supper. According to you, what do chopsticks represent? What information is given?”

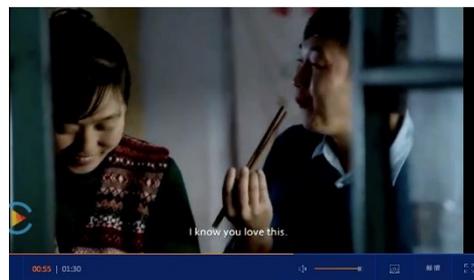


Figure 19 The maternal love for her son.

Students were asked to express their opinions. I replayed the video clip which had been played before and asked them to pay particular attention to the scene: when a group Chinese people are celebrating the Spring festival, the boy is about to pick up the chopsticks and eat something first but his parents ask him not to do so until the grandfather begin to eat.

Explanation: The reason for which I showed students this advertisement is that I could point out the epitomic meanings of chopsticks by capitalizing on this video clip and utterances. The filial piety is one of the distinct parts of Chinese Confucianism and it is one of the representations of traditional Chinese value systems.

“(…) and identified filial piety (obedience to and care and respect for family elders) as

⁸ <http://tv.cntv.cn/video/C10457/aad34f930df6470689a94cc899bfff140>

the foundation of virtue and the root of civilization” (Jacka, et al., 2013: P37)

文化教学就是从现实社会生活中的文化现象入手，入社会习俗及文化产品，将其与更稳深层的文化观念联系起来。(P144) (English Translation: The first step to teaching intercultural awareness is associating the specific cultural phenomena, say, cultural costumes and products with their embodied cultural concepts or connotations. (Chen, 2008)

After that, by directing students’ attention to the frame at 01:23 and I asked them: Let’s think for a moment, why did they celebrate Spring festival in this way? Why did they not eat until their grandfather began to eat?)



Figure 20 Respecting the old and cherishing the young.

Explanation: By doing so, I could help them to know the relationship between Chinese chopsticks, the Chinese traditional cultural knowledge concerning 尊zūn老lǎo爱ài幼yòu (respecting the old and cherishing the young), the family love and reunion and how a pair of chopsticks is endowed with the meaning of family warmth.

My question: “How about the facial expressions between the mother and son in this video clip? Do they feel happy? How about the facial expressions of the grandson and grandfather? Do they feel happy?”

c) I concluded what students said and explained to them that chopsticks, as an integral part of Chinese culture, epitomized the warmth of family and they were also related to the love that family members showed to each other.

I said “In Chinese culture, the Chinese people will always set chopsticks for their beloved ones. They can be parents, children and relatives or even the dead. If a Chinese person places a pair of chopsticks on the table, he or she may express his or her love for family members or commemorate them.” (Wang, 2015)

Step 3: Learning a Chinese taboo related to chopsticks

a) I introduced to them some customs and taboos concerning chopsticks.

- b) I showed Italian students two pictures and asked them to observe the similarities between them



Figure 21 A pair of chopsticks are inserted vertically in a bowl of rice.



Figure 22 Two joss sticks and candles are placed on the incense table.

Questions: What can you observe from these two pictures? Both chopsticks and candles are two sticks, right? Generally speaking, people prepare joss sticks and candles for the dead.

- c) taught students that they should know how to use a pair of chopsticks appropriately. I explained the taboo: I used gestures, facial expressions and intonation to showcase the implicit meaning, and meanwhile, I conducted situational teaching by acting like a guest and then acted as a host. I said: I am the host and then I set a table and I put a bowl which was filled with rice and I insert a pair of chopsticks in the bowl.

Then, I changed my role from a host to a guest:

With eyes open widely, I asked in an indignant manner “Why did you insert two chopsticks vertically in the bowl!? Do you want to curse me to die!? How dare you!”

In doing so, I invited the Italian students to explain the reason for which ‘the guests reacted to ‘this host’s behavior in this way.

Reason: By showing them pictures related to chopsticks, I aroused the pragmatic awareness of Italian learners of Chinese and investigated whether they had the

precedent knowledge concerning this table manner. And based on their knowledge concerning Chinese table manners, I explained to them that some Chinese families usually mourned for their dead family members by burning joss sticks and incenses. Since the cultural practice inserting the chopsticks in the rice was analogous to inserting the joss sticks in censers, such behavior might offend the Chinese people. (Wang, 2015) And to avoid enforcing their cultural stereotypes, I also laid an emphasis: Although this cultural practice was offensive to me, it would not be definitely impolite to all the Chinese people. And I also underscored that whether a social practice was face-threatening or not was determined by their interactants' cognitive and metacognitive awareness.

Step Four: Students interacted with a Chinese bar owner LX by enacting the speech acts of requests concerning Chinese table manners and the other appropriate language uses.

Lesson 5 (75 Min')

Objectives:

1. Italian learners of Chinese are able to reflect on Italian culture from the perspective of family parenting.
2. Italian learners of Chinese are able to reflect on their own culture from the perspective of the ways in which they treated people with different lingua-cultural backgrounds.
3. Italian learners of Chinese are able to increase their cultural sensitivity by narrating their personal stories

Step 1: Review of Chinese table manners related to Chinese chopsticks

I showed students a picture. In that picture, a pair of chopsticks were inserted vertically in the rice. By presenting them the picture, I asked Italian students of Chinese to tell me the table manners of chopsticks that they had learned in the last lesson.

Step 2: Watching the Italian Film Clip

- a) I let students watch an Italian video clip *Genitori e Figli: Agitare Bene Prima dell' Uso* (English translation: Parents and children: shake before the use) whose main theme concerning family parenting, especially in terms of how to treat the others with different linguacultural backgrounds.)

- b) Students were required to describe and interpret the main content of the film trailer.
What happened in this film? (who, what, when, how and why)

Step 2: Reflection on Italian culture

- a) By asking students some questions, I prompted them to express their viewpoints of the family and school education in Italy and I also enabled them to do so by asking them to share their personal narratives.

My question: “Does the family relationship between the parents and their son portrayed in this film reflect the reality? If, yes, why, if no, why?”

In light of treating people with different countries, how do Italian schools educate students? How do your schools teach you?

Have your parents ever told you about the ways of treating others with different cultures? What do you think about it? If yes, why, If no, why?

- b) A variety of opinions had been welcomed, as these perspectives prompted students to reflect on their own culture in depth in Italian and English. Each student was required to conclude his or her ideas and his or her opinions were recorded and saved.

Step 3: Role-play

At this step, I played the role of the protagonist Edore of the film abovementioned and I asked the Italian learners of Chinese to play the roles of the parents of “Edore”.

Based on the main plots of the film, I and the Italian learners played a drama revolving around the topic of how to treat the foreigners in Italy.

Step 4: Asking questions about Chinese families

By showing Italian students the following picture, I directed the students’ attention to Chinese families. And at the same time, I enabled them to give their interpretations of Chinese families.

Lesson 6 (75 min’)

Objectives:

1. The Italian learners of Chinese have increased their cultural knowledge of the May Fourth Movement
2. The learners are able to know the effects of historical backgrounds on the family relationship between the parents and their children in the early 20th century.
3. Students learn the Chinese families on the historical background of the “Old Shanghai Golden area” (1927-1933) and the effects of the socio-economic background of the “Old Shanghai Golden area” on Chinese families at that time.

Step 1 Reading a literary excerpt adapted from *Jia*

- a) I prepared a literary text adapted from *Jia* (Ba Jin, 2005) which was written by Ba Jin⁹. Then, I distributed it to Italian learners of Chinese and asked the students to read this literary excerpt.
- b) I encouraged Italian learners of Chinese to describe and interpret the main contents of the whole excerpt.
- c) I interviewed the students with respect to the relationship between the protagonist Jue Xin and his father.
- d) During this process, students conveyed their ideas on the relationship between Chinese parents and their children.

Explanation: The reason for which I chose this excerpt as one of the case materials is that it depicted the Chinese young people who had the agency to fight against the feudalistic families where they were born and grew up in the May Fourth Movement (1919). In this excerpt, the father of the protagonist Jue Xin arranged a marriage for Jue Xin without informing him. When Jue Xin heard this message, he was desperate and felt that his life was ruined completely by his father’s arrangements. Although Jue Xin had his agency to fought against the marriage that his father arranged for him, he did not have a firm willingness to resist against his father’s control. Since this excerpt depicted the relationship between parents and children against the backdrop of the *May Fourth Movement*, it was one of the stimuli with which I enabled Italian learners of Chinese to get to know Chinese family relationship at the early of 20th century before letting them have a continuous understanding of the family relationship in ‘Old

⁹ Retrieved on https://www.chiculture.net/index.php?file=topic_description&old_id=0425

Shanghai Golden Era' between 1925-1935 and that in the 20th century.

Step 2: Chinese comic-strips

- a) I showed the students four comic strips adapted from *The Wanderings of San Mao* (Zhang Lei Ping, 2020) and I explained the Chinese characters in each comic strip
- b) I let the students describe and interpret the meanings that were inherent in comic strips by asking them the following questions:

“Could you please describe the main content of each comic strip? What can you learn from these comic strips?”

- c) Students were welcomed to answer the aforesaid questions in English.
- d) I concluded what students had said and shared my explanation in terms of the socio-economic situation that the comic strips *The Wanderings of San Mao* reflected.

Explanation: The reason for which I chose this comic strips is that instead of letting students have a negative stereotype of the relationship between parents and children, I enabled the Italian students to analyze this cultural phenomenon by associating it with the related societal background that was contextualized in the comic strips. As one of my teaching stimuli, the comic strips that I had selected reflected the social ills and injustice of the old Shanghai golden area and how such a turbulent societal background affected people's daily lives, including the way in which how parents treated their children. (Lent, et al., 2017) By interpreting the intended meanings of the comic strips to the Italian learners, I aroused their sympathy for the poor who suffered from hunger and poverty and their hatred towards the rich. And in doing so, I tried to let them take an insider viewpoint, interpreting a discourse by taking the perspective of the Chinese people. (Kramsch, 1993; Qingbing, 2015)

Step4: I made a summary of the main contents of the lesson

Assignment: the students were asked to search for the information related to the Chinese legal system during the period of 1927 -1937 after class.

Lesson 7 (75 min')

1. Italian students' referent and aesthetic reading capability will be improved.
2. Students could learn the family relations of Chinese immigrants between 1980 – 1990

3. Students could learn Chinese families in contemporary society (between 2014-2016) and have a continuous and dynamic understanding of the family relationship and education along with Chinese socioeconomic and historical development.

Step 1: Review

- a) I distributed the teaching stimuli, viz., an excerpt from *Jia* with Italian translations and Chinese comic strips that I had used in lesson 7 to the Italian learners of Chinese and I encouraged them to convey their ideas about these materials.
- b) I concluded their feedback and directed their attention to the changes in the relationship between parents and their children during the historical period between 1919 – 1937.

Step 2: Literature appreciation

- a) I distributed handouts (an excerpt extracted from Amy Tan's novel *The Joy Luck Club*) to students and asked them to describe and interpret the literary excerpt adapted from the novel *The Joy Luck Club*. The article that I distributed to Italian students of Chinese narrated the relationship between the protagonist and her mother.
- b) After students finishing the reading, I asked students some questions and let them air their views on how Chinese parents showed their love to their children in Italian.
- c) I summarized what learners had expressed and then gave my interpretation of the main contents of this excerpt.
- d) Then, I asked the students some questions in a way to let them compare and contrast the Chinese and Italian family relationships.

My question: Is the daughter thankful to what her mother has done? Why? How does the protagonist feel about her mother? Have your parents ever showed you off? If, yes, how did you feel?

- e) I concluded what students had said and shared my explanation of the social and historical reasons for which the protagonist and her mother were angry at each other.
- f) At this step, students voiced their emotions and opinions freely saying whether they have been treated as goods by their parents (Tarp, 2017) They experienced this kind of treatment before or no. Expressing their emotions freely is a good way for them

to compare and contrast the different family relationships and the Chinese and Italian family education. By comparing and contrasting, they increased their understanding of Chinese family education, the relationship between Chinese parents and their children and the way in which Chinese parents show love to their children. That understanding may pave the way for developing their cultural awareness in terms of the way of Chinese parenting.

Step 3: Music Interpretation

- a) I played the song 时间都去哪儿了(English translation: Where has the Time Gone) and distributed the lyrics with English translation to students. Before I played the song, I encouraged Italian students to make a title for this song after they listened to it. I asked them some questions: what can you tell from this song? What does this song tell us?

Reason: musical interpretation is an effective approach with which the teacher can uncover students' understanding of parents' love and enable them to find out how Chinese parents show love to their children on their own.

- b) By associating with their personal experience, the students took the floor and convey their ideas in English.
- c) I concluded students' ideas and gave my explanation of this song:

This song tells us how Chinese parents love their children. The Chinese parents are not good at saying love and they seldom do so. That's "all the words were hidden in the white hair". Instead, they show their love by flinging themselves into their kids' lives. They do almost everything for their children and have no time to enjoy their own lives. "I cannot wait but my eyes are failing" They spare no efforts to protect their children from hurts. In a word, Chinese parents sacrificed themselves just for providing the best life to their kids.

Lesson 8 (75 min')

Objectives:

1. Students' evaluative capabilities will be improved.
2. Students may have a disconcerting attitude towards social media.

3. Students are able to construe Chinese parenting by taking account of the socio-economic factors that contribute to shaping the phenomena of Chinese parenting

Step 1: Blog Reading

- a) I distributed a blog (See appendix E) written in Italian to the Italian learners of Chinese. After the students read this blog, I asked them to make a summary of what they had learned about the Chinese family and the relationship between Chinese parents and their children.
- b) I concluded what students conveyed and then I asked them to watch a Chinese documentary *Mirror* filmed by CCTV (society and law)

Reason: Based on Kramsch's cultural reality and cultural imagination and Risager's linguaculture (2018), Italian learners were asked to reflect on their culture, paying a particular look to the influence that media texts have on their attitudes towards the people with a different cultural background)

Step 2: Chinese Documentary

- a) I let students watch the documentary *Mirror* with English subtitles and required them to analyze the attitudes that those Chinese parents and their children hold respectively in that video and then encouraged them to find out what that clip demonstrated implicitly.
- b) I encouraged them to take the floor in English and to ask them to express their ideas about what they had learned.
- c) Then, I explained to them another part of that film documentary and tried my best to direct their attention to the attitudes that their parents held towards their children and how their parents continued to deal with the problems after satisfying the needs of their children. By encouraging Italian learners of Chinese to compare and contrast the intended meanings of these two clips, I directed them to the point that each film clip was indeed a piece of discourse which had its own embedded meanings. The first clip emphasizes the parenting problems of that group of Chinese parents who sought the advice from the psychologist. While in the second clip, their children still relied on his parents and asked them to deal with the things they had long required after their desires being satisfied. By explaining the focuses of each clip, I emphasized that one should not draw a hasty conclusion of a cultural

phenomenon (the relationship between Chinese parents and their children in this case) before exploring to learn about this topic in a more comprehensive manner) Besides, I also mobilized them to analyze a discourse by taking the contextual factors of discourse into consideration.

Step 3 Group Interviews

- a) In this lesson, I conducted a group interview with the Italian learners of Chinese.
- b) I asked students to give a rough description of their conception of family love. (questions: according to you, what does it mean by family /family love?)
- c) By asking student questions, I let them share their own narratives concerning family love in their small cultures.

My question: can you share with us your personal experience? ES: There are two sentences that are commonly uttered by Chinese parents. “I’ve done everything for you, don’ you know?” or “I sacrificed everything only because of you, don’t you know?” From their perspectives, they think they give their kids enough love, hardly imagining that they are controlling and hurting them in the name of love. They dido not realize that what children want are just support, encouragement and trust. The kids hope that their parents can trust them, believing that they are enough independent and can take care of them. They hope that when they feel frustrated and confused, their parents can give their emotional support. They hope that they can have more chances to have heartfelt communication with their parents. They hope their parents can respect their choice and understand their thoughts.

My question: Have you ever come into conflicts with your parents? Have you ever been frustrated and angry with them?) Could you share with us your experience? Do you think that our parents love us? Do you think you love and have affection for your parents? Then, if both care and love each other, why there are conflicts?

- d) By asking students these questions, I prompted them to realize culture has little to do with family education and the relationship between parents and children. Rather, I aspired them to know it was parents’ perception of love and their conceptualization of education that affect the ways in which parents educate their children. That is to say, different person has a different perception of love and he or she may show love in a different way.
- e) I and students expressed their ideas in Italian. (Without judging and criticizing) As a member of the class, I also shared her personal experience with her students.

- f) I guided students to discuss the way of loving and highlighted that parents with different linguacultural backgrounds love their children. Although Italian family parenting is different from that of Chinese, the ways of love are the same.
- g) After my interpretation, I encouraged students to summarize the relationship between Chinese parents and children and how Chinese parents love their kids.

Assignments: 1. Each student was required to write an email to reflect on what they have learned from my teaching activities which include 8 lessons. All the Italian students of Chinese at elementary and advanced levels were required to send emails to me. I saved the emails and display them in section 8 The Feedback of Italian learners of Chinese.

7.2.3 WeChat Digital Platform

Apart from undertaking the teaching activities inside and outside the classroom, I also carried out digital teaching by opening a WeChat official account named 意大利人学中文 (The Italian learners of Chinese). I posted four messages in total on the platform under the name of this WeChat subscription account.

The first message was a Chinese documentary named *Mirror* with English subtitles (marked as a)

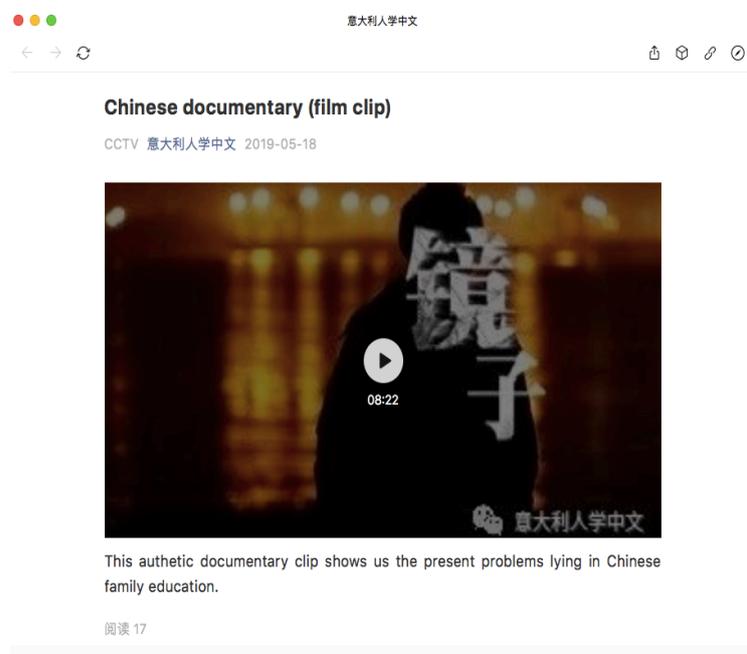
The second message, the third is a song named The Gratitude Mind (感恩的心) with English lyrics (marked as b).

The third message was a conversation that I had with an Italian learner. (marked as c)

However, due to time limitations, I only spent most of the time answering the questions that they asked, especially when they encountered difficulties during the process of learning Chinese. A case in point is the concept of 自爱 (love for oneself), I explained the concept of 自爱 with an Italian student GLA by emphasizing that it was better not to use the expression 请自爱! As in most cases, qǐng zì ài carries negative connotations which will be offensive if one utters this phrase to the others. And our conversations could be demonstrated in the following picture c. By posting the

aforesaid messages to Italian learners of Chinese who were using Wechat and discussing over the contents covered by these messages, I propelled students to discuss and compare notes about the content that I had pushed, thereby deepening their understanding of China or Chinese culture.

a.



意大利人学中文

Chinese documentary (film clip)

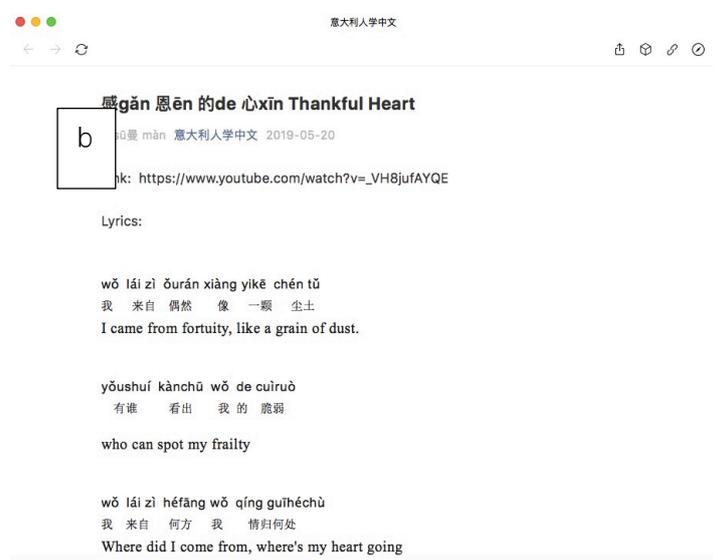
CCTV 意大利人学中文 2019-05-18

08:22

意大利人学中文

This authentic documentary clip shows us the present problems lying in Chinese family education.

阅读 17



意大利人学中文

感恩的de心xin Thankful Heart

和曼 màn 意大利人学中文 2019-05-20

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_VH8jufAYQE

Lyrics:

wǒ lái zì ǒu rán xiàng yí kē chén tǔ
我 来自 偶然 像 一颗 尘土
I came from fortuity, like a grain of dust.

yǒu shuí kàn chū wǒ de cuī ruò
有 谁 看出 我的 脆弱
who can spot my frailty

wǒ lái zì hé fāng wǒ qíng guī hé chù
我 来自 何方 我 情归何处
Where did I come from, where's my heart going



Figure 23 The screenshots of WeChat Public Account.

7.2.4 Summary

I carried out the whole teaching program with the following two goals:

1. Developing the intercultural competence of Italian students of Chinese by improving their Chinese language proficiency and increasing their sensitivity for intercultural awareness
2. Improving Italian students' critical thinking and contributing to their life-long learning.

8. The Feedback of Italian Learners of Chinese

1. Student AM Feedback:

Ho trovato il corso organizzato dalla Professoressa Guo molto interessante, in quanto non solo abbiamo avuto la possibilità di praticare la lingua cinese, ma abbiamo anche trattato argomenti di cultura.

Per quanto riguarda la parte della lingua, durante il corso abbiamo ripassato gli argomenti trattati a lezione e abbiamo avuto la possibilità di praticare quello che abbiamo appreso in una situazione autentica, andando a bere il tè insieme in un bar.

Durante il corso abbiamo trattato temi di cultura molto interessanti, come il concetto di multiculturalismo, transculturalismo e di “ideal self images”. Inoltre, abbiamo trattato il tema dei pregiudizi, capendo che la diversità non è negativa ma è

ricchezza e che non si possono giudicare le persone dall' apparenza. Durante il corso mi sono avvicinata alla cultura cinese, ho scoperto cose che non conoscevo come le buone maniere a tavola in Cina. Durante le lezioni abbiamo trattato anche il tema toccante del rapporto tra genitori e figli, ascoltando una canzone in cinese "Where has time gone?". Abbiamo parlato di come il concetto dell' importanza della famiglia cambi nel corso del tempo, in base al contesto storico, sociale ed economico. In particolare, abbiamo trattato il tema della povertà in Cina dopo la seconda guerra mondiale e dell'adozione di bambini che non potevano rimanere con la loro famiglia a causa della crisi.

Il corso è stato molto interessante, ha arricchito il mio bagaglio personale e mi ha aiutata ad aprire la mente.

2. Student GLM Feedback:

Lettorato lingua cinese terza lingua, gruppo 3

Professor Guo lectures, review and resume

During Professor Guo lectures, **we worked on a double path: on the one hand, we glimpsed in Chinese culture, on the other hand, we fine-tuned our knowledge of Chinese phonetics and phonology.**

-- Chinese culture --

First of all, we challenged the definition of intercultural communication, focusing on the miscellaneous reality of contemporary global society. Then through a brief explanation of the history of the word “chopsticks, kuai4zi0 筷子” we also analyzed how this cutlery is more than a mere object in Chinese culture. Furthermore, we use the pretext of chopsticks to explore and research Chinese table manners. During this part, we also observed how it is important to know how to behave and why some actions done by foreigners could be considered as rude from Chinese people.

Then we analyzed the multifaceted concept of love. We saw that love in Chinese society, as in others, is a fluid concept that assumes different forms:

- qin1qing2 亲情: affection between family members;
- ai4qing2 爱情: romantic love;
- you3qing2 友情: affection between friends.

We also highlighted the difference between two words that could be misused by foreigners: xi3huan0 喜欢 and ai4 爱. While the first word, 喜欢, is mostly translated as the verb “to like”, its focus is on the subject who likes something or someone. The second word instead, 爱, is mostly translated as “love” both as a verb and substantive, its focus is on the who/what is loved.

The last concept that we started to analyze is family and parenting methods. Through multimedia material: songs, comics and videos, we discussed our knowledge of parenting methods in China, **we learned about** a historical period where wars and hunger strongly divided social classes in Chinese society and how this was reflected on parenting.

-- Chinese phonetics and phonology --

Concerning Chinese phonetics and phonology, we revised the usage and

pronunciation of some characters studied throughout the academic year. **Thanks to the language teaching knowledge of the professor we focused on the 5 basics of Chinese phonetics:**

- place of articulation;
- manner of articulation;
- voice and voiceless sounds;
- rounded and unrounded sounds;
- aspirated and unaspirated sounds.

2. Feedback FC

During the course, we analyzed different aspects of Chinese culture and language.

In particular, we learned the origin of certain Chinese characters and we made some exercises in order to improve our pronunciation and our ability to create dialogues in Chinese. Furthermore, we spent a lot of time analyzing Chinese culture and traditions. Knowing some Chinese table manners and Chinese history was, in my opinion, one of the most interesting and fascinating points of the course.

In addition, we learned to order something in a bar, in a real situation and outside the university classroom, with the chance to speak in Chinese with other Chinese people.

Personally, I've learned some interesting aspects of Chinese culture, some new words and some useful grammatical constructions. I enjoyed the discussions about trans-culture and education too, because it made me think about how my educational and family background helped me in choosing to study foreign languages with no prejudice towards the others.

4. Feedback of S



Translation: ←

Salvatore: Through the interviews, I have had some best reflections (on the issues mentioned in these interviews)←

GNY: Thank you! ←

Emoji(Thank you!!)←

Figure 24 The feedback of participant S.

I took part in teacher Guo's study on students who were studying Chinese or studied it in the past. The study first focused on assessing the participants' language skills through an interview, and afterward, the researcher used materials to improve our ability and knowledge of Chinese language and culture.

The sessions were divided into theoretical and practical activities. Personally, even though the theoretical ones were the most difficult, focusing on linguistic issues, they were at the same the most interesting because for a student such as myself that have been studying this language for more than three years, focusing on the correct posture and place of articulation of the sound, it is still something that is needed to improve the student's pronunciation ability, especially in a musical language as it the Chinese.

The more practical lesson, however, also held fundamental importance during the entire process. Those activities ranged from describing the comic strips and interpreting their meanings, reading a short passage of Ba Jin's novel and talking about the subtext, the society and culture described in the novel, and even understanding the importance of Chinese characters' order when forming a word, the characters' origin, history and change of meaning and shape during a three thousand year period, such as the evolution from the character 箸 to 筷.

In conclusion, this study includes indeed an innovative method to teach Chinese language and culture to non-native speakers and I would attend those **activities** again. However, I believe that it is not recommended for students that are only starting

to learn this language. Most of the topics of the course require a solid knowledge of the language and a quite thorough understanding of the Chinese culture, society and history, otherwise, the teacher would need to spend extra time explaining those, with the result of not being able to complete the entire program.

9. Data Analysis

With respect to data analysis, I will adopt Fairclough (2001)' approaches of critical discourse analysis (CDA) to describe, interpret and analyze the conversations that I had with the Italian learners of Chinese with reference to Kress (2006, 2010, 2016) and Leeuwen (2005)'s multimodal social semiotics. By doing so, I am able to give an in-depth and detailed analysis of the conversations at linguistic and sociocultural levels.

In the following paragraphs, I would like to mark the discourses I made with the Italian learners of Chinese in reference to the labels below.

1. Vocabularies, paralinguistic features, and grammatical collocations are marked with underlines.

The phrases that need to be analyzed are marked with boldface.

9.1 Analysis I

9.1.1 Teaching Activity 1

In lesson four, Italian learners whose language proficiency was at low level were asked to interact with a Chinese barkeeper LX. They were encouraged to make request for a cup of tea in Chinese with reference to the pragmatic knowledge that they had learned after attending my classes.

In the first part of lesson four, I asked the Italian learners who participated in my teaching program to use the grammatical pattern “你好....我想要一杯茶” (hello, I would like to have a cup of tea) to make a request related to Chinese table manner in the classroom. In the out-of-classroom activity, I wanted to know Italian learners knew how to interact appropriately with the Chinese bar owner after taking account of the formulaic expressions related to Chinese table manner that they had learned, viz., “你好 , 我想要一杯茶”; the interest that I shared with that bar owner LX in terms of the Chinese tea culture as well as the identity of being a member of the service staff that LX presented in that situation.

In this section, I would like to give an analysis of Italian learners' pragmatic competences and show how the Italian learners were able to communicate with LX by drawing on their affordances¹⁰ in that situation.

Besides, I wanted to show how Italian learners could flexibly manipulate their affordances in order to create the meanings they wanted to create in that on-going interactive process instead of solely considering the formulaic expressions related to Chinese table manners.

Here, I am going to offer a rough picture of the Italian student FC's pragmatic competence by analyzing how she used the language expression *你好我想要一杯茶* to show her politeness and how she changed her language use from the formulaic expression into the sign that best suited the bar context after re-conceptualizing the explanations that I and LX offered with respect to the ways of making requests in Chinese in different informal contexts.

In this out-of-classroom activity, I observed that FC applied the knowledge concerning “*你好我想要一杯茶*” into her conversation with LX. In that context of the situation, FC requested LX to give her a cup of tea by using the formulaic expression *你好我想要一杯*. And LX who interacted with FC suggested her that she should use a less formal expression “**来杯茶 a cup of tea!**” And I suggested her that for the people who were the members of service staff, she should use the expression “**来杯茶**” instead of “*你好 , 我想要一杯茶*”, as the latter was just a formulaic expression whereas“**来杯茶**” was used to address the service staff *en bloc* who were assigned to low social positions in the Chinese society. (Yuan shu & Qingchu, 2017) By doing so, I emphasized that one should not only enact speech act of requests by following the formulaic expressions but also know to how to make meanings by drawing on the semiotic resources in a specific context. Here, the identity of a member of the service staff that LX presented in that context and the friendly attitude that he held towards the

¹⁰ ‘Affordance’ refers to the potential learning resources that a learner could capitalize in in a given situation. (Van Lier, 2000)

Italian learners as a whole can be viewed as a context of situation (Halliday & Hasan, 1989), based on which I deployed a multimodal teaching approach by using the Chinese sentences “来杯茶” (a cup of tea) and their correspondent pīn yīn that I wrote on my notebook, my explanations on how to make request for a cup of tea in Chinese by virtue of the substance - a cup of hot tea to make my meaning: one needs to use an expression that is appropriate to a given situation. Here, I emphasized that one should use “lai bei cha” in a restaurant and bar to address a member of service staff.

At first, FC felt confused about my explanations for how to use “你好 , 我想要一杯茶”) and “来杯茶” because of her lower proficiency in Chinese. Besides, FC just learned the word order “Sub+ Modal Verb + Num + Classifier+ Noun” “我想要一杯茶” and she practiced the sentence solely referring to that pattern, as later on she told me she had never learned the grammatical pattern “lai bei cha” (a cup of tea). Then, I wrote this sentence “来杯茶” on my notebook with pīn yīn and asked FC to practice it. However, although she made efforts to do so, she did not utter it successfully but said “茶” (tea) with her finger pointing at a cup of hot tea . Besides, she did not pronounce the sound of 茶 clearly. During this process, FC drew on the potential learning resource - a glass of tea to communicate with that bar owner LX who understood FC’s intended meaning and passed it to her.

As can be seen from the analysis above, through my multimodal teaching approach, I enabled Italian learners who studied Chinese as a foreign language to produce the meanings by drawing on the resources in the bar context which were, the tea bags, her gesture, viz., a finger pointing at a glass of tea, my explanations on how to make the request for a cup of tea as well as the sentences “lai bei cha” and their corresponding pin yin on my notebook.

9.1.2 Teaching Activity 2 – Interview

After letting the Italian learners of Chinese watch the film clip: *Genitori e Figli: Agitare Bene prima dell’ Uso* (English Version; Parents and Children: a relationship needs to be dealt with) in the classroom, I asked their opinions on their family education, especially on how they and their parents treated each other by conducting group

interviews.

Interviewer: GNY Participant 1: GLA Participant 2: FC Participant 3: AM

01 Interviewer: Ok, vai

02 Participant 1: ehm:: ↑ adesso che anche io sono adulto i miei genitori mi danno sempre il loro amore diciamo sostenendomi nelle mie scelte, quindi:: non mi giudicando ciò che studio:: a ciò che voglio diventare::, ma:: aiutandomi pur sapendo che mi fu pure difficile. E.. se magari avesse studiato medicina haha sarebbe stato più facile trovare un lavoro, mentre invece studiando lingue e più difficile::, ma loro accettano i miei percorsi di vita e mi sostengono nelle mie scelte.

03 GNY: _____ quindi loro rispettano la tua scelta [si], ok non ti costringono [no] a fare qualcosa [no] ok

This participant remained silent before raising his tone and back-channeling with the precedent utterances that I and the other two students made (meanwhile, he raised a little bit his left hand) and told that their parents always supported him, even though he encountered great difficulties **“diciamo sostenendomi nelle mie scelte; non mi giudicando ciò che studio e ciò che voglio diventare, ma aiutandomi pur sapendo che mi fu pure difficile”**. As can be seen from these three gerund phrases **“sostenendomi”** **“aiutandomi”** and **“non giudicando”** which are used to show the way or the manner in which the parents of participant 1 love him, participant 1 emphasized that his parents remained open and allowed him to do the choices that he liked to make, as evidenced by the utterances “non giudicandomi cio che studio” and the concessive conjunction “pur sapendo”. Then, participant 1 laughed, saying if he had majored in medicine, he would have found it less difficult to find a job. “se magari avesse studiato medicina, sarebbe stato piu’ facile” Noted that he used the hypothetical clause to imply that medicine major might be more promising and easier to learn than language major from the instrumental perspective, viz. finding a job and earn money.

Then, one might infer from the whole discourse that although the participant 1 liked the way in which his parents treated him in terms of making choices, i.e. selecting

a major, he might desire to have his own autonomy to make his own choices, as he came to underpin at the very beginning of the sentence “adesso anche io sono adulto” and with the concessive clause “ma loro accettano i miei percorsi di vita e mi sostengono nelle mie scelte.” That is to say, participant 1 showed favor to the attitudes that his parents took towards the choices that he had made. That is to say, with respect to choice-making, his parents and he took a similar position. Then, by using the summative word “quindi”, I offered my interpretation of participant 1’s narration, regarding the love of the parents of participant 1 as the respect and freedom, as evidenced by “ti rispettano” and “non ti costringono fare qualcosa”.

However, participant’s discourse mentioned above was just the local coherence, as “one established meaning connections between utterances, producing (where feasible) coherent sequences of them” (Fairclough, 2001: 120). In order to know which attitudes he held towards the relationship between parents and their children in different cultures, I quoted another utterance he took after the narratives of participant 2.

Description: When I asked him how Chinese parents treated their children, he continued to air his views after another participant 2 told me that she knew a Chinese boy who was close to his parents.

Participant 2: *Io alle superiori c’era in classe con me un ragazzo cinese (aha) e lui è molto legato alla sua famiglia (aha), e però non entrava nei dettagli però ad esempio, lui ha avuto una sorellina, (lui ne aveva 20 anni) ed era entrata l’anno scorso una sua sorellina, più piccola e lui era sempre con lei, era molto legato alla sua famiglia, al suo fratello ↓*

Then, when I asked all the students whether the attachment phenomenon aforementioned was a single case or not or whether it was a universal phenomenon that was prevalent in diverse countries, participant 1 took the turn with a high rising tone which was marked as ↑.

Participant 1 *↑io so che in generale la tendenza, ma non solo della Cina proprio la differenza tra occidente e oriente (.) e che da noi si tende a festeggiare il successo (.) ce quando una cosa va bene si festeggia, quando una cosa va male: va bene*

mentre invece so che per molti asiatici se una cosa va bene e perché il tuo dovere (.) e se una cosa va male invece ti sgridano però non so se vero, e una cosa che ho sentito ↓

As can be inferred from the discourse aforementioned, Participant 1 agreed with participant 2 and he emphasized that the phenomenon that Chinese children were attached to their families was “in generale in tendenza” by using the concessive conjunction “ma” and the prepositional phrase “non solo della Cina”. From the viewpoint of this participant 1, he then expressed that it was not only the differences between Chinese culture and his own culture (Italian culture) but also the “propria la differenza tra Occidente e Oriente” that made the relationship between parents and their children different. To rationalize his arguments, he made an example of the attitude that Western and Eastern parents hold towards their children respectively. He did so by juxtaposing two adversative conjunctions ‘*mentre invece*’ first and by using the emphatic sentence “*e perché il tuo dovere*”.

As can be seen, participant 1 took a less complex viewpoint of culture by viewing culture in a dichotomous manner, as evidenced by “tra Occidente e Oriente” What is more, he also took the risk of over-generalizing and stereotyping the Chinese parenting by making an example of how Asian people treated their children uttering that:

so che per molti asiatici se una cosa va bene e perché il tuo dovere (.) e se una cosa va male invece ti sgridano però non so se vero, e una cosa che ho sentito ↓

Based on Fairclough (2001)’s interpretative methods, I associated this discourse with the other conversations that I had made with participant 1 and I found out his real point of the theme family education and the relationship between parents and their children lied in the fact that compared with Eastern families, Western families enjoyed much more merits in terms of the attitudes that parents took towards their children.

With reference to Fairclough (2001)’s insights into the relationship between discourse and its embedded unequal power relations, an individual interpreted a phenomenon in accordance with his societal, institution and situations determinants, all of which could be subsumed into member resources (See Figur 26)

In this case, this participant gave his interpretation “*però non so se è vero.*” by drawing on his intertextual context which is his background knowledge related to the

attitudes that Asian parents held towards their children as well as participant 2 and 3 's previous discourses of describing, interpreting and explaining the theme Chinese family education.

With reference to Holliday (2019a)'s argument that essentialism presumes that certain forms of behavior belong to a certain culture, this participant 1 created imagined, essentialist statements about the attitudes that the Western and Eastern held towards failure and success. With Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, this participant constructed his contextual identity by giving his description about the attitudes that Western and Eastern held towards failure and success.

By using the two adverbs "mentre invece" which indicates the meanings in precedent utterances are opposed to those in the latter, this participant 1 tried to emphasize that the Western people are different from the Eastern people in terms of the attitudes towards success and failure, as this participant 1 not only reinforced "*se una cosa va male invece ti sgridano*" is a distinct phenomenon in Asian countries but also identified himself as one of the members belong to the Western culture which is characterized by the cultural practice "*quando una cosa va male: va bene*".

In this way, this participant intended to convey the idea that the national boundaries could not be crossed by comparing and contrasting the attitudes that Asian and Western people took towards success and failure. In addition, this participant denied his ideology in his description of the Western and Eastern culture, which can be seen in "però non so se è vero" in his discourse listed above.

Besides, this participant 1 held essentialist ideas in Western culture, as he homogenized the Western culture, rather than believing the fact that cultural patterns underwent changes and can be engaged with and expanded into during the process of intercultural communication. This disbelief manifested itself in his claim for his identity "da noi", a static conceptualization of his Western identity and culture, which can be seen in "*da noi si tende a festeggiare il successo quando una cosa va male: va bene.*"

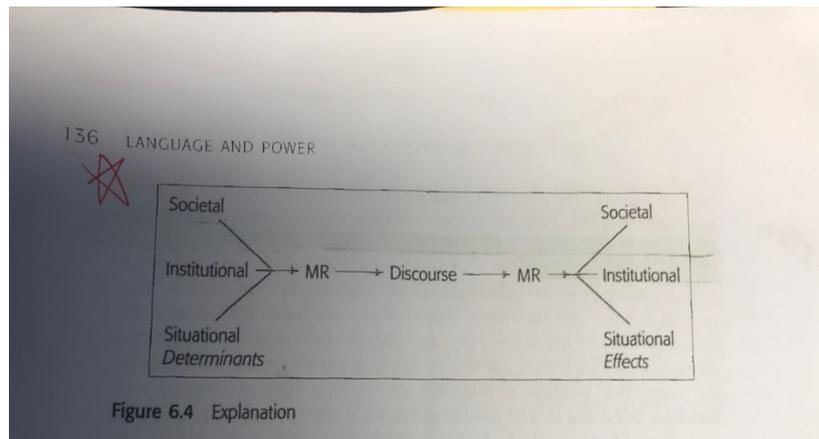


Figure 25 Explanation (Fairclough, 2001: P136)

According to participant 1's narration about family education and his statements about the how the Western and the Eastern families treat success and failure, I asked him to view a cultural phenomenon in a complex manner by accentuating "We can't say in general":

*GNY: **We can't say in general**, because in the first lesson I said, I, everyone has his own personal trajectory and cultural experience.*

I think this book is very critical. (Andrian Holliday) (in that book where he) as he said you could not categorize people into different groups, like the Chinese group. I hope you could challenge me, you could not say the Chinese, the Chinese parents blah blah.

Each family has its own education.

Participant 1, 2 and 3: [yes]

*GNY: **So if you have the chance to go to China, you will encounter many different cases. There are families like yours, because** in my opinion, my family, at some point, like yours. They encourage me, support me, **while** there are the other families that force their children to do the things that they are unwilling to do.*

After listening to the three participants' discourses, I raised my voice to a high pitch in a way of letting students focus on what I was going to say.

By using the pronoun "We", I intended to make an alliance with these participants which might be much better than just said "You cannot say sth, in general", as the latter phrase might perform the illocutionary acts of verdictives and create imposition on these participants and let these participants to think that I just made judgments about the right and wrong of what these participants had said.

Then, by deploying the causal clause “because”, I explained to them the reason why we – I and the other participants could not generalize a cultural phenomenon which were family education and the ways how parents treat their children in this teaching program. By referring to the discourses that I delivered in a precedent lesson *“in the first lesson I said everyone had his or her own personal and cultural experience”* and incorporating it into the discourse that I delivered at that moment, I could form a renewed discourse based on which I could emphasize my point that culture could not be generalized with reference to Holliday’s insights into intercultural communication *“I think this book is very critical. (Andrian Holliday) (in that book where he) said you can't group types of people together; Chinese or not”*. And articulating together my renewed discourse and that of Holliday, I foregrounded the social practice was the tool with which one could view culture from the perspective of family parenting.

What is said and done and written in a particular event or text is intertextually related to other events and people inevitably drew on, anticipate and respond to other events and texts.” (Fairclough, 2013: P871)

Based on this social practice, I showed my non-essentialist ideas by positing my subjective stance on how to communicate with people with different linguacultural backgrounds: one needs to view a cultural phenomenon in a complex and different manner. By using the phrase *“so”* which serves to emphasizes the things that have already been mentioned before and adding a conditional clause *“if you have the chance to go to China, you will encounter many different cases”*, I highlighted that the small culture was always on the go, in the sense that people who belonged to the same community obeyed with the rules that they consciously and unconsciously formed because of cohesive consideration and since people with different cultural backgrounds come into and get out of a community, the rules may undergo changes because the people who temporarily share a community may recontextualize the rules in their own ways and negotiate with each other their reconceptualization of the rules. Since the rules may undergo changes continuously, the way in which one conducts a social practice has little to do with national culture but has to do with intersectional factors, viz., the educational ways of a family. And by using the prepositional phrases (preposition + possessive pronouns) “like + yours” in this case, I shared my personal narratives with these three participants in terms of family parenting and thus I underscored with the

noun phrase “in my opinion” that family parenting was an underlying universal cultural process shared by people with diverse linguacultural backgrounds. (Holliday, 2019b)

*“There are **families like yours**, because in my opinion my family, at some point, **like yours**. They encourage me, support me, give me their support”*

However, with the conjunction “while” which was used to emphasize the difference between two conditions, I also emphasized that the way in which parents educated their children varied from case to case and it seemed impossible to overgeneralize a family pattern before having a comprehensive understanding of it.

“They encourage me, support me, give me their support while there are other families that force their children to do something”

As I emphasized in my abstract and introduction, intercultural competence contains three layers of meanings. First, the people with intercultural competence thought a cultural meaning can be constantly construed and re-construed during the process in which interactants with different lingua-cultural backgrounds converse with each other. A pre-established cultural knowledge could be endowed with new meanings as a result of the intersubjective alignment between these interactants. Second, the people who have intercultural competence reckon that a cultural pattern that was distinct in a country in the past now prevails in different countries. Third, the people with intercultural awareness could construe that a cultural phenomenon is undergoing changes over time instead of perceiving it based on the pre-established values.

In this case, I tried to improve the intercultural awareness of Italian learners of Chinese by accentuating that their conceptualization of the relationship between their parents and this conceptualization had little to do with culture but has to do with the specific educational ways of families and with the different points of views of their parents and theirs respectively. My point of view could reflect in the following three utterances:

*“**↑We can’t say in general**, because in the first lesson I said, I, everyone has his own personal trajectory and cultural experience.”*

“Each family has its own education.”

*“**So, if you have the chance to go to China**, you will encounter many different cases. There are families like yours **while** there are the other families that force their children*

to do the things that they are unwilling to do.”

9.2 Analysis II

interviewed V. who works at the international welcoming desk of the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia. I had several lessons concerning family education with her. The whole teaching activity (including individual interviews) was a month-long, beginning on 16, September 2019 and ending on 15, October 2019.

9.2.1 Teaching Activity 1

I first showed her an excerpt adapted from a Chinese Literary book *Jia*. I asked her to describe the meanings that she could capture from this literary excerpt. Then, revolving around the reaction that Jue Xin had towards his father, I invited her to discuss the reasons why the son Jue Xin and his father treated each other in a certain way. Considering that Veronica had little background knowledge related to this excerpt, I explained the May 4th movement and Chinese warlords to her. Meanwhile, I emphasized that each cultural artifact, particularly literature, was closely bound up with the historical background where this cultural artifact came into existence. After that, I encouraged her to reconceptualize my interpretation and explanation about the literary text, viz., an excerpt from *Jia*, by associating with the historical background of the May 4th Movement.

01Veronica: He is a very beautiful guy, he is beautiful (ok). I don't know if he is a beautiful guy but he is very smart for sure ha ha and his mother (ok) in the middle of the story dies

02 GNY: she passed away

03 Veronica: yes , she passed away is more polite, and...so he was shocked but not so much because he has a dream, a dream to study and to have a good career↓

04GNY: to improve himself

05Veronica: ↑yeah maybe and the: his father married another woman en.. He got married to a young woman, wasn't her?

06 GNY: Yes, his father Mr. Gao arranges

07 Veronica: No, no but also. Oh yeah, but also (Yuexin). I'm pretty sure that the father also got married, with la matrigna. Matrigna doesn't mean the mother in law but the new mother

08 GNY: uhm

09 Veronica: so, the father and the new mother (uhm) chose for Juexin a new wife but he didn't know about it.

10 One day the father called Juexin and asked him to get married to Ms. Li but a woman yeah. Ok Ms. LI...

11 GNY: uhm a new woman

12 Veronica: but Juexin fell in love with another girl, so he was very shocked and surprised, but he didn't oppose to his father's decision, he respected the decision of the father (uhm) and new mother ↓ // And then he stopped.

13 GNY: let's focus on the reaction of Juexin

14 Veronica: Yes.

15 GNY: Inside his heart, inside himself, does he really want to obey the orders of his father? //

16 Veronica: ↑ oh no, he wants, but he didn't

17 GNY: could you elaborate a little bit?

18 Veronica: In the half of this text, I read that Juexin's first reaction was not a surprised one... ↓

19 GNY: vuoi dirlo in italiano? //

20 Veronica: era spaesato (eh) spaesato. It means he doesn't understand anything at that moment, but right after he was surprised because he didn't know that his father and his father's wife were managing

21 GNY: managing, even managing his life

22 Veronica: yeah (ok) and Juexin's reaction was the silence

23 GNY: the silence, even though he wanted to have a promising future

24 Veronica: uhm

25 GNY: but he couldn't get it, he felt like he was unable to struggle against this arranged marriage

26 Veronica: yeah

27 GNY So, what can you learn from Juexin's reaction?

28 Veronica: ↑ I don't know if his reaction changes, maybe the story continues so he probably has another reaction. However, this is not common a reaction

29 GNY: questo comportamento, I mean the attitude?

30 Veronica. Il comportamento is to not have a reaction so, this is a little different from

what I'm used to see and read, you know↓

31 GNY: What are you used to seeing?

32 Veronica: ↑when i read this story, I can say that this is a common story. In the past I read other stories similar to this one; a parent who decides for the son to whom he should get a marriage to, but usually there is a reaction (uhm). In this case the behavior is to not have a reaction↓//

33 GNY: The behavior you mean, Juexin's behavior

34 Veronica (yeah, Juexing). He stayed silence.

35 GNY: Let's turn over the paper and now let's focus on this one; the May 4th movement

36 Veronica: (en en) .

37 GNY: I've highlighted it in red. What have you learnt about the May 4th movement?

38 Veronica: ↑just a moment, this is about Mao; Mao Zedong; dui ma?

39 GNY no, it is before that

40 Veronica: Before 4 Maggio. How many years? ehm: ↓

Veronica_actions look down while reading a paper

41 GNY: The reason for which I've asked you this question is that all the literature, all the literature texts, writing, cultural artists are related to the social culture situation during that historical time

42 Veronica: ok

43 GNY: The writer tried to depict and portray the social society of that time. May 4 movements took place in 1919

44 Veronica: ok, before the, before the Emperor

45 GNY: after the Emperor, after the Emperor.

46 Veronica It is not the Tai Ping movement.

47 GNY It is a type of movement that took place during the Warlords Period

48 Veronica: (ok) ↑I don't remember very well about the May 4th movement↓

49 GNY: The May 4 movement is a historical event, it is about the students who made a lot of manifestations, demonstrations

48 Veronica: ok

49 GNY: to against the Feudalism and against the control of the government, they resisted against the cultural phenomenon like foot binding and the men keeping long plait.

50 Veronica: Ah,ah, ok

51 GNY: uhm for example they fight against the decadent part of Chinese tradition culture

52 Veronica: I get it

53 GNY: the drawbacks of the Confucianism

53 Veronica: ok and after that we do have.

55 GNY: No, after that came the Japanese invasion

56 Veronica: maybe Chiang Kai-shek, yes. ↑I remembered, so this movement is about a fight against the tradition, there are demonstrations against the Chinese traditions↓

57 GNY: ↑against the Chinese control, because at the time there was one government due to the Colonization. There is no government; each region had their own private military, each region had their own military at that time during the year of 1919, so the students fought against this government, against all the powerful militaries in order to get their voice heard, so that they could welcome the science and the democracy of the Western culture, due to the colonization, we had a kind of culture invasion in China. They just wanted to get rid of the Feudalism they wanted to have the decadent culture and just wanted to embrace the so-called science and democracy, even though they did not have a very clear notion of what did it mean by democracy and science. What they wanted was just the freedom

58 Veronica: (ok)

59 GNY: but they did not know how to do so. This is reflected in this text.

He had dream that represented the collective of the students at the time, they wanted to welcome

60 Veronica: (he dreamt also about going to Germany).

61 GNY Yes so, that's the reason but he did not take action (uhm) because he would like to get freedom but they did not know how to realize this kind of the freedom, this is the point

62 Veronica: (I get it),

63 GNY: therefore this is not a fiction

64 Veronica: OK)

65 GNY but a novel written by Ba Jin. He was a renowned writer who always wanted to insinuate, to reflect the Chinese society and its different historical period. This is a kind of design in which he wants to represent the Chinese society alongside its

vicissitude of common people's life and the kaleidoscopic of Chinese society which means that this writer also presented the diversified lives of common people at that time

66 Veronica: ok

67 GNY: the citizens and also with this one. **So, could you please make a summary of this text? What have you learnt from this text? What have you learnt about what I said before? //**

68 Veronica: Ok now after your explanation, after the first May 4th movement, the Chinese students or the Chinese young people dreamt about moving out, they have dream, they dreamt about improving themselves, but their parents, their parent's generation was maybe different, they were still stuck in the tradition ideas so, for this reason Juexing has kind of conflict inside of him

69 GNY: yes, esatto.

70 Veronica: He wanted to follow his own dreams, but he had to respect the decision.

71 GNY: the father represents the decadent part of Chinese tradition culture and Juexing represents the collective of people who wanted the freedom, the science, the democracy those who wanted to pursuit their own dreams

72 Veronica: yeah, there is a kind of dicotomia. I don't know, two different cultures and generations

73 GNY: this is not dichotomy but a conflict between two generations; the older ones and younger ones. "We" were at a crossroad "we" did not know how to follow (oh yes). It was the moment at which the decadent tradition and new ideological trends co-existed.

74 At the turn of the early XX century, ok va bene. I also made a PPT about this part, I can show you the PPT (uhm) and then you can have a look at it, this is the PPT on the social political plan and the cultural plan. These are the main characters of that historical period. (Veronica: ok (murmuring): There were private militaries that battled against...)

75 Veronica: of the May 4th movement.

76 GNY: It was one of the causes for the May 4th movement. So they want the democracy and science

77 Veronica: uhm,

78 GNY: Mr. De and Mr. Sai

79 Veronica (ha ha)

80 GNY: because the phonology of these two Chinese words. They are a little bit similar

to the those in English. The pronunciation of 德 in Chinese was the homophone of democracy and the sound of 赛 in Chinese was similar to science in English

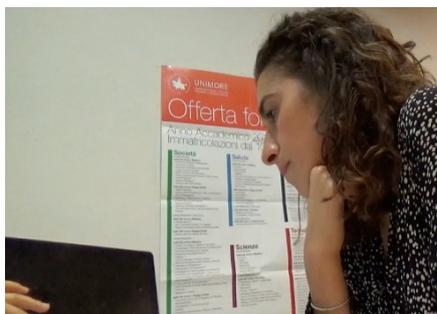


Figure 26 Veronica's body postures during our interviews. The whole interview was filmed with her permission.

As I activated the cursor movements by virtue of the mouse, Veronica was looking at the slide that I showed her in a way that she clenched her left hand and held it tightly against her mouth. Then, as can be seen from the picture above, I asked her to read the hypertext¹¹ and directed her attention to Chinese warlords by pointing at the place where the cursor hovered on with my fingers. With her chin resting on her right hand, Veronica was looking at the content of the hypertext that I emphasized. The direction of her gaze suggests that Veronica was engrossing with the main content of the hypertext with which Veronica could engross the historical background of Chinese warlords.

As can be seen from the conversations that I quoted above, I first asked Veronica to describe the literary excerpt adapted from *Jia* for the purpose of knowing how much knowledge that Veronica had learned about the Chinese historical background in the 1900s. Based on Veronica's description and interpretation, I came to understand gradually that she only reckoned the excerpt as a story as she mentioned that the reaction of Jue Xin was different from that of the main characters in the stories that she had read before our interview. In another word, she did not understand the reason for which Jue Xin remained silent, which could be seen in “so that is a little bit different from what I used to see and read.” and “↑when I read this story, I can say that this is a common story. In the past, I read other stories which were similar to this one; a parent who decided for the son whom he should marry, but usually there is a reaction (uhm). In this case, Jue Xin did not have a reaction↓”

• <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=12ac3676786e4fd2b76c36e8299a381>

As can be seen from her utterances, Veronica emphasized that she could not figure out the reaction of the protagonist of Jue Xin. Her emphasis could also manifest itself in her falling tone marked by ↓.

After taking her confusion into consideration, I directed her attention to the May 4th movement and asked her whether she had known about the May Fourth movement, “what have you learned about the May 4th movement?”. Then, Veronica answered my question by only mentioning the name of mao zi dong” and by using the tag question “dui ma”, she sought for my confirmation of the relation between Mao zi dong and the May fourth movement. From her ambiguous feedback, I understood that Veronica did not have a clear understanding of the May fourth movement, which, as far as I am concerned, made her feel confused about Jue Xin’s reaction.

Given that the language and cultural knowledge related to a country is one of the integral parts of intercultural competence (Byram, 1997, 2017; Kramsch, 2006, 2010), Veronica had not yet fully developed her intercultural competence at that moment as she did not have a sound knowledge related to May 4th movement, an epitome of Chinese historical culture in the 1910s.

Considering her little knowledge about the Chinese May 4th movement, I introduced Veronica Chinese warlords from the perspectives of society, economics and culture. The reason for which I did so is that Chinese warlords were one of the causes for the May 4th movement. Letting Veronica learn about Chinese warlords might help her to deepen her understanding of the historical background of the May 4th movement. And the understanding may act as a part of Veronica’s intertextual context based on which she could re-conceptualize the literary text and have a understand the family relationship between father and son in the 1990s, a case in point could be Jue Xin’s reaction towards his father and the attitudes that his father held towards his son, Jue Xin.

And then, I offered my interpretation of the reason why Jue Xin did not take any action to fight against his father by combining the historical background of Chinese warlord periods and the May 4th movement with the literary except from *Jia*. In another word, I focused on the association between the May 4th movement and Chinese warlords for the purpose of asking Veronica to pay attention to the influences that May fourth movement and Chinese warlords had on the mind of Jue Xin, along with its indirect effects on the attitudes that Jue Xin held towards his father.

In this case, my spoken utterance “this is not a dichotomy but a conflict between two generations; the older ones and younger ones. “We” were at a crossroad “we” did not know how to follow (oh yes) It was the moment at which the decadent tradition and new ideological trends co-existed” which included my pitch, stress and the pauses between the utterance as a whole is the mode of speech. This mode of speech and the hypertext which included images and texts together contributed to realizing the meaning which was the influences that historical background had on the relationship between father and son in accordance with Veronica’s need to know *May 4th Movement*.

In addition, with reference to Hoff (2016)’s the intercultural reader. The reader could be exposed to multiple perspectives related to a literary text by communicating with other readers. And then, this reader could deepen his or her understanding of the literary text by re-conceptualizing the multiple perspectives or the interpretations that the other readers offered. And the process of reconceptualization could be viewed as a kind of improvement of intercultural understanding on part of this reader, as this reader may form new insights into a given literary text by associating with or disagreeing with his or her own cultural, social and subjective positions and those of the other readers. Here, by re-conceptualizing my illumination on the May 4th movement, my interpretations about the association between my May 4th movement and Jue’ reaction towards his father as well as her emotional and subjective positions *a priori* on the literary text that she had read before, Veronica had a different and more complicated understanding of the influences that the historical background – the Chinese warlords and May 4th movement – exerted on Chinese families and family relationships during the historical period of the 1990s. And I regarded the relationship between Jue Xin and his father as well as Jue Xin’s reaction towards his father as the point of entry as a whole. From this point of entry, I prompted Veronica to construe Chinese family relationship and to explain the reason why the Chinese children and their Chinese parents treat each other in a specific way after having her to take account of the historical background against which the Chinese family relationship developed in a certain way.

Furthermore, as a teacher, I displayed the slide (please see below) in order to help Veronica to have a more comprehensive understanding of the historical background where the literary except *Jia* set in.

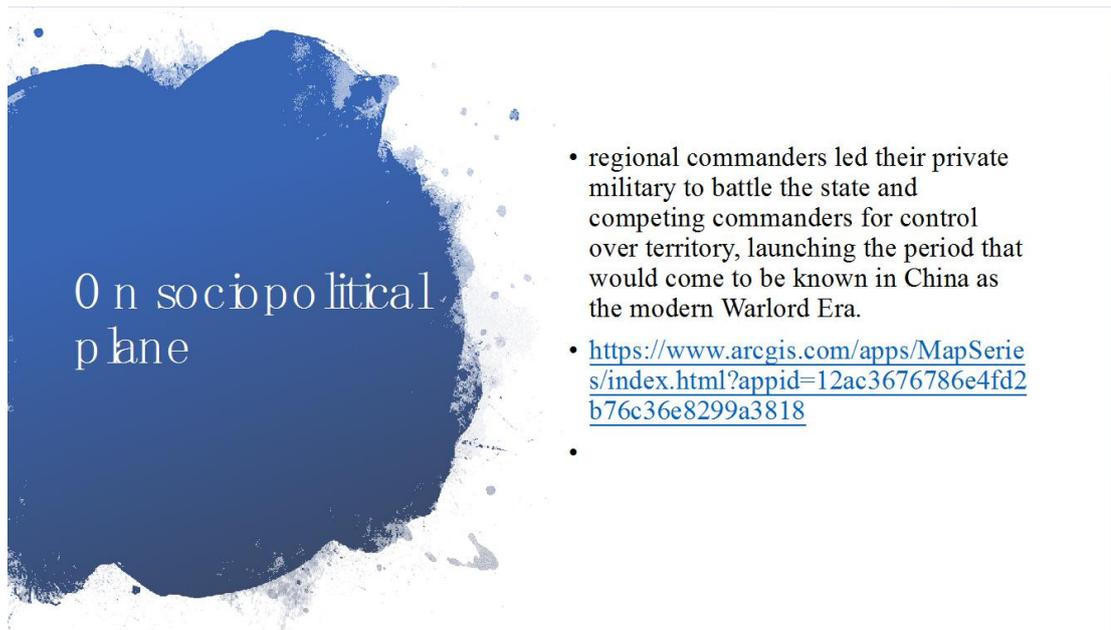


Figure 27 The slide on the Chinese Warlord period.

As can be seen above, the slide is subdivided into two parts. On the left, there is a blue ink drop integrated by a written text “the background of Chinese warlords”. On the left of this image, there are my textual explanation and the hyperlink which provide the information of Chinese warlords. As can be seen from this slide, the blue ink drop, the written text and the hyperlink are interconnected with one another, forming a meaning that I let Veronica understand how Chinese warlords came into existence.

Besides, by showing the historical picture which indicated that the Chinese students set out demonstrations to fight for freedom and equality (please see below). I let Veronica understand that the ideas of the protagonist Jue Xin were, to some extent, influenced by the *May Fourth Movement*, as Jue Xin in that excerpt desired to advance his study and absorbed new thought by reading newspapers.

- 3. On cultural plane:
- May Fourth Movement (override feudalism and welcome the science and democracy. Eg. 德先生: democracy 赛先生science)

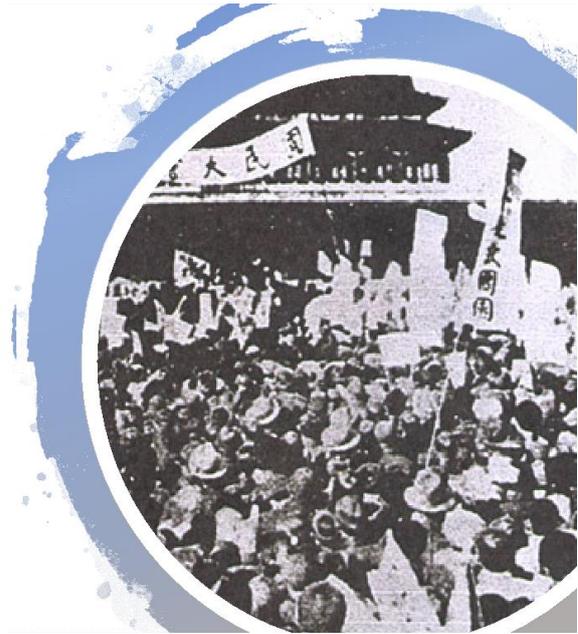


Figure 28 The slide on May Fourth Movement.

Retrieved from the picture [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Chinese_protestors_march_against_the_Treaty_of_Versailles_\(May_4,_1919\).jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Chinese_protestors_march_against_the_Treaty_of_Versailles_(May_4,_1919).jpg)

At this point, I taught Veronica with the multimodal means, namely the mode of speech - my explanation for the May 4th movement and interpretations of the literary excerpt, the hyperlink and the pictures in the slides demonstrated above. By doing so, I increased the Chinese culture knowledge of Veronica and thus I improved her intercultural competence by explaining to her the May 4th movement and Chinese warlord periods .

At last, according to Vygostky (1978)'s zone of proximal development (ZPD), students could reach the level of potential development under the guidance of her instructor. In this case, Veronica reinterpreted the reaction of Jue Xin and the relationship between Jue Xin and his father by taking account of the historical background that the literary excerpt set in. At this point, compared with her first understanding of the literary except adapted from *Jia*, Veronica was able to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the excerpt of *Jia* with my help, viz., my explanations and interpretation of the May fourth movement and Chinese warlord periods.

9.2.2 Teaching Activity 2

After showing and explaining to her the slides pertaining to Chinese warlord periods as well as the May 4th movements, I then demonstrated her a series of comic strips which depicted a poor boy who suffered from misery and was forced to sell himself. By helping her to understand the price tags in Chinese with my verbal speeches and the colorful comic strips, I encouraged her to try her best to describe and interpret the main contents of the comic strips. As can be seen from the following exchange I quoted below:

01GNY: Va bene now let's look at this one, I sent your las time (What is this about). It is about I wrote, I translated into simple Chinese characters (ok). So, have you ever looked at them before (no)? So, you can look at them now

02Veronica: Ahh: so, this child tried to sell these children maybe they were his siblings

03GNY: ↑First of all, you can observe all the comic strip then you can organize your discourse in a systematic way

04Veronoca: ah: il bambino lo compra) (0.5)

05GNY: this is different from this one, then comes this one. I chose this one, in order to enable you to have a complete picture of the citizens' lives.

06Veronica: (ok)

07GNY: This is China and it is about the Chinese cartoon. No, let's get rid of those strips because they are ambiguous, and I showed you this one, I think it is much clearer.

08Veronica: Ok I don't know who is selling, maybe this old man is trying to sell these children, oh yes, so the price for one child is 7 000 ok, and 5 000 RMB, I cannot read very well

09GNY: he took a piece of paper and wrote a price (ah)

10Veronica: ↑He made it by himself↓

11GNY: he made it by himself, Why?

12Veronica: Because he saw the old man trying to sell it and so ah:

I have to start from this one, ok not from this one.

13GNY: I think it is a little bit weird, what is wrong with it? Ok, he used a kind of carbon to write the price tag.

14Veronica: (ok) ↑ now I understand, because it was a little bit weird, I started from

this one, it's 1.2.34. (this is the first. This old man tried to sell these two kids and the guy found a paper and he tried to sell himself (yes) I suppose he is a very poor guy and he is looking for some money, so the old man look at him like what are you doing, but he didn't react (yes) ↓

15GNY: ↑the other people didn't even pay attention to him↓

16Veronica: so, he left the place, I'm sure he needed a place and maybe wanted to be back at home and the guy gave up and he went in front of the shop and he found some dolls they price were more expensive than his own price.

17GNY: ↑Yes, can you see the price, the number (yes, it is 1 000 RMB) esatto, the price is 10 times more expensive, so the dolls are much more expensive than a real person, this is a shocked contrast (yeah). So, what we have learnt from this picture? ↓

18Veronica: ↑this is a kind of (and then this one). It is the same, he was freezing he didn't have clothes, it was cold outside, he's looking at these two dogs of those two rich women which were wearing two beautiful coats (branded coats), even the dogs wear nice clothes↓

19GNY: so, what you have learnt from this?

20Veronica: ↑so, what I've learnt from it is that often in different countries or better everywhere this kind of this happen, like some children don't have anything and the rich people don't care about their condition neither, also for a poor child see the difference between him and the rich people that are very strong and indifferent, strong, they are to dominate↓//

21GNY: ↑they can dominate compared to the poor (uhm), the poor who have no money, no house who have nothing almost nothing. The reason why I didn't explain to you the background or this comic strips was because I wanted you to think about it. Are you familiar with the state of this painter? This painter is very famous↓//

22Veronica: I'm not familiar

23GNY: Because once you told me you have visited China. I was just a bit curious

24Veronica: ↑No, it's the first time I've seen him↓//

25GNY: His name is Chen Le Ping (and meanwhile I wrote the Chinese pin yin on the paper.). He draws these kinds of pictures; he draws these kinds of design during the Japanese invasion period

26Veronica: Ah ok

27GNY: From the 1930-1934

28Veronica: ok so,

29GNY: this is the time

30 Veronica: ok.

31GNY: At that moment he draws these pictures, because he wanted to project the society situation

32Veronica: **↑Yes, can you see the price, the number (yes, it is 1,00000 RMB) esatto, the price is 10 times more expensive, so the dolls are much more expensive than a real person, this is a shocked contrast (yeah).**

33GNY: So, what we have learnt from this picture? ↓

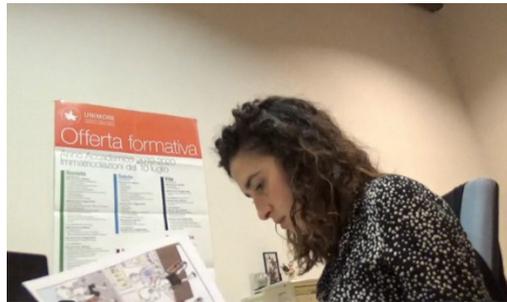


Figure 29 Veronica was looking at the comic strips.

34Veronica: They are timeless, aren't they?

35GNY: timeless?

36Veronica: ↑Timeless. These comic strips.

37GNY: what do you mean by timeless,

38Veronica: ok it's like they could be also of our period not only of 1930↓

39GNY: No, it mainly reflected the historical period of 1930. but this is a little bit different, because the people of different generation and different period interpreted them in different ways. I just wanted to show that at that time there was a big gap between the poor and the rich and then it was also because the political perspective, the government was incapable to fulfill and provide the necessities of its people, like providing a house for those who were in need

40Veronica: ho capito.

41GNY: Because they just want to pursue their own power. There was a lot of cliques. If I could show you the map you would see there were just four or five houses, everything was gone

42Veronica: no, no worries

43 GNY: so , there was no legal protection that was the reason why parents could sell

their children ,there was not a sound systematic legal system. Can you see this tiny house?

44 Veronica: Ok

45 GNY: besides, the resources were limited, the poor could only have part of the resources whereas the rich people enjoyed resources that is why there was few
46resources left. If the rich enjoyed too much resource how could the poor survive?

47 Veronica: they can't

48 GNY: So, they want to make a living so, how could they earn money? by sell their children

49Veronica: ↑They just sell them ↓

50 GNY: I can also tell you at the time a lot of babies dying because of cough (oh my
51 God) and hunger, and this baby, he is shacking (that's crazy). I don't know whether you have learnt about it before. This is my interpretation so; you can search on the net
52 in order to have a more complete view about The Japanese invasion period and Warlords Period and to understand what kind of life the poor people were living (uhm)

53Veronica: What do you think about the Japanese?

54 GNY: I? I need to say that at that time the patriotic, the right party. If you read a book written by Lao She which is translated into English, it is called the "Yellow stone"
55 it is a little bit weird. At the time all the Japanese woman reflect the collection of the Japanese people and also condemned what they have done, the Japanese soldiers so I think there is a diff between the Japanese soldiers, the Japanese soldiers and the common citizens

56Veronica: uhm

57GNY: so, this is my point of view

58Veronica: I understand I was curious

59GNY: ok, why were you curious?

60 Veronica: I don't know if after this period the Chinese could agree and accept Japanese next to them

61 GNY: uhm

62Veronica: I was just curious to understand, I know sometimes Chinese don't love
↓Japanese (uhm) ok so, I was thinking if it is because of this period or in general

63 GNY: I think it's because the historical events, the historical events left shadows and memories. For my parents, they hate Japanese people because what they learnt during

the school time (yeah). How terrible how hilarious how they were, this hate, these people. but there are also some innocent people to some extent

64 Veronica: Sure, it's like for us when it comes to German people, our grandparent, they don't love them very much, but they are different now, so we move from this time of history, we cancelled it.

As can be seen from the conversation quoted above, Veronica tried her best to understand the main contents of the comic strips. From this conversation, as I explained to Veronica the Chinese characters, showed her the comic strips and pointed at the place that calls for attention with my fingers, I helped her to understand the great disparity between the rich and the poor during the historical period between 1928-1935. Within the multimodal framework, my teaching process can be seen as a multimodal engagement for my explanations and the interpretations about the comic strips could be seen as a mode of speech and the ways in which I directed V' attention can be seen another mode, both of which and the visual-orientated images as a whole is a sign-making which was my emphasis not only on the sharp contrast between the life of the rich and that of the poor during the historical period of 1930 but also on the poor who lacked the legal protection due to the incapable government of the times.

After our discussion about the the excerpt adapted from a novel Jia, Veronica asked me a question "what do you think about the Japanese?", a question that I did not expect in this teaching activity.

Being stuck on this question for a moment , I offered my feedback, saying that one could not over-generalize the Japanese based on the previous conversation that I had with Veronica in terms of the sociopolitical influences that had on people's lives, particularly the poor. The reason for which I shifted my focus from our discussion about the historical and socioeconomic background where the comic strips set to the topic of the behaviors and the ways of thinking that the Japanese people had during the World war II is that I tried to tap into Veronica's cultural attitude towards how the Chinese think of the Japanese and have a rough picture of Veronica's soiciopolitical position in general sense. As the social political position is a departure point from which I tried to encourage her to view culture –the historical narrative of the German people –in a complex and dynamic manner.

I took the lead to express my ideas about the Japanese at that time. I told Veronica that the Japanese of that particular time should be viewed critically. To elaborate on my

opinion, I drew on my past reading experience – my reflection on the humanitarian attitudes that the Japanese woman in the book *the Yellow Storm* had¹², as can be seen in “If you read a book written by Lao She which is translated into English, it is called the “Yellow stone” it is a little bit weird. At the time all the Japanese woman reflect the collection of the Japanese people and also condemned what they have done” in line 54. Meanwhile, I used the summative phrase “I think” to air my views that one needs to take a complex viewpoint of the Japanese soliders and the Japanese common citizens at that time. And I emphasized that, what should be condemned to death was the Japanese patriotic and right party who propandized the loyalty for the imperial Japanese Army and the Japanese soliders and generals who had no moral standards and chose to invade China during the historical period (1937 - 1945). However, for a small population of the Japanese common citizens, there were also innocent who championed peace. After reflecting on my viewpoints of the Japanese during that historical time, Veronica told me that she understood my point of view.

With the phrase “Sure, it is like us”, Veronica aligned her viewpoints and subjective postion with those of mine by making references to the attitude that her grandparents’ held towards the German and the emotions that her grandparents’ had to the Germans who lived during the World war II period.

What is more, Veronica also reflected on my views on the Japanese during the Japanese invasion period and my underpinning that one needs to take a critical and complex viewpoint of a population. Her reflection can be seen in line 64 where Veronica recognized the German at the present times were different compared with those who lived in her grandparents’ generation, as can be seen in the phrase “our grandparents they don’t love them very much, but they are different now, so we move from this time of history, we cancelled it” in line 64. Here, Veronica used concessive conjunction “but” to indicate that one should jump out of the fixed viewpoint of a population (a stereotype of the German) which is the consequence brought by one piece of discourse (her grandparents’ words about the German) related to a historical event.

To summarize, I offered my interpretation of the Japanese based on Veronica’s

¹² “I’m a Japanese citizen, but I’m also global citizen belonging to all human beings! As a Japanese citizen, I should keep silence and obey orders. But as a global citizen, I curse those people who have turn their father into ashes and forced their mother to be military prostitute!” (P1013)

interests in how the Chinese viewed the Japanese after the Japanese Invasion War, as shown in lines 54 and in line 63. And according to my underpinning that one needs to view a population in critical and dynamic manner from the perspective of how to view the Japanese in the World War II, Veronica realized her meaning, that is, one needs to jump out of the fixed viewpoint of a specific population and to view these people in dynamic way, as evidenced by her dynamic viewpoint of the German people. In this sense, through my teaching which manifest itself in my views on the Japanese people, I helped Veronica to construe the cultural phenomenon in dynamic and complex manner.

9.2.3 Teaching Activity 3

Then, I showed Veronica another literary text *written by Amy Tan, a Chinese American writer*. She began to actively participate in reading them and then to concentrate on the discourse practice enacted by me, displaying her changing direction of orientation, gestures and eye contacts. During the course of the whole teaching session, she changed her head, loosened her braid and then she looked at me in the eyes with one hand supporting her chin.



Figure 30 Veronica's body positions. The video was filmed with her consent.

As can be seen from the four screenshots, the changing postures of V indicated that she was engaged with her hand movements. By laying out her left hand (see figure 13.3 a), she was engrossing in the text and tried to summarize the contents of the excerpt adapted from the *Joy Luck Club*. Here, this hand movement was a kind of mediational means for helping Veronica to understand the contents of that excerpt and to interpret

the writers' intentions of writing this excerpt. Thus, in this sense, her hand movement was a 'complementary aid' to her verbal speech, enabling her to selectively transform the meanings of that text. And then, I shared my understanding of that excerpt: the daughter in that excerpt decided to play chess not because of her mother's words but as a result of her mother's attitudes towards her. I went on to explain that according to the daughter Jong, her mother treated her as if she was an object that could be showed off. Thinking of my words, she leaned against the chair, loosening her braid unconsciously (See figure 13.3 b) And then, she presented her contextual position that the mothers sometimes did not know how to show love to their children or they did not know how to express their love in a way that was acceptable and appropriate to their kids. Afterward, she attuned her subjective positioning with mine by saying 'yes' and making an example of her personal experience –she disobeyed her mothers' orders by hanging out late for she thought that her mother did not understand her. By doing so, she was involved in the conversation with ease. Here, her gestural changes show that she shifted from a state where she focused on the handout --- the excerpt to the state where she was a listener who actively involved in our interactions.

Then, I further asked her some questions with an effort of eliciting her (Veronica)'s interpretations. The reason I did so is that I would like to have a partial understanding of her cultural resources, viz., her habits, world outlook and her value systems that she drew on unconsciously when she described and analyzed a handout and to know how she deconstructed her mindset (i.e. her preconceptions of parenting) in a way of aligning her attitudes in terms of the relationship between parents and their children.

I first encouraged her to re-read that excerpt and then I asked her some questions as prompts. When being asked "What do you think of the relationship between the protagonist Waverly Jong and her mother", Veronica answered that Jong felt confident about herself as she heard her mother complimenting her intelligence. However, when Jong shouted at her mother on the street and told her that she would not play chess again, her mother treated her as if she was invisible. And it is because of her mother's attitudes, Jong decided to not play chess anymore.

The conversation can be displayed as followed:

01 Veronica : La madre sostiene la figlia e le ha dato anche dei consigli prima di (prima

che lei giocasse) giocare a scacchi. E poi, dopo ↑ cambia drasticamente la relazione tra lei e la figlia. Quindi... (Perché), la figlia davanti a tutti nella mezza di strada, le urla e le dice, sai che cosa dice? Di smettere di giocare a scacchi perché la madre dicesse agli amici che giocare a scacchi non tratta di essere intelligenti ma di essere strategici. Quindi deve avere una strategia.

02GNY: Ah...

03 Veronica : Ma dopo quando la figlia aveva la difficoltà... ha avuto la febbre così ↑ la assisteva e la aiutava però qualcosa si è spezzato ↓ .

04GNY: che cosa si è spezzato? Secondo te ↑ ?

vanm05Veronica : Si e' sentita inutile e si e' sentita distaccata davanti... (a tutti le persone che la conoscano) invece qualcosa di amorevole che faceva negli confronti della madre.' La figlia decide ad un certo punto di non parlare di più' alla madre. E sua figli l'ha offesa pensando che lei (sua madre) ha cambiato l'atteggiamento e invece la madre davanti a tutti no ha cambiato nulla l'atteggiamento.

As can be seen from this excerpt, Veronica reckoned that Jong's mother made considerable sacrifices for Jong and it was Jong who did not understand her mother and she interpreted her mother's attitudes as offense and showoff – "*E sua figli l'ha offesa pensando che lei (sua madre) ha cambiato l'atteggiamento e invece la madre davanti a tutti no ha cambiato nulla l'atteggiamento.*" And when being asked about her opinions on that protagonist Jong, Veronica thought she was very confident about her capability of playing chess and Veronica also thought the daughter – Jong was attached to her mother, as she paid attention to her mother's attitudes and reactions to her performance in chess tournaments. The conversation between Veronica and I was constructed by our collaboration in joint action (Clark, 1996) The two interactants, viz., Veronica and I, co-adapted to each other by negotiating the lexical and pragmatic expressions in order to make meanings that facilitated the conversation. For example, we tried to capture what we would like to express by switching from English to Italian from time to time. And then I and Veronica tried to know each other's views on the relationship between mothers and daughters or to fulfill our utterances by changing our intonations (i.e. from the rising pitch to a lowering one) and stress unconsciously. By doing so, we were able to facilitate the interactional process and we collaborated with one another in order to have a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the

socio-cultural issue – parenting and of the similarities that we shared in respect of how we dealt with the conflicts between mother and daughter.

As I have illustrated before, an individual discourse is supposed to be analyzed at both micro-genetic and meso- or micro-sociological levels. Here, I am going to adopt the methods of Fairclough in a way of explaining why Veronica interpreted the excerpt in this but not in that way.

At meso and macro levels, I adopted critical discourse analysis by first taking the triad relations between genres, styles and subject positioning into consideration. Among these three interrelated factors, subject positioning is the main unit of analysis as it could show how people choose to adapt themselves to the whole interactive situation that they are participating in. Besides, subjective positioning also shows how their ways of alignment with the whole context (including interlocutors) is interconnected with their interests, values and beliefs that they have unconsciously formed within a community.

People bring to any event an ‘autobiographical self’. This is their personal autobiography up to that moment; it is the life experiences, the socialization and the familiar social practices that they are able to draw on. (Fairclough, 2013)

Here, Veronica modulated her subjective positions by shifting her primary alliance with the mother in that excerpt *The Joy Luck Club* to her alignment with me. By doing so, she displayed how she could flexibly reflect on the issues related to parenting – understanding the complexity of the relationship between parents and their children and the ways in which they show love to each other. In particular, she came to know that the relationship between parents and children did not vary from culture to culture. Rather, it, in most cases, depends on the intersectional factors, such as affluence, social class and the ways of parenting.

Second, from the perspective of intertextuality, the interview that I conducted with Veronica might tell the partial story of Veronica’s MR– the cultural resources based on which she aired her views or expressed her feelings in different genres. And by giving a closer look at her interpretations of the excerpt adapted from *The Joy Luck Club*, I showed that Veronica opined how her Chinese colleagues treated her and she thought they were introverted to some extent and not only she but also her Italian colleagues

found it difficult to get along with the other Chinese colleagues and her standpoints of Hong Kong political system “*It is hard to incorporate two sets of democratic systems into one because the mainland China and Hong Kong take different historical and sociopolitical stances.* (my field notes) I could tap into her member resources that were nested in her utterances. And by negotiating with her the meanings that have emerged in that interview, I could know to which extent V chose to get rid of the influences of her member resources MR by creating the meanings that are apt best for the interaction between me and her.

And her MR, to some extent, acted as the agent for determining how she (re)conceptualized the various representations of social reality. For example, how she conceptualized the Italian media, say, newspapers, magazines and how she construed the literary texts could jointly contribute to innovating her order of discourse which in turn conducted to “what is said and done and written in a particular event or text is intertextually related to the other events and texts. So, we can eventually, anticipate and respond to the other events and other texts” (Fairclough, 2013: 714)

Then, Veronica legitimized her discourse action, say her conceptualization of the excerpt adapted from *The Joy Luck Club* by drawing on one of her past discourses – her disobedience of her mother’s orders. These two discourses situate in the same chain of her whole discourse system, showcasing the intertextual relations based on which Veronica conceptualized the other texts in the other semiotic forms (i.e. how she perceives and construed the comic strips and the Chinese song *Where does time go by*) Simply speaking, her personal narrations within multiple timescales were interrelated with one another, contributing to endowing a social event, i.e. a written text with new meanings.

On the micro level, the discourse of Veronica at that moment was just one of the representations of her discourse system which contributes to her whole trajectory of discourse system (order of discourse) along with her discourses event enacted before the moment at which she partook of the interview.

From my point of view, the reason for which Jong shouted at her mother and decided to not play chess is that Jong wanted her mother to understand her that she was intelligent by born instead of being a girl who knew nothing but adopted strategies in chess tournaments. “In other words, I drew upon her own MR (interpretative procedures) in order to explain how participants draw upon their value systems” (Fairclough, 2001)

However, the writer of this novel focused on depicting the relationship between

daughters and their mothers instead of showing favor to any side.

The reason for which V construed this literary text in this way is that she partook of her intertextual context “she rebelled against her mother’s word” and my interpretation of this literary text, based on which she interpreted and explained the issue family relationship when she engaged with literary text *The Joy Luck Club*

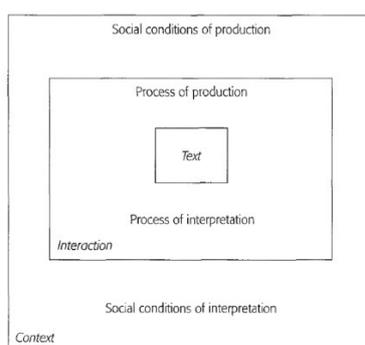


Figure 31 Discourse and Text (Fairclough, 2001: P21).

9.3 Analysis III

9.3.1 Teaching Activity 1

In this lesson, I first asked the participant S (marked as A in the following discourses) to watch a video clip **concerning the mistakes that foreigners might make during their process of learning Chinese**. After the video clip was played, I encouraged him to summarize the main content of that video clip using the Chinese language or propelled him to use the language based on his interests with reference to multimodal semiotics. (Bezemer and Kress, 2016)

After listening to my words, this participant chose to use Chinese to do the summary of the video clip which concerned mistakes that foreigners committed, as he said he could improve his oral Chinese with me in this way.

001Participant S: 刚看的这个 YouTube 的视频讲的是外国人经常会犯的错误，就是会犯，就是，外国人经常会在四声调犯的这一些错误。

English Version: From this video on YouTube, I can tell that foreigners made some mistakes, I mean that they made some mistakes, the foreigners make some mistakes in

terms of articulating the basic four tones.

002GNY: 在...声调 ?

English Version: On the articulation of tones?

003Participant S: 对 , 四声调。

English Version: Yes, four tones.

004GNY: 四声调 ?

English Version: Four tones?

005Participant S: 嗯。四声调。经常会.....

English Version: Um..., four tones, sometimes

006GNY: 是第四个声调 , 还是四个声调 ?

English Version: The fourth tone or four tones?

007Participant S: 四个声调 , (ah...)在四个声调上 , 这个方面.....

English Version: Four tones, on these four tones...

008GNY: 不要忘了.....il classificatore (个)

English Version: But please do not forget...the classifier (as can be seen, I accentuated that the classifier should be preceded by the collective nouns)

009Participant S: 对 , 四个声调有的方面会经常发音错误 , 会发音错的。

English Version: Yes, sometimes the language learners of Chinese may articulate these four tones in wrong way.

010GNY: uh-huh

011Participant S: 这个 , 讲这三个故事的人是**外国人**。

English Version: This, the person who tells these three stories is a foreigner?

012GNY:他是 台湾人

English Version: He is Chinese

013Participant S: 哦 , 是台湾人。他说的之前 , 如果他是台湾人 , 那他还学中文吗 ?

English Version: Oh, if he is a Taiwanese, but according to what he said...if he a

Taiwanese, why is he still studying Chinese?

014GNY: 嗯，台湾有台湾的语调，可以发现，就是如果，我不知道你有没有去过中国

English Version: Yes, because there is Taiwanese dialect in Taiwan. You can find the difference (between Taiwanese and Putonghua) if you are in Taiwan after you have studied PuTongHua or you are studying PuTonghua. The people coming from different places of China speak their own distinct dialects. I do not know whether you have been in China.

015Participant S: 嗯。 My girlfriend comes from Xin Jiang.

016GNY: 可能新疆的也有新疆的方言，我们每个地方都有每个地方的方言。

English Version: Perhaps the Xin Jiang people speak their own dialect. There are different dialects in different places.

017Participant S: 新疆那边的方言是最接近北京的。

English Version: The dialect spoken in Xin Jiang is like to that spoken in Beijing

018GNY: 最接近北京的方言?

English Version: Does the dialect that approach most to that of Beijing?

019Participant S: 比较标准。

English Version: Comparatively standard

020GNY: 嗯，但是中国，没有一个标准方言，我们现在学的普通话，只不过只是在世界范围内认可的官方语言而已。

English Version: Yes, but there is no standard dialect in China, the language that we are studying is mandarin - Putonghua - the official language which is recognized worldwide.

021Participant S: 嗯。

English Version: Uhm..

022GNY: 总是很多人都会说北京话就是标准语言，其实不是，北京有北京的方言。

English Version: Lots of people say that Beijing dialect is the standard language. But

that is not true, lots of people speak Beijing people.

023 Participant S: 嗯，好，好的。 \

English Version: En, yes, yeah

024 GNY: 对，还有什么可总结的吗？ The main content?

English Version: Yes, anything else? The main content?

025 Participant S: ey, 他之前说的三个故事里面元宵节 he said first that

Among the three stories he had talked about, one was related to Lantern festival.

026 Participant S: 就是四个声调。

English Version: Just four tones.

027 GNY: 唉，不够全面。四个声调，四个声调的什么？

English Version: Non very specific, these four tones...the four tones of which... ?

028 Participant S: 外国人会经常说错这四个声调，这个事情。

English Version: The language students who learn Chinese as a second or a foreign language may pronounce these four tones in wrong way. That is my point.

029 GNY: 对，对，okay. You almost hit the point.我想说的是，不管你到多高的级

别，你一定要将词拼读正确。(English Version: Right, you have almost hit the point.

I mean, no matter at which level your Chinese language is, you need to pronounce the Chinese four tones accurately.)

030 Participant S: 嗯。

English Version: En.

Description: As can be seen from the conversation I quoted above, by showing the participant S a video clip, I directed his attention to the embarrassing moments that foreigners encountered when they pronounced Chinese tones inaccurately. By doing so, I emphasized that Chinese tones matter most in the communication with Chinese native speakers. In the teaching steps demonstrated above, the video clip is an audio-visual mode ensemble and my refocusing on the importance of Chinese tones “Right, you have almost hit the point. I mean, no matter at which level your Chinese language is, you need to pronounce the Chinese four tones accurately.” is

a mode of speech. All the mode ensembles together realized a meaning-making which was my emphasis on the paramount role that Chinese tones play in the accurate expressions in Chinese. Thus, as can be seen from my analysis, I realized my meaning-making in a multimodal manner.

031GNY: you have mentioned four tones, right? (Yes) Do you think they are only four tones in Chinese?

032Participant S: there is also a mid-tone.

033GNY: uh-huh.

034Participant S: when you are not pronouncing any tone.

035GNY: uh-huh. When you are not pronouncing any tone.

036Participant S: there is a neutral tone.

037GNY: a neutral, okay.

038Participant S: there is also a neutral tone.

039GNY: In Chinese how to say this neutral tone? How to say the name?

040Participant S: ahah, this... I don't. I can't recall. This one. Can you help me?

041GNY: okay. 轻声 (neutral tone).(And meanwhile, I wrote the neutral tone on a paper)

042Participant S:轻声 (neutral tone)

043GNY: do you think the neutral tone is an independent tone or just belongs to the other four tones, or they are ...?

044Participant S: I think the neutral tone can be developing in the...

045GNY: in the sentence?

046Participant S: in the sentence. When where there is pin yin. Maybe when we are speaking, it is the natural development of Chinese phonology.

047GNY: The neutral tone is not a tone in its own right. It's a variant which could only be articulated only if it is attached with the other syllables in a semantic constituent. They should be articulated lightly and be pronounced in less stressed and de-emphasized manner, under the condition that they are interrogative question marks. The structural auxiliary words is attached with a possessive pronounce like '我的','你的','他的', such as '的'.

In this conversation, I underlined that the neutral tone was not an independent tone compared with the other four tones. Instead, it was a variant tone. Then, I asked him in which situations the neutral tones can be pronounced in a way of knowing whether he had the linguistic knowledge concerning the use of neutral tones. The specific teaching process will be seen in the following conversations:

048GNY: so, could you recollect a little bit the other situations where neural tones could be pronounced?

049Participant S: I was thinking about...

050GNY: We need to specify in which specific situation we can use the neutral tones.

051Participant S: okay, perhaps we can use the neutral tone when using the Umh, the questioned mark, the question characters.

052GNY: questioned markers, could you give me some examples? For example?

053Participant S: when using mark, for the question mark.

054GNY: could you please make a sentence? And then I can understand a little bit better.

055Participant S: 你在干嘛呢 ?

English Version: What are you doing?

056GNY: 你在干嘛呢 ? (I recasted this student's pronunciation of 呢 by articulating it lightly.)

057Participant S: 呢

058GNY: 呢 (I pronounced '呢'lightly),Yes. It is an interrogative question mark or a modal auxiliary word。

059Participant S: yes, I was talking about all this kind of question marks.

060GNY: question mark?

061Participant S: we use this kind of character to...

062GNY: yes, how we can label this kind of question marks? How we can draw some conclusions? Because we cannot say 用吗 , 用呢 , 用吧。 We cannot say, we need to know...

063Participant S: need to know when to use them.

064GNY: yes.

065Participant S: in which situation we will use them.

066GNY: yes.

067Participant S: Each question mark and its sounds in a specific situation.

068GNY: because generally speaking we pronounce 吗 lightly. However, if the addresser asked his addressee in emotional tone, i.e. in irritating or in anxious manner, ma should be pronounced a little bit heavier. So, we needed to pay attention to it. Sometimes, in some situations one needs to pronounce 'ma' heavily while in the others one does not need to do so).

069Participant S: Ma se vuoi chiedere una vera e propria domanda, devi articolare 吗 , 吧 leggeramente?

070GNY: Yes, for example, 你有纸吗 ? (Can you give me a paper?)

071Participant S: 嗯。

English Version: Em...

072GNY: please pay attention to it. (laughter) But there are two cases very very common, you need to remember it. how to use “的” 轻声. In the first situation, I just mentioned “的” (in this case) In different sentences, in different situations, one will be used in different tones. How about 白勺 “的”? (I directed the attention of this student to the word 的)

073Participant S: 白勺的。

074GNY: 懂了 ?

English Version: Do you understand?

075GNY: 懂了 ? 好。 Could you please make an example?

English Version: Yes, I got it. Could you please make an example?

076Participant S: 这是我的.. 我的书籍。

English Version: This is... my book.

077GNY: 啊。 Quindi, in che situazione si puo' usare la parola '的'

English Version: Ah, so, in which situation one needs to use the word '的'

078Participant S: we can use this one when we are trying to signal that one object is ours.

GNY: could you please summarize a little bit?

079Participant S: possession.

080GNY: yes, so the auxiliary '的' should be pronounced lightly only if it was preceded by the possessive pronouns, right?

081Participant S: Yes, it's an object specific possession. Related to people or relatives.

082GNY: 比如说 ? (translation: For example?)

083Participant S: because we cannot use 的, when it comes to our parents, 我妈 we can use it. we cannot use 我的妈。 (translation: because we cannot use de, when it comes to our parents, wo ma we can use it. we cannot use wo de ma.

)

084GNY: No.

085Participant S: that's right?

086GNY: yes.

087Participant S: this is one...

088GNY: 但是 in the semantic constituent '我的妈妈'the second syllable of the replicated Chinese characters '妈妈' ma should be pronounced lightly. If I just said 我妈和我的妈妈, 你能分清吗 ? (English translation. But, in the semantic constituent, wo de ma ma, in the second syllable of the replicated Chinese characters, mama should be pronounced lightly. If I just said wo ma and wo de mama, could you make a distinction between them?)

089Participant S: ...

090GNY: Quindi, possiamo ricordare or imparare a memoria, la situazione dove si puo' usare il '的'de

English Version: So, we need to remember and memorize in which situation one needs to use 的. ‘de’

091Participant S: Yes

092GNY: Alright, could you please make a summary of how to use ‘的’, apart from the case that you have already mentioned?

093Participant S: 嗯。

094GNY: could you please lend me a pen. I want to use it for a while, for a short while. In this case, can you recollect some memories about this? (Italian13: 46-47) for example, 我用用你的笔可以吗? 我用一下, 用用, 我看看。 (translation: Can I use a little bit your pen, I used it a little bit, yong yong kan kan)

095GNY: siblings, I refer to the brothers and sisters.

096Participant S : 姐姐, 妹妹, si, si, si (translation: the younger sisters and elderly sisters, Yes, yes, yes)

097GNY: 姐姐, 妹妹, 哥哥, (the younger sisters, the elderly sisters and the elderly brothers)the second should be pronounced lightly. It does not mean it is neutral, what does it mean by neutral tone? it should be pronounced lightly. But it should be pronounced but with a...

098Participant S: si, si, si,

099GNY: yes, does not... the force is not emphasized. (14:50)

的, should be used in a phrase which is formulated by a pronoun and an object and this phrase indicates the possessive relations. For example “我的书”.The neutral tone should also be used in the situation where there are two replicated Chinese characters, one is verbal replication and the other is nominal replication. As for verbal replication, I made some examples to him in a way of demonstrating why the second verb should be articulated neutral tone, as evidenced by “看看” “摸摸”.

As can be seen, I taught this participant that the neutral tones could be used in three situations, namely the structural word “de” in possessive pronouns and the bi-syllabic Chinese characters.

100GNY: okay. this, I will let you to listen an audio, and then could you please, (the

sound of pig grunting). Can you guess?

101Participant S: 一头猪.(translation: a pig)

102GNY: 猪 , 一头猪。 Perfect. Excellent. Yes. 一头猪 , 不能说一个猪。

(translation: a pig, perfect, Excellent. Yes. You need to say yi tou zhu, rather than saying yi ge zhu.)

猪 pig , How to write 猪 pig in Chinese simplified character ? How to write it, could you please write it, because I want to write the order of the strokes. Then, there is something wrong with the structure.

103 Participant S: Yeah, I mean...do you have a paper?

104GNY: I have a piece of paper. I can write for you.

105Participant S: can I write it?

106GNY: yes. Or if you want to use the pencil? It's okay.

107Participant S: I do not remember because...

108GNY: but you just...why you wrote in this way? No, I did not tell you it is wrong or right. I just ask you the reason for which you wrote it in this way.

109Participant S: it is left-right kind of character.

110GNY: yes.

111Participant S: order. Then I remember the radical, the radical for the animals, in general.

112GNY: which radical is general?

113Participant S: this character radical is used for animals like dog. This kind of radical.

Then, the second part I remembered that 猪, pig, as similar to the character of house, without the roof.

114GNY: no, for the characters you need to always write with pen. In this way you can memorize it better. Because this is wrong.

115Participant S: yeah, I know it's wrong. Because I think it's wrong. But I don't remember which part is wrong.

116GNY: this part, can I use it? 猪 pig , you are right, this signifies a kind of animal, but this part, in the past, you know this one... how to draw a pig... in the ancient times. The people, the ancient people, pigs and other animals generally the pigs, and lambs, to pay tribute to the heaven. Right? 祭祀 to offer sacrifices to god. So, they

will sacrifice these animals and they cooked these animals in this way. So, vertical, vertical. I will show you picture. This one.

117Participant S: is it the traditional one?

118GNY: yes, it is the traditional one. This is the traditional one, so I did not tell you that you were totally right.

119Participant S: I also study the traditional character. Sometimes I got them... I confuse them.

120GNY: yes, you confuse them. But first you need to know how to write them in the simplified manner. Yes, and then gradually, you will master the simplified and traditional Chinese characters. I do agree with you, the traditional is this one, 海豚的豚.

121Participant S: Okay

122GNY: right? So this is the traditional one, this is how, 猪, in the modern times, how this evolved in this way.

123Participant S: okay.

124GNY: the evolution, the process.

125Participant S: in today, 猪 pig is more similar to phonological character.

126GNY: phonological character, no. can I explain it first? Because you will get confused. Okay, first remember this, this is from the etymological perspective, 猪, in the past, si scribe, in the past, it was written in this manner, and then this did not change, then we add this part, do you know what is this part? Please pay attention to this part. Because they are similar, they share some similarities with each other. So, this one is very important, and you can understand not the character itself, but the history. Each character contains a kind of Chinese history. So that is the magic of Chinese language. Could you see what it is? if no, I can tell you.

127Participant S: no, I cannot guess.

128GNY: imagination, I just dissected this word into two parts, I dissect it into two parts, how to say, to make you understand it better. Okay.

129Participant S: okay.

130GNY: last slide, this one, can you understand a little bit?

131Participant S: it's the...ways for us to tribute.

132GNY: yes, for the tribute, but specifically, it is used, it is a kind of cooker. You know cooker?

133Participant S: yes.

134GNY: In cinese come se dice? cooker.

135Participant S: 锅。

136GNY: 厨具。锅是厨具的一种, 厨具 e' la sostantivo collettivo 厨具。厨具 is a kind of, ho bisogno di scrivere?

English Version: I need to write this one. Then 厨具, in the kitchen we usually have the beans, have lots of vegetables, so we use this one. 豆子。

137Participant S: huh?

138GNY: this is a 豆 pea right? 厨具 the cooker.

139Participant S: Okay.

140GNY: so can you understand 猪被放到厨具上面? what does it mean?(so can you understand that the pig is stewed in a cooker?)

141Participant S: they will cook it.

142GNY: they will cook it. so that is the history of 猪, I show it, it means that, this is the cooker right? They cooked not only 猪, not only pig, they cooked the vegetables, rice or anything else and then first, have you ever understood the instruments with which the ancient people, the ancient Chinese people ate? How they ate?

143Participant S: no. I did not know this story.

144GNY: okay, first, use a kind of, because I want you to search for the resources on your own, but I can explain it to you, in the ancient times, the battles, there were endless battles, there were endless battles and so the general, 将军, I can explain it in Chinese, could you understand?

145Participant S: I will try.

146GNY: 我觉得还是用中文比较好由于你汉语水平偏高, 因为这是一个中文课, 如果说你是 beginner 我可以用英语或者是意大利语。(English Version: I think it is better for me to use Chinese since your Chinese language proficiency was high. If you

were a beginner, I would use English or Italian. If there is anything that you could not understand, please tell me, ok?)

After focusing on the importance of pronouncing Chinese four tones accurately, I directed his attention to the origin of chopsticks by sharing with him a historical story related to Chinese chopsticks.

147Participant S: Okay.将军要在时间紧迫的情况下要煮熟东西，但是煮熟东西通常情况下，通常情况下那些东西都很烫手，Do you know tàng shǒu 烫手？
(English Version: Okay. The general and soldiers needed to cook things and to eat them in imminent danger, but the cooked meal was generally too hot to be picked up.)

148Participant S:huh...

149GNY: 烫手, too hot to touch.

150Participant S: 烫手, okay.

151GNY: 烫手 tàng shǒu , 第四声(I corrected his tone) (the fourth tone) , 所以他们发明了一个工具 (English Version: So, they invented an instrument with which they could pick up the scalding food. And this instrument was not but a pair of chopsticks. That is the origin of chopsticks).

152Participant S: huh.

153GNY: okay, I show it because one needed to use this kind of instrument to pick up the food in the ancient times, but this kind of instrument was a little bit crude, just not like the modern times we have very beautiful chopsticks, pairs of beautiful chopsticks, but in ancient times it does not, it's not the case, right? Okay, and then, I can show you this one, this, how was it? How can you pronounce it in Chinese? (At the same time, I asked him to pay attention to the bamboos)



Figure 32 Bamboo

154Participant S: 草偏旁。(English Version: The radical of grass)

155GNY:草偏旁？但是这是什么？(English Version: the radical of grass？But what is it?)

156Participant S: bamboo.

157GNY: in Chinese.

158Participant S: it's called zhǔ?

159GNY: no, 竹子(zhú zi) , 这个词 (translation:this word)

160Participant S: 这个词。(English Version: this word (at the same time, I directed his attention to the image of bamboo with a finger pointing at the image of 竹)

161GNY: 竹子。Zhu (4) 子 , 竹子 , 这上面是竹子 this upper component is the radical of bamboo. general, the pair of chopsticks are made of bamboos, right?

162Participant S: you tell me?

163GNY: yes, I just want to, I want to know what you have learned in the past. Right?

164Participant S: ...

165GNY: this is the cooker right?

166Participant S: okay.

167GNY: this is the bamboos, right? We use the bamboos, we use this kind of these two sticks which are the bamboos, to pick up the hot food quickly.

168Participant S: okay.

169GNY: right? Okay, so that is the modern character.

170Participant S: oh, okay.

171GNY: that is the modern. That is the modern character of this ancient character, that is a process of evolution.

172Participant S: 对。

English Version: Right.

173GNY: okay, again this one, so that is the yesteryear character of 筷 zhu, we use 筷 kuai in this way nowadays, but in the ancient times (yuan dynasty), we use this word 箸 zhu, could you please tell me why we changed the word 箸 zhu into 筷 kuai? Is it

something, there is some story related to this word?

174Participant S: (embarrassing smile) I don't know.

175GNY: so you have not learned it.

176Participant S: No.

177GNY: okay. This part, is one of the assignments. I will not tell you because if I tell you all the things, you will forget all the things.

178Participant S: Ok, giusto. si si si.

179GNY: and then, after the class, it's better for you to search on the internet for the resources related to the process. I mean how the Chinese character 箸 zhu had been changed into 筷 kuai.

180Participant S: okay....

181GNY: okay. Because in the next session, you will also watch a film clip related to Chinese chopsticks. In that clip, you will learn the symbolic meanings of Chinese chopsticks.

182Participant S: okay.

183GNY: Could you please write 筷子 (kuai zi) for me?

184Participant S: en.

[Description: I asked this participant to write kuai zi for the purpose of knowing whether he knew the stroke principles of writing Chinese characters. Then, I found out that although he wrote these two characters according to the stroke principles, he confused the radical of grass with that of bamboo. Then, to teach him to write kuai correctly, I enlightened him to pay attention to the material of making chopsticks]

185GNY: You know that the chopsticks are made of bamboos, right?

186Participant S: Oh! Yeah the bamboo right, yes.

187GNY: so this is the one we need to understand a little bit. The history, the materials, this kind of things, and then next class I will teach you how to pronounce and how to articulate a Chinese character scientifically.

188Participant S: Okay.

189GNY: because sometimes we just imitate it, to correct, to pronounce this word, but

it is necessary to master, to have some scientific methods to articulate a sound, and in this way, we will save a lot of energy. Otherwise, it will be very time-consuming. That is general linguistics.

190Participant S: 恩

191GNY: Please show me how you write the chopsticks , sorry, could you please write it. because I...

192Participant S: because you want to see the order, the stroke order.

193GNY: yes, this one, I need to correct you, this part right, it is the, how to say, the upper and lower parts right? 它是上下组合。是吧 (It is the upper-lower structure, right)

194Participant S: Si.

195GNY: and if you write this one, how to write, you write two points first, and I prefer to write in this way, first this, this.

196Participant S: that's write, I don't know how to use it.

197GNY: use it, use what?

198Participant S: So, questo è uno tratto verticale. E poi, punto, punto(English Version: So, this is a vertical stroke, and then, point, point.)

199GNY: So, this is the vertical stroke, and then this is point and turning stroke.

200GNY: so first,

201Participant S: Vertical stroke and point and point. Ok, that is right.

202GNY: So, the order is also important.

203Participant S: Okay,

204GNY: could you follow me? Because someone told me I was a little bit serious.

205Participant S: no, no, maybe I did not make mistake of it but if you have not told me, I myself would have been very angry.

206GNY: and now could you make a summary of this lesson? What we have learned in this lesson.

207Participant S: we have learned the importance of the four tones, we have also learned that, in theory there are four tones, but we have five tones, the fifth one called the neutral tone, which we can use in particular situations.

208GNY: for example?

209Participant S: for example, we use the question marks or use the particles, the

question particles, the 的 , to indicate possession.

210GNY: uh-huh.

211Participant S: When we talk about siblings, and finally we duplicate... 我看看

212GNY: not duplicate, we need to understand the situation, 我要用用 , 我要看看 , means I just use it for a short period of time, so that is the point.

[Description: As can be seen, I not only explained to him the meaning of replicated Chinese characters, but also told him that he was supposed to have the pragmatic awareness and used this bi-syllabic Chinese characters after taking account of the context that is apt best for the use of the bi-syllabic Chinese characters.

213Participant S: in the first part, we understood this. Phonology.

214GNY: yes. I need to correct one thing, but I will not correct you right now.

215Participant S: okay.

216GNY: now continue. I will not interrupt you, you need to finish the summary. And then I will correct.

217Participant S: yes, in the first part we talked about phonology. Then we moved on to the writing system of Chinese character.

218GNY: uh-huh, writing system, what we are talking about?

219Participant S: about pig.

220GNY: how to say in Chinese?

221Participant S: 猪. (zhū) zhū. And it's etymology. From where it came and how it came into...

222GNY: came into being.

223Participant S: came into being. The character as now.

224GNY: in the modern... so how we could use it, in the past...

225Participant S: in the past, it was written as a left-right order character, where we find the pig character on the left, on the right part we will find the cooker.

226GNY: cooker? No, I will not interrupt you.

227Participant S: as to represent the origin of meaning, the tribute that Chinese people paid to heavens.

228GNY: yes. so in which way we pay tribute to the heaven, to show the respect? In which way, we cannot use a cooker, but we used the cooker to cook the pig in order to pay tribute to the heaven.

229Participant S: you cook a lamb (yes) and tribute to the...

230GNY: so, we used the cooker to cook the pig, okay, in this way, so, and then...

231Participant S: and then (the bamboo character is related to this) starting from the bamboo character, we also learned, we also talked about the 筷子.kuai zi

232GNY: yes. 筷子 kuai zi (translation chopsticks). from which?

233Participant S: we talk about the of character.

234GNY: okay, I will make it, I will marshal the ideas in a systematic way. Okay, in the ancient past, I use the cooker, I use the cooker, because in the 筷子.kuai zi

235Participant S: we used it the war state...

236GNY: yes, the generals, the soldiers, to pick up the hot food.

237Participant S: the food is too hot.

238GNY: yes.

239Participant S: so, they use...

240GNY: a kind of bamboo-like instrument to pick up the food.

241Participant S: to pick up the food.

242GNY: which is too hot to touch right?

243Participant S: yes, of course.

244GNY: so that is the origin, that is the etymology of 筷, right?

245Participant S: yes.

246GNY: so we can understand either 筷 or 猪 share affinity, do you know affinity?

Share some similarity.

247Participant S: the cooker character.

248GNY: yes, the cooker. So, they all concern about food.

249Participant S: yes.

250GNY: right? The food, the cooking, right?

251Participant S: yes.

252GNY: okay and then...

253Participant S: so then you ask me to surf on the net to find the history of the

transformation of the 筷子. 筷子 character.

254GNY: transformation?

255Participant S: the development...

256GNY: Yes, the evolution of this character.

257Participant S: ancient character.

258GNY: No, not the ancient character, not of 500 years old, 500 years ago, we have 金字 , we have 象形字 , we have 小篆 , we have 甲骨文 , we cannot just say ancient character, we can only say the character in which period of history.

259GNY: or six decades ago. Or at least, a century ago. One hundred years ago. We cannot say the character in ancient times. I called this too general.

260Participant S: okay. my mistake. I understand the character you show me was from 500 years ago.

261GNY: no, it's different. Okay. So that's the reason why I ask you to make a summary. And in this way, I can know at which point you have just misunderstood. So that's it, let's call it a day.

Summary: in this teaching activity, participant S increased his Chinese and language knowledge from the following perspectives:

1. This participant S had a basic understanding of the Chinese four tones
2. He had learned the basic rules of pronouncing the Chinese neutral tone.
3. The participant had understood the history of the Chinese character 箸 and

learned how to write 箸 in logical manner. In particular, he knew how the Chinese character 筷 evolved from 箸

--- with G

GNY: cosa hai compreso da questo video?

Participant G : emm...un po', Ok

GNY: en

Participant G : Ho capito che questa persona sono stata a Tai wan , giusto?

GNY: SI' Lui è un Taiwanese. Lui ha raccontato, lui stava raccontando i foreigners.

Participant G : OK, lui è un uomo Taiwanese, dice che e' capito e' successo che alcuni errori che facessi degli errori che ha parlato.

GNY: Oltre agli errori che abbiamo compreso da questo film clip

Participant G : em

GNY: potresti raccontare il contenuto centrale di questo film di questo clip.

Participant G Ok, il contenuto principale è che Lui racconta i tre episodi,

GNY Si. che significano questi tre episodi? Di che cosa trattano?

Participant G : se non conosciamo i toni delle parole, le persone cinesi non ci capiscano. Non capiscono cosa vogliamo dire perché una parola con quattro toni può significare dei significati diversi.

GNY: eh, Si, dobbiamo, si usiamo i toni sbagliati, potremmo creare degli equivoci, addirittura quelli piu' gravi. We will create misunderstanding.

Participant G : Si

Summary: As can be seen from the conversation above, I asked a participant G to pay attention to the importance of Chinese four tones by telling him that to articulating Chinese four tones accurately is fundamental to him, as he would create some misunderstandings or what is worse, he would trigger communicational conflicts if he did not articulate a tone in an accurate manner.

9.3.2 Teaching Activity 2

- with **Participant S**:

After playing the commercial of Chinese chopsticks, I asked the participant S to describe and interpret the representative meanings of chopsticks. Then, I told him that the majority of Chinese people cherish the memory of their beloved ones who have passed away and pass on good wishes to their beloved ones or family members. Meanwhile, I explained to him the reason why the majority part of Chinese people did so by setting pairs of chopsticks on the table.

Participant S : mangiare con loro↓

GNY: sì↑

- 1 Participant S : sì↑ poi ehm no ehm una nuova vita...perché quando il ragazzo ha regalato le bacchette alla sua fidanzata era un modo per dire che stava arrivando un'altra persona nella loro vita perché era incinta ↑
- 2 GNY: ecco ↑
- 3 Participant S : una nuova vita eh aspetta poi e ah ce n'era un altro eh...ah sì ↑ l'uso delle bacchette per per eh essere riverenti verso i genitori
- 4 GNY: ah sì↑
- 5 Participant S : signor san Francisco il signore a san Francisco poggiava le bacchette eeh eh
- 6 GNY: ah ah
- 7 Participant S : dove c'era questo... dove c'erano le foto dei suoi genitori per porgergli, per fare gli auguri di di buon anno
- 8 GNY: sì ↑il motivo per cui io ti ho fatto vedere questo filmato è che ci sono tanti sensi, tanti significati su sulle bacchette e poi si passa ai significati, io vorrei dirti che tu, oppure come si dice, uhm per esempio, sì, delle culture riguardante le bacchette. Le bacchette. Innanzitutto, devo sottolineare due punti. Le bacchette, no sono l'identità cinese, sono l'identità di persone asiatiche, per esempio quella dei giapponesi
- 9 Participant S : sì sì
- 10 GNY: coreani anche, sì, usano le bacchette. La differenza è che le bacchette rappresentano diversi significati
- 11 Participant S : in Cina
- 12 GNY: non in cina, nei paesi asiatici.
- 13 Participant S : sì sì
- 14 GNY: il significato delle bacchette in cina è diverso da quello in Giappone
- 15 Participant S : sì
- 16 GNY: questo è il primo, quindi
- 17 Participant S : però tu mi hai fatto vedere un video sulla Cina
- 18 GNY: eh sì↑ sulla Cina
- 19 Participant S : quindi quello che ti posso dire, io non lo posso sapere
- 20 GNY: eh sì, però, ecco perché, il motivo per cui ti ho fatto vedere questa clip e' vorrei sottolineare che le bacchette in questo video rappresentassero l'identità del popolo cinese.
- 21 Participant S : sì sì, lo so

22 GNY: hai capito questo motivo?↑

23 Participant S: Sì

24 GNY: questo motivo, sì lo so (ride), lo sai che tutte le persone asiatiche, gli asiatici

25 Participant S : usano le bacchette? ↑

26 GNY: sì ↑

27 Participant S : sì

28 GNY: però io devo sottolineare che il significato

29 Participant S : cambia

30 GNY: cambia↑

31 Participant S : sì

32 GNY: per esempio le bacchette in Giappone è un simbolo estetico

33 però le bacchette in cinese significano tante cose, per esempio

34 si usano per esprimere l'amore verso i propri cari oppure per rispettare gli anziani.

35 Participant S : sì sì, mi ricordo, quando c'era il bambino

36 GNY: eh si↑

37 Participant S : ...che voleva iniziare a mangiare, però si deve dare la precedenza agli anziani

38 GNY: eh si↑

39 Participant S : okay, sì, giusto

40 GNY: come hai visto dal filmato. Rispettare agli anziani e' una connotazione delle bacchette nel senso cinese.

41 Participant S : okay

42 GNY: sì, a prescindere dai materiali

43 Participant S : sì sì

44 Participant S : sì, il significato, ehm, che è dentro, c'è non è l'oggetto,

45 ma il significato che c'è dietro l'oggetto

46 GNY: sì,va bene...e poi, cominciamo dal primo significato

47 Participant S : sì

48 **GNY:Just like what I have said before, a pair of chopsticks epitomize of the life that your value very much...for example since my grandmother passed away, my mother always prepared a pair of chopsticks for her. Every time when we celebrate the traditional festivals my mother set a pair of chopsticks on the table despite the fact that this seat was**

49 Participant S : **but the seat was empty**

50 GNY: **Yes, what I am going to say is that my grandmother seated there when she was alive.**

51 **Here, the pair of chopsticks were used to cherish the memory of my grandmother, your beloved ones who passed away and at the same time, you wished them lived better in the heaven, it is a kind of wish.**

52 Participant S : **okay, okay**

- **With Participant GF**

After playing the commercial of chopsticks to the participant GF, I asked him to describe and interpret the main contents of the commercial of Chinese chopsticks on CCTV. And then, by asking him questions, I explained to him how Chinese chopsticks represent the Chinese traditional values and family love by introducing the concepts of “尊 zun 老 lao 爱 ai 幼 you” (trans: respecting the old and cherishing the young) and “好 hao 邻 lin 居 ju” (trans: good neighborhood) to this participant. Then, I asked them to review the concepts related to stereotypes and prejudices.

Participants: (GNY, GF)

01 GF: background

02 GNY: diversi background, diversi..

03 GF: background sociali

04 GNY: background

05 GF: diverse situazioni

06 GNY: ah si

07 GF: situazioni

08 GNY eh si

09 GF: [Per esempio eh... per esempio, ↑le festività↓ eh...oppure
quando il

10 figlio torna a casa dalla madre//

11 dopo tanto tempo che non si vedono]

12 GNY: [eh si!, si c'è una scena..]

- 13 GF: Oppure quando un bambino molto piccolo (0.1) deve crescere e imparare
- 14 a usare le bacchette [eh...]
- 15 GNY Perché il bambino deve imparare ad usare le bacchette?
- 18 GF: Perché è una tradizione (.)Cinese↓
- 19 GNY: (0.1)eh.. continua
- 20 GF: Nel video, c'è una bambina non un bambino, la bambina lei eh... usa la
- 21 bacchette poi subito le cadono eh' (1.0) lei poi piange dice io non le so
- 22 usare, (ah si) la mamma penso//
- 23 GNY: ↑Si↓ (dice)è la mamma.
- 24 GF: [Dice, devi imparare, la prossima volta le usi bene dopo lei, la 25
bambina ci ha provato di nuovo(eh) , e ci è riuscita (si) e poi
era felice.(eh).



Figure 33 An example of respecting the old and cherishing the young

As can be seen from the conversations below, I deployed a multimodal teaching approach, as I used the frame of this Chinese commercial “let grandpa eat first” - an audio-visual mode ensemble and my utterances “*Informale oppure formale?*” “*Di solito gli anziani sono più importanti. E poi?*” – a mode of speech to create a sign-making which was my emphasis on the traditional Chinese value “respecting the old”.

Then, revolving around the meanings that were inherent in the commercial, I continuously asked GF’s questions in order to direct his attention to the Chinese traditional values which are respecting the old, hospitality and affection for family members. Thus, as can be seen from my analysis, by teaching this participant GF in a multimodal manner, I expanded participant GF’ s insights into the Chinese traditional values from the perspectives of the connotations of Chinese chopsticks.

In this sense, I adopted a multimodal approach to increasing the knowledge related to Chinese cultural and linguistic knowledge of this participant GF in a multimodal manner.

- 19 GF: Per esempio, un'altra scena, nel video c'è una cena a tavola (0.1)
- 20 (si, questo si)', la famiglia//
- 20 GF: Il bambino vuole mangiare (eh), ma il papa dice no, fai mangiare prima il nonno.]
- 21 GNY: **Eh si (fai mangiare prima il nonno) Perché?**
- 21 GF: **Perché bisogna rispettare le persone più anziane.**
- 22 GNY: **OK:, e poi?.**
- 23 GF: **Poi perché in Cina (eh) mangiano prima le persone più anziane, perché è una cosa informale.**
- 24 GNY: **Informale oppure formale?**
- 25 GF: **[scusa formale. (eh si), formale**
- 26 GNY: **nei pranzi e cene formali(eh) mangia prima (uhum) le persone ↑anziane↓,]**
- nei pranzi e cene formali(eh) mangia prima (uhum) le persone ↑anziane↓,]**
- 27 GNY: **oppure le persone più importanti**
- 28 GF: **Si, ma le persone anziane. __**
- 29 GNY: **Di solito gli anziani sono più importanti. E poi?**
- 30 GF: E poi eh..., per esempio.
- 31 GNY: C'è un'altra scena che riguarda i "table manner"
- 32 GF: [Si, ehhh (0.6) quando c'è un uomo da solo (uhum) che viene invitato(uhum) in casa di una famiglia (uhum) per mangiare, (il vicino, giusto?), i vicini per mangiare
- 33 GF: e lui dici, ↑no io non posso venire, ho già cucinato (eh)sul fuoco↓, ho già il mio cibo sul fuoco //
- 34 GNY: Lui ha detto for declining (esatto), for declining but; in fact; perhaps he doesn't cook, but it's a kind of (sisi, polite), it's a polite decline, e poi?. (sisi)
- 35 GF: poi va a casa della famiglia.()
- 36 GNY: lui va direttamente?↓ .

37 GF: [No, lui prima vuole andare (ah) a casa sua, pero il vicino lo prende e dice; no, tu vieni a casa mia (eh)↑ho preso delle bacchette in più(eh si) delle bacchette extra↓(eh si)

38 GF: eh... ,poi lui va, e mangiano tutti insieme, mangiano (eh) con le bacchette (eh), gli danno le bacchette (eh)mangia e lui è felice.

39 GNY: **eh!, sì esatto, hai descritto circa tutto il contenuto del video, che vuol dire questo video? (eh..) di che parla il video?**

40 GF: Parla che ↑le bacchette in Cina↓, “chopsticks” eh...sono un modo modo per trasmettere tanti sentimenti, tanti valori.

41 GNY: **Tanti sentimenti? per esempio?**

42 GF: per esempio (eh) I buoni vicini.

43 GNY: i buoni vicini come si generale questo buoni vicini?

44 GF: eh... In che senso?

45 GNY: buoni vicini, hǎolínjìu, (uhum) possiamo trovate una parola per://

46 GF: Ah!, si ho capito uhm...

47 GNY: **Ospitalità↓.**

48 GF: Ospitalità,(eh si) ospitalità. Sì, oppure quando bisogna trasmettere (0.2) delle regole di educazione.

49 GNY: regole di educazione. Per esempio

50 GF: Per esempio, le persone anziane mangiano prima.

51 GNY: è questo da quale rigore proviene?

52 GF: è una tradizione

53 GNY: [**è una tradizione dal (0.2) Confucia... (confucianesimo), sì.**

54 **Zūn lǎo ài yòu (translation.Respecting the old and Cherishing the young).Hai sentito?**

55 GF: sisisi (ah ok, va bene).Sì prima i più anziani

56 GNY: ah ok va bene.

57 GF: sì, prima i più anziani.

58 GNY: eh si, e poi, che hai?

59 GF: e poi, quando bisogna imparare (uhu) come si fanno le cose come si mangia (uhum) e quindi (0.2), insegnamento, insegnamento.

60 GNY: sì, questo sì, anche questo però e rispetto agli altri/-verso gli altri, è meno importante (sì, meno importante)

61 GF: oppure (0.4)nostalgia//

62 GNY: eh! , nostalgia, che nostalgia? ↓

63 GF: della madre per il figlio

64 GNY: della madre per il figlio? ↓, oltre alla nostalgia da parte della madre, che significa? ↓, lei usa le bacchette (eh...)...per esprime che cosa?

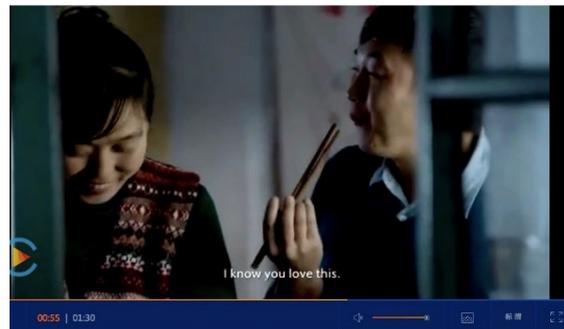


Figure 34 A scene showing the affection of family members.

As can be seen from the conversations above, by directing the attention of this Italian learner GF to the frame at 00:55, I asked him to describe the main content of this scenario and then I offered my interpretation about the symbolic meanings of Chinese chopsticks which is the affections that family members showed to each other. In this case, my verbal speech and the frame which was audio-visual mode together indicated my emphasis on the connotation of chopsticks which was the mother's love for her son.

65 GF: ↑eh,affetto↓

66 GNY: **eh, affetto materno**↓

67 GF: sisi, affetto materno sisi.

68 GNY: cioè è un tipo di sentimento ↑familiare↓

69 GF: sì, familiare

70 GNY: sì ok, **va bene.Poi per quanto riguarda le bacchette, ↑do you think ((ride)) chopstick in that video the chopsticks in this video are portrait in the right way or not?**

71 GF: sì, right way.

72 GNY: **Why in right way?. What do you think?**

- 73 GF: Io penso che siano eh mostrate le bacchette eh nel modo giusto, right way.
- 74..GNY: eh, nel modo giusto.
- 75.. GF: Perché mostrano (eh), fanno vedere tanti valori positivi (uhum) delle persone cinesi e di tutte le persone
- 76 GNY: di tutte le persone?/le persone cinesi
- 77.. GF: alcuni di tutte le persone, altri solo delle persone cinesi/.
- 78 GNY: eh si... nell'altra foto abbiamo parlato degli stereotipi e i pregiudizi, potresti spiegarmi?
- 79.. GF: Sì, stereotipo vuole dire che (0.2) per esempio, io giudico, per esempio io dico tutti i tedeschi (eh)bevono birra(eh) questo è uno stereotipo,
- 80..GNY: eh si
81. GF: perché la birra è molto famosa in Germania, ma non tutti bevono birra(eh si) questo è uno stereotipo.
- 82 GNY: some are sober.
- 83 GF: oppure tutti gli italiani mangiano la pizza.
- 84 GNY: eh si, questo è uno stereotipo.
- 85 GF: oppure tutti i cinesi mangiano:: ((ridono)) l'anatra **dōngpō**↓ (**trad. Dong po duck**)
- 86 GNY: Ah si, anatra Kǎoyā.(Kǎoyā.Kǎo/yā/ (kǎoyā)il terzo (anatra).
- 87 GF: questo è stereotipo (si).
- 88 GNY: però invece il pregiudizio?
- 89.. GF: [pregiudizio sisisi, pregiudizio// è qualcosa che si pensa prima di conoscere una persona, è una cosa negativa (eh)su una persona.
- 90.. GF: Per esempio, io non voglio conoscere quella persona perché secondo me è maleducata, secondo me, ma io non la conosco, io non so se è maleducata (eh si), questo è un pregiudizio↓**
91. GF: oppure io non voglio essere amico con (eh) i (0.5) tedeschi perchè secondo me sono tutti maleducati. Questo è un pregiudizio.]
- 92 GNY: sì eh si, si hai capito (smorchia sulla faccia del ragazzo),pero c'è "overgeneralization" (si, c'è) What does it mean?**
- 93.. GF: che... eh (0.4)c'è un detto in italiano un modo di dire, si dice io non so se lo sai, secondo me non lo sai (no,io non lo so) "fare di tutta l'erba un fascio",**

lo sai o non lo sai, è un modo di dire, si///vuol dire che tu(0.2) over-generalize(uhum) una caratteristica di una persona(uhum), e la//

94 GNY: tutte le persone. ///

95 GF: tutte le persone sono così.

96 GNY: Per esempio, c'è un cinese maleducato e molto sporco, ↑e tutti i cinesi sono maleducati e sono sporchi↓, questo è overgeneralization(sisi).

97 In questo video, abbiamo visto tanti significati sulle bacchette, per esempio, affetto materno, ospedalita', rispettare agli anziani e curare i figli, ma

98 GF: rapresentano solo una piccola parte dei significati associati alle bacchette (cinesi si')

99 GNY: Una persona non puo semplicemente associare i significati che abbiamo detto alle bacchette cinesi, perche' sulle bacchette coreane o giapponesi,hanno dei significati diversi

98 GF: Si' Si'.

9.3.3 Teaching Activity 3

After watching the film clip: *Genitori e Figli: Agitare Bene prima dell' Uso* (English Version; Parents and Children: shake well before the use), I encouraged the Italian learners of Chinese to describe and interpret the main contents of the film clip. Then, I asked them to convey their ideas about whether film clip reflects on their family education and the sociocultural reality of Italy.

[Film]

Ettore

Ettore!

[Il titolo del tema era racconta le tue vacanze di Pasqua e come l'hai vissuta. Scusate che mi intrometta è una cosa che non mi riguarda, ma il bambino lo vedo cambiato da quando vi siete separati.

Non credo c'entri la separazione, del resto quando il bambino e con me è così felice, sereno

Madre: Comunque, grazie di averci avvertiti

Maestra: bene, allora arrivederci e mi raccomando!

Madre: Gianni,

P2: è sbagliato come

Padre: adesso incontriamo il dottore, il dottore Gozzolino

GNY: Possiamo focalizzarci su questa parte, questa parte è molto importante

Padre Parliamo da uomo a uomo, A... per cortesia puoi andare a farti un giro, rimaniamo un attimo da soli

Madre: Per cortesia niente, io rimango qui, voglio assistere

Padre: Ci vuoi parlare tu? (si) va bene. Complimenti bell'inizio

lo psicologo però disse un'altra cosa, non è la colpa della situazione (Ettore!) il fatto è che il razzismo e ormai nell'aria, si respira la polvere, è incredibile come teoria eh]

Teacher: GNY Participant GF: P1 Participant S: P2

1 GNY: ok, va bene (0.3) (eh) Che cosa avete compreso da questo filmato?

2 P1: che i bambini (aha) si fanno influenzare dall' ambiente sociale (.) quindi se c'è molto razzismo nella società i bambini si fanno influenzare↓.

3 GNY: ok questo è un punto di vista, e poi?

Perché io ho visto che stavi per parlare

4 P2: no niente, un'altra cosa non c'entra niente con la lezione di oggi↓

5 GNY: non c'entra niente con la lezione di oggi. Ok, quindi oltre a questo. Che hai imparato? per esempio la modalità dell'educazione dei genitori. Per quanto riguarda la modalità di educazione da parte dei padri, Cosa avete scoperto?↓

6 P1: in che senso?

7 GNY: nel senso, come i genitori in questo filmato educano:: i propri bambini?

8 P1: eh (.), loro discutono fra di loro, (eh, si) non è bello, non va bene. ↓

9 P2: sì, sono in contrasto fra di loro (esatto) usano il figlio (dovrebbero essere d'accordo) è un (.), diciamo è un intermediario nella loro lite, è un modo per loro di litigare (esatto). Usano il figlio come scusa per litigare tra di loro, e il figlio percepisce la negatività che c'è tra i due genitori e (.) la riversa sulle altre persone↓

10 GNY: si, la riversa sulle altre persone, quindi secondo voi com'è. C'è una frase ↑ “i bambini sono fragili, vengono protetti” ↓ (si). Cosa pensate su queste due parole () “fragili e protetti”?

11 P2: beh, fragili nel senso che è facile assumano dei comportamenti sbagliati e che poi non riescano più a cambiare i loro atteggiamenti verso un tema specifico, come il razzismo di questo bambino era, fosse ormai (aveva un motivo per)// Anche I bambini ascoltano molto quello c'è interno a loro (alla maestra), alla maestra, ai loro amici (ad altri bambini), ascoltano altri bambini, alla maestra e ai genitori e ascoltando (si) e imparano da quello che c'è intorno a loro sono molto sensibili ↓

12 GNY: Ah, ok, Io vorrei sapere in realtà, per quanto riguarda la modalità di educare come si dovrebbe comportare verso le persone che sono diverse da noi? Potresti condividere le vostre storie? Come i vostri genitori vi educano ancora ↓

13 P2: adesso, ormai non più,

14 GNY: ↑ormai non più ok, (siamo adulti) siete adulti, ok quindi quando eravate bambini, come vi hanno educati i vostri genitori? (eh). Per esempio, il comportamento e l'atteggiamento verso le persone diverse ↓

15 P1: verso gli stranieri?

16 GNY: non sono stranieri, no si può dire stranieri, perché non c'è.... Secondo me siamo tutti stranieri ↓ perche' abbiamo i...come si dice.. i diversi background linguistic e culturali. Non c'e' uno standard culturale fisso in base a cui possiamo giudicare le persone con le nazionalita diverse.

Explanation: By saying “siamo tutti stranieri” I tried to find the intercultural thread with which I could find out the connection with them. By finding connection, I intended to let them pay attention to the fact that their linguacultural backgrounds are distinct, being expanded into and engaged with during the process they interacted with the people with diverse nationalities. On the one hand, the people who carry their distinctive accents, language and cultural knowledge related to their own countries may continuously shape and reshape their identities in a way that they could adapt themselves to one another. On the other hand, they formed a set of recognized rules that they could follow or the collegial behavior that the people with distinct linguacultural backgrounds could acknowledge for how to behave in the discourse activities that they could engage in. Therefore, the presumed differences in terms of nationality, physical appearance and social conventions could not be viewed as the sole criterion according to which they claimed that they are Italian in a way that they alienated the people coming from different countries and labeled these people as foreigners. Thus, in this globalized world, it seems impossible to find out a pre-established norm based on these

two Italian learners of Chinese made judgments of the cultural backgrounds of the people whom they had encountered, in the sense that each one has his or her own distinct lingua cultural knowledge which is continuously undergoing changes as they interact with the other people (because of the aforesaid two reasons). At this point, everyone could be regarded as a foreigner as each one is unfamiliar with the linguacultural backgrounds of his or her interlocutors, no matter whether they and their interlocutors share the nationality or member resources (MR). However, as can be seen from the conversations as followed, I failed to let them get my point.

17 P1: si ho capito.

18 GNY: eh:: vorrei sapere la modalità di educazione dei vostri genitori

19 P1: i miei genitori sono stati sempre d'accordo, non hanno mai discusso come questi genitori (mai)/ eh:: poi mi hanno detto di accettare (solo accettare). No, io non mi ricordo io ero piccolo, però penso di sì, tutti siamo uguali (eh sì), ok (tutti siamo uguali) però non mi ricordo altro (ah ok) però io comunque non ho mai detto le cose che il bambino ha detto (non vi hanno spiegato?). Sì, probabilmente sì però io adesso non mi ricordo (ok) sai ero molto piccolo ↓

20GNY: e poi e tu?

21 P2: i miei genitori non hanno mai avuto delle frasi razziste a casa (eh sì), hanno sempre rispettato

22 GNY: ma non solo le parole ma anche l'atteggiamento e l'intonazione. Le parole sono solo piccole parti, tipo le espressioni faciali e i gesti↓

Explanation: With the grammatical pattern “non solo... ma anche”, I emphasized that communication should be viewed as a kind of whole-body activity, including linguistic and non-linguistic modes, viz., gestures, facial expressions, and verbal speeches (Urye, et al., 2014). The whole-body activity could manifest itself in my words “atteggiamento, intonazione, parole e le espressioni faciali e i gesti” in line 21. In this way, I tried to let these two Italian learners realize that communication, in nature, is multimodal-oriented, rather than being reduced to verbal speeches which are shown by “non solo parole”.

23 P2: sono sempre stati. L' importante era rispettare, essere educato verso gli altri e comportarsi il modo civile quando ero in giro a scuola (sì). I miei genitori erano severi nel momento in cui non mi comportavo come una persona civile, nell'ambiente della

scuola o con gli amici. Bisogna comportarsi in un certo modo (esatto) essere rispettosi↓
24 GNY: ah ok, ho capito. Quindi, non vi hanno insegnato come pensare? (si). Come pensare? ↓

25P1: non solo i genitori, ma anche la scuola (anche la scuola) ti insegna a pensare↓

26GNY: L'educazione delle scuole e dei genitori non si possono separare, si. Per quanto riguarda la scuola per esempio, che avete ascoltato oppure avete saputo per quanto riguarda l'atteggiamento o il comportamento verso gli altri visto che Italia è un paese di immigrati. Sì, quindi, ↑Could you please recollect your memory? ↓

27 P2: io ho sempre avuto amici che erano non erano di nazionalità italiana, anche di nazionalità diverse

28 GNY: si avevi degli amici. Però questo è superficiale, come pensano loro, quelli di diversa nazionalità?

Description, Interpretation and Explanation: By making contestation that “l'educazione delle scuole e dei genitori non si possono spiegare” in line 25 and asking the participant 2 the question “come pensano loro, quelli di diversa nazionalità in line 27, I tried to let the participant 2 to image what the people with different nationalities would feel. That is to say, I tried to let him infer the mental states of his friends with different nationalities. And in this way, I encouraged him to align his subjective positioning and emotion states with those of his friends. By doing so, I tried to arouse the empathy of participant 2 by developing his awareness for understanding the emotions and intentions of this participant's friends. Since empathy plays a pivotal role in letting the people with a linguacultural background to understand the emotions and ideas of each other, it is one of the agents for promoting intercultural understanding. As Kramsch (1993) put it “Through the dialogue [...] each person tries to see the world through the other's eyes without losing sight of himself or herself.”

29 P1: erano amici.

30 GNY: ma, quando incontriamo una cosa in cui abbiamo diverse opinioni, come ci comportiamo?

31P1: ↑l'importante è la propria di opinione, non quella degli altri↓

32 P2: dipende da noi e da come veniamo educati (esatto) a casa e a scuola, se i genitori

33 e gli insegnanti hanno un atteggiamento positivo verso tutti gli altri, noi
rispecchiamo

34 quello che vediamo nei nostri genitori↓

35 GNY: ↑Could you please give me an example?

36 P2: se mia madre è rispettosa verso (.) la nostra vicina che era di nazionalità, lei era di nazionalità, veniva dall'ex Iugoslavia (ah ok), anche io ero amico dei suoi figli che erano della stessa nazionalità, giocavamo assieme, andavamo a giocare a calcio, tutti insieme (ok) non c'era nessun problema↓

37GNY: Ok, e tu?

38 P1(GF): anche io, la mia vicina era però africana. **Se i mei erano rispettosi con lei anche io lo ero**↓ **Capito?**

39GNY: sì, questo l'ho capito, sì. Quando andiamo d'accordo con gli altri, tutto va bene (sì ho capito). Però, quando abbiamo degli scontri (sì) Come pensiamo? A questo momento come possiamo reagirci agli altri ? ↓

40P1: se noi siamo abituati a rispettare il diverso, (uhum) noi rispetteremo sempre il diverso. Ogni volta che lo vediamo, incontriamo rispetteremo, perché

Description and Interpretation: Here, I quoted the exchange between line 29 - line 40. In this conversation, I initiated a question “quando incontriamo una cosa in cui abbiamo diverse opinioni, come ci comportiamo?” for the purpose of knowing how the Italian learners of Chinese communicated with the people of different nationalities and knowing whether they were able to view a cultural phenomenon from a variety of perspectives. Besides, by doing so, I could know whether they had critical thinking, holding suspecting attitudes towards the education that they had received.

In this exchange, participant 1 answered my question, reckoning that the education that he received from the school and his families were the criteria according to which they react towards the people of different nationalities. The opinion of this participant manifest itself in “dipende da noi e da come veniamo educati (esatto) a casa e a scuola” and the conditional clause which serves to introduce a hypothesis “se i genitori e gli insegnanti hanno un atteggiamento positivo verso tutti gli altri noi rispecchiamo quello che vediamo nei nostri genitori”. In this utterance, the participant used “noi” to lay emphasis on the attitudes that he held towards his parents’ education ways “noi rispecchiamo quello che vediamo nei nostri genitori”. In order to find the

intercultural thread with which I could enable them to reflect on the education that they had received and to challenge the taken-for-granted viewpoint that they had long championed which was ‘respecting the diversity in this exchange’, I continued to ask them to make examples to find out the point with which I could spur them to reflect on their own family and school education. Participant 2 explained how he respected diversity by making an example of his neighbor in line 36. Meanwhile, participant 1 concurred with the participant’s explanation, emphasizing that he also agreed with the attitudes that his parents held towards the others, as evidenced in line 38 “anche io, la mia vicina era però africana. Se i mei erano rispettosi con lei anche io lo ero Capito?” By juxtaposing the phrases below:

noi rispecchiamo quello che vediamo nei nostri genitori

noi rispetteremo sempre il diverso.

noi siamo abituati a rispettare il diverso

I learned that participant 1 merely claimed that the education that they received from schools and their families is the holy writ according to which they reacted and held attitudes towards the people with diverse nationalities. In this sense, they took the premise that the education they had received was the only ‘correct’ way with which they make civilized conduct, instead of realizing that the other educational ways within the other cultural communities and societies would be also reasonable and “correct”.

At this point, they did not recognize cultural complexity and diversity, particularly from the perspective of family and school education.

42P2: ma secondo me un dibattito con una persona italiana o una persona che è di nazionalità non italiana è la stessa cosa (appunto), possiamo avere uno scontro verbale, ma comunque si può arrivare. ↓

Description: Rapport management is a commonality shared by people all over the world. People who engage in daily communication may create misunderstandings despite their different linguacultural backgrounds. The miscommunication has largely to do with their incapability to deploy the appropriate skills to regulate their emotions or to operate on the facework (i.e. positive, negative face and bold-on record) of the other interactants. (Spencer-Oatey, 2009) The addressers who are inflexible to adapt his or her emotions and subjective position to those of their addressee are prone to create

communicative misfire. And this has little to do with nationalities but has more to do with viewpoints and individual's attitudes towards a given issue. In this conversation, by juxtaposing a nominal phrase "una persona italiana" and a prepositional phrase "di nazionalità non italiana", the participant 2 opined that people with Italian nationality and those of no Italian nationality may, more or less create misunderstandings when they speak with one another. And according to this participant, it is the different points of view that interlocutors hold triggered the verbal conflicts, rather than their different nationality. The viewpoint of Participant 2 can be reflected in the sentence "ma secondo me un dibattito con una persona italiana o una persona che è di nazionalità non italiana è la stessa cosa possiamo avere uno scontro verbale, ma comunque si può anche arrivare." At this point, participant 2 wanted to emphasize that communicative conflicts had little to do with nationality. His emphasis reflected that he did not tackle problems by only leaning on national stereotypes or the presumptions related to nationality. His thinking pattern revealed that he had reflective and critical capability which had not yet been stimulated. Capturing this point, I kept asking him questions to arouse his reflective awareness of his own culture, as evidenced by line 43.

43GNY: ma, lo scontro non c'entra la cultura, non c'entra la nazionalità, questo è giusto (si, esatto) cosa c'entra allora?

44P1: le modalità di pensiero?

45GNY: Sì. Ma centrano di più i diversi punti di vista, giusto?

46 P1: (si). Non c'entra solo la cultura oppure la nazionalità.

47 P2 sono tutte cose quelle, stimoli che vengono dai media (dai media), i media stimolano il cittadino a pensare in maniera anche sbagliata.

Description, Interpretation and Explanation: By asking the question "le modalità di pensiero?", this participant 2 sought my explanation for the reason that triggered the conflicts between the people with different linguacultural backgrounds. He regarded my question "*lo scontro non c'entra la cultura, non c'entra la nazionalità, questo è giusto (si, esatto) cosa c'entra allora?*" and his previous discourses (from line 29 – 40) as the given part of his member resources (MR), based on which this participant 2 (Salvatore) reflected on the reasons for triggering conflicts between the people with different nationalities. By reconceptualizing my interpretation "centrano di più i diversi punti di vista, giusto?", participant 2 knew the causes that led to the conflicts by

reflecting on the role that media played in people's minds. His reflection can be seen in *line 44 "sono tutte cose quelle, stimoli che vengono dai media (dai media), i media stimolano il cittadino a pensare in maniera anche sbagliata."* Besides, he also emphasized that media ("the stimoli" in line 44) might have negative effects on citizens' way of thinking, as evidenced by "pensare in maniera anche sbagliata". From this participant's emphasis on the negative effects of media, I could understand that participant 2 suspected the deterministic role that media play in citizens' thinking patterns "pensare in maniera anche sbagliata", which manifests his reflection on his own culture. Since his attitudes towards media show his reflection on his own culture, an integral part of intercultural competence (Deardorff & Arasaratnam, 2017), this participant 2 improved his cultural competence, as he explained the formation of stereotypes "un episodio singolo causato magari da una persona". "lo stereotipo (eh) viene creato da una serie di casi e di informazioni sbagliate che riceviamo, molte persone trasformano un episodio singolo, un episodio causato magari da una persona di nazionalità non italiana in stereotipo o odio verso gli stranieri"

In Byram (1997, 2017)'s intercultural communicative model and my cultural model, critical cultural awareness enables foreign language learners to evaluate and criticize one's own societies and those of the others in terms of a cultural phenomenon. It also enables people to challenge the explicit criteria, standardized rules and taken-for-granted common sense and at the same time, it helps people to see through the dominating ideologies that are inherent in media discourses. (Fairclough, 1993) In this case, the participant 2 made an objective evaluation of the Italian media by pointing out its merits and demerits. He could reflectively challenge the legitimate position of Italian media, realizing the impacts that Italian media inflicted on Italian people's thinking patterns. That could be manifested in the sentence "*i media stimolano il cittadino a pensare in maniera anche sbagliata*".

45 GNY: eh si questo è il punto

51 P2: l'influenza, lo stereotipo (eh) viene creato da una serie di casi e di informazioni sbagliate che riceviamo, molte persone trasformano un episodio singolo, un episodio causato magari da una persona di nazionalità non italiana in stereotipo o odio verso gli stranieri

9.3.4 Teaching Activity 4

At the very beginning of the lesson, I first distributed an excerpt adapted from *Jia*, written by Ba Jin. I let the Italian learners of Chinese read the handout and the questions written on that handout. After they finished reading it, I encouraged them to describe and interpret the main contents and the inherent meanings in that literary text.

01Participant S: si' ok, allora la reazione di Juéxīn↓ alla notizia(.) che lui
sposerà una ragazza che gli è stata imposta dal padre ha
deciso il padre che ragazza sposerà↓

02Partecipante GF eh lui ↑davanti al padre non dice niente↓ eh: è diciamo
non ha reazione

03Participant GF poi quando va in camera ed è da solo↓ si butta sul letto
e piange (eh), quindi la sua reazione è sicuramente di
disperazione, è disperato

04GNY è disperato, si...

05Participant S eh perché gli è stata ↑imposta una cosa contro la sua
volontà↓

06GNY eh si contro la sua volontà↓, ↑però do you think questo
protagonista ha la sua agenzia↓

08GNY cioè autonomia (si, ha la sua autonomia), autonomia
però: (ma non..)
padre) si

09Partecipante GF lui non osa perché ↑forse ha paura della reazione del
padre↓ (uhm), non vuole magari deludere il padre, lui
non vuole deludere; forse; e quindi non dice niente



Figure 35 The Italian learner was expressing his ideas with his left hand moving up and down.

10 Partecipante GF: non ha reazione perché è come dire sottomesso,
↑sottomissione↓ (eh si) al padre, eh però:: dentro di sé↓
(si) ↑lui non è contento non è felice↓

12 Partecipante GF ed è appunto molto triste, infatti lui si butta sul
letto e piange↓

13 GNY e dal suo punto di vista, lui ha un piano futuro↓ (si) che tipo di piano futuro↓

14 Partecipante S ↑piano↓ (ah piano) ↓

15 GNY piano, ok

16 Partecipante S eh, lui vuole(.) fare carriera (uhum)

18 GNY ↑molto generico↓ (si), che tipo di carriera↓(vuole...)

19 Partecipante GF lui è molto brillante, uno studente molto brillante e
vuole andare, qua dice, andare in Germania↓ a studiare
oppure a Shanghai a Pechino↓ (uhm)

20 Partecipante GF eh però (0.3) diciamo che questo suo sogno, questo suo
piano↓ è ostacolato dal matrimonio che gli ha imposto il
padre (eh). Si.

22 GNY Si, quindi lui ha il suo piano sul futuro (si, autonomia) si
autonomia ok, ok va bene

Description:

This participant first described and interpreted the psychological state of the protagonist Jue Xin by using a myriad of verb phrases “non osa” “ha paura” “non vuole magari” “non deludere” By doing so, this participant implied the negative emotions of Jue Xin, as evidenced by “non è content” “non è felice”. By having used the negative phrases “non +vuole/non deludere/osa” for three times and the adjective phrases “non + e’ felice/ contento”, this participant emphasized greatly the pain that the protagonist Jue Xin felt. After that, this participant explained the reason why Jue Xin was suffering from the aforesaid negative emotions was that he was imposed by the power of his father “come dire sottomesso, sottomissione (eh si) al padre”. Then, with the phrase “sottomissione al padre”, the participant continued to reinforce that the father of Jue Xin had more power than Jue Xin and then enhanced that it was the father of Jue Xin who inflicted the pain on Jue Xin.

As can be seen from the description at the levels of grammar and vocabulary, this participant interpreted that Jue Xin had no agency and was regarded as an object of the father, as participant 1 juxtaposed the submissive attitudes of Jue Xin held towards his father and the control of the father of Jue Xin, all of which was reflected in participant’s assumption initiated by “forse” “lui non vuole deludere; forse; e quindi non dice niente”.

Then, by emphasizing that Jue Xin was brilliant and has the dream of going to Germany and comparing the “matrimonio” to “ostacolo”, this participant enhanced that the marriage that his father arranged by his father was the sole barrier impeding him from pursuing his dream, which was shown by “dal matrimonio che gli ha imposto dal suo padre ”.

After that, I showed the participants S and C eight-frame comic strips and another image. In the eight-frame comic strips, one could see a skinny old man who wears torn clothes carrying a shoulder pole with two woven baskets. In the two woven baskets, there are a boy and a girl. The girl who is in a woven basket is attached by a tag with several traditional Chinese characters. And the boy who is in another basket is labeled with another tag. From the second frame, another boy dressed in rags passes by and sees these two woven baskets. He picks up a pen, finds a paper and then writes some Chinese characters on it. He holds that paper on his neck and stands next to that old

man, as he tries to sell himself for 10,000 “inflated pre-war yuan. From the facial expressions of the boy and that old man who carries two baskets, one can observe that they get bored. And from the eighth frame, the boy sees a rich lady who spends ten times that amount on an imported doll for her own son. The boy looked back at them, wearing a bitter smile on his face.

In another image, a heavy woman who wears a fur coat looks at a scraggy and shaking boy in a disdainful way.

In the third image, a mother is hugging the protagonist of this comic strip – san mao, crying heavily.

I then asked the two participants to read these comic strips and asked them to describe the main contents. After that, I invited them to interpret the four framed comic strips and another image, all of which were produced by the author Zhang Leping (1910-1992). The following discourses showed how these participants and I negotiated the meanings which were embedded in these comic strips and how they and I aired different views on the attitudes that parents held towards their children during the historical period between 1923 -1933.

1P1: **The social representation of poverty forced people to sell themselves in contrast to ... the wealth of ... people with a lot of money,**

2 P1: they look only at what is **beautiful (ok)**, at the beauty of the things. They don't help those **who are poor, they don't even consider those who are in need.**

3 GNY: ok

4 P2: Yes, ah ... the rich people, the wealthy society only look at the appearance (ah) at what is shown through the showcases, through the outside, at what is beautiful.

5 GNY: yes

6 P2: they **don't care about the ugly (yes, so...), the broken and the poor things, they don't even look at them.**

7 GNY: so, **as I mentioned before, // there is a gap between the rich and the poor //, so how was the society?**

8 P2: The society only takes account of the things that are important to them and don't ... ah? (the society is divided into different classes). It does not care about the poor people (oh yes).



Figure 36 The participant S was looking at me and participant G was interpreting the inherent meanings of the comic strips.

As can be seen from line 8 “The society only took account of the things that are important to them and don’t ...ah?” and the figure 37, participant 2 used the adverb “only” and floundered his words with an auxiliary verb in the negative form “don’t” and an interjection “ah” and meanwhile he delayed interpreting the meaning of these comic strips, as evidenced by the ellipsis omission “...”. As can be seen, the answers of participant 2 reflected that participant 2 did not have too much knowledge about Chinese society at that time, as he did not provide any detailed information. He did not specify “the things that are important to them” nor did he explain the reason why the society does not “care about the poor”. What is more, he took an over-simplistic viewpoint of Chinese society at that time in that he divided it into different social classes and ignored the fact that society was too complex and diversified to be divided.

And since this participant was an Italian learner of Chinese, his Chinese language and culture might be one of the integral constituents of his member resources (MR). In this case, both the discourse/interpretation that another participant gave in terms of the eight-frame comic strips and the background knowledge concerning Chinese culture history acted as one of the parts of the member resources of participant 2. Drawing on the member resources of this participant 2, participant 2 described, interpreted and explained the four frame comic strips. Since this participant’s interpretations about the Chinese cultural knowledge related to this comic strips manifested themselves in his repetitive words and hesitational tones “The society only took account of the things that are very important, very important to them and don’t ... ah?”, this Italian learner of Chinese might not have too much background knowledge related to Chinese cultural knowledge.

9 GNY: you need to know about the story was depicted by the author in 1935 and reflected the historical background between 1923 to 1933.

10 P2: Yes, this story is set in the 23

11 GNY: No, between 23 and 33

12P1: well yes, (between this period) when there was ... when the Communist Party come to exist

13GNY: The Communist Party came later, (it was just coming to exist) it was coming to exist, yes.

14P1 It was starting to get stronger

15 GNY: Yes, **but (五四运动 wu si yun dong) was before this historical period.** Wu si Yun dong took place at the time of 1919.

16P1: Oh yes, there was May 4th

17P2: Oh yes

18 GNY Do you know about it?

19P1: Okay, so there were student riots

20 GNY [not **just students' riots (riots for ...)**

21 GNY: there were also workers]

22 P1: [yes workers (OK), more than just students (oh yes students, ok)

23 P1: more than just the students who left Beijing and then go around China]

24 GNY: ok, so what was the reason? (ah ...)

25P1: the reason was (ah,the protest) ...

26 GNY what?

27 P1: so, there were protest against...

28 P2: protest against (against) the society of the time

29P1: there were protests (ah, I know) to have a change in the literature of that time.

30GNY: oh yes, oh yes.... (破除封建迷信 pochufengjianmixin to override feudalism), and then ...

31P1: **But** this protest was also against the warlords (The participant1 took my turn and associated the protests with I signori della guerra.)

32 GNY:I signori della guerra?

33 P2: the warlords

34GNY: the warlords ok, have you studied about it? First, there was a protest against the war lords and then (yes jiu yes jiu nian wu yue si ri wu si feng lei (then the nationalists) And then the young people started to ...

35: P1: oh yes, they started creating cultural associations.

36 GNY: They were appealing for the new culture. Mr. sai and Mr. De have you studied about it? Mr. Sai is Science, while Mr. De is Democracy

37 P1 & P2 Si si

38: GNY: sai is the sai of sai zhenzhu (Pearl Buck) and it is also the sai of bi sai (competition) So they appealed a society who championed science and democracy because at that time the whole Chinese society was closed

39 P1 SI

40 The imperialist countries invaded China at that time. They initiated movements to fight against the imperialism and the government was the warlord during that historical period. So the society was..

41 Si' there were lots of members in the society who struggled against the control and suffered from poverty.

42 So the society became poor

43 a society without spirit and culture

At the same time, I wrote down these two characters on the notebook : the pronunciation of “sai” sounds like science and that of “de” Democracy. By writing, speaking the Chinese characters “德” and “赛” and looking at them from time to time, I intended to let them have a rough understanding of the historical background of the May Fourth Movement: the people who received higher education at that time appealed for science and democracy. Here, I deployed a multimodal approach to teaching them the historical knowledge pertaining to 五四运动 for my verbal speech demonstrated from lines 34 – 36, the Chinese characters “德” and “赛” that I wrote on the paper and my eye contacts with the Italian learners of Chinese were all the multimodal means with which I let them learn about Chinese linguacultural knowledge.

After explaining the linguacultural knowledge related to the May Fourth Movement to the Italian learners, I directed the attention of students to the comic strips and let them interpret the intended meanings of the four comic strips.

When being asked what they have learned from these comic strips, Participant 1 took the turn, saying that “there was no culture” I explained to him that during that historical period, the society was chaotic as there was a great number of the poor people suffered from hunger and cold. They were unable to survive. By doing so, I intended to

say that people at that time found it difficult to survive. There was little possibility that they received an education, let alone creating a strong culture.

The conversations that I made with two Italian learners can be seen as followed:

62 P1 there was no strong culture at that time.

63 GNY: No, this was a confusion and a chaotic society. The poor people lived in a mysterious decadent and terrible situation (oh yes) They suffered from hunger and cold to such an extent that they were forced to sell their children as the legal system was not sound at all at that time.

64P2 : Yes, it happened

65P1: [but, today if you visit China you can see parents in the parks placing ads to sell their children so that they can find someone to get married, so there is a cultural custom that continues to exist

66 P1 there are always parent who believe they own their children

67 GNY: They own...

68 P1: ...own their children

69 GNY: they own their children, yes, that is right but they respect their children's opinions.

70P1: However, there is still a criticism towards the parents who think that they can sell their children

71 GNY ::, sell their children as they were objects, without autonomy without agency?

72 P1: It is something that is still present (until today), is still there.

73 GNY: It is still there... but as they say it is still there with a different connotation. This society it's like that

74 P1: but in my opinion today it is even worse.

75 GNY: Why is it even worse today?

76 P1: because today there are not only laws the protect people but also the Chinese society has totally changed (yes) back to the days the Chinese citizens had no money

77 GNY: they didn't have ...

78 P1: they had nothing

79 GNY: they had no protection

80 P2: A law the protects them was not there

81P1: yes, there was not any government that could help the citizens and the towns.

82 GNY: but, today it's even worse because (exactly), although there is law...

83 P2: Exactly

84 P1: it is ironically worse.

85 GNY: Why?

86 P2: because there is the law, there are laws that protect the citizens and yet despite the

existence of this law certain things keep happening.

87 GNY: I would like to ask you why do think it has gotten worse?

88 P1: ah ... that's the reason.

89 P1: ah ... I already mentioned it. Because there is the law, but the same things that happened in the past are still happening today. The reason is because there hasn't been a change in the way of thinking, in the mentality. It has remained the same as before.

90 GNY: (sigh) You're right, however, I would like to emphasize that in the society only a small number of people who had no moral standard and did this horrible thing just for the money. Right now, the constitution of the People Republica of China implemented new laws, emphasizing that the people who dare to sell their children are sentenced to death or to life-long sentence. They are just asocial and immoral people who earn money in illegal way. The majority of the Chinese people values their own children more than anything else, they love their children and even spoil them (uhum, yes) and in the last lesson you will listen to a song named Where does time go which tells the sacrifices that parents have done for the sake of their own kids.

92 P1: Oh yes

93 P2: no, I don't understand. '

94 GNY: I don't understand, what don't you understand?

95 P2: the word you just mentioned. The word.

96 GNY: ah, I said. Indeed, You're right

97 P2: Yes I do, indeed.

98 GNY: Indeed. It is not about the law, oh yes the law is partially (partially) concerned, however, it is the divergence between the rich and the poor people (yes ok) that has yet not been changed very much (that has not changed much). Unfortunately, this is the current situation (yes ok ok)

99 P2: Yes, it's true.

100 GNY: they don't have enough money, then

101 P1: Yes, that's right. Despite the fact the poor people lack of money, a changed in their mentality has not happened yet. This poor people still maintain a mentality of the 1900s.

102 GNY: It does not concern the mentality. (not at all)

103 P1: It is about the mentality. It is about the way they see the world.

104 GNY: What do you mean for mentality?

As can be seen from the conversations above, I kept asking him questions in order to know what he meant by “mentality”.

105 P1: I mean, the way of thinking concerning the money.

106 GNY: Ah! Do you think....

107 P1: **[the way of thinking about the money. The problem Is that they think about money in the present time rather than thinking of money as the means for investing it in the long term, I mean investing money for their future ...**

108 P1: **They just think about money in the present, so that is why they always stay in the same place]**

109 GNY: I see, but then what is this money for? Shouldn't this money be used to provide to their own needs

110P2: Yes, (to provide to their own needs). Oh yes. What does it mean?

111GNY: It means that they can survive if they meet their needs.

112 P2: Salvatore means that these people don't foreseen the future they rather just think about the present.

113 GNY: yes, have you studied Maslow's Self-actualization?

114 P2: No, I haven't

115 P1: No, I haven't

116 GNY: We need to meet the basic needs like what I am going to eat, or ...

117 P2: or where to sleep

123 GNY: But could you put yourself; how do you say; (in their shoes), "Could you put yourself in their shoes". If they have no time **how they can ...**

124P1: **[well, it does not mean that I have a lot of money, I just have the right money to live on, that's why I have to think about how I spend this money**

125 P1: Should I have to spend on this? I have to think about investing my money somewhere. What should I do today? Should I eat more or less food? In order to able to put some money aside (ok)

126 P2: Yes, he is right (I should put some money aside...)

127 GNY: **So, what's the point? Could you ... (meaning negotiation)**

128 P1: I mean, if I only think of surviving. I will never have anything in life. I will never be able to live.

129 P2: some sacrifices are needed to plan the future.

Description: The participant 2 used the determiner "some" followed by a noun in the plural form to cover the real agent who really did the sacrifices and who had the need to plan the future. By doing so, participant 2 left people to infer the agent who could be parents, children or the whole family. By using the noun phrase "some sacrifice" instead of using a clause which is comprised of a subject, a verb and a complement, say "The families should make some sacrifices to plan the future", he did not clearly say whether the Chinese or Italian families made sacrifices to plan the future.

130 GNY2: oh yes. In this case you're right, but in the other case. If they are very poor, have you noticed that there are tears swelling in the eyes of this mother? (And meanwhile, I pointed at an image that a mother hugging her son crying lightly) The children are their beloved ones. Do you think that they do not cherish their own beloved ones.

(Participant 1 Chime-in: Yes)

But because of the turbulent society which was greatly damaged by the war and the paucity of the necessity for life, there were lots of people who suffered from hunger and cold. Let's imagine, if we could not survive, we could not provide a shelter for our children, how could we let our children to eat and learn, let alone investing the money on our future. At that time, one of the reasons for which the shaggy old man in that image sold their children is that he wanted their children to have a much better life in the rich families.

131 P1: (but there are a lot of people who make a living because of their capability. But the government at that time was incapable.

132 GNY: Yes, the job market was controlled completely by the privileged social class. There was no place for the people who were at the lower class.

133 P1: I don't know what they have in mind, but let's just think about how many poor people in China have recently become rich.

134 GNY: yes, **but it depends on the historical time. At that time, the poor people who at low social class did not even have any chance to make money. and it also depends on person to person ...**

135 P1: **without any government help. 这是对的,我要做些笔记 (Trad. That is right, I will take some notes) .**

136 GNY: [depends on person to person, the poor people are not a generic community.

137 P1: oh yes, It is about the mentality ..., the mentality, but it is also about the individual mentality. It depends on the person.

138 GNY:, you have to see it from different points of view to be able to solve the situation, if you only use one point of view to solve it. It won't be solved.

139 GNY: It won't be solved.

140 P1: you have to see the problem from multiple angles ...

141 GNY: yes, it's complicated, you have to see it from many perspectives.

142 P2: there are multiple perspectives in everything

143 GNY: there are many causes, there are many reasons that have contributed to this situation.

144 P2: yes

145 GNY: These reasons have caused this situation to happen (yes). this is the point of

view,

146 P1: oh yes!

147 GNY: it is not from the top down, but from the bottom-up point of view in this case.

Analysis: I quoted this exchange in order to show how they and I construed and explained the content of these eight-frame comic strips in different ways. I emphasized that the phenomenon of “selling the children” was brought by three reasons. They are the immorality of a small number of people, the ways of making living and the government’s incapability. While the other two participants focused on the way of spending money, keeping reiterating that an individual should save the money for their future and one needs to make money based on their own capability.

As the interview went on, I noticed that these two participants took the Othering perspective when they interpreted the comic strips, as they drew on their own member resources to construe the comic strips instead of understanding what the majority of Chinese poor people thought or what they suffered from. (Hoff, 2014) What is worse, the participant 1 even stigmatized the thinking pattern related to possessing children, thinking that the phenomenon of selling children happens nowadays in spite of Chinese sound legal system.

To arouse their empathy and to prompt these two participants to imagine what that old man would feel in that turbulent society, I showed them another image. (a mother hugging a child crying heavily) To align myself with them and to suggest them imagine a situation where the poor suffered from hunger and cold, I used the first-person plural imperative “let’s imagine” in line 130 instead of the third- person single pronoun “he” or “she”. And by using the present subjunctive mood, I continued to prompt these participants to infer the mental states (i.e. emotions,) of mother and that old man had during that historical time and meanwhile I enabled them to inhibit their own point of view if necessary. What is more, I used the conditional clause “if” to let them assume the situation in turmoil in a way that I put forward a series of questions “if we could not survive, we could not provide shelter for our children, how could we let our children eat and learn, let alone investing the money in our future.”

Then, when I found out that they did not inhibit their perspective or imagine what the old man felt, I continued to direct their attention to the socio-economic and political background that lead to the phenomenon reflected in these pictures, which is “the great disparity between the poor and the rich” and the “incapability of government” and in

this way, they were required to understand the meanings inherent in the comic strips with reference to the historical and economic background on which the social phenomenon reflected in the comic strips became rampant. And in terms of the government's incapability, participant 1 agreed with me, which can be reflected in line 135 "without any government help".

After that, participant 1 continued to emphasize his opinions on the way of making money by mentioning his background knowledge "many people became rich recently" in line 133. I tried to ask him and the other participant to take a complex viewpoint which is taking a variety of situations into consideration. I told him that different historical times might give rise to different social phenomena. However, as participant 1 and 2 took the turn, they underpinned that the Chinese poor people nowadays had the mentality (selling their children) that could be traced back to 1990, and I immediately told him that he should not overgeneralize a community where there were a variety of complicated and different ideologies neither should he make any judgments before having a more comprehensive perspectives of a community or a social issue. I reiterated that it was an individual's ways of thinking that led to a miserable situation.

By conversing with this participant, I tapped into his personal cultural trajectory and understood that he had learned little about Chinese society in different historical periods. Considering his shallow understanding of Chinese society, I mentioned the method of 'thick description' (Holliday, 2011), mobilizing him to observe the Chinese poor people and to know in which contexts some poor people behave in this but not in that way. By saying "you need to **understand an issue from multiple perspectives**" , **"You need to analyze it from multiple perspectives"** **"there are many causes, there are many reasons that have contributed to this situation"** in lines 138, 141 and 143, I encouraged him to deploy a bottom-up approach, observing the behavior of a person and interpreting the reason for which this person needs to react in a particular way. In these comic strips, one of the reasons for which the old man sold their own children is that he wanted his grandchildren to have a well-off life in the rich families, and he hoped that his children would not suffer from hunger anymore just like he did. The reason for which this social phenomenon was rampant in the old Shanghai Golden era is that the law system at that time did not protect the rights of the vulnerable people and because of the government's incapability, there was a great disparity between the rich and the poor.

9.3.5 Teaching Activity 5

The role-play of S and G:

Participant S: P1 Participant GF:P2 the teacher: GNY

In this lesson, I first asked the participants to review the video clip. Then, I encouraged them to prepare another script with reference to a scenario of the film clip *Genitori e Figli: agitare bene prima dell'uso*. In that scenario, the parents told his son E that he should not write the composition containing racist ideas and then this father taught his son how to treat the other kids from the other countries

After that, by asking them the question: **“If you were the parents of E., how would you educate them to treat the other children who are lingua-culturally different from yours?”**, I prompted the two Italian learners of Chinese to play the roles of the parents of Edore, the little boy in that film clip. And I played the role Edore in that film clip. And by doing so, I would like to know whether they could identify themselves as the members of the communities of the foreigners. Besides, I also wanted to know whether these two Italian learners of Chinese could take the perspective of foreigners, imagining how the “foreigners” would think and feel in a specific situation. Since empathy (i.e. emotion alignment and perspective-switching) contributes to promoting intercultural communication (Deardorff, 2012), learning the degree to which the Italian learners switched their perspective to imagine themselves as the members of the community where the foreigners belong to might help me to know whether I had improved their capability for perspective -switching. As perspective-taking can be an integral part of empathy (2006), an indispensable contributor to intercultural competence in the present project, the two Italian learners improved their intercultural competence as they knew how to take the perspective of the people who belong to the foreign community.

1 P1: infatti magari come fai, se facessi anche tu puzze di merda

English version: in fact, perhaps how would you do ... If you had been a kind of crap, what would you have done?

Description, Interpretation and Explanation:

Acting as the mother of E, the participant 1 (student S) tried to surmise a condition

that if “I” - the protagonist of the film “Edore”- had been the “puzze di merda” by using the adverb “magari” “perhaps” in line 1. Then, to intensify his assumption, he not only triggered a question using an ascending and descending intonation contour, but also conveyed the subjunctive mood by using the linguistic clause “if you had... what would you have”. As subjunctive mood is usually used to denote a possible state, and to express wishes, he hoped to let me - the boy “E” to make intersubjective alignment with the other children with different lingua cultural backgrounds. By using these phrases at the levels of vocabulary and grammar, participant 1 would like to arouse my (E)’s empathy by asking me to infer the mental states of the other people with different lingua-cultural backgrounds and then he indicated that building emotional connection played a pivotal role in communicating with the other people with different linguacultural backgrounds.

By incorporating the phrase “puzza di merda” into the subjective mood, participant 1 made great endeavors to ask “me” to put myself into the shoes of the other people. What is more, from line 3 “*quindi non bisogna offenderli, bisogna aiutarli parlare con loro, insegnargli l’italiano se tu pensi che lo sappiano male*” he emphasized that calling a person “Puzza di merda” (crap) might create offensive effects on the face – self-esteem and thereby create emotional dissonance. (Brown and Levison, 1987; Cheng, 2020)

With reference to Spencer-Oatey (2009)’s rapport management, people’s face sensitivity is one of the contributors to facilitating intercultural interaction, as it concerns the respect for the people with different cultural backgrounds and is associated with the issues such as honor, status and competence.

In this case, since participant 2 took account of the sensitivity of the face of the people with different countries, orienting himself towards the self-esteem of the foreigners, he, to some extent, fostered intercultural interaction by aligning himself with the foreigners he had encountered from the perspective of facework. In this sense, this participant’s intercultural competence has been improved as he knew how to adapt himself to the people coming from different countries by doing facework.

2 GNY: però loro secondo me non sanno parlare italiano molto bene, poi secondo me è meglio che loro vivono nel proprio paese anziché in Italia se loro non sanno parlare italiano bene

But, in my opinion they don’t know how to speak Italian very well, then I think it’s

better if they live in their own country instead of living in Italy if they can't speak Italian well.

3 P2(G): ma, se loro vengono in Italia è perché hanno difficoltà nel loro paese e cercano una vita migliore in Italia quindi non bisogna offenderli, bisogna aiutarli parlare con loro, insegnargli l'italiano se tu pensi che lo sappiano male...//

but if they come to Italy. It is because they are struggling/ having issues in their country and they are looking for a better life in Italy, so you should not offend them, on the contrary you have to help them, talk to them, teach them Italian if you think they can't speak it.

11 P1 : perché non pensi a loro come dei fratellini, come dei piccoli, come delle persone che devi accudire ...perché devi insultarli e non devi prenderli e aiutarli

Why don't you see them little brothers, like little ones, like people you have to look after instead, why did you insult them? You must take care of them and help them

12 P1(S): “quando loro arrivano in Italia non sono più stranieri, non hanno più una cittadinanza straniera, facciamo tutti parte di una stessa comunità. (intercultural citizenship)

English Version: When they arrive in Italy, they are no longer foreigners, they no longer have a foreign citizenship, we are all part of the same community”

13 GNY: Eh, Esatto, ma io ho fatto fatica, ho fatto a concentrarmi come i bambini come noi, non siamo (uhm) uguali secondo me.

Exactly! (laughs), but I suffer from taking care of the children (with different cultural backgrounds), they are not like us (uhm).

Description, Interpretation and Explanation:

Acting as the Edore, “I” complained to them that I always created conflicts with the children from the other countries as they could not speak very well Italian or did not know how to conform to the social conventions in Italy, S, the father responded that “I” should treat them as brothers and sisters for they shared the same community with me.

At the levels of vocabulary and grammar, in line 11, the participant1 showed his empathy towards the foreigners, as he emphasized the responsibility that an Italian

should take for the foreigners by using the modal auxiliary phrases “devi accudire” “devi prenderli e aiutarli” twice, as he thought that the foreigners were the needed ones, as evidenced by the line 12. “facciamo tutti la parte della stessa comunità”. In line 12 “*quando loro arrivano in Italia non sono più stranieri, non hanno più una cittadinanza straniera, facciamo tutti parte di una stessa comunità.*”, participant 1 used the adverbial phrase non sono più ‘not anymore’ followed by ‘stranieri’ (translation: ‘foreigners’) and cittadinanza straniera (translation: ‘foreign citizenship’) in order to highlight the termination of the state of being foreigners and having foreign citizenship on side of the people who immigrated to Italy. By doing so, this participant underscored that the people who had different nationalities and were alienated as foreigners in the past should become the ones who share similar identities with him. And his emphasis reflected in “facciamo tutta la parte della stessa comunità” “we share the same community”. As can be seen, he educated ‘me’ - the protagonist Edore in an effort to align his subjective positioning with that of the people with different *nationalities*. However, by regarding the others coming from different countries as the needed, he unveiled his “liberal-essentialist” duality (Holliday, 2011): although he desired for the neutral fairness with respect to the Italian citizenship and that of the foreigners, he presumed the distinction between the Italians and the foreigners. As he emphasized that the foreigners and the Italians shared similar identities within a given community with the modal verb “should”, he still took a dichotomous viewpoint of culture itself, in the sense that he underpinned that there was a clear-cut distinction between the Italian citizens and those in the countries other than Italy.

However, what should be noted is that although this participant assumed the difference between the Italians and the foreigners from the perspective of citizenship, he emphasized that the people of different nationalities should collaborate with one another for communication, as evidenced by the lines of 15. With reference to Byram (2018) intercultural citizenship, people with different linguacultural backgrounds collaborated with one another to conduct social practices that are moral-oriented. Therefore, acting as the father of Edore, this participant took account of morality and the obligation by persuading me to talk, play and take care of the people who comes from different countries, as can be seen in lines 1, 3, 14. And “he” also tried to mobilize me to cooperate with the foreigners for the purpose of establishing a friendship.

Besides, with respect to intertextual context, Fairclough (2001) put it:

participants in any discourse operate on the basis of assumptions about which previous discourse of the current one is connected to, and their assumptions determine what can be taken as given in the sense of part of common sense, what can be alluded to (Fairclough, 2001: P 121)

In this conversation made between me and this participant, by acting as a father of the protagonist “edore”, this participant imagined how to educate his own son and showed how he treated the foreigners by drawing on his intertextual context which is his reconceptualization of the discourses inherent in that film clip and his assumption that how to act as a father which was formed during his primary and secondary socialization.

What is more, by acting as the father and making conversations with me, he showed his open attitudes towards foreigners, as evidenced by line 11 “*pensi a loro come dei fratellini, come dei piccoli, come delle persone che devi accudire ...perché devi insultarli e non devi prenderli e aiutarli*”. Since the willingness of suspending cultural disbelief in the other countries and taking an open attitude is one of the agents for improving one’s intercultural competence, this participant got his intercultural competence improved.

14 P1: secondo te, ma hai provato a giocare insieme? a chiacchierarci?

That is your opinion, but did you try to play with them? or to chat?

15 GNY: si:::

Yes.

16 P1: e che cosa hanno di diverso?

and how are they different from you?

17 GNY: si:... e poi loro hanno per esempio; io condivido con un coinquilino cinese, poi lui ha lasciato l'acqua sul pavimento e poi secondo me non va bene, bisogna asciugare.

Yes: and then they have; for example; I share my flat with a Chinese roommate, once he left the water on the floor and then I think it's not good, he must dry it.

18 P1: ma perché ...

- 19 P2: perché non glielo dici?
- 20 GNY: gliel'ho detto, ma lui mi ha detto in Cina noi siamo così lasciamo l'acqua sul pavimento e si asciuga da solo.
- 21 P1: ma tu non dovresti preoccuparti di queste cose, sono cose molto::
(0.2) superficiali, tu devi pensare a fare amicizia con loro (si:: ma)
- 22 P1: ok possono avere delle abitudini diverse da noi pero non vuol dire che siano sbagliate, che facciano uno sbaglio, magari anche tu fai degli errori e non te ne rendi conto//]
- Ok they may have different habits from us, but it doesn't mean they are wrong, they make a mistake, maybe you also make mistakes and you don't realize it
- 23 P2: sicuramente si
- 24 P1: //quando noi...
- 25 GNY: quando lui ha sputato sul pavimento...
- 26 P1: ma, aspetta quando noi ti spieghiamo una cosa e perché tu non la sai, noi ti educiamo e tu ci ascolti perché noi sappiamo di più,
27 e tu a scuola non sei come noi che possiamo dirti quello che devi fare tu devi ascoltare la maestra, non devi pensare a educare le altre persone.]
- 28 P2: (interruzione) e tu non devi giudicare le persone perché sanno meno di te, devi pensare alla maestra.
- 29 GNY: dicono che i cinesi sono sporchi, pero secondo me lasciare il pavimento bagnato, non è un tipo di buon comportamento
- 30 P1: [glielo l'hai detto alla professoressa?
- 31 P2: [glielo l'hai detto alla maestra
- 32 GNY: eh no
- 33 P2 : eh... devi dirlo alla maestra (eh allora) non è il tuo compito quello di giudicare ed insegnare. è il compito della maestra che valuta ed insegna, non è il tuo, tu devi stare al tuo posto
- 34 P1: esatto, tu devi pensare ad essere (per esempio) amichevoli con tutti gli altri bambini
- 35 GNY: con tutti gli altri bambini, pero' io ho fatto un viaggio (e bambine) negli Stati Uniti e poi le persone nella metropolitana non vogliono dare i posti agli anziani...
- 36 GNY: ma sin da piccolo sono stata insegnata ad essere riverente/educata verso gli anziani, per questo non mi è piaciuto, questo... sì.

- 37 P1: agli anziani e alle anziane.
- 38 GNY: in che senso? Non ho capito↓
- 39P1: (ride)è corretto dire anziani e anziane, tutti e due maschi e femmine
- 40 GNY: eh si anziani, agli anziani .
- 41 P1: e alle anziane, e agli anziani tutti e due.
- 44 GNY: ok va bene
- 45 P1: se non è scorretto, viene dal linguaggio di genere
- 46 GNY: si però io intendevo dire che a me non è piaciuto questo comportamento. Secondo voi?
- 47 P1: che non lasciano i posti?
- 48 GNY: eh si (ma è vera questa cosa)
- 49 P1: ma tu hai detto qualcosa, hai aiutato? ...sei intervenuta quando nessuno ha lasciato il posto al signore anziano↓
- 50 GNY: eh si perché dalla vostra educazione... bisogna (brava) eh si (brava)
- 51 P1: brava, hai fatto bene, e tutti... e l'importante è comunque provare ad incitare anche le altre persone ad essere civili ed a lasciare i posti alle donne in cinta
- 52 agli anziani alle anziane a tutti, cercare di essere una comunità tutti insieme e di essere civili].
- It is necessary to leave the posts to both old men and women. We need to create a civil community by behaving well.
- 53 GNY: ma negli Stati Uniti non sono...
- 54 P1: ma tu non sei degli Stati Uniti, tu sei italiana.
- 55 GNY: eh si pero ho fatto un bel viaggio negli Stati Uniti (un bel viaggio). Vi ricordate?
- 56 P1: si, ma..
- 57 GNY: abbiamo fatto un bel viaggio negli Stati Uniti.
- 58 P1: (neanche a me piace gli Stati uniti)(...)(ridono) un bel viaggio negli Stati Uniti.
- 59 GNY: (ride) ah ok
- 60 P1: va bene, va bene ,pero paese che vai... in Italia si dice paese che vai gente che trovi .
- 61 ***GNY: no, no dobbiamo dare giudizi alle persone °***

As can be seen in line 61 to line 69, by saying “non dobbiamo dare dei giudizi

alle persone” and “comprendere un atteggiamento ”, I underscored that a person could not judge a person with a different linguistic background before having a more comprehensive understanding of them. And meanwhile, I highlighted that it was necessary to understand the reason for which a person conduct a behaviour in a specific situation, as evidenced by my agreement “Si, da dove viene (l’atteggiamento).”

Ah, ok, ok, so, we should not judge people at all

62 P1: si, dobbiamo cercare di essere più civili possibile (si)

63 GNY: oppure comprendere le persone (comprendere quello che pesano)... il più possibile

64 P2: comprendere

65 GNY: eh si

66 P1: comprendere un atteggiamento

67 GNY: si da dove viene.

68 P1: esatto! la radice di un comportamento

69 P2: *non dobbiamo giudicare soprattutto, mai! non bisogna mai giudicare senza conoscere.*

We should not judge any behavior, never! We cannot judge any behavior without knowing them.

70 P1: esatto

9.3.6 Teaching Activity 6

1 GNY ok

2 P1 Questo: è estratto da questo romanzo (si) vediamo che la rappresentazione di questa ragazza di 10 anni (si) che ama giocare a scacchi (aha) ed è molto forte, diciamo che è invincibile (aha) eh: non ha difficoltà a competere in qualunque torneo e abbattere qualunque avversario o avversaria

3 però ehi...c’è un problema e viene dal suo rapporto che ne ha con la madre, in pratica si: non è un rapporto (.) cioè secondo lei il rapporto è inclinato perché la madre per la madre eh: si vanta di sua figlia di quanto e forte agli scacchi, però il problema è che quando si vanta con le altre persone dice che è tutto

merito suo, che è merito della madre

4 che le vittorie sono tutte merito della madre e perciò il loro rapporto non è non e/ più un rapporto d'amore, diventa un rapporto quasi di rancore perché la figlia ha un po' di rancore verso sua madre, dopo che continua a vantarsi dei meriti, dei suoi meriti?//

5 GNY eh si nei confronti della figlia, eh si, come reagisce?

On the part of her daughter, how does she react to her mother's show-off behavior

6 P1 //eh infatti la figlia per far smettere la madre le grida contro e le dice che non è merito suo che le vittorie non sono merito suo e che non deve più parlare, (uhum) la madre come reazione non le rivolge più la parola, non le presta più attenzione quando: se si allena per gli scacchi o in qualunque altra situazione non la calcola più, eh: dopo un paio di giorni la figlia non sa più come fare per ricevere l'attenzione della madre (eh) e decide di non partecipare ad un torneo, (.) per avere attenzione della madre che però al contrario questa strategia non ha effetto

la madre continua a non, a ignorarla (ah), alla fine cercando di guadagnare di nuovo l'attenzione della madre si ammala, lei si ammala le venne la varicella, (varicella) chickenpox, (chickenpox) eh si varicella (ah) vabbè, alla fine, la madre comunque le spiega che da quel momento in poi per lei non sarà più così facile vincere (eh si) e anche se la madre torna a parlare con lei non è più come prima, infatti ha cambiato il suo atteggiamento verso la figlia, non si vanta più della figlia non: le pulisce i trofei o taglia gli articoli di giornali dove ci si riferisce alla figlia alla fine dei conti quando la ragazza quando ha 14 anni decide di abbandonare gli scacchi perché non riesce più a vincere con facilità come prima?

5GNY ?con facilità come prima, ah ok, ah: si si potresti guarda questo film dopo la lezione? Perché alla fine (0.2) e sua madre, sua madre che ha come si dice, uhm che ha mollato?//

6P1 sì, alla fine sua madre non, non l'ha più incoraggiata

7GNY no, non l'ha più incoraggiata

8P1 e quindi lei pensava di essere un prodigio (eh) invece era anche grazie all'aiuto della madre che l'incoraggiava, l'aiutava (uhm) però non l'aveva capito, la ragazza. Non l'aveva capito che la madre l'aiutava(eh) senza farsi notare//

9GNY eh si, si ah: secondo te sua madre l'ama o no? (certo) certo, (si, certo) si (l'ama), eh la figlia ama a sua madre?

10P1 eh: diciamo che all'inizio, all'inizio aveva ce non apprezzava ciò che la madre faceva per lei che le puliva i trofei che si vantava di lei con altre persone, ma dopo che la madre non le ha più parlato la figlia capisce l'amore che la madre aveva nei suoi confronti?

11GNY posso fare una narrativa, un racconto (si) sì dopo questo estratto, questo sì è ambientato nel 1980 (ok) ok, e poi questa, loro hanno immigrato (ah ok) negli Stati Uniti (ok), poi quando questa figlia è cresciuta, lei ha trovato un marito occidentale e poi sua madre non ha ha, si sente un po' in colpa (uhm) sì e poi lei. She was a little bit picky, il comportamento non va bene, rispetto alla tradizione cinese (ok), perché non aspetta mai gli anziani (si si) quando cominciano (comincia a mangiare) e poi c'è un monologo di questa figlia, la madre sempre, sempre un po' lunatica ah sì lunatica, ok va bene (corky, uhm aspetta) no, she is picky, she is a little bit picky she is always, picky in all the things she has done (uhm) no matter what kind of things she has done , she is always picky including this one (ok) she just wants her mother//

12P1 to acknowledge her (to) to acknowledge her, (acknowledge her success) yes (what or semplicemente, simply she just want to makes her mother happy) uhm (be proud of her) , sì secondo me la madre ha aspettative molto alte verso la figlia (uhm) secondo me sa che la figlia è un prodigio e può far di meglio, secondo me, la madre sì , pretende molto dalla figlia però: diciamo che i genitori riescono a vedere il potenziale dei figli, secondo me, quindi si aspetta molto (si, si) da quello che mi hai detto secondo me può essere un modo di vedere?

13GNY però: la madre e la figlia reagiscono in modo diverso (si), si comportano in modo diverso (rispetto ai rapporti familiari nel passato).(uhm) sì (la madre: la madre)

14P1 la madre è un poco(esigente) sì esigente quello che intendevo, pretende molto, esigente, la figlia: vuole solo che la madre le voglia madre, che sia orgogliosa di lei come hai detto tu, ce vuole essere solo amata (uhm) vuole solo essere trattata come una figlia alla fine dei conti (ok) vuole essere trattata come qualunque altro bambino o bambina (eh si) molto semplice secondo me, però diciamo, possiamo dire che c'è una colpa, una mancanza di comunicazione da parte loro (comunicazione) mancanza di comunicazione che porta ad errori da parte della madre e della figlia (ok) la mancanza di punto di contatto (eh si)

crea delle divergenze (it is called emotional influency) uhmm (cioè io posso) influenzare sì, si ho capito//

15GNY esprimere (si) in modo appropriato e giusto (si) fammi capire, le mie ah:

sentimenti, i miei sentimenti (si), le mie idee, fammi capire, a mia madre ai miei genitori (esatto) ok. Per quanto riguarda il rapporto tra il figlio e il padre? (il rapporto) il rapporto potresti raccontarmi un po' le tue (le mie) le tue esperienze (come), una storia//

16P1 diciamo che mio padre è una persona abbastanza seria (ok) ce non esprime mai le sue emozioni in modo molto esplicito perché è stato un militare e fa parte della autorità civica, è un finanziere (ah ok)

policemen (policemen) quindi è una persona molto seria, nell'aspetto, ce non da o fa vedere i suoi sentimenti molto spesso, però: in qualunque cosa che ho fatto mi ha sempre supportato ce non ho mai fatto vedere ciò che provavo mi ha sempre detto che mi avrebbe aiutato in qualunque situazione e quando faccio, per ogni traguardo che ho raggiunto si e complimentato sempre con me e mi ha sempre dato fiducia (ah) quindi mi ha sempre supportato (potresti fare un esempio, per spiegare). In pratica mi ha detto che nel futuro quando, non importa dove lavorerò dove voglia andare se avrò bisogno di qualunque tipo d'aiuto lui ci sarà sempre, se avessi bisogno di un aiuto per cercare lavoro o per dei soldi, queste cose semplici così, voglio dire (ah ok) però che possono aiutare un ragazzo che ancora, che possono aiutare uno studente che finisce la laurea (ok) sono cose semplici però che racchiude comunque l'affetto di un padre verso i figli (chiudono) racchiudono (ah racchiudono ok, ok) ?//

17GNY //ho capito (rappresentano l'affetto). Per quanto riguarda la tua ragazza come ha reagito tuo padre

18P1 eh: è contento che abbiamo una relazione stabile(ah) stabile e ci vogliamo bene, non ha detto niente e in favore (a favore) a favore, (quindi da il consenso) si certo se io sono felice da il consenso (ah)

19GNY va bene ok, eh si **dal tuo punto di vista com' è il rapporto tra i genitori cinesi e i loro figli?**//

20P1 **diciamo che dipende dai genitori (uhm) dipende se ci sono dei genitori, per esempio quelli li del documentario che ci hai fatto vedere (uhm) che non sono ancora in grado di capire i sentimenti dei figli, non sono in grado di capire quello che i figli di cui i figli hanno bisogno, magari hanno bisogno di giocare con gli amici, di riposarsi di tempo libero, però ci sono anche dei genitori che riescono essere più aperti verso i figli, per esempio i genitori, la madre di mia ragazza e molto aperta (come è molto aperta)**

21 P1 ti ho detto, l'ha sempre supportata in qualunque cosa che volesse fare, **quando volva studiare pittura le ha detto va bene, quando voleva andare all'estero,**

l'ha aiutata a studiare all'estero la mia ragazza si è laureata in Italia (eh), quindi l'ha sempre aiutata e comunque parlano di tutto, non ci sono segreti (ah) hanno un bel rapporto e sono persone molto, sono molto giovanili nella mente, nella mente sono molto aperti mentalmente (si ho capito) anche il marito della madre, perché lui non è il padre, è il marito, la madre si è sposta di nuovo (step father) 22 si (ok) anche è una bravissima persona, però il marito del, il patrignano the stepfather era anche lui un militare quindi un po' più serio, però vuole bene alla mia ragazza, quindi sono persone molto cortesi, hanno accettato anche me ok (ok)



Figure 37 My facial expressions and hand movements and those of this participant during our multimodal engagement. The screenshot was filmed and demonstrated with his permission.

Analysis: In the third session of the teaching activity, I asked this Italian learner to read an excerpt adapted from the novel named *The Joy Luck Club* and then I asked him to describe the main content of this excerpt.

As can be seen from this screenshot, I rested my chin on my left hand to paid attention to what this participant was saying. Meanwhile, I smiled at him in order to show my interests in his discourse. At then, I raised my left hand, moved it forward and backward and asked this participant to continue to interpret the literary text *The Joy Luck Club*. By doing so, I carried out my teaching activity in a multimodal manner, as my facial expressions, accompanied by hand movements and verbal speech indicated that I was focusing on what the participant had said and trying to direct this Italian

learner's attention to the family relationship between the daughter and her mother. And in meantime, to respond to the discourse that I made with him (the discussion about this text), this participant spread his left hand a little, moved his head to his left direction and made eye contact with me in order to explain the inherent meanings that he captured in the excerpt. As can be seen, both this participant and I produced meaning by co-aligning ourselves with one another in a multimodal way.

From line two, participant 2 first emphasized the brilliance of this daughter – the protagonist of this novel by using the adverb of degree “molto” and the adjective “invincibile” and he also underlined that this daughter was intelligent as she remained intact from every challenge. By using the grammatical structure negation +verb phrase “non ha difficoltà” and the indefinite phrases “qualunque torneo” and “qualunque avversario o avversaria”, this participant emphasized greatly that the daughter in this excerpt was unconquerable when it comes to playing chess.

Then, this participant used the concessive conjunction “ma” and sentence “c'è un problem anche viene dal rapport tra lei e sua madre” to emphasize that the daughter has her problems despite the fact that she is invincible in terms of playing chess. After that, he used the attributive clause “il problem è che in line 3 to specify and to further explain that the problem is related to her mother's boast about her daughter's intelligence for playing chess. After that, by using the causal clause “perchè la madre si vanta di sua figlia di quanto forte agli sacchi” in line 3 and the sentence “ dice che è tutto metiro suo”, this participant continued to emphasize that it was the mother's boast about her daughter's intelligence and her mother's boast about her capability of cultivating her daughter that broke the affective bond between the daughter and her mother. And the viewpoint of this participant could be shown by the consequential clause “perciò il loro rapport non è piu un rapport d'amore” followed by an elaboration which was “diventa un rapport quasi di rancore”.

As can be seen from this participant's description, Participant S implicitly indicated that the relationship between the mother and her daughter was supposed to be different from what had been described in that excerpt, as evidenced by his use of the metaphorical expression “è inclinato” in line 3.

And then, in order to let this participant construe the motives behind the detachment between the daughter and her mother, I let this participant interpret how the daughter and her mother reacted towards each other. And then, I introduced the setting for this excerpt and the writer's background to the participant in a way of letting this

participant have a more comprehensive understanding of Chinese immigrating families and the attitudes that Chinese immigrants held towards their parents or their children. Apart from doing so, **I offered my interpretation of the relationship between the mother and daughter, regarding the daughter as picky in all the things that she has done.**

Afterward, with reference to my interpretation, participant S took the turn and reconceptualized the relationship between the mother and her daughter. **Then,** the participant explained that the miscommunication between the daughter and her mother in this excerpt lay in their lack of communication “una mancanza di comunicazione da parte loro” and then by emphasizing the negative attitude that the daughter held towards her mother, he accentuated the results brought by the the lack of communication “diventa un rapporto quasi rancore” in line 4

According to me, the reason for which he attributed the conflicts between mother and daughter to the lack of communication is that he drew on his intertextual contexts which were my interpretations about the relationship between the protagonist and her mother as well as his previous assumptions that the parents were supposed to help, support and take care of their own children, as evidenced by line 16 “mi ha aiutato, mi ha supportato e sono le cose semplice pero che racchiude comunque l’effetto di un padre verso I figli”.

Then, I took the turn and asked him to pay attention to the relationship between him and his father in a way that I could prompt him to share his personal narratives. In line 16, he narrated how his father gave his support and encouraged him to do the things and how his father believed in him in line 16.

The reason for which this participant only mentioned his father’s merits instead of giving an unbiased interpretation of his father’s attitudes towards him is that he took account of his previous discourses about the excerpt, viz., his description about the attitudes that the mother and her daughter took respectively and his member resources (MR) concerning the relationship between parents and their children. And by regarding his previous discourses and MR as one of the parts of the intertextual context, this participant then narrated that both his mother-in-law and his father also took an open attitude towards marriage issues. By sharing his narration with me, he emphasized that different points of views and the extent to which parents could comprehend their children played an important role in communication, which is shown by “**non ancora in grado di capire i sentimenti dei figli, non sono in grado di capire quello che i**

figli di cui i figli hanno bisogno” in line 20.

Since comparison and contrast, according to Byram (Byram, 2018) and my cultural model, is one of the indispensable skills of intercultural communicative competence, enabling a foreign language learner to think about how to learn about the people with different linguacultural backgrounds, I asked him the question “dal tuo punto di vista, com’è il rapporto tra I genitori e I suoi figli?” for the purpose of enabling him to make a comparison and contrast between the attitudes that Chinese parents held towards their children and those of their Italian counterparts took towards their children respectively. To respond to my question, he offered a critical viewpoint of the attitudes that Chinese parents held towards their children, as he emphasized that how Chinese parents treated their children lied in the thinking patterns of Chinese parents or specifically speaking their capability for understanding their own children. His critical understanding of Chinese parents’ attitudes towards their children manifests itself in “diciamo che dipende dai genitori se ci sono dei genitori ...che non sono ancora in grado di capire i sentimenti dei figli” and the concessive clause “però ci sono dei genitori che riescono essere più aperti verso i figli” in line 20.

By comparing and contrasting the attitudes that Chinese parents held towards their children in the documentary *Mirror* and that of his father did in lines 16 and 20 respectively, this participant emphasized that the relationship between parents and their children (i.e. whether parents could understand their kids’ needs and desires) was one of the commonalities shared by Italian and Chinese culture. In this case, this participant acted as a cultural mediator as he compared and contrasted the Chinese culture with their own from the perspective of family relationships and the attitudes that parents held towards their own children. (Byram, 2017; Kramsch, 1993; Risager, 2007).

By giving a detailed narration of the open attitudes that his mother-in-law held towards him, he could suspend his cultural disbelief in Chinese family parenting, which can be reflected in lines 20 and 21.

Then, by recognizing the similarities that both his mother-in-law and his father share in terms of the parenting attitudes towards their children. He emphasized that it is parents’ openness/ ways of thinking that determine parents’ attitudes, which could be shown by line 21 and line 16 “**la madre di mia ragazza è molto aperta (come è molto aperta) ti ho detto, l’ha sempre supportata in qualunque cosa che volesse fare, quando volva studiare pittura le ha detto va bene, quando voleva andare all’ estero.**”

Based on Byram (1997, 2017)’s insights into intercultural communication and my

cultural model at the micro dimension, critical awareness is one of the agents for promoting intercultural communication. In this case, this participant took a critical awareness of Chinese parents' attitudes, as he recognized that some Chinese parents were unable to comprehend their children's needs and desires on the one hand; on the other hand, he also thought that the other Chinese parents, say, his mother-in-law was able to do so, which is reflected in line 20.

9.4 Analysis IV

9.4.1 Teaching Activity 1

The First Session with Participant 1 (Concetto)

Introduction: In this lesson, I taught the participant C how to use neutral tones in Chinese.

The Chinese neutral tones can be used in the following situations:

- 1) In the reduplicated Chinese syllables:**
 - a) The replication of Chinese verbs: 看看**
 - b) The bisyllabic Chinese characters which refer to sibling relationship eg. 爸爸 bà ba 哥哥 gē ge**
- 2) The structural word “de” after the possessive pronoun. Eg. 我的书**
- 3) The plural pronouns in Chinese: eg. 我们, 他们**

My teaching activity can be seen as followed: (Interviewer: GNY, Concetto: participant

1)

1 GNY As for the video, have you watched the video I sent you, haven't you?

2 PARTECIPANT 1 No, I haven't watched the video...

3 GNY But have you seen the picture I sent you?

4 P1 uhm, the picture that shows, uhm, how to pronounce labial, uhm, Chinese tones...

5 GNY the oral cavity...

6 P1 Yeah, all the... Yes, I have seen the picture that shows, ehm, there are in Chinese the four tones, and the mouth shape, the oral cavity, they depend on the tones, on the words we pronounce, the mouth shape, tongue placement and air flow change.

7 GNY yeah, everything changes.

8 P1 yes, yes...

9 GNY yes...

10 P1 Yes, for example, ehm... the picture shows the mouth shape when we pronounce the first tone, 妈妈 (Māma, trad. mother), the mouth has this shape (student shows the shape of his mouth). Okay?

11 GNY Okay...

12 P1 ehm, I'm thinking about a word with second tone, or, ehm, *tāmen* 他们 (trad. they)... first tone...

13 GNY *tāmen* 他们...

14 P1 *tāmen* 他们... in this situation *men* is a plural markers, being used in Chinese plural pronouns. In this case, *men* should be pronounced lightly.

15 GNY eh...

16 P1 *tā* has the first tone, like *māma*, right?

17 GNY eh...

18 P1 Or when we pronounce the second tone 朋友 (*péngyou*, trad. friend), not the last part of *péngyou*

19 GNY *péngyou!* Yeah, exactly!

20 P1 Okay...Third tone, for example, *to dance*, , 跳舞 (Tiàowǔ)... wǔ...

21 GNY Tiàowǔ!

22 P1 The second syllable of Tiàowǔ has the third tone...

23 GNY yes, yes...

24 P1 to dance...because I wanted to give you an example...

25 GNY to dance...

26 P1 yeah, to dance...and if I have to say a word with the forth tone, eh, uhmm, ah, eh I would say 爸爸 Bàba, fourth tone, that means father...

27 GNY yeah Bàba, but ehm, ah ah, the second syllable has the neutral tone...

28 P1 yeah yeah...I was talking about the first syllable...

29 GNY yeah, yes...

30 P1 the first part...it has the fourth tone...Bàba...

31 GNY Bàba, xièxie, it's always like this, the second syllable has the neutral tone...

32 P1 yeah, yeah...I said Bāba in order to give you an example...to show you how to pronounce the fourth tone...

33 GNY uhm uh...

34 P1 bà, bà of Bàba, is it the fourth tone right?

35 GNY yeah, this is correct...

36 P1 it was only an example...

37 GNY okay okay...but there are four tones, but there is one more, that is the neutral tone...

38 P1 okay...ah for example, the neutral tone is, ehm, now I don't remember when we use it, mmh, no, I don't remember, uhm, can you explain me it?

39 GNY Let me think

40 P1 Give me an example...

41 GNY ehm, for example, mmh...don't you know in which situation you can use it?

42 P1 Mmh, I don't remember when we use the neutral tone...

43 GNY Okay, for example, "Can I have a look at your book?" (能看你的书吗 Wǒ néng kàn nǐ de shū ma),

44 P1 I don't have my book here!

45 GNY yeah, you don't have...but it was only an example...

46 P1 ahhh, okay, I didn't understand, ah okay...

47 GNY okay okay...

48 P1 okay okay, yes, yes...right ahah, sorry, go on...

49 GNY Ehh “Can I use your pen?” (我可以用你的笔吗? Wǒ kěyǐ yòng nǐ de bǐ ma?), or if I say “用用” Yòngyong (to use) or “看看” kànkān (trad. to look)...

50 P1 Ah Okay, “看看” kànkān, in these sentences there is the neutral tone...

51 GNY eh yes, in Chinese bisyllabic characters or the two replicated Chinese verbs, the second syllable should be pronounced lightly, kànkān...

52 P1 Why do they have neutral tone?

53 GNY Kànkān... The neutral tone is said to be "light" or "de-emphasized," meaning you don't have to give it the same amount of stress, and it should be articulated a bit shorter than the other tones...

54 P1 ah okay, It's not “strong” as in other cases...it's lighter...

55 GNY yeah, yeah, lighter, yeah, and then...

56 P1 like, kàn kan, kànkān, like this?

57 GNY *Wo kànkān diànshì!* (我看看电视, trad. I watch tv),

58 P1 *Wo kànkān diànshì!*

59 GNY *kànkān dōu zài yìqǐ* (“看看“都在一起, trad you must say “kànkān” all together) , they cannot be separated.

60 P1 ahh , eh, they should be read all together, in this way we can hear the difference of tones...if I say Kànkān, the first syllable has the second tone...

61 GNY eh yeah...kànkān

62 P1 kànkàn, ah, here we are, kànkàn

63 GNY Exactly...

64 P1 the sound goes down, lighter, kànkàn

65 GNY Exactly...

66 P1 Right, now it's clearer...

67 GNY then, furthermore...

68 P1 eh? What?

69 GNY Furthermore...

70 P1 ah okay...

71 GNY Furthermore, for example, kàn kàn, mama, bàba, this, I don't know how to call it, this...redouble...

72 P1 ah redouble...do you mean redouble verbs or tones? Or do you talk about tones as before?

73 GNY ehh verbs...

74 P1 ehh verbs, we can redouble, for example, ehm, *wo yòngyong*, ehm, computer, ehm which is the name for computer, ehm, ah, *wo yòngyong*, ehm, *yòngyong*, ehm *shouji*, ehm phone, mobile phone, ehm

75 GNY eh in Chinese, it is a must to use a verb to express the will...for example, *wo xiang*...

76 P1 *wo xiang, wo yào...*(trad. I would like to, I want)...

77 GNY Yeah, exactly...

78 P1 Okay...eh do you mean, mmh, do you use this to redouble...?

79 GNY no no, it's not for this, this eh this is an example. I can write...

80 P1 yeah...

81 GNY because I've already written them

Description: At this time, I showed him a slide related to the use of Chinese neutral tone. (for the slide, please see figure 11 in section 8.2.2 of part 2 Theoretical framework) This participant paid attention to the slide that I showed him and at the same time he listened to my explanation with respect to how to use Chinese neutral tones in three situations.

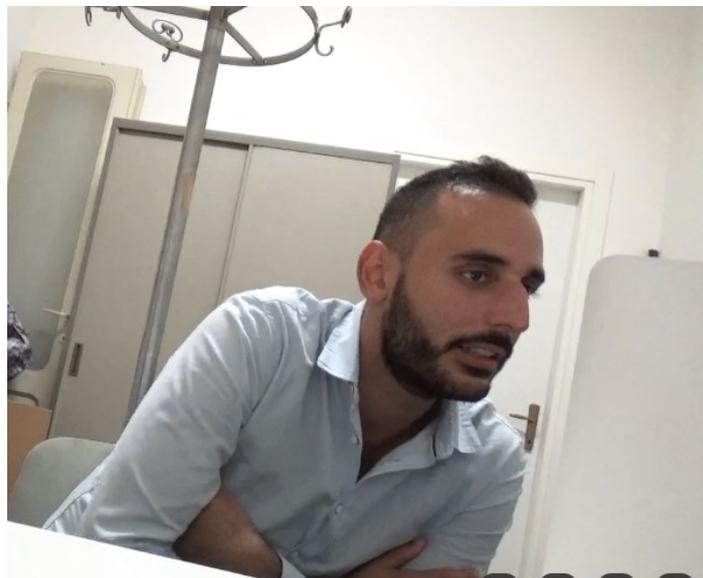


Figure 38 The body posture and gaze direction of P1 when he was looking at the screen of my laptop.

As can be seen from this picture, I carried out my multimodal teaching activity to emphasize the situations where Chinese neutral tones could be used, as I activated the cursor movements with a mouse, demonstrated the slide which was filled with pictorial and textual elements to this Italian learner of Chinese, made my verbal speech “*o no*,

it's not for this, this eh this is an example. I could write to you another example ..." and adopted my forward posture to the computer for the purpose of emphasizing the rules of using Chinese neutral tones. Specifically speaking, the slide was, in nature, an ensemble of visual and textual modes, my utterances could be classified into the mode of speech, and the cursor movements activated by my the mouse (the laptop can be seen from the picture demonstrated above) could be viewed as another mode ensemble. The mode ensembles contribute to forming a sign complex which was used to emphasize the markers in terms of the use of Chinese neutral tones, such as the bisyllabic Chinese verb, 看看 kàn kan, 用用 yàngyong and the structural word “de” in possessive pronouns.

On the part of this Italian learner, his gaze direction and his forward posture as a whole can be seen as a sign of engagement, suggesting that he was reading and understanding what I was writing at that moment. Therefore, I enabled this Italian learner to engage himself in my teaching activity with the mode of speech, the visual and textual mode ensemble and the mode of gestures illustrated above.

80 P1 yeah...

81 GNY because I've already written them

82 GNY ehm, apart from the two cases, are there any situations in which you can pronounce the neutral tone?

83 P1 mmh...for sure there is but, speaking frankly, I don't know...

84 GNY 的 (de), de, 我的书 (Wǒ de shū, trad. my book),

85 P1 okay...

86 GNY So 'de', as a structural word, should be put after the possessive pronouns in order to express possession...

87 P1 okay, so *Wǒ de shū*,

88 GNY Exactly, in this case, we must pronounce *de* lightly...

89 P1 oh, Sure, right, yes... Oh that's right, I didn't think of that because it comes natural to me to pronounce this syllable in that way. My book, *wo de shu*, ehm, the stress here is not strong, ehm, it comes natural to me, but, yeah for sure, it's true, in this case, the pronunciation is not strong, because here *de* express possession...my book...

90 GNY Yeah, *Wǒ de shū* (trad. my book), *wo de bàba* (trad. my father), you need to pronounce them in this way, in this case, *wo de bàba*...here I have exaggerated, but yeah, in this way it should be pronounced.

91 P1 Okay, okay, *wo de Bàba*...

92 GNY *bàba*, 有点儿太多了! (you yidiàner tài duo le, trad. too much)

(P1 laughs)

93 P1 ehh I know... *Wo de ...Wo de péng you!* (trad. My friend)

94 GNY péng you...

95 P1 Pèng you...

96 GNY *Wo de péng yǒu!* (I kept repeating the words to show the right pronunciation)
You need to vocalise sounds clearly...

97 P1 the tones...

98 GNY yeah the tones...

99 P1 because if you don't use the right tone, people cannot understand you...

100 GNY eh, if you do not articulate it in accurate way, the Chinese people will be confused

101 P1 be confused...In my opinion, one of the biggest difficulties that Italian people who study Chinese have is the correct use of Chinese tones.

102 GNY the use of the tones?

103 P1 yeah, yeah...because if we pronounce the words with wrong tones, the meaning of the words could be different.

104 GNY Exactly. What's worse, you will create misunderstandings. Do you know the places and the ways used to pronounce sounds?

105 P1 Using an example...like saying a place in Chinese? What do you mean?

106 GNY ehm, you didn't see it, did you?

107 P1 ahhh, the places, how to pronounce the words...ahhh okay okay okay...yes, I've seen the Power point you sent me...

108 GNY okay, okay...

109 P1 But actually I don't know, when I pronounce a word, I don't think about which muscle of the mouth I move, which is the position of my tongue, I don't think about all these things, it comes natural to me, I don't think about that. Obviously, it is really important, but I couldn't say the specific words used to explain the process of pronunciation.



Figure 39 This Italian showed the muscle movements of his mouth with fingers pointing at his mouth

As can be seen from the picture demonstrated above, this Italian learner of Chinese pointed at his mouth with his right hand and the index finger of his left hand. By doing so, he indicated the movement of the muscle of his mouth and the position of his tongue. My verbal speech “*do you know the place and manner of articulating a sound?*” **which manifests itself in my pitch and stress** acted as a direction, prompting him to engage himself in my conversation. In this case, my question, the texts and the pictures in the PowerPoint and (my gaze direction) could be regarded as sign-making which was my underpinning that he should pay attention to the gesture of articulating a sound. In this sense, I aroused his awareness of the importance of articulating a sound by carrying out multimodal teaching.

After teaching this participant the rule of using Chinese neutral tones, I played a film clip to him in order to let him reflect on the Italian socio-cultural environment and the influences that Italian society exerted on Italian family and school education.

115 GNY So I can skip this part, and I would like to show you this clip...

116 P1 the clip you mean?

117 GNY yes, the clip

118 P1 The film *Genitori & figli - Agitare bene prima dell'uso* (trad. Parents and Children: Shake Well Before Using)

(P1 laughs)

119 GNY Have you ever watched this film? I believe the actors are really famous...

120 P1 Yeah, I think I know them, but I've never watched this film, but the actors, yeah maybe in other films I watched there were the same actors...I don't know, but yeah...

121 GNY I would like to have you to make a role-play.

122 P1 make a...?

123 GNY A role play!

124 P1 ah a role play, okaaay...

125 GNY First of all, I want you to watch a clip, and then you'll answer to some questions.

126 P1 okay, I will...

(The student watches the scene of the film)

127 GNY What have you understood from this clip?

128 P1 In this video we have just watched, the child represents racism, in Italy, where the film was shot. So...how to say...it was like the society...the society wants children to change their mind and understand that Italian people and foreigners have differences about language, culture and habits, **but there's not a culture that is better than the other ones. This film wants to teach us that between two cultures there are differences, but we should see these differences in a positive way, as an advantage, because I can learn something new from you who belong to another culture and you can learn something more from my culture.** In this case people from Italy and people from abroad, ehm, they have to help each other in order to learn more...

129 GNY ehm, okay...in terms of education? The ways of education?

130 P1 uhm, in school too...

131 GNY not just the school, the parents' education...What do you think the fact that the Italian schools help Italian parents to educate their children?

132 P1 uhm okay, **can I make a distinction between school education and parents' education?**

133 GNY okay, okay...

134 P1 uhm, **about parents' education, first of all, it depends, I mean, in Italy there are some people that are racist, but not only in Italy, but all around the world.**

135 GNY around the world, yes...

136 P1 **So, it depends also on your family. Uhm, I mean, if your family is racist, okay, children will be educated in that way, even if they don't have the same idea. Education, especially during the childhood, is really important for children, because they take their parents, their family as a model...**

137 GNY They imitate their parents...

138 P1 Yes, exactly, they imitate their parents. If parents are bad people, children, most of them, in my opinion, mmh, they will try to do the same things parents do. Okay? In that case, there are a lot of possibilities that also children will be racists. You know?

As can be seen from the conversation demonstrated above,

139 GNY uhm yeah...

140 P1 This is my opinion, could be wrong or right, this is only my opinion...

141 GNY Okay...

142 P1 because the family for me...

143 GNY it's your opinion, it's not wrong or right...

144 P1 Perfect ...

145 GNY only an opinion...

146 P1 Of course...Parents' education and school education are different but at the same time they are both important, but the approach is not the same. Okay...Children of course go to school and for this reason school education has a big influence on them, but when they wake up, they come back from school, when they have dinner, they are with their parents, so family education represents the biggest approach of education for children. Talking about school, in my opinion, uhm, how to say...in Italy there are a lot of projects that schools organise in order to connect people from the others' countries.

147 GNY Yeah, school promotes exchange programs...

148 P1 Of course and I did it! I was in...

149 GNY Could you give me some examples, what kind of education did your parents give you?

150 P1 ah okay, ohh, I understood what you mean...

151 GNY How do they see people from abroad...

152 P1 My parents, ehm, they are totally the opposite, they are open-minded, they were happy when I did my exchange program during high school, or when I went to Austria for the Erasmus, they were really happy, because they were sure that, ehm, in order to grow up, we need to travel, to know people from other countries...so this is what they

think, and of course so do I. This is why I like to travel abroad.

153 GNY In Austria?

154 P1 uhm no, in Austria with the, uhm, during University, but when I was in, uhm...during high school, I went to Netherlands, okay?

155 GNY ahh Netherlands, okay

156 P1 in Dutch city, okay? I was younger, I was eighteen, now I'm 25, and school organised an exchange program in order to connect two different cultures, the Italian one and the Dutch one. Okay?

157 GNY okay...

158 P1 people from Netherlands...

159 GNY have you ever been in the Asian countries?

160 P1 where?

161 GNY in Asian countries...

162 P1 Well, no, no, I've never been in Asia. I hope one day I will go. Ahh because during my Bachelor degree I had the opportunity to go to China, but the travel was really expensive, okay?

163 GNY okay...

164 P1 ehm, there wasn't any scholarship, so, ehm, we had to pay all the expenses for the travel, for the accommodation, it was too much for me, so I couldn't leave.

165 GNY But if you could be there, how to say, if you have the opportunity to leave, would you like to spend your money, would you like to visit that country?

166 P1 to invest my money and time to go there...?

167 GNY No, no...not to invest your money...

168 P1 Do you mean if I have had the opportunity, the chance to go to China?

169 GNY Yeah, if you have had the scholarship, would you have visited China?

170 P1 Do you mean if I want to go to China for example? Yeah yeah, I think so, but honestly not for a long period, maybe only for three or four months, okay? But not because I don't want to stay there for one year, for example, but because there is a big difference in culture, in the way of living, and I think it is difficult to, for example, start a new life over there, starting from zero. So, in my opinion, it should be...mmh how to say...mmh, a short process. Starting from a period of three or four months, in China for example, and then come back to Italy...and then, if you want to go there, maybe, uhm, for longer period, you will...but first time I couldn't be able to stay there for one year, for example, I think it's too much, but for me it's too much...I would like to stay there for only few months and then...

171 GNY Why?

172 P1 Because I'm scared about that, but not, in a negative way, because I am...ehm...

173 GNY it's too much ehm, it's too exhausting...

174 P1 mmh, no, I don't think this is the right term, but not, it's because, uhm, it's too different, I mean, it's not as easy as when I went to Austria for the Erasmus. And okay, it's a different country, but it's really close to Italy

175 GNY yes...

176 P1 it is also in Europe, so culture is more or less the same, the coffee...

177 GNY it's much easier...

178 P1 Yeah, much easier...even if coffee is more...

179 GNY ahah, more expensive...

180 P1 of course, too much expensive and worse, but it's similar, so...it doesn't matter...During the five months I spent there, I didn't notice any big difference, so there's the point...

181 GNY So, it was much easier to adapt yourself to a new situation.

182 P1 Here is the point, the keyword is *adapting*. Yeah, there's the point...For me, it would be harder to adapt to China, but not because I cannot, but because ehm it will be more difficult, as when you came here in Italy for the first time...

183 GNY Making friends would be difficult...

184 P1 mmh, for culture and the...mmh...

185 GNY the way of eating living...

186 P1 Yeah, the way of eating...the way of living, I mean the city... For example, if we compare a city as Modena or Milan to a Chinese city...like...

187 GNY Beijing for example, I'm from Beijing...

188 P1 Yeah, exactly, Beijing, the way of living, the way of eating, the way of thinking also is different. So, ehm, this is the main reason that the first time in China, I won't be able to stay there for more than four months, but this is my opinion, maybe in the future I'll change my idea. Because I've never been there, so I imagine that it is hard to adapt to that culture, but I cannot be sure. Maybe if I go to China, I will love it, and I want to stay there all my entire life, but who knows...

189 GNY And, what do they think about China, Japan or about the south Asia countries, for example Singapore?

190 P1 I don't know what they think about Japan or Singapore, but about China, mmh, they think that Chinese people are nice, you know, because my parents in Sicily have a little restaurant

191 GNY a Chinese restaurant?

192 P1 ahah no no, an Italian restaurant...and near the restaurant there is a small Chinese shop. Okay? And they have a good relationship with the Chinese guy, the owner of the shop. He can speak really good Italian, ehm yes, he's been working there for, I don't know, maybe five years, mmh I don't know...I don't know exactly which part of China he is from, and he is very nice, like other Chinese people I know. My parents and I think that Chinese people are very smart, clever, because they have a good entrepreneurship, they are really ehm, I would like to find an adjective...they always want to improve themselves, working, studying...we really appreciate Chinese people...

As can be seen from the conversations demonstrated above, Concetto (P1) offered an interpretation of the film clip by reflecting on the words that the little boy Edore uttered in the film *Genitori e figli: agitare bene prima dell'uso*. His interpretation could be seen in his utterance “the child (in the film) represents racism in Italy”. As can be seen, participant 1 thought that the film mirrored the whole Italian society where there were racist ideas. In this sense, this participant reflected on Italian society by engaging with the discourse embedded in the film mentioned above.

Besides, this participant also reflected on his conceptualization of Italian society by saying that Italian schools played a positive role in promoting intercultural exchange, which manifests itself in line 146 “in Italy there are a lot of projects that schools organize in order to connect people from the others' countries.” In this line, participant 1 reckoned that schools which represented Italian society, contributing to connecting people with different linguacultural backgrounds.

In this sense, this participant thought that Italian society had positive effects on intercultural communication.

However, he did not negate that Italian society also created negative effects on people's ideologies. His viewpoint can be seen in his reorganization of the existence of racism in Italy in line 128 "in Italy there are some people who are racist". At this point, this participant held a critical awareness towards Italian society, as he realized the demerits and merits of Italian society. What is more, the reflection of this participant on Italian society also manifests itself in his viewpoints of Italian family parenting. By saying "it depends on parents", this participant argued that there were diversified ways of family education. Some patterns of family education had negative effects on their children's minds whereas the others not. His views on family education can be seen in the juxtaposition of two hypothetical clauses which were "if I mean, if your family is racist, okay, children will be educated in that way" and "If parents are bad people, children, most of them, in my opinion, mmh, they will try to do the same things parents do. Okay?".

From the conversations that I co-constructed with participant 1, I could infer that the discourse in the film clip, his personal cultural trajectory, viz., his participation in the exchanging program in the Netherlands, in the Dutch city, his Erasmus in Austria and his cultural attitudes shaped by his parents were interplay with one another, jointly contributing to forming the intertextual context, based on which participant 1 reflection on Italian family education and society from line 128 to line 134. Given reflection is one of the agents for intercultural communication, this participant developed his intercultural awareness at the moment we made this video interview.



Figure 40 The Italian participant is emphasizing the positive parts of different cultures

From the perspective of open attitudes, by initiating the sentence "the film wants to teach us that", this participant offered his understanding of the film clip to me. He thought that people with different cultural backgrounds should hold positive attitudes

towards each other and should learn the distinctive parts that are related to each other's cultures. The understanding of this film clip that this participant offered can be seen in *"but we should see these differences in a positive way, as an advantage, because I can learn something new from you who belong to another culture and you can learn something more from my culture."* And by moving his left and right hands up and down and saying **but there's not a culture that is better than the other ones.**", this participant debunked on ethnocentrism— claiming the cultural community that one belongs to is much better than the foreign cultures that this person encounters, as he emphasized that each culture had its own distinctive part. In this sense, this participant held an open attitude towards other cultures. Although this participant dismissed ethnocentrism, he still recognized that one culture is different from another one. That is to say, he presumed that there is a clear-cut boundary between cultures. Despite that participant 1 contended that the cultures are different, he held a positive attitude towards the distinction between different cultures. And by using the causal conjunction "because", this participant continued to explain the reason for which the differences should be construed as positive is that people with different cultural backgrounds could exchange their distinctive parts with one another. Since open attitudes, according to Byram (1997, 2017) model of intercultural communicative competence, serve to facilitate intercultural competence, it seems that participant 1 had already improved his intercultural competence at the level of attitudes.

However, his open attitude towards culture, in my opinion, was just a cloak for his cultural neo-essentialism which was represented by his cultural overgeneralized ideas related to Chinese culture because in this conversation and the questionnaire this participant filled in, participant 1 gave me a great quantity of information, all of which revolved around the Chinese people's character, which could be seen in his and his parents' appreciation of the Chinese shop owner and the Chinese people's character in line 192 "and he is very nice, like other Chinese people I know" and "I would like to find an adjective...they always want to improve themselves, working, studying...we really appreciate Chinese people. "

In this sense, this participant took an over-simplified attitude towards culture, as he classified the whole Chinese people into one type "the Chinese people are nice, they always wanted to improve themselves working" rather than viewing the Chinese in complex manner which is there are also exceptions in terms of the Chinese people's characters.

Besides, with respect to the role that parents play in shaping their own children's mindsets, he did not give a critical analysis, as he viewed that parents played a deterministic role in their children's thinking pattern, which could be seen in **“I mean, if your family is racist, okay, children will be educated in that way, even if they don't have the same idea.”**

Since Holliday (2019) underscored that personal cultural trajectory contributed to intercultural communication, the personal cultural baggage of this participant might also serve as a catalyst for his development of intercultural awareness. His intercultural awareness can manifest itself in his reflection on Italian society and the influences that Italian parents have on their children.

To summarize, from the conversation, I could see that participant 1 recognized the racism in Italy in line 128. Besides, participant 1 thought that people should hold positive attitudes towards each other as each culture enjoys an equal position in the same line (128). Third, participant 1 offered a complicated viewpoint of Italian family parenting in line 136 “it depends on families”. Fourth, participant 1 thought that family education mattered most in the thinking patterns of a child in line 147.

9.4.2 Teaching Activity 2

In this lesson, I developed the intercultural competence of this Italian learner of Chinese to arouse his pragmatic awareness. After participating in this activity, participant 1 learned that it is necessary to adapt himself to the people with different impositions in different social contexts.

By deploying a multimodal approach, I let this student understand the role that facial expressions play in interpersonal attentiveness, particularly in facework viz., the self-image that one values. (Spencer-Oatey & Francklin, 2009) What is more, I tried to let this Italian learner of Chinese understand that facial expressions are not culturally determined. On the contrary, they are contextually orientated. That is to say, it was the different registers and the power relationship between interlocutors that decided on what kind of facial expressions that one could make. Besides, I reiterated that what kind of facial expressions one could use depend also on the identity that his or her interlocutor presented in a specific situation and the emotional state that his or her interactant shows in that particular context. (Although from the following conversations, I failed to arouse his meta-pragmatic awareness.

By using my gestures, facial expressions and verbal speeches, I made this

participant engage himself with the thing that interests him most. In this teaching activity, this participant chose to focus on facial expressions after taking account of the different connotations between the Italian facial expressions and those of the Chinese.

01 GNY: che cosa?

02 Participant C: dico questo non c'entra con il testo e una domanda che volevo farti io così in generale.

03 Siccome ieri parlavamo di differenze culturale queste cose, una cosa che ho notato anche quando parlo con te o quando ho parlato con qualsiasi persona cinese che cambiano molto di: le espressioni faciali, nel senso alcune molte, questo è un mio pensiero **quando io parlo con un italiano io riesco a capire molto molto facilmente se lui è contento o se lui arrabbiato se lui è divertito. Quando parlo con te o quando i cinesi in questo caso con tutti quelli che ho parlato anche questa ragazza che ti ho detto ho conosciuto un paio di mesi (uhum), in qualche modo a livello fasciale**

04 GNY: Ma anche i cinesi mostrano le espressioni faciali quando sono contenti.

05 Participant C: Questo non lo so, appunto te lo chiedevo

06 GNY: Because in the working place (for me)it is dangerous to reveal your negative emotions to the others through facial expressions,

07 Participant C: davvero//

08 GNY: yes it does, yes it does. If you reveal you negative emotions in the workplace through your facial expressions you will take the risk of being misunderstood (si)by the others

09 Participant C: si fraintendere (eh).

10 GNY: **In questo caso si può introdurre come mantenere un rapporto buono non per rendere male perché siamo colleghi**

11 **Quindi siamo, a un certo punto, dobbiamo collaborare insieme a volte quindi è**

meglio mantenere un legame (si) oppure un rapporto accettabile

12 Participant C: direi equilibrato precisamente (si) balance (eh)

13 GNY: equilibrato, ok va bene

14 Participant C: ok tu però la prima cosa che mi hai detto è stata del lavoro, il fatto che al lavoro generalmente (con i colleghi italiani eh)

15 Participant C: si si ok, dico la prima volta che ti ho chiesto (mai) al lavoro insomma si: è meglio avere una faccia che fosse accettabile per i colleghi.

16 non che mostri emozioni. Questa quello che ti avevo detto ieri

17 in generale generalizzando io bello o brutto che sia. la mentalità dei cinesi e molto vicina al lavoro quello che io ho detto l'altra volta. Il fatto di essere intraprenditi il fatto di volere sempre lavorare fare tante cose

18 che ho generalizzano su questa cosa in qualche modo c'è il collegamento con la tua risposta

19 GNY: dipende dalle persone

20 Participant C: Sicuramente, però vedi già la prima cosa e stata quella, è giusto quelli che dici tu

21 GNY una faccia lunga con la professoressa Poppi o con la professoressa Marina Bondi , non va bene

22 Participant C: Certo che non va bene

23 GNY: Dipende dal social distance degli interlocutori. (si, certo). Dal punto di vista pragmatico.

24 Participant C: Assolutamente, sii in questo caso e una cosa più informale, anche se

sorrìdi non succede niente, io sono contento se sorrìdi ha ha

25 GNY: Dipende da how to say...Dall'interlocutore (dall'interlocutore) in un contesto sociale.

26 Participant C: Sì da tante cose sì sì, era una mia curiosità, ti ho fatto tante domande, volevo chiederti questa cosa

27 GNY: Secondo me uguale c'è una piccola differenza tra italiani e cinesi, per quello che riguarda questo, per esempio la faccia, le espressioni faciali

28 Participant C : ok va bene

29 GNY: però, se parli con un capo oppure una persona più importante (certo, devi essere serio) devi essere prudente (brava, certo sì sì) questo è il mio punto

30 Participant C: Ok, essere prudente, Quindi non mostrarsi tanto, quindi cercare di ...

31 GNY: Perché le espressioni faciali sono uno dei modi di espressioni di comunicazione

32 Participant C: ↑certo, molto importante↓

33 GNY: Gestures, facial expressions, tones and all the things and verbs speech and verbal speech nonverbal speech, they all as a whole express some meanings, combine In this case, so in this sense. This is a way of communication, (uhum)so it is necessary to behave appropriately to behave with prudent manners in front of different people, depending on the person, whether he or she has a high position or a lower position.

9.4.3 Teaching Activity 3

The Description and Interpretation of the Literary Text *Jia*

Introduction: I asked him to read the excerpt that I adapted from a book named Jia via mobile phone. After this participant read this excerpt, I let him describe and interpret the main contents of this excerpt.

01 GNY: Hai finito di leggerlo?

02 Participant C: sì ho letto tutti e due

03 GNY: Hai capito?

04 Participant C : si si, se vuoi posso dirti un po'. Se vuoi posso dirti un po'

05 GNY: Potresti descrivere o fare un riassunto di questo (va bene) e interpretare oppure
06 le tue percezioni (perfetto va benissimo) in inglese (of course I will) è molto difficile
07 trascrivere in italiano //

08 Participant C : of course! Ok so in this he was really clever and smart guy he
wanted to, he studied chemistry; he had a lot of dreams because he wanted to improve
himself.

09 he wanted to continue to study in order to improve his career he wanted to travel, to
go to Germany to improve himself, but there was a problem because something went
wrong, he had a big problem because his mother died

10 so, after the dead of his mother everything has changed, his father has another
woman but for him; Jue Xing; it was a terrible change he not only lost his mother but
also his life change.

11 His father arranged a marriage for him with a girl but without his approval, he just
wanted to put together his son with another important family' daughter.

12 His life was destroyed because everything was different as. He thought before he
taught, he will be travel, study and go ahead with this career, but everything stopped
because of his father↓

13 GNY: Because of his father, but he would like to improve himself right (yes, he
wanted) What was his reaction↓

14 Participant C: The first moment he didn't say anything he just say nothing, almost
nothing but inside he was dying because when he came back to his room after his after
his father tell him about this marriage , he understood his life will change forever
because of the father

15 Eh:: this decision was terrible his father decide this wife this girl with a stupid game
using a paper in other to choose too girls from two family

16 GNY: uhum What do you mean?

17 Participant C : He use some read paper (.) and then without any reason just because
of the lucky his father chooses a girl a wife for his son, so this in my opinion represent
I don't know actually in China what happened about this kind of topic

18 GNY: sorry for interrupted you, can we just talk about the relationship between
father and son

19 Participant C : Ok in this case the father decided the life of his son.

20 He didn't want to accept this marriage, but the father decided for him, he couldn't escape from that marriage even if he didn't want to marriage.

21 GNY: He couldn't escape the control of his parent even though his inside...

22 Participant C : ↑He was dying inside he didn't want to marry in that moment↓

23 GNY: yes, he has how to say his autonomy and agency to some extent, but his power is too weak and too powerless

24 Participant C : yes, because to go against his father maybe because he was too young or maybe because his attitude was not that brave, his behavior was not brave in order to face his father in that case the little guy was just a victim

25 GNY:was just a victim so as for the relations the protagonist and his father, what kind of role does the father play and what of role does this son play?

26 Participant C : ehm:: in this case, the father decided the life of his son without asking anything to him what, like what you want to do or what do you want

27 GNY: without communication

28 Participant C : exactly, there wasn't any kind of communication between the son and father. The father said do this to the son said Yes.

29 GNY: without communication yes, without communication do you think this kind of situation reflect the way or the relations between the father and their kids? Do you think this kind of situation reflect the reality?

30 Participant C : Nowadays?

31 GNY: Nowadays

32 Participant C : if I will talk about general, actually I don't know nowadays but in general it is not something new that parents will introduce a girl or a wife to his son, maybe I'm not that sure but it is common to arrange this kind of marriage but not because the son or daughter they want to but just for busines or economic power between this big families, so just to create a connection between these families but not between the son and the daughter↓

33 GNY: Not between the how to say.

34 Participant C : In this case there is any love just interested, busines

35 GNY: Interest, ok. Beside the interested is there any causes or reasons for such kind of phenomena

36 Participant C : Uhm I guess the parents in the wrong way they want the best for their sons, but (.) it is the worst way to have your son to be happy, maybe in that mentality ok ,in the mind of the parents it is a good way move to find a girl wife to their son

37 GNY: So, the do not know how to put themselves in other shoes, in the shoes of their son//

38 Participant C : //Maybe they do this

39 GNY: The switch a little bit their perspectives

40 Participant C They have to, but they do not, I think so

41 GNY: In which way can they show, if there Is love in the right or in a proper way↓

42 Participant C ↑**They have to, but in my opinion, this is the same of what happened before to the grandfather. If the grandfather arranges a marriage for the father to his son (yes), if the grandfather will act like this, I'm pretty sure the son of the grandfather will act his father because his mind will be change (ok) in a bad way of course↓**

43 GNY: In a bad way or different way?

44 Participant C: **Uhm: maybe the adjective bad it is too personal. In my opinion it is that way maybe other persons will say it is a good way why not (yes, it is different) In my opinion; il mio concetto; it is bad but yes in a different(ok), if I speak about**

it with other Italian students, I'm almost sure they will same as me↓

45 GNY: ↑They will say the same (I think so), Why? (they It will be bad) It will be bad

46 Participant C : I think that all Italians would say this is bad of type arranging a marriage for your son to get married↓

47 GNY: è un modo ingiusto

48 Participant C : Not 100 percent of Italian people of course there are always exception, **but if i love a woman I will marry her not because my father told you have to marry her, but in the past also happened in Italy.**

You know my grandfather and grandmother, they're dead. Their marriage was when there were 16 or 17 (ah, just like in China) very young. Now is di-fferent//

49 GNY://Now is different

50 Participant C : They were really young like 17,16 or 15 and it happened the same as the story the father of my grandfather introduced my grandmother to my grandfather and said you have to marry her in that case they didn't have the power to change(.) the plan and they get together and get married, they after they fall in love, because I know they fall in love. In the beginning it was an arranged marriage you didn't choose your partner somebody else did that for you↓

51 GNY: as time goes by he learnt gradually to love her, he fall in love with her you said. At the very beginning there was not love (yes)It was just combined marriage but after that (it happened). It happened, ok ho capito↓

52 Participant C : also in that case for me. It wasn't right in my opinion ok, it wasn't not right they fall in love later but if I think about me if that I will take wife I would like to choose my wife, not my father will say Concetto take that girl and marry, maybe after two year I will fall in love with that girl but://

53 GNY: // something miss

54 Participant C : ↑Something miss that is the point and for me it is important it doesn't work like this↓

55 GNY: And will you listen to some advice? Some parents' advice?

56 Participant C: Right now, you mean?

57 GNY: No, the advice... for example, you want to get married,

58 Participant C: Ok!: You want to get married, you want to marry a girl. And then after that

59 :: Yes, of course, for me my parents' advice is very important, but also about student life, my family will have a doubt about internship, affairs and others too.

60 GNY: Yes!

61 Participant C: Every time I ask my father and mother what I can do now, can you help me, not just physically, but all kinds of communication: don't worry or something.

62 GNY: Not physically, what do you mean by not physically?

During this conversation, I negotiated the meaning with him by asking him to explain the meaning of physical communication.

63 Participant C: I mean I don't need, because my parents live in the south part of Italy.

64 GNY: Oh, not face-to-face communication.

65 Participant C: Yes, not face-to-face communication. Just typing or calling them by mobile phone. Just undirect (indirect) communication, not face-to face. I don't know whether undirect is the right term, but it doesn't matter. I mean I care about the opinions of my parents in my life. Also if there is a girl, I had, two years ago, a girl, ok? Two or three years ago, and I ask to my parents, what do you think of her? And my parents said, "ok, she is nice" or "she is not for you blah blah blah". But I have to choose what to do, but also I listen to their opinions.

66 GNY: right, okay. What do you think of now then, what do you think about modern China? Nowadays do you think this is a kind of phenomenon (people only listen to parents' words without having their own agency) that also prevails?

67 Participant C: Uh-huh, prevail. I think it still exists.

68 GNY: It still exists.

69 Participant C: **Like the same of the story, but maybe this phenomenon was**

reduced. I mean, after years, I mean nowadays is different from 20 years ago. I think that during the future, this phenomenon will not disappear at all. But it will be reduced.

70 GNY: Reduced. And it will be reduced especially in metropolis cities or no? Like Beijing or Shanghai?

71 GNY: I...uh.: Or it depends on the family?

72 Participant C: I think it depends on the son.

73 GNY: Depends on the son?

74 Participant C: Because I guess that if the son has reached, uh... how to say, an autonomy? Your own way of thinking thanks to personal experiences, to study, to working, to relationships, I think he will have more power to choose what he really wants. So, I think to reach this kind of perception, in that case, the power of the father will be reduced.

75 GNY: Correspondingly be reduced.

76 Participant C: Yes, so in that case, the son will decide who to marry to.

77 GNY: okay, depends on the son, depends on the person, the protagonist.

78 Participant C: Yeah, the protagonist of the story.

79 GNY: The story, okay, okay. Have you ever heard about something about the May Fourth Movement?

80 Participant C: I guess not, I don't think so. Honestly when they read May Fourth Movement, I felt that I will ask you what happened, what is this movement.

81 GNY: I mean the students, they the students just, how to say, participated in several demonstrations.

82 Participant C: Protests maybe?

83 GNY: So, they fight against the feudalism. So they just welcomed the democracy and science, the western democracy and science, because at that time it was colonized, China was colonized by western countries.

84 Participant C: Okay.

85 GNY: So they welcomed the so-called science and democracy without realizing such knowing, without having a crystalized concept of what does it mean by democracy and science.

86 Participant C: Okay.

87 GNY: So, they cannot live under the control, they cannot, they should, get rid of the shackles of the family, get out of the shackles of feudalism, off the fixed, how to say,

the bad past, the negative past of the Confucianism. But they don't know how to do. They were at sea, they are very confused at that time. They realized the patriotic society... feudalism the marriage arrangements were not right, they realized this kind of things were not really right, but they um,, do not know how to struggled against

88 Participant C: how to fight...

89 GNY: how to fight in right way. So this is reflected in this text↓//

90 Participant C: The problem of the combined marriage (yes)

91 GNY: Juexin although

92 Participant C: Ah: and also, because the son he couldn't act he didn't know how to act against the father

93 GNY: ↑Yes, like that, exactly↓

94 Participant C: Ok I see↓

95 GNY: Any social phenomenon is always related to the socioeconomic situation at the time

As can be seen from the exchange quoted above, this participant explained the reason for which this son was powerless and had no agency; According to this participant, the protagonist Jue Xin in the literary text had no courage to rebel against his father, which can be seen in his repetitive use of the adjective phrase “not brave” in the utterance “his attitude was not that brave and his behavior was not that brave”.

When participant 1 was asked to explain the reasons that lead to the attitudes that the protagonist Jue Xin and his father held towards each other, he thought that it was the father who decided the life of his son Jue Xin. Then, this participant continued to elaborate on his opinions by attributing this phenomenon to the lack of communication between the father and his son and to the economic and business interests between the families.

As for the economic interests between families, this participant emphasized that the reasons for getting married should lie in the parents' need of getting connection between big families instead of the real love between the children. That is to say, it was the business and interests shared by families at that time that force the children of different families to get married, instead of the affection that the children had for each other. And then, with the phrase “I am pretty sure that” participant was convinced that

the rationale behind such a united marriage should also be related to parents' ways of thinking. He presumed that the parents of different families were unable to imagine their children's feelings and ideas because they were deeply influenced by the value systems that their families had long championed. This can be seen in line 42. Then, by using the experiential word "in a bad way of course" which denotes the disagreeable and unpleasant thing, this participant showed his disapproval of the united marriage mentioned lines 28, 32, 34 and 36, this can be seen in the phrase "in my opinion" in line 42.

After taking account of his participant's opinions "in a bad way", I asked him the question "in a bad way of in a different way?" in order to let him reflect on his previous discourses "I am pretty sure the son of the grandfather will act his father because his mind will be change (ok) in a bad way of course" which is an essentialist statement about the cultural phenomenon "marriage arrangement" as he did not consider the other cases about the styles of Chinese marriage arrangement, for example, there are all some children who get married because of the affection for each other.

By doing so, I would like to propelled him to understand the point that one could neither judge a cultural phenomenon by merely using "good/bad" nor could he rationalize his viewpoint by over-simplifying the styles of getting married.

However, with the mental clause "I think " which indicate a person's ways of thinking and the determiner "all" which denotes the mass people or whole number of amount, the participant C tried to legitimate his stance on liberal marriage by saying that the whole Italian people thought the same as he did, as can be seen in "I think that all Italian would say this is bad of type of arranging a marriage for your son to get married ", especially after he re-conceptualized my intended meanings which were inherent in my questions "one could not judge a phenomenon and label it as good or bad". The certainty of his views also manifests itself in the falling tone ↓ which serves to highlight his stance on how to get married. Then, I offered my interpretation "e' un modo ingiusto" in a way of giving him hint, enabling him to reflect on his utterances "I thing all the Italians would say this is bad of type of arranging a marriage for your son to get married."

From our conversations which were quoted above, the participant aired his views on the Chinese styles of getting married "there is no love but interests and business" by drawing on his member resources, that is, his attitudes towards and the assumptions

about marriage that had long been shaped in his primary and secondary socialization which can be found out in his opinions on the role that Italian parents play in their own children in the first activity and those in the present activity “I think that all Italians would say so” and “if I love a woman I would choose to love her not ”. Then, the previous discourses that I made with him in terms of the styles of getting married in teaching activity 2, his own interpretations of the literary excerpt adapted from *Jia* in this teaching activity as well as the discourse of *Jia* itself were all social presentations which mirrored the social reality - marriage. Three pieces of discourses were regarded as the intertextual context, that is, the meanings that the participant selected as the background experience according to which this participant chose to agree with his own previous opinions.

Then, used the adverb “also” which indicates that something one has said is true of another thing, this participant reflected on the discourses that I made with him, his own utterances about the excerpt and the language in the literary text by recognizing that this kind of united marriage happened not only in China but also in Italy, as can be seen “but in the past also happened in Italy.”

He further explained this utterances by sharing his narratives related to the styles of how his grandparents had gotten married in line 50. “They were really young like 17,16 or 15 and it happened the same as the story the father of my grandfather introduced my grandmother to my grandfather and said you have to marry her in that case they didn’t have the power to change(.) the plan and they get together and get married, they after they fall in love, because I know they fall in love. In the beginning it was an arranged marriage you didn’t choose your partner somebody else did that for you↓”

And by uttering this utterance and the utterance “ok, it wasn’t not right they fall in love later but if I think about me if that I will take wife I would like to choose my wife, not my father will say Concetto take that girl and marry”, this participant compared and contrasted the ways of choosing a spouse in the past and at present in Italy by narrating the marriage story of his grandparents and his own willing to marry a woman if he fell love into her. Then, when I asked this participant whether the phenomenon - the united marriage - still existed in China, this participant reckoned that it will become a rare phenomenon in the future.

And then, with respect to the style of marriage, this participant juxtaposed three

temporal conjunctions “nowadays” and “20 years ago” “in the future” in an effort to indicate the changes of the styles of getting married. By doing so, this participant thought that the styles of getting married is a social event which underwent changes as time went by. This can reflect in “nowadays it is different from 20 years ago, in the future It won’t disappear at all but will be reduced↓” What is more, he underscored his opinion with the falling tone which was marked by ↓.

Since the styles of getting married can be classified into social customs, a representation of culture, this participant did not view culture in fixed manner. On the contrary, he believed that culture was flexible, undergoing changes during different historical periods. His belief manifests itself in his recognition of the development of the styles of getting married, which existed not only in China but also in Italy. In this sense, this participant took a dynamic viewpoint of culture, as evidenced by his views on the styles of getting married.

As can be seen from the conversations I had with this participant, I prompted him to reflect on the issues concerning marriage in China and in Italy by asking him question “In which way can they, if there is love in the right or in a proper way↓”. By doing so, I let him reflect on his previous discourses about marriage and I also enabled him to further elaborate on his viewpoints of ways in which parents show love to their children.

9.4.4 Teaching Activity 4

01 GNY: Then. I have some interesting things to show you please have a look at it↓
This is the first one, this is the first one

02 1,2,3,4,5 and then 5,6, 7, 8, and this is another one (ok) but they are connected to each other and they together show something

03 Participant C: In the same order (they are connected to each other) this is like story? (together show something)

04 GNY: It is not a story. Could you please tell me what you have learn about this? (10)
non so se tu possa capire o no perché questo è scritto in cinese tradizionale? ↓//

05 Participant C: eh direi (ha ha). Ti giuro che ci sto provando, mi sto sforzando, (ok)a dare un’interpretazione

06 GNY: Se c’è qualche punto che non capisci, dimmelo↓

07 Participant C: Ok I want to say something, but i need your help↓

08 GNY: Ok volentieri

09 Participant C: Ok perfetto, starting from the first picture there is a man two babies, he put the babies are inside some: (case) yes and writing down some characters but I don't know the meaning↓

10 GNY: it means the price tag ..

11 Participant C: They are the price tag (ok) certo, certo

12 GNY: 7 thousand, 5 thousand.

13 Participant C: The man tries to sell the babies (yes) ok. but there is a young man they saw this scenario, he found a piece of paper and try to write down the price of himself, he tried to sell himself but ok So maybe ah:, maybe I. Wait, maybe so I'm going on no nobody bought the babies ,none of them

14 GNY: Nobody cares about them

15 Participant C of the babies of the father of the man also about the young guy that try to imitate the other babies ok

16 GNY: what else could you get from this picture?

17 Participant C: I guess that he wanted to earn money, the young guy so he thought that maybe it could be an easy way to make money. I mean selling myself, because I don't have anything I almost no doubt I'm pretty sure I saw this.

18 GNY: And then this one

19 Participant C: There is a rich woman, there is a comparison

20 GNY: Especially for this

21 Participant C: ah, for the dog, they are wearing some sweaters. This is typical stereotype of a rich women (rich women), compare to the poor guy who doesn't have anything, coming back to our story nobody care the man went back home, went away and the little guy was really sad because he went to the shop maybe his idea was to buy something

22 ok because this is a shop (uhum vetrina), una vetrina is, he was sad or jealous, sad maybe will be enough because he saw another guy with a mother we a family we an economic situation maybe good not rich people but normal people

so, the woman the mother of this kid, bought a puppet to his son. In this case he was really sad he wanted to buy something too. It is doll shop, just my interpretation he couldn't buy the puppet even if he really want he didn't have money, that was the real reason why he wanted to sell himself and then in the last page it its really clear that he is really poor that he doesn't have anything because there is a really strong

comparison between the poverty and the economic welfare

23 Participant C: The poor and the rich

the poor and the rich. The society. It might mirror the society nowadays

24 GNY not nowadays. This happened in 1930s (ok ok) during the control of GuoMinDang government. (The nationalist government) In the 1930 before years approaching the WW2, the Japanese invasion (ok) So, at that time the society was in chaos.

25 Participant C Ok ok so it reflects, it mirrors the society gap between rich and poor people

26 GNY and then, this one I have to show you, do you know the price ↓

27 GNY_Azioni mostra I fogli allo student

28 Participant C: The first character its...shi wan , I prezzi sono

29 GNY: I prezzi si, pero questo è un puppet it costs more than the babies. A puppet costs more than the babies

30 Participant C-: ↑E vero, é vero. Yeah ok, I got it↓

31 Participant C_azioni guarda ai fogli

32 GNY What does it mean?

33 So the puppet was more expensive than a real baby↓

34 GNY: From the socioeconomic prospective, what do you think?

35 Participant C: There was a poor society (right) at that moment. A chaos as you told me. So, people didn't have money to have a baby means having expenses so if you don't have money you cannot take care of your baby maybe you prefer to sell the babies

36 GNY: **No ones does not like the babies. I was too poor, if I can not survive, how can I support my babies,**

37 Participant C: **eh: I'm trying to say the same** I make an example, I'm the father I have two babies I'm really poor. If I don't have money, how can I find money or drink? what can I do? **I will sell the baby to another person and the person will take them maybe to a better life because I cannot afford to the expenses, I cannot grow my babies.**

38 GNY **what else do you find in these pictures? they are collect to each other. They are just how to say; banconote;**

39 Participant C: **Banconote (si is). there was a currency. Yeah ok but, it doesn't matter, just this one**

40 GNY: gold

41 Participant C: this one, what is this a piece of gold (gold) oh yes, I couldn't see, this little piece of gold the value of this little piece of gold it is all this money

Yes, it means that the currency the devaluation of the currency and inflation. Secondo me me l'hai studiato

42 Participant C: is, l'abbiamo fatto in economica, l'inflazione. There was a a big inflation and of course it mirrors in (yes) this was also one of the reason why there were poor

43 GNY: Yes because with a lot of banconote (they lost their power) Yes, The money does not have (real value) real value, so I need to have more money (of course) to buy the same thing (different from before). Compare to before or the past And then do you know, have you noticed. Do you think it its legal or illegal to sell your kids? I don't mean right now. right now, it is illegal also in china

44 Participant C: ↑of course, it is illegal↓

45 Participant C: You mean in the period if it was legal or illegal?

46 GNY: I just wanted to say compare to the present situation (ah). At the time the kids could be sold easily, could be sold whether they could be sold or could buy their parents. so their life in the hand's other parents

47 Participant C: Yes of course but I don't think the parents will sell the children nowadays they will act differently they will have more money to grow the babies and maybe they will give their babies to other family, they will find a compromise I mean maybe the father will work for the family and the family will help the children i don't think there will be a father or mother will sell the babies just to find a comprise in order to grow them, not selling↓

48 GNY: but to some extend the comic strips reflected that historical time during which the legal systems was not very. It was not very sound

49 Participant C: It didn't work



Figure 41 I and participant C are talking about comic strips.

Within the framework of multimodal social semiotics, I analyzed the conversations that I had with participant C.

Based on this learner's interests in the Chinese characters and his need to describe and interpret the comic strips, I first directed his attention to the Chinese characters that are written on the comic strips. In doing so, I explained to him that the Chinese characters indicated the price which was 7 thousand and 5 thousand pre-war yuan respectively. Then, with the movements of my right hand (the mode of gesture), my explanation "it means the price tag" and "7 thousand and 5 thousand" (the mode of speech) as well as the images drawn on the papers (the visual mode), I managed to enable the participant C to understand my meaning-making: the old man sold his own babies and the little boy sold himself. (Please see the hereunder picture which is shown in appendix C).



As can be seen from the analysis above, I carried out my multimodal teaching activity by presenting the comic strips to this participant C, making my gestures, viz., my hand movements and showed my facial expressions. In doing so, I made participant C understand the meaning inherent in the comic strips by capitalizing on the mode ensembles, viz., an integration of the mode of gesture, the mode of speech and the visual-textual mode.

Then, with the question “What else could you get from this picture?” in line 16, I continued to ask this participant to describe and interpret the contents of comic strips in order to know the extent to which he understood the meanings that are embedded in the pictures. By using the subjective modality marker “I guess”, the participant presumed that the little boy in the comic strips just wanted to earn money by selling himself. After getting this participants’ answers, I learned that this participant did not understand the sociocultural context and its changes which were reflected in the present discourse, viz., the four-frame comic strips. Neither did he realize how the sociocultural context during the historical period of Min Guo (1927 - 1945) served to shape the discourse — the comic strips — in a particular way. That is to say, this participant did not know the reason why the comic strips were designed to represent the chaotic society during the historical time (1927 - 1945).

In order to let this participant C have a more comprehensive understanding of the historical background where the comic strips set, I showed him another image where a woman wore a fur coat whereas a boy was shaking as he wore nothing, based on which I directed his attention to the rich woman drawn on the picture with my fingers pointing at it, as can be seen “especially for this”. By doing so, I tried my best to ask him to get the context of situation or the wider societal context that the discourse – the Chinese

comic strips – represented. That is, the great disparity between the poor and rich in the Old Shang Golden era (1927- 1945). In this way, through my multimodal teaching, I made the meaning “the chaotic and the wider societal context that the discourse – the Chinese comic strips – represented” by integrating the visual-textual mode (the comic strips) with my explanation “especially for this” (the mode of speech) and my hand movements (the mode of gesture).

By using “compared to” which denotes the differences and juxtaposing the two adjectives “rich” and “poor”, this Participant C engaged with the comic strips and interpreted its textual meaning by drawing on the member resources related to the image of the rich and the poor that this participant had long formulated in his life experience, as can be seen from his conceptualization of the rich people which manifests itself in “a typical stereotype of a rich woman ” and “the poor guy who does not have anything” Besides, this participant did efferent reading (Rosenblatt, 1994) in a way of retrieving the information from a text, “...coming back to our story nobody care the man went back home, went away and the little guy was really sad because he went to the shop maybe his idea was to buy something”. However, from the utterance of this participant, I could infer that participant C limited himself into interpreting the comic strips, without clearly interpreting the present comic strips by drawing on the the historical background where these comic strips set. Neither did he present his subjective positioning in accordance with that of the poor orphan and that of the old man in these comic strips.

Besides, considering the the utterance “it might mirror the society nowadays” in line 24, I knew that this participant did not have a clear picture of the Min Guo historical period (between 1927 - 1945) and he did not have a basic understanding of the designer Chen Le Ping and what the designer wanted to imply by drawing the comic strips.

Considering that this participant’s lacked relevant knowledge, I increased the comprehensible input related to this historical period by continuing to explain to him the price tag which was attached on the window of a shop in the comic strips and telling him the comic strips set in the old Shanghai where the society was turbulent, as can be seen in line 24 “This happened in 1930s (ok ok) during the control of GuoMinDang government. (The nationalist government) In the 1930 before years approaching the WW2, the Japanese invasion (ok) So, at that time the society was in chaos.”. By doing so, I let this participant capture my meaning: the lives of the poor were much cheaper than the price of a doll in that turbulent society. And participant C also understood my meaning, as evidenced by “Ok ok so it reflects, it mirrors the society gap between rich

and poor people” in line 25.

What is more, by asking him to pay attention to the price that was labelled to the two babies and the price of the doll, I tried to enable this participant to learn about the reason why the old man was force to sell his own babies and the boy had to sell himself by letting him know that the price of the doll symbolized the rich people whereas the social behavior of selling oneself reflected the misery that the poor people suffered from. In doing so, I let him learn about the influences that the historical background of Min Guo had on the attitude that parents held towards their own children, especially on the socio-cultural phenomenon “selling oneself and selling one’s own babies”. In this sense, I enabled this Italian participant to view

To summarize, I helped this participant to understand the meaning of the traditional Chinese characters, which served as a piece of crucial information with which he was able to describe and construed the meanings that were inherent in the comic strips. The comic strips can be seen as a semiotic potential with which I made my meaning, that is, the miserable life that the old man and his babies suffered from during the historical period between 1920 – 1930. After reflecting on the interpretation that I offered and his previous interpretations of these comic strips, this Italian participant reconceptualized these comic strips which could be regarded as an integration of pictorial and textual modes from the perspective of multimodal semiotics. With these comic strips, he understood that the society at that time was chaotic and the poor were forced to sell themselves in order to survive.

Furthermore, from the lines between 34 – 37, I explained the reason why some people conducted the behavior of selling their children during the historical time of 1930. By saying “no one does not like the babies” I emphasized that family love is a commonality shared by all humanities. Then, by doing so, I wanted to implicitly intend that the parents in the comic strips also regarded their children as their beloved ones and they also valued their own children than anything else. What is more, by using the first-person singular form “I” and the conditional clause “if I cannot survive” to hypothesize a situation in which one suffers from hunger and cold, I tried to prompt him to imagine the misery that the protagonist San Mao and the old man suffered from by saying “I was too poor” and if I could not survive”.

After considering my hypothetical question, this participant took the same line with me in terms of “If I could not survive, I could not support my children” by saying “I’m trying to say the same”. And then, this participant explained the reason why he

agreed with my viewpoint by making a presumption that if he was the father of two babies, he would sell them in order to let them lead well-off life. Then, this participant continued to show his subjective position by aligning himself with me in a way of using the conditional clause “if I have no money” and initiating an array of open-ended questions “How can I make money and drink?” “what can I do?”. By putting forward this hypothetical condition and using two modal verbs in the negative form “cannot” which means the inability to do something, this participant explained the reason why he could not keep his babies, as evidenced by “I cannot afford to expense and grow my babies”. Apart from rationalizing the behavior of “selling babies”, this participant gave another explanation with respect to the positive side of the behavior of “selling children”. By imagining the identity of a father who had no money, he thought that his babies might lead a well-off life if his babies lived in a rich family, which can be reflected in “I will sell the baby to another person and the person will take them maybe to a better life”.

As can be seen, this participant was able to shift his perspective of an Outsider to an Insider by identifying himself as one of the members of the community to which the old man and the three children in that comic strips belonged and imagining the feelings of the old man in the comic strips. (Kramsch, 2000) As I have emphasized in the methodological part, intercultural competence embraces intersubjective alignment which manifests itself in empathy. I aroused and developed this participant’s intercultural competence as I prompted him to take the perspective of the old man in the comic strips and to encouraged him to feel and think what the old man against such a historical background might feel and think. In one word, I improved this participant’s intercultural competence in a way of developing this participant’s awareness of empathy with reference to Deardorff (2006)’s integrated model of intercultural communicative competence.

In addition, since making the meanings based on each other’s interests and needs could be viewed as an index of the development of intercultural competence in the present project, this participant improved his intercultural competence as he showed his contextual stance on the reasons for selling babies, expressed his emotional tone, showed his gestures and facial expressions to make meanings in accordance with my emphasis on the causes for selling oneself or one’s own children, which can be seen in the utterance “I am thinking the same with you”. That is to say, this participant showed his opinions on the reasons why the father sold his children in the comic strips which

set in the Min Guo period (1927-1945) after he took my focus on the causes for selling children into consideration.

9.4.5 Teaching Activity 5

At the beginning of this lesson, I asked participant C to watch *Mirror*, a Chinese documentary and asked him to describe, interpret and explain the main contents that he had watched. And the conversations that I made with him are presented in the following conversations:

- 1 GNY: Could you please (...)
- 2 P1: it works?
- 3 GNY: yes it works ...
- 4 P1: cool
- 5 GNY: Could you please tell me what you have learned from that that Chinese documentary *Mirror*?
- 6 P1: ok so...
- 7 GNY: (...) [..] You have just to recognize
- 8 P1: [Yes of course, ehh ok.
- 9 **The video clip shows this difficult relation between parents and sons because**
- 10 **sometimes happen not only in China but also in Italy it happens,**
- 11 **The parents they will press too much**
- 12 **they stress too much their son so also go studying or working or also all about thoughts ways of thinking - and the little guys like (about) 13,15,18,16 they are too weak to (0.2) fight against the parents so the parents**
- 13 **will influence their sons in a bad way and they will never be independent/ happy at all even if they will study a lot and have a great career because they study, they will live have / they will grow with a kind of**
- 14 **mental condition because of the parents, in my opinion parents they have to always stay next to their sons ok, but at the same time they should (provide some suggestions) (modal verb) uh leave some (determiner) space for them because the sons, they have//**
- 15 to have possibility the chance to think (Infinitive verb) to with their mind

to do what they want as soon as possible of course but to express themselves not only say “yes” or “not”, sorry can or should I go? No! They have to try, and

16 I remember the words of the first guy with the red shirt that he said “I always have to ask for everything” also if I want to “ride the bike’ I have to

17 ask can I take my bike? So, this reply reminds me of the son big barriers big obstacles and if you will grow with these kinds of obstacles when you will be an adult it will be really difficult for you to go off these obstacles. To go...

17 GNY: to overcome...

18 P1 **to overcome these obstacles you know because if you live since you were really young like this your mind is changed your mind will be weak and even if you are an adult you will grow...uhmm in my opinion you are too much influenced by**

19 **the education of your parents and in this case, it is not impossible but will be hard to destroy to fight these words that your parents created for you↓**

20 GNY: I’ts very hard for them, to this kind of people to get rid of this kind of influence

21 P1: yes, from the influence of the parents,

22 GNY the negative influence of the parents. Do you think, in this case...?

23 P1: **Yes, because they were very too strict, too hard, too ... how to say? ...**

24 **↑too much In general ↓because people didn’t have any air in order to**
25 **breathe in my opinion, because when you hear a little guy like 16 years old 15, that he will-**

talk about these topics like this...I think I’m pretty sure that he really lives In this condition and he’s not joking about, he’s really forces to do everything it’s a kind of reaction to what his parents did to him.

26 GNY: so, ↑what do you think about Chinese parents from this documentary?

27 P1: ok, **I don’t want to generalize about Chinese parents**, but In relation to this clip **I appreciated that the parents of these children they went to the psychologist in order to find maybe a better way of living//**

28 GNY: they wanted to solve the problem

19 P1: maybe ↑that’s the point↓, they understood if you try go to...

20 GNY: they try to something...

21 P1: In order to help the children because the parents they understood that

there's a problem (o.2) I like when you're ill, you understood that you're ill so you will go to the doctor but if you don't understand you are I'll you won't go to the doctor

22. and this is the same, parents understood that they did a bad job with their children because they created this worst mental condition to them so they give up. In my opinion, there are two alternatives: giving up or going to psychologist in this case.

23 in order to change their mind, change the role that they had to the children (towards the children) because if these are the results parents are failing, In my opinion because my opinion is that it's impossible the a

24. little guy that 13 14 16 15 years old talk about this, in this way with this expression with these words, so there was a big problem...

22 GNY: yes

23 P1: but, I see a little light in this black scenario that I really appreciated the role of the parents

24 GNY (.....) [06:48min] everything has a silver line?

25 P1: yep, because I didn't expected when I saw the children I thought the video will focus only on the children but also the video shows the other side

26 **about the parents, they were there together with the psychologist yes and they try to speak each other with the psychologist maybe to hear some advices in order to grow their children as good as possible so for me this is really a big step**

29 GNY Ok so... **this one the scenario**, do you think it reflects the status quo of Chinese family parenting?

30 P1: What do you mean by real?

31 GNY: do you think[↑] it **objectively** reflects the reality?[↓]

32 P1: uhm: not at all, I mean these are some cases ok, but we cannot generalize watching this video because if I stop watching this video I won't **think that all Chinese parents will be like this like them, maybe this is only a**

33. **single case**, because there a lot of cases like this also in Italy but [↑]I don't want and I cannot generalize on this topic, only watching this video[↓]

33: GNY: Yes and then?

34 P1: uhm::

35 GNY: **It's a kind of discuss. every piece of discuss its use to construct a piece of reality** [↓]every piece of discuss is a representation of the reality

36 P1: of course all the discuss of the children of the parents psychologist ,
yes if I will focus only to the discuss of the children when they were crying, when they
were complaining about everything my mind will be (0.2) how to say...

37. not that clear I mean I cannot give a judge only listen to the children only
listening to I have to watch, **I mean I have to//**

37 GNY: it's partial story

38 P1: yes, I have to see the other part to have a total(0.2) an overview to this
topic, so I appreciated the video that show to us in this case both of the part, because if
the video focus only to the children it won't have to much sense for me.

39 GNY: because every discuss it's bias. ↑Discuss is always an event↓

40 P1: yeah we need to have a general view.

41 GNY: the original.. I just make a clip from the original documentary.

42 P1: of course

43 GNY: The original document they write the little guy in right t-shirt the first
guy the first kid, he always wanted to have a dog, but his parent do not//

44 P1: say no,

**45 GNY: say no they didn't permit him do anything, but at the end of this
document he realized/ fulfill his dream. How to say his parents met/satisfy his
desire.**

46 P1: Did they buy a dog?

**47 GNY: Yes they bought a dog, but do you know what? The "escrementi"
these kinds of things they boy he does not care, so there were always his parents
who took care of these kind of things, to clean to take care of the dog**

48 P1: ah::: ok

49 GNY: so at this point some of the boy ideas are not very mature, this is my
point of view

50 P1: yeah, if I were **(the subjunctive mood marked by the conditional
word if)** the guy with red shirt and I want the dog and I am complaining the dog, like
my parents they don't want to buy the dog and blah blah blah ok. **Ok I am your
father I'll buy a dog ok but you have to take care of him↓**

51 GNY: Yes ,you have to take the responsibility to take care of him, yes you
have to take care.

52 P1: for everything not only for the dog.

53 GNY: eh si., for everything that is the point ,so this clip just less emphasize on the voices (...) [12:26 min]. Not the parent but what I said before it's just released the partial, release a part of the whole picture

54 P1: of course

55 GNY: So, it's necessary for us if we are expose to this kind of discuss when it is real document or kind of (...) [12:50 min] or it is an event.

56 P1: in order to have a clear vision

57 GNY: We need to have lots of prospective.

58 P1: We have to make all the pieces together.

59 GNY: yes

60 P1: In order to fix the puzzle

61 GNY: and then we will have a more complete view of a phenomena of yes, but we cannot get.

62 P1: [we cannot judge

63 GNY: [we cannot judge. (...)[13:24min]

64 P1: We don't have all the conditions to give a judge if we have only had a partial vision of this scenario

65 GNY: once we did our judgements or stereotypes(...)[13:46min], In this way we do not want to think, (we are too lazy to think)///

66 so it is always better to think than to judge

67 P1: that's the problem that is easier to judge than think

68 GNY: yes it's easy to judge so that's my point, it's better to observe how to say directly these people and not to have a pre assumption pre perception,

69 P1: [perception

70 GNY: [perception

71 P1: without focusing

72 GNY: Yes, without any presumptions and without anything , but you need to get in touch with the people and to know them directly in person.

73 P1: Yes to have the first impression without saying anything, without knowing anything or just saying oh this is bad, but maybe I don't know anything it will be easy to speak like this

74 GNY: it will be easy

75 P1: speak it is faster than ok let's take then some minutes I will think and then speak, no i'll speak now immediately. It happens.

76 GNY: it happens

77 P1: nowadays with friends with colleagues with your wife with everyone

78 GNY: **Yes I know, sometimes**

79 P1: **we might adapt this concept to every scenario.**

80 GNY: **sometimes we do it unconsciously just like overgeneralization yesterday, you did it unconsciously but it doesn't mean that you cannot think in a complicated way.**

81 P1: but at the moment, yes unconsciously, I did it

82 GNY: yes, but you have the kind of conscious, I hope that you have that kind of conscious in your mind it's that the point,

83 P1: but is very difficult it's too hard

84 GNY: to control also

85 P1: to control

86 P1: **because, if we don't want we do(0.2) I mean like yesterday I generalized I didn't want to but because when you went out you told me you generalized and-**

87 **I said to you! me? It's not true then. I understood what you meant because I generalized but I didn't do that consciously//**

87 GNY: I just wanted to...

88 P2: was an automatic process

89 GNY: and then unconsciously you will run (...s to overgeneralization,...) [16:11 min].... that you didn't meant to do it but.

90 P1: No, absolutely not, I said to you I didn't know I know that, I know (.....) [16:23min]

91 GNY: yes that's my point

93 P1: also in **this case I have (...)**

94: GNY: **so, my point is that we always build some points, some compromises points,**

95 P1: yes I absolutely agree, I made the example of sports and hobby, it was my example so..

96 GNY: yes, your example (ride), I just want to ...

97 P1: OK

98: GNY ok thank you

Analysis: In this documentary, participant 1 thought that the Chinese parents educated their children badly with the verb phrase “did a bad job” and the superlative degree of the adjective bad “worst”. By using the experiential word “appreciated”, participant 1 also took the same line with the Chinese parents in terms of the ways of solving problems arose during their interaction with their children - asking for the help of a psychologist and doing self-reflection. His agreement with Chinese parents’ ways of solving family problems could be shown in the adverbial clause of purpose “in order to change their mind ...the role towards the children” in the last conversation.

First, participant 1 subsumed the contents of the documentary *Mirror* under the relationship between parents and children. By using an adjective and noun “difficult relationship” in line 9, he regarded that the four adolescents “the 13, 15, 16” in the documentary held negative attitudes towards the relationship between parents and them. Then, using the correlative conjunction “not only ... but also in the lines 10 - 11, participant 1 thought that Italy and China shared a commonality in terms of family parenting. After that, in line 12 and 13, by drawing on the modal verb “will” which signified “someone is ready to do something”, the participant 1 emphasized that the social practice - agent “parents” pressed too much on the patient “their sons” had already existed and happen. And then, with the adverbial phrase “too much” which denotes “a large amount of something”, the participant 1 enhanced that it was highly possible that parents increased pressure on their children’s mindsets or way of thinking – a phenomenon prevails both in Italy and in China, as evidenced by the given information “Italy and China” in his precedent turn. Then, in line 14, line 18 and line 25, he used the summative word “so” and the following phrases “in my opinion” to reiterate the decisive role that parents played in their children’s “ways of thinking”. However, by using the adverbs of degree “too much” and “never” and “always” alternatively from lines 8 to 14, the participant 1 indicated that the Chinese parents gave much more pressure on their children compared with their Italian counterparts, despite his reorganization that both Italian and Chinese parents pressed stress on their children respectively, which had already been mentioned from the line 9 – to 11.

However, he used the modal verb “will”, an adverbial phrase “never be independent” to highlight the mental dependence of children. Then, in the line 14, participant C underscored that the patient “children” were subjected to the impacts that the agent “parents” inflicted on their children with the modal verb “will” and the prepositional phrase “because of the parents”, as participant 1 only identified two roles

in the whole conversations made by him and me, viz., parents versus children.

Then in the same line, Participant 1 first used the modal verb “should” and the determiner “some” to modify the noun “space” in a way of mitigating his stance on parents’ educational methods. By using the modal verb “should” and construing the relationship between parents and their children using the metaphorical expression “some space”, which means an amount of area, participant 1 then suggested that there should be some areas between parents and their children and then underlined that parents and children should not interfere each other. And on the part of children, participant 1 suggested parents be supposed to let their children to grow up and to think on their own.

To summarize, as can be construed from line 9 and 10 “The video clip shows this difficult relationship between parents and sons because sometimes happen not only in China but also in Italy it happens”, participant 1 showed his cultural understanding by recognizing that family parenting was the commonality shared by Italian and Chinese culture.

As can be seen from the conversation above, by using a myriad of adverbial phrases of degree, participant 1 spent a great deal of time to describe and interpret Chinese parents’ dictatorship in terms of educating their children and the mental dependence of their children which reflected in line 12 “they stressed them too much ... and the little guys they are too weak to fight against.” Through the interpretation of the documentary in lines 18, 19, 20, participant 1 aired his view that although the children would gradually promote their meta-cognitive capability, they could not get rid of the control of their parents, as they might find it difficult to struggle against the power that parents had imposed on them.

The Chinese document *Mirror* acted as a “cue”, triggering this participant’s intertextual context related to the relationship between parents and their children. In this case, the intertextual context could be viewed as this participant’s interpretations of the relationship between Jue Xin and his father in the literary text *Jia* “and also, because the son he couldn’t know how to act against the father” in the first session of my teaching lesson and his interpretations of the comic strips “*There was a poor society right at that moment a chaos as you told me, so people didn’t have money having a baby means having expenses so if you don’t have money you cannot take care of your baby*” in the second teaching session. Another reason for which this participant interpreted the Chinese documentary *Mirror* in the way described above is that he drew on his

presupposition of family parenting which could be reflected in the **“Education, especially during the childhood, is really important for children, because they take their parents, their family as a model...”** in the first teaching session.

In conclusion, the previous discourse of participant acted as the intertextual context, based on which he interpreted the contents of that documentary which was “even if they will study a lot and have a great career because they study, they will live have / they will grow with a kind of mental condition because of the parents”

At that moment, I understood the reason for which this participant had not yet viewed the relationship between Chinese parents and their children or family parenting in a dynamic view is that he always thought that it was the parents who created a “mental condition” for their own children.

Then, to encouraged him to view family parenting with multiple perspectives and let him get rid of overgeneralized viewpoint of Chinese family relationships, I operated on his interpretation and explained to him the reason for which he needs to understand a sociocultural phenomenon in a more comprehensive and critical manner. I did so by making him understand clearly that the discourses, viz., the adolescents’ narrations and the ‘psychologist-parent’ interaction, as a whole, was one of the social representations of the family education in China.

What is more, by saying “every discourse is uneven and it just a social representation. It just discloses the partial, revealing the whole picture (of family education in China), we needed to discuss a social issue from multiple perspectives in order to have a more complicated view of this issue,” I urged this learner to reflect on his insights into family parenting. At this point, my interpretation of the Chinese documentary *Mirror* served as a tool, operating on his homogeneous view of Chinese family education.

Besides, by using the pronoun of “we” instead of “you” in line 65, I aligned myself with this participant. And by doing so, I emphasized that people who take a homogeneous viewpoint of a cultural issue might unconsciously make judgments, say overgeneralization. After that, I also reiterated the importance of how to view a cultural issue – family parenting in this case in a complex and dynamic manner, as evidenced by the lines 68, 72 and 80.

And though the interpretations and summaries that participant 1 offered which manifest in his back-channeling “yes” and in line 64 “we don’t have all the conditions to give a judge if we have only a partial vision of a scenario”, in line 79 “we might

adapt this concept to every scenario”, this participant in the last teaching activity was able to view Chinese family relationship in a more comprehensive manner. Since viewing a cultural phenomenon with multiple perspectives is one of the indicators of the development of intercultural awareness, this participant at that moment increased his sensitivity for intercultural awareness.

10. Fieldnote

10.1 Fieldnotes of Francesca

During the process of group interview, Francesca shared her views on identity after GLA’s complained that some people coming from the other foreign countries viewed themselves as Italian. Francesca disclosed to me that LX- the bar owner had complained about Italian’s legal system related to food industry. “One week ago, LX complained to me that in China putting a desk outside of a bar or a restaurant was permitted whereas in Italian it was not allowed. He said that he needed to apply to a permit before arranging some chairs and tables outside of the bar.”

FC said that she could not understand the reason why that Chinese bar owner said so and it seemed to her that that bar owner had nurtured some negative emotions about Italy. At that time, I told her that “this kind of assumptions should not be viewed in negative way, as they were a kind of cultural disbelief – a disbelief that LX took to his own country. I continued to explain that cultural disbelief should not be simply recognized as prejudices by elaborating on the similarities and differences between prejudices and cultural disbelief. By prejudice, I told her it indicated that people who were born and grew up in a particular country treated the people coming from the other countries unfairly. And sometimes they tended to resort to violence to solve problems as a result of their miscommunications with the people coming from the other countries. “The people who nurture prejudices” I proceeded “are unwilling to show appreciation of the foreign countries for they... in my opinion, presume the cultural conducts in their own countries are fixed” I went on to explain that the reason why people disregarded the cultural practices of the other countries was that they do not believe that culture was elastic and undergoes changes as time goes by.

This distrust of cultural flexibility could be seen as cultural disbelief. To render it clearer, I also underpinned that disbelief was reciprocal, in the sense that the people in a particular country might held disbelief towards not only the other foreign countries

but also their own countries. People sometimes deliberately made contestations of their own cultural patterns in a way to distinguish themselves from the others with different linguacultural backgrounds. In doing so, they did not realize that they, in effect, saw their own cultural patterns as fix and incompatible. To further illuminate the concept of cultural disbelief, I went on to explain LX's contention that "putting chairs out of a bar or a restaurant his own country is legal and allowed", in effect, showed his negation of the flexibility of Chinese culture. He did not believe that the Chinese culture could "be engaged with, learnt from and indeed expanded into." (Holliday, 2019a) He presented his national identity by making some cultural contestations, which showed his incomprehensive and non-dynamic view of Chinese and Chinese culture. I concluded by reiterating that culture, either the Italian or Chinese one could not be viewed as monolithic. Instead, it is complex, dynamic and undergo changes in the course of historical development.

By explaining to Francesca the concept of prejudice brought by cultural disbelief and asking the other students to listen to my statements, I emphasized that as one of representation of discourses, any contestation that is related to a cultural phenomenon mirrored social reality. The conversation that FC and I had respectively offered different yet partial viewpoints of social reality. Each was ideologically based, being constructed by social reality which was Italian legal system in this case and then served to reconstruct social reality. (Fairclough, 1992, 2003; 2013) The conversation between LX and Francesca at the moment they met had effects on the interaction that Francesca had with me, jointly contributing to Francesca's interpretation of Liu Xia's complaint about the Italian legal system related to food industry "putting chairs outside a bar and a restaurant". Francesca understood my explanation for LX's social practice and acknowledged the concept of "cultural disbelief" with the back-channeling of "yes".

11. Discussions

With reference to the feedback of Italian learners of Chinese that I collected during and after the whole teaching activities, I would like to say that the present project was successful, as I not only improved the Chinese language proficiency of seven Italian learners who study Chinese but also developed their intercultural awareness.

In the first place, I improved Italian learners' language proficiency in the Chinese language at phonetic, morpho-semantic and pragmatic levels. First, I aroused Italian learners' sensitivity for Chinese four tones and increased their knowledge concerning Chinese tones. Besides, I taught them methods for articulating Chinese consonants and vowels.

For the basic Chinese four tones, five Italian participants understood the importance of Chinese four tones and knew the reason why these Chinese four tones played an indispensable role in daily communication, as they learned that articulating Chinese four tones inaccurately might lead to misunderstanding and awkward situations.

What can be found out is that like the beginners, the Italian learners S, C and Veronica whose language proficiency was at intermediate level still found it hard to articulate Chinese tones accurately. However, compared with the beginners who only had an ambiguous perception of the tone levels, the Italian learners at intermediate level had developed a better awareness of the articulating length of Chinese four tones. For instance, they knew that the duration of pronouncing the third Chinese tone should be much longer than that of the Chinese fourth tone. As for the rules of using Chinese neutral tones and the situations in which one could use Chinese neutral tone, six Italian learners learned three rules of using Chinese neutral tones which are the bi-syllabic Chinese characters, the grammatical pattern, viz., possessive pronouns + “de” and the question mark “吗”“吧”. What should be noted is that the participant S understood the point that only Chinese neutral tone used in specific situations could indicate particular meanings. That is to say, participant S knew when and in which situations one could use Chinese neutral tone.

What is more, after associating my explanations for the manner and the place of articulating a sound with a colorful image concerning the cross-section of articulation apparatus of human beings, the majority of the Italian learners learned how to pronounce Chinese consonants. In terms of *kuai zi*, most Italian participants were able

to learn the phonetic methods of describing the Chinese sound /kuai/. In particular, they knew how to articulate the Chinese initial consonant /k/ from the perspectives of place of articulation, manner of articulation, aspirated versus lack of aspiration; and the Chinese rime which was the triphthong /uai/ which included the glide /u/ from the angles of rounded versus unrounded, the vibration of vocal cords. From the feedback of the Italian learners who participated in my program, the Italian learners at beginning level and those at intermediate and advanced levels could not make a distinction between the aspirated Chinese sound and those of the unaspirated ones. For example, GLA was unable to make a distinction between 趴 p^ha and 爸 pa from the perspective of aspiration. But he was able to know the meaning of aspiration by imitating my gesture – I put a piece of paper in the front of the face of mine and pronounced the consonant /k/ in order to show that the paper was blowing in the front of my face.

When it comes to Chinese characters, five Italian learners' orthographic awareness had been aroused, as they knew learnt how to recognize the Chinese character 筷 kuai and memorize the constructive parts of kuai after taking account of my designed pictures and my explanations about the six characters of Chinese and the history related to kuai.

On the one side, after attending my teaching activity, the Italian learners were able to recognize and memorize the Chinese character kuai by associating its upper component 夂 and the lower component 快 with their referents in the real world respectively. However, during this period, participant S confused 夂 with 卩 and while the other participants not only mistook the orders of the strokes of the character but also forgot some specific strokes, especially the left-falling and right-falling strokes.

On the other side, they were able to recognize and memorize constructive components of the Chinese character kuai by taking into account the history related to 筷, my interpretations and explanations about the six categories of Chinese characters and the pictures I designed for them. Four Italian learners acquired the cultural knowledge related to Chinese chopsticks and the process in which the Chinese character 筷 evolved from 箸 by associating the historical background related to kuai zi. In particular, they could learn the function of chopsticks by associating the picture that I designed for them with my explanations for the connotation of these pictures. That is

to say, by attending my lessons, these Italian learners learnt how they applied 会意 (semantic - phonetic compound) – one of the six principles of Chinese characters - to their recognition of the Chinese character kuai as well as their memorization of the ways of han zi constructive process (Han zi gou cheng). In the review step, I examined how these Italian participants wrote strokes and whether they wrote strokes in correct way. Since I had found out that the majority of Italians were able to immediately recognize the Chinese character 筷 kuai and associate the history pertaining to 筷 kuai, I could say that my teaching activity served to increase the historical and linguistic knowledge of the Chinese character 筷 because it aroused Italian learners' interests in memorizing the Chinese character 筷. Then, as I talked with them about their learning process after class, I was told that compared with the Italian learners who spent much time in practicing the stroke orders, those who spent less time in doing so found it hard to memorize the specific strokes. Therefore, I found it necessary to emphasize that it takes students a great quantity of time to practice writing Chinese characters. However, although writing Chinese characters calls for endeavors, I also need to highlight that my multimodal teaching activities enabled these Italian learners to recognize and memorize the Chinese characters much more easily.

In the light of the symbolic meanings of Chinese chopsticks, the seven Italian learners were able to learn some Chinese traditional values after watching a commercial whose name was *Chinese chopsticks* and listening to my interpretations of the main contents in that commercial. For example, in accordance with my explanations for the frame in which the parents asked their child to not pick up chopsticks until the grandfather of this child let him do so, they were able to learn the meaning of 尊老爱幼 respecting the elders and cherishing the young. What is important is that they also learned that the majority of Chinese people use chopsticks to cherish the memory of their beloved ones who passed away when the most part of Chinese people celebrate Chinese festivals. And before my explanation for this connotation of chopsticks, Participant S and FC did not understand why my mother still used to set a pair of chopsticks on the table for my grandmother also after she passed away even though the seat which had been occupied by my grandmother was empty. After my explanations of the epitomic meaning of chopsticks which was cherishing the memory of the beloved members who passed away, these two Italian participants had deepened their

understanding that Chinese chopsticks could be associated with the affection that family members show to each other. That is to say, they have reconceptualized the meaning conveyed by my explanations and the embedded meanings in the commercial where a senior cherished his dead parents by placing a pair of chopsticks on the incense table. Besides, they also learned that chopsticks represent family reunion as they reflected on my interpretation that chopsticks represented a mother's love for her son.

Furthermore, thanks to my teaching activity, Italian learners who studied Chinese as a foreign language also developed their pragmatic awareness of Chinese language and culture. The Italian learners learned that inserting a pair of chopsticks vertically in the rice can be associated with the practice of burning joss sticks to the dead people. Since chopsticks are similar to joss sticks and the people burn joss sticks only to the dead ones, inserting a pair of chopsticks vertically in the rice in front of a person indicated that this person would/should die. Thus, inserting a pair of chopsticks is an impolite and offensive behavior. Then, by listening to my explanations for the connections between the joss sticks and candles and a pair of chopsticks inserted vertically in the rice respectively, the Italian learners were able to learn how the social practice – inserting chopsticks in the bowl vertically is a face-threatening act, creating misunderstandings and even conflicts. In this sense, Italian learners developed their pragmatic awareness as they learned that inserting a pair of chopsticks in the rice is a taboo which creates miscommunications.

Apart from developing their pragmatic awareness, Italian learners also increased their pragmatic awareness because of my teaching activity. By attending my lesson, the Italian learners who studied Chinese as a foreign language learned that whether inserting a pair of chopsticks in the rice was a face-threatening act or not depended on the face-sensitivity of this person who interpreted this act. That is to say, whether this behavior is offensive to a person depends on how this person construes this behavior. Besides, the Italian learners also practiced their pragmatic capability with me and a Chinese bar owner using the communicative strategies, specific Chinese language expressions in accordance with the explanations that I and the Chinese bar owner offered in a specific context.

From the perspective of intercultural awareness, the Italian learners who participated in my multimodal teaching program were able to develop their intercultural awareness in varying degrees.

As I mentioned in the literature review, the development of intercultural awareness is reflected in the open attitudes towards a language and cultural knowledge, the development of critical awareness of the contentions related to a cultural phenomenon, the improvement of the ability of reflection and intersubjective alignment, particularly empathy and the capability for producing meanings creatively based on each other's interests and needs.

As for holding an open attitude towards a language and cultural knowledge, the Italian learners who studied Chinese as a foreign language were willing to learn the Chinese language and culture that I taught to them. Their open attitudes did manifest themselves not only in their interests in learning the knowledge related to Chinese language and culture, but also in their desire for exploring the distinct attributes that the Chinese and Italian cultures carried. As can be seen from the feedback of FC, an Italian learner whose language proficiency is at a low level, I taught her the Chinese table manner and Chinese history by virtue of two pictures which depicted pairs of Chinese chopsticks and incense table and joss sticks and my explanations about the association between the pictures, as can be seen from her feedback “**Learning some Chinese table manners and Chinese history was, in my opinion, one of the most interesting and fascinating points of the course.**” and “**I enjoyed the discussions about transculture and education too.**” Here, the summative phrase “in my opinion” and two superlative degree of the English adjectives “the most interesting” and “the most fascinating points” indicate her inclination towards **some Chinese table manners and Chinese history**. As Chinese table manners are typical of Chinese culture as a whole and Chinese history is one of the representations of Chinese culture, participant FC was willing to accept Chinese language and culture. She suspended her disbelief in Chinese culture, as she found out that the Chinese culture was interesting and fascinating. Apart from FC, the Italian participant AM also showed her open attitude towards Chinese culture, which can be seen in the phrase “Durante il corso mi sono avvicinata alla cultura cinese, ho scoperto cose che non conoscevo come le buone maniere a tavola in Cina.” Here, “mi sono avvicinata” and “ho scoperto cose che non conoscevo” suggests AM's willingness to get access to the knowledge of Chinese table manners that she had never learned about. In particular, the Italian learners C showed his interests in understanding the different connotations of Italian and Chinese facial expressions, in the sense that this participant C would like to know why the Chinese people seldom changed my facial expressions compared with the Italians.

As for the ability of reflection, the majority of the Italian learners who studied Chinese were able to engage in reflections. In one sense, they could review their resources, notably their own presuppositions during their interactive engagement with the discourses in a variety of genres, particularly the discourses in commercials, film clip, blog, music, literary texts and Chinese documentary. In another sense, they were able to reflect on their own previous discourses after accepting my interpretations and explanations about the discourses that I had presented to them. In addition, it seems that two Italian learners improved their reflective ability by focusing on the inherent meanings in a discourse itself, my interpretations about a discourse and their conceptualization of a discourse, despite the fact that they were prone to avoiding reflection by seeking an easy answer related to a cultural phenomenon. In this discussion, I would like to say that my multimodal approach, to some extent, served to improve the reflective ability of the Italian learners who participated in my Chinese lessons. As for the Italian learners whose language proficiency was at low level, they were able to reflect on their member resources. By engaging with the film clip *genitori e figli: agitare bene prima dell'uso* and thinking about my interpretations about family relationship, participant GLA was able to reflect on the attitudes that his parents had long hold towards him. And by conceptualizing the narrative offered by participants FC, he further reflected on the differences between the educating ways of the Western families and those of the Asian families.

As for the Italian learners whose Chinese language proficiency was at intermediate level, they were able to reflect on Italian society and the influences that Italian sociocultural environment had on their cultural attitudes, particularly in terms of family education.

For participants S, after watching the film *genitori e figli: agitare bene prima dell'uso*, he reflected on the Italian society by narrating how his parents educated him and how his family parenting and school education exerted influences on the attitudes that he held towards the people with different linguacultural backgrounds thanks to my multimodal approaches. This is because during the process I focused and refocused the inherent meanings in the film clip and by doing so, I prompted him to engage himself in multimodal teaching activities.

After reflecting on his own previous discourses and reconceptualizing the interpretations that I had offered to them, he pointed out the negative effects that Italian social media had on people's ways of thinking. He also did so after reconceptualizing

the previous discourses that I exchanged with him and participant GF. The film clip which was audio-visual in nature and my utterances together created a sign potential, enabling this participant to reflect on Italian society. Through participating in my teaching activities, Veronica also reflected on the literary texts that I presented to her by positively engaging herself in my meaning-making which is the impacts that a certain historical and socioeconomic background had on the relationship between family members. I enabled her to interact with the literary text *Jia* and then propelled her to reconceptualize the sign-making that I had created for her by virtues of the slides with which I offered my explanations for May 4th Movement and my gestures, as I directed her attention to the hyperlink with my fingers. In this sense, she did reflection on Chinese family relationship after taking account of the discourses — the literary excerpts as well as my explanations — in multimodal manner. In this sense, my multimodal activity serves as a mediational tool with which Veronica was able to reflect on her previous *member resources (MR)* related to her family, as can be seen in the section of data analysis “Then, Veronica legitimized her discourse action, say her conceptualization of the excerpt adapted from *Joy Luck Club* by drawing on one of her past discourses – her disobedience of her mother’s orders”.

As I mentioned in 1.1 My understanding of intercultural competence also involves critical thinking, the present teaching program contributed to developing subtly the critical thinking of the majority of the Italian learners who had participated in my teaching program. A case in point could be participant C. With respect to the Italian sociocultural environment, participant C recognized that there were racist ideas in Italy, despite that he mentioned the positive role that Italian schools played in promoting intercultural exchange. Especially, he did not overgeneralize the Italian society, as he emphasized that some Italian parents had negative effects on shaping the mindset of their children at cultural level while some set good example for their own children in terms of developing the critical cultural awareness of their children.

With respect to intersubjective alignment, it involves empathy and the ability to create and re-create meanings based on each other’s interests and needs. As for empathy, by adopting the multimodal teaching approach, the Italian learners were able to switch from an outsider perspective to an insider perspective by imaging themselves as the members of Chinese community. By showing them comic strips which depicted an old man who was going to sell their own babies and explaining to them the chaotic society where the comic strips set, I made the Italian participants image the miserable life that

the old man suffered from and tried my best to let them align themselves with the main characters in the comic strip by asking them to feel and think what the old man might do in the turbulent historical period. In particular, two Italian learners learnt how Chinese family relationship had undergone changes against the backdrop of immigration by analyzing the social and economic factors leading to that cultural phenomenon. For example, the comic strips about *the Wonderings of san mao* reflected the Min Guo historical period (1927-1949) and its social and economic factors which could be subsumed into the disparity between the rich and the poor. One student learnt it was necessary to view culture in dynamic way. That is to say, the distinct cultural patterns of a nation are not monolithic but keep changing because of socioeconomic and political background. This student knew that one of the reasons that lead to that chaotic society was the incapacity of the government at that time and the lack of the protection of legal system.

As for the development of the ability to create meanings based on each other's needs and interests, I could only say that through my teaching program they learnt how to make and negotiate the meanings by capitalizing on the linguistic and non-linguistic resources, viz., gestures and mesh-coding, code-switching to communicate with me and that bar owner. In addition, they learnt that the factors such as different parenting styles, the education of parents, the intergenerational interaction and sociopolitical stances (Veronica) are common elements that Italian and Chinese culture share.

As can be seen from above, the Italian learners who studied Chinese language as a foreign language not only made improvement in Chinese language proficiency but also developed their intercultural awareness from the perspectives of reflection, critical thinking and intersubjective alignment which in my project was defined as empathy and the ability to create meanings based on each other's needs and interests.

12. Conclusion

With the increasing demand for Chinese knowledge in this globalized landscape, teaching Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) in Italy has long been a key concern of education. However, there were few innovative pedagogical methodologies that were used to develop the intercultural awareness of Italian learners of Chinese. The majority of the pedagogies concerning the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language merely focused on developing the communicative skills and strategies of Chinese language

learners by asking them to memorize some Chinese formulaic expressions and let them practice writing or speaking these Chinese expressions instead of encouraging them to understand Chinese characters and sounds. They paid little attention to the functions the other modes (besides language) performed in terms of letting the foreign language learners understand the knowledge related to Chinese language and culture. The modes are realized by instant message application the props and substances in the reality. What is more, they did not realize how to integrate these aforesaid modes into language, as they did not create the meanings tailored to the need of the language learners who study Chinese as a foreign and second language.

Against an Italian backdrop, the present project extends the concept of intercultural competence. It highlights that intersubjective alignment, the ability to make meanings by drawing on the semiotic resources in a given context based on each other's interests and needs should be one of the integral parts of intercultural competence. In the present project, the majority of Italian learners who studied Chinese language co-constructed the meanings that emerged in on-going interactive process by code-switching, aligning their subject positions with that of the researcher in a given context.

Furthermore, against an Italian backdrop, the present project is a pilot study, attempting to explore how the integration of modes can be used to expand the scope of learning resources and to increase the comprehensive input enable the Italian students to become better Chinese language learners. Based on the framework of multimodal social semiotic framework proposed by Gunther Kress *et al.*, (2010, 2016), the present project proposed a multimodal teaching pedagogy, trying to incorporate We-chat, a means for realizing multimodal communication into the activities that have been carried out in the teaching program and those out of the classroom. With this multimodal approach, the researcher (I) aimed at improving intercultural competence of Italian learners of Chinese on this 'liquid' landscape.

By doing so, the present researcher (I) chose chopsticks as the theme revolving around which she encouraged the Italian learners to not only acquire the linguistic knowledge related to chopsticks at phonetic, morphological and pragmatic levels, the cultural values concerning chopsticks, but also to discuss about Chinese family and the relationship between Chinese parents and their children in different historical periods. By doing so, I invited the Italian learners who participated in my teaching program to know that there were some similarities shared by parents and their children from

different countries. The similarities can boil down to the relationship between parents and their children, notably the attitudes that parents and their children held towards each other and the ways of family education and the marriage arrangement in the last centuries and the prevalence of liberal marriage.

The whole teaching program was a continuum which moves from the cultural artifacts of chopsticks, the connotative association between chopsticks and family as well as the sociocultural issue of Italian and Chinese family education.

I regarded family education as the point of entry, from which I deployed a multimodal approach to not only increase the Chinese language proficiency of Italian learners on the one side; on the other side, I also encouraged them to reflect on the influences that their family education and the effects that the other sociocultural factors such as schools have on their ways of thinking. In this way, I asked the Italian learners to view the attitudes that Chinese parents held towards their children from multiple perspectives. I also tried my best to enable them to take a more complicated and dynamic view on the changes in the relationship between parents and children along with historical and socio-economic changes.

As I mentioned in abstract and introduction, intercultural competence refers to the improvement of language proficiency in the target language (i.e. the phonological, semantic-pragmatic knowledge of the target language), the attitudes towards cultural knowledge and intersubjective alignment, namely empathy and the ability to creatively produce meanings based on each other's interests and needs.

With reference to my explanation of the concept of intercultural competence, I improved the intercultural competence of Italian learners who study Chinese as a foreign language from the angles of family education, family relationship and the attitudes that parents held towards their children and vice versa.

First, by conducting my teaching program, I answered the following questions :

“Since the Chinese language proficiency of Italian learners who participated in my teaching program was relatively low, how could I make them better acquire the knowledge related to Chinese language and culture covered in my teaching program?” and question **“3.a How to design my teaching program that stimulate Italian learners’ motivation for learning Chinese as a foreign language?”**

First, I managed to make the Italian learners better acquire the knowledge related to Chinese language and culture covered in my teaching program by stimulating their motivation for learning language and culture. After taking account of Dörnyei (2002)'s L2 Motivational Self System which claims that language learners' motivation is contextually shaped and it changes within multiple timescales, I maintained the motivation of these Italian participants by means of multimedia, particularly the pictures, film clip, song, literary texts and a commercial. By doing so, I established a relaxing climate for the Italian learners, as can be seen in the feedback of Italian learners who participated in my program. And the relaxing climate can be viewed as an engaging environment with which I enabled the Italian students to be more willing to accept the Chinese knowledge and culture that I shared with them. And their willingness of learning about Chinese language and culture can be reflected in the conversation that I made on We-chat platform (see below) and Italian learners' positive engagement in learning Chinese language and culture which can be seen by Participant Veronica's willingness to learn what the Chinese people think of the Japanese people and Participant C's desire to learn the reason why the Chinese people seldom changed their facial expressions compared with the Italian people.

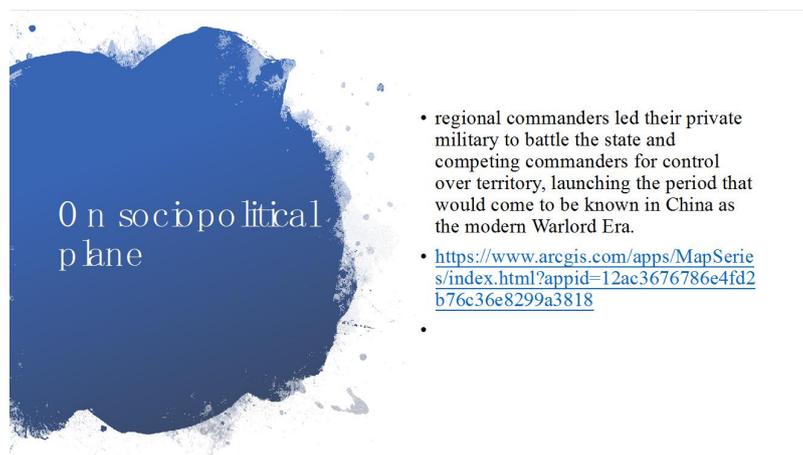


Given both Ema Ushioda (2015)'s ecosystem of motivation and Dörnyei (2005, 2015)'s L2 Self Motivational System which highlight that a specific learning context was dynamic and transient, affecting students' motivation from time to time, in each

teaching step, I tried to maintain the motivation of Italian students during their process of language learning by deploying the multimodal teaching which can be realized by the rising and falling intonations in my speeches, approachable facial expressions and postures as well as the audio-visual teaching materials that I showed to the Italian participants who attended my teaching program.

Apart from having the willingness to acquire Chinese linguistic and cultural knowledge, the Italian learners in my program were able to draw on the potential semiotic resources in a learning context and to selectively transform the comprehensible input thanks to my multimodal teaching approach. This is because the multimodal approach that I deployed in the present program manifests itself in the hypertextual media and my explanations for the methods of describing the Chinese sounds, the image of human apparatus based on which I transposed the movements of my oral muscles.

Besides, my multimodal teaching approach reflected in my narration about Chinese historical knowledge, as I made the meaning of this Chinese historical knowledge by demonstrating the slide which was an integration of visual and textual modes and making my gestural movements during the teaching procedure. Here, the slide and my gestures contribute to making the meaning as a whole: the Chinese warlord periods.



And according to the sociocultural theory (Lantolf, 2002, 2014), language learners were able to transform the external signs or expressions through mediation. And the multimodal ensembles — the slides, my explanations for the slides, my gestures — serve as the mediational means with which the language learners transformed my knowledge into their own according to their own learning interests .

Since they were offered by the mediational means realized by multimodal ensembles, the Italian learners have much more learning opportunities to capitalize on the teaching resources . And as the Italian learners of Chinese were willing to learn about Chinese language and culture, they transformed their learning resources into their own with the mediational means and thus they improved their Chinese language proficiency in varying degrees.

As can be seen, I answered the question “Since the Chinese language proficiency of Italian learners who participated in my teaching program was low, how could I make them better acquire the knowledge related to Chinese language and culture covered in my teaching program ?” and the question How could my teaching program not only stimulate their motivation for learning Chinese as a foreign language?, as I deployed my multimodal approach by virtue of the multimedia means, such as pictures, film clip, literary texts, as well as commercial, with which I offered my explanation and interpretations to the Italian learners who participated in my teaching program. By doing so, I stimulated their sensorial learning and let them immerse themselves into the teaching activities that I had designed based on their interests’ in Chinese culture. Their interests are reflected in questionnaires.

In this sense, I stimulated the Italian learners’ motivation in learning Chinese language and culture, as by stimulating the motivation of Italian learners of Chinese, I had more opportunities to increase the comprehensible input of Italian participants. And since the comprehensible input is one of the representations of sociocultural environment, it had effects on the Italian participants who made advantage of my multimodal means to transform the comprehensible input into their own knowledge and intercultural competence, as can be seen by participant C’s capitalization on his *member resources* about comic strips, comic strips themselves and my gestural and verbal feedback that I offered to him.

With respect to the question **“How to design my teaching program that enables the Italian learners of Chinese to create and re-create meanings based on their interlocutors’ interests and needs?”**, I answered it by asking the Italian learners to realize meaning- making to draw on the affordance – the potential learning resources - at a bar context and on We-chat platform.

By employing my multimodal teaching methods, I not only spurred the Italian learners to interact with the Chinese bar owner LX in an authentic situation which was outside a four-walled classroom, but also encouraged them to learn about the Chinese tea culture and the ways of making requests in Chinese in accordance to the context that they situate themselves.

As for the conversations that the Italian learners had with me and LX outside the classroom, the Italian learners were encouraged to make meanings by drawing on the semiotic resources in that bar context, viz., the tea bags that I brought to them, the bottles of glass filled with hot tea according to which the Chinese bar owner and I provided corresponding explanations on how to make an appropriate request for a cup of tea in Chinese and Chinese tea culture. After considering the Italian learners' language proficiency level, their interests in Chinese tea and the ways to make request for a cup of tea in Chinese, I explained to them the reason why “来杯茶” was more appropriate than “您好，我想要一杯茶”, as the former “来杯茶” was apt best for the bar context. And after reflecting on my explanations for the specific use of “来杯茶”, the glasses of hot tea and the characters with their corresponding pin yin on my notebook, an Italian learner was able to make request for a cup of tea in Chinese by using her words, her finger pointing at a cup of hot tea. In this sense, this Italian learner re-made meanings by drawing on the semiotic resources in that bar context.

Therefore, as can be seen, by deploying my multimodal approach, I answered the question “How does my teaching program enable Italian learners of Chinese to make and re-make meanings based on their interlocutors' interests and needs?”. In fact, the explanations on the appropriate uses of Chinese expressions in formal situations, the interest in the language use in informal situations and tea culture is the multimodal means by means of which the Italian learners could communicate with the bar owner and me appropriately.

As for the question “How to design a teaching program that enables Italian learners who study Chinese as a foreign language to engage in conversations despite time and space limitations?”

I answered this question by expanding the scope of the teaching resources beyond time and space limitation. By using the we-chat application, I increased the

comprehensible input to the Italian learners who studied Chinese as a foreign language not only in classroom, but also on We-chat, an application for group discussion and learning and sharing the information related to Chinese language and culture in my teaching program. What is more, the we-chat itself could be viewed as a multimodal teaching method, as it incorporates a melange of multimodal signs which are realized by linguistic, audio-visual, emoticons as well as textual modes. In my teaching program, I used We-chat to improve the intercultural competence of Italian learners of Chinese in the following three ways:

First, I asked Italian learners to register their own We-chat accounts and then I created a digital group and I added them to that group. In this way, I formed an online classroom where I promoted teaching progress on the one side; on the other side, I examined their Chinese language learning progress as I recast and reformulated the Chinese language expressions that Italian language learners used on We-chat. Besides, I helped them transform the appropriate and correct Chinese language expressions into their own by interacting with them in Chinese on that online classroom by deploying the multimodal approach which was realized by the integrations of emojis and written texts. By doing so, I helped the Italian learners to understand the reason why they used these expressions in a way that I stimulated their motivation for the displaying forms of the Chinese language. In this sense, by deploying the multimodal approach, I let them know how to use these Chinese expressions in correct way and thus I improved their Chinese language proficiency. For instance, an Italian learner said in Chinese “zhe liang ge shi jian dou dui wo hao” (translation: I am okay with both time slots), I recast this utterance with “wo dou you kong” (I am free in both two slots).

Second, I shared some posts about Chinese language and culture with the Italian learners in the online classroom that I mentioned above. After I took account of their interests in Chinese culture, I expanded their insights into Chinese language and culture in a way that I encouraged them to use the multimodal means — the hypertexts and songs — to learn about the Chinese language and cultural resources that I had designed for them. The aforementioned multimodal means were the mediational tools by means of which I produced the meaning: letting the Italian learners comprehend the Chinese culture in a much better way. For example, the hypertexts were in Italian and the song *dong fang zhi zhu* (Eastern Pearl) was accompanied by its corresponding textual explanation.

Third, I designed audio-textual-visual messages and posted some hyperlinks on We-chat. With these resources, I expressed meaning which concerned Chinese family education, the ways in which Chinese parents and their children show love to each other and the Chinese historical background which had effects on Chinese family relationship and its development.

As for the relationship between Chinese parents and their own children, I deepened Italian learners' understanding of the love of Chinese parents by making the connotations of lupines and then endowing it with new meanings in accordance with the theme of family in my teaching program and Italian learners' focus on family relationship and the attitudes that parents held towards their children.

As for the ways in which parents showed love to their children , I created a message which was called 鲁冰花 *lu bing hua*, as I designed a visual cover from which one could learn that the 'sense' *lu bing hua* (lupines) could be associated with the 'referent', a plant in the camp that one could observe. Then, I juxtaposed two sets of pictures, one concerned the Chinese version of the lyrics of lupine and the other was related to the English translated version of the Chinese lyrics. Besides, in the message *lu bing hua* I attached Chinese music related to lupine. Based on this music and lyrics, I also gave my textual explanations for the denotation and the connotations of *lu bing hua* in that message. (please see the picture hereunder:).

鲁 lǔ 冰 bīng 花 huā is called lupin in English. This type of flowers belongs to pea family and tastes bitter. It symbolizes misery, less fortune and sorrow. However, it fertilizes the soil after withering away.

In this song, lupin flowers are metaphorically used. They epitome the selfishness of maternal love. Mothers are to unconditional love what lupin flowers to soil.

Chinese (Original Version)	English Version
wǒzhīdào bàn yè de xīng xing huì chàng gē 我知道 半夜的星星会唱歌	I knew the stars in midnight sang songs:
xiǎngjiā de yèwǎn tā jiù zhèyàng hé wǒ yì chāng yì kǒu 想家 的夜晚它就 这样 和我 一唱 一口	In the nights when I felt nostalgic, he and I then echoed each other in this way.
wǒzhīdào wǒkǒu de cānzǎn huì chānzé 我知道 我口的餐饭 会 蘸 醋	

At this point, by integrating the visual cover, the lyrics which were in the written form and the music which was an audio mode, I created a sign potential which concerns the Chinese maternal love after taking account of the theme of my teaching program and Italian learners' language proficiency.

Therefore, it is the multimodal “window” through which Italian learners were able to explore Chinese culture and language thanks to the messages that I posted on We-chat. Besides, the We-chat platform was a mediational tool, with which the Italian learners could selectively engage with these resources based on their previous learning trajectories. On my side, I designed some posts which were linked with the teaching contents that I taught them in the classroom. The contents involved family education and the relationship between Chinese parents and their children. A case in point was family relationship in Min Guo period.

In addition, after attending my lessons, the Italian learners who studied Chinese language were able to discuss family education by analyzing how it underwent changes in different historical periods and how the sociocultural background exerted influences on the relationship between parents and their children.

To answer the third research question **“Given the cultural ideologies of Italian learners of Chinese are deep-seated and are difficult to tap into, are there any ways of developing the cultural awareness of Italian learners of Chinese?”**, I first postulated a cultural model which embraces the macro and micro dimensions. Based on sociocultural theory (Lantolf, 2012) and Complex dynamic systematic theory (Larsen-freeman, 2008, 2016), I mainly focused on how the big picture – family education, institutional formation and sociocultural engagements – plays a fundamental role in forming Italian learners' value systems, world outlook and cultural habits.

I distributed to them the questionnaires which covered the cultural attitudes that they had held before their participation in the present teaching program and based on the information that they had provided in questionnaires I then conducted group and individual interviews in a way that I found out the departure points from which I let these Italian learners realize the commonalities that Italian and Chinese cultures share, especially from the perspective of family education.

As for the following questions: **“through my teaching program, how could I learn about the personal cultural trajectory of Italian learners of Chinese, particularly their cultural attitudes?”**

I also gave a general response:

By distributing the questionnaires to the Italian learners, I had a rough picture of Italian learners’ personal cultural trajectories. In particular, I could learn how their cultural experiences contribute to shaping and reshaping their primary and secondary socializations which reflected in questions 5, 6, 7 mentioned in the further information in the questionnaire. They are “what and how do the Italian media portray people from other countries”, “What kind of attitude do your parents or friends hold towards the people with different cultural backgrounds?” By doing so, I could learn how the socio-cultural environment where they situate themselves influences how they treated the people with different linguacultural backgrounds from the angles of social behaviors and cultural attitudes. That is to say, by distributing this questionnaire, I knew how and the extent to which interactive-personal factors affected their intra-personal development, which was their understanding of the people coming from foreign countries and the attitudes that they held towards Chinese family relationship. For example, from the questionnaire that had been filled by participant C, I learned about that this participant had rich personal cultural trajectory, as can be seen by the utterances “I also think that China is an amazing destination for tourists. The landscape is amazing. There many important cities to see and attractions, like the Great Wall of China, the Terracotta Army and the Forbidden city.” I had the possibility to meet Chinese people. I think they are nice people, who care about their traditions and family. They seem to be really helpful.” Besides, I also learned about his attitudes about Chinese people.”

With reference to what they had provided in questionnaires, I conducted group and individual interviews in order to continue to ask Italian learners’ questions in terms of how they construed the influences that their sociocultural environment has on them. For example, how their parents educate them and how they view the Italian society. And then, by deploying a multimodal approach, I realized the meanings in the multimodal stimuli which are film clip, pictures, We-chat, songs as well as documentary. By doing so, I offered my interpretations with the aim of prompting them to share their personal narratives with me. By encouraging them to share their personal narratives and letting the Italian participants explain the meanings that they intended to convey, I went

further to tap into their attitudes towards the people with different linguacultural backgrounds because during the process in which they made personal narratives, the Italian learners may unconsciously reveal their implicit and explicit assumptions related to a specific topic, they rationalized their assumptions and legitimated their subjective positions in a given context by elaborating on and expanding their narratives with functional words and grammatical relations, such as the summative phrase in my opinion, causative conjunction because, the conditional phrase “If” . A case in point can be “eh: I’m trying to say the same I make an example, I’m the father I have two babies I’m really poor. If I don’t have money, how can I find money or drink? what can I do?”.

As can be seen, through the present teaching program, I tapped into the personal cultural trajectories of the Italian learners who studied Chinese and learned their cultural attitudes by conducting questionnaires and prompted them to give their narratives and to let them explain why they narrated their cultural experience in a specific way.

c. As for question How can my teaching program help Italian learners of Chinese to construe a cultural phenomenon in a more complex, dynamic and comprehensive manner?

I answered this question by choosing families as the point of entry. Revolving around the cultural issue related to family which is a common topic in different countries, I asked the Italian learners to share their own stories in order to seek for the intercultural threads¹³ which were the cultural similarities that the interlocutors shared with respect to family education in a given context.

In this project the cultural threads manifest themselves in the way of analyzing a cultural issue by associating the influence that its related historical and sociocultural environment had on the change of this cultural issue. A case in point can be family and family relationship. Besides, the thread also lies in the attitudes that parents and their children held towards each other.

In my opinion, seeking cultural threads is the starting point from which I enabled the Italian learners to know that culture is elastic, undergoing changes because of an

¹³ Here we should search for threads with which to connect with people. One place to begin might be recalling occasions when we have had breakthroughs with people with whom we felt we had nothing in common with, and how and when we discovered unexpected commonalities. We could then look at what sorts of things we talked about that helped to connect—family, jobs, identity issues. (Holliday, 2018)

array of sociocultural and economic reasons. In the present project, culture was viewed as family education and relationship. It has undertaken changes from the beginning of the 20th century of China to the Chinese modern times.

Besides, in the present project, Chinese family relationship and education should be seen as multifaceted, which means that Chinese family relationship and education cannot be overgeneralized, but rather it can only be understood once one construes it from a variety of perspectives.

In this teaching program, the Italian learners viewed how family education undergoes changes and at the same time they viewed Chinese family education and family relationship in dynamic manner. This can be seen in participant Salvatore's understanding of the attitudes that Chinese parents and their children held towards each other which undergoes changes with the historical periods of time. At first, this participant thought that Chinese children had no agency, being the possession of their parents before the founding of the People's Republic of China (from 1919 - 1945).

Then, after the participant interpreted and re-conceptualized the literary excerpt adapted from the novel *The Joy Luck Club* and the Chinese documentary *Mirror*, he viewed that Chinese children had their own willingness and knew how to use their own power to fight against the orders of their parents.

Besides, the Chinese family relationship and education are multifaceted. Based on this topic, I deployed a multimodal approach with which I helped Italian learners to avoid overgeneralizing Chinese family relationship and to know that they could have a more comprehensive viewpoint only if they construe it from a variety of perspectives.

For example, By showing the literary excerpt adapted from Jia, a renowned Chinese novel and Chinese documentary which is called *Mirror* to the participant C, I learned that this participant C formed a much deeper understanding of Chinese sociocultural panorama from the perspective of the relationship between Chinese parents and their children. By marrying my interpretations of the discourse of the Chinese documentary *Mirror* with the semiotic potential of this documentary, I prompted this participant to reflect on the dominating ideology that constructed this documentary. By doing so, I let him understand that the documentary is only one of the representations of social reality, viz., Chinese family relationship. Thanks to my interpretations and explanations, he learned that one could have a clearer understanding of an issue only if he or she "put all the puzzles together," in section 9.3.4 Similarly, by discussing about the the comic strips, participant S and participant G admitted that

to figure out an issue, one needs to see it from multiple perspectives. As can be seen in section 9.2.5

138 GNY: you have to see it from different points of view to be able to solve the situation, if you only use one point of view to solve it. It won't be solved.

139 GNY: It won't be solved.

140 P1: you have to see the problem from multiple angles ...

141 GNY: yes, it's complicated, you have to see it from many perspectives.

My project makes contributions to the present researches related to intercultural education and teaching Chinese as a foreign language. It is an innovative teaching program. It challenged the traditional teaching pedagogies which laid too much emphasis on the role that multimedia themselves play in teaching Chinese as a foreign language. Specifically speaking, multimedia in its diverse forms were just the conveyor helping the teachers to deliver fixed knowledge to their students.

On the contrary, against Modena, a local Italian backdrop, the present project highlighted how the multimedia, viz., film clips, commercial, comic strips and Chinese documentary could be the mediational means for helping both the Chinese native speakers and Italian learners who had different intercultural background to create meanings in their intercultural interaction based on their own needs and interest. In one word, the present project appealed for multimodal approach, aspiring both the present Italian learners who study Chinese and Chinese speakers whose mother language is Chinese to jointly create meanings and lets them capitalize on the resources in a specific situation in accordance with their own distinct learning and teaching trajectories, as is the case with the multimodal conversations that I made with the Italian students in the bar context. And how I deployed the multimodal approach to expand the Italian learners' insights into Chinese language and culture by incorporating the online teaching and out-of-classroom activity into inside classroom teaching lessons.

Furthermore, the present project postulates a cultural model. It emphasized that sociocultural environment where foreign language learners were born and grew up plays a pivotal role in shaping their cognitive ability to conceptualize the external world, especially in cultivating their intercultural competence which embraces, empathy, reflective ability and critical cultural awareness. The reason why sociocultural environment influences the development of intercultural competence lies in the hybrid

characteristics that sociocultural environment bears. That is to say, the daily communication is intercultural, to some extent, as people's personal histories are imbricated with one another. The people who communicate with one another carry their intercultural trajectories. At this point, their interaction can be viewed as intercultural communication.

Apart from the influence that sociocultural environment exerts on the promotion of Italian learners' intercultural competence, this project also emphasizes how reflection, critical awareness and motivation can be the linchpin for arousing and developing the intercultural competence of Italian learners who study Chinese as a foreign language.

The present project unveiled that for the Italian learners whose language proficiency was at an intermediate and advanced level and for those who have been in China (Veronica), the articulation of Chinese four tones matters most in their Chinese language learning process. Partial evidence can be seen in Italian learners' feedback on my teaching program.

The present research also found out that it seems that whether a person develops his or her intercultural competence or not has little to do with his or her personal cultural trajectories. On the contrary, it has more to do with the cognitive capability or subjectivity, that is, how a person construes the external world or the ways in which he or she chooses to interpret a cultural phenomenon.

Participant Veronica, who had been in Shanghai, did not develop her intercultural competence from the perspective of open attitudes. This can be seen in "our world" "the others worlds" that she provided in the questionnaire. Before the implementation of my teaching program, Participant S, who has a Chinese girlfriend, found it hard to switch his perspective from an Outsider to an Insider, that is, he did not regard himself as a member of the Chinese community in the comic strips and infer the mental states that main characters might felt and thought. Whereas participant C, who had only studied Chinese for two years, knew how to put himself into the shoes of the others.

Limitations: some limitations in this project should also be laid bare.

First, the sample size in my project was small, as there were few students available to participate in my project. Due to the scale of the sample size, the research results cannot be generalised,. In fact, they did not fully show whether the other Italian learners of Chinese would improve their intercultural competence through my teaching program. as individual variants, like the level of anxiety that each one has, the specific strategies that each learner deploys to learn Chinese and the extent to which a learner

desires to communicate as well as the motivation of learning Chinese will affect their results of learning Chinese.

Second, since the timescale was limited (two-month long), I am unable to observe whether they have increased their intercultural awareness during this short period as the increase of intercultural awareness, as a kind of cognitive development, can only be observed span their lifetime.

Two finer proposals of the present program:

First, considering the subjects who participated in my research were the Italian learners who study Chinese as a foreign language, it would be necessary to involve the Italian learners who study Chinese language as a second language in my project and to investigate whether the foreign stay may have effects on the Chinese language learning process of Italian Chinese learners. Although the participant Veronica who participated in my teaching program had been in Shanghai, China for one year and I learned that her stay in China might contribute to increasing her knowledge related to Chinese language and culture from the conversations we had, I found out that her intercultural awareness, viz., critical awareness remained same with that of the Italian learners who had never been in China. And whether foreign stay contributes to developing a language learner's intercultural awareness is still a question left open. If possible, I would like to involve the Italian learners who study Chinese as a second language in my teaching program.

Second, considering the present teaching activity only focused on increasing the comprehensible input and expanding merely on the learning resources of Italian learners who studied Chinese as a foreign language, I proposed the finer teaching program in a way that I would like to make the Italian learners take intercultural actions. In my opinion, Italian students could not only get their intercultural competence improved but also foster the intercultural understanding of others. The significance of future projects lies at the heart of *how* but not *what*, in the sense that the future researches dedicated to making Italian students become better learners of Chinese in an effort of cultivating them into the ones who have their intercultural competence improved and their intercultural awareness developed in one way; in another way Italian learners of Chinese may take actions, making great endeavors to facilitate cultural understanding of others as cultural advocates. 'Advocates' does not mean that

students only propagandize the importance of cultural communication without paying attention to their addressee's need and interests. On the contrary, "advocating" means that Italian learners of Chinese themselves should know how to influence their peers of different ethnic backgrounds by improving their peers' cultural competence and sharpening their cultural awareness. Italian learners of Chinese's motivation will be aroused and maintained and their approaches to doing so will be encouraged as much as possible. The encouragement will contribute to promoting Italian students of Chinese's life-long learning which also conduces to promoting their eudemonic well-being. By engaging themselves into the activities fused with multimodal semiotic resource, Italian students of Chinese may handle intercultural encounters by capitalizing on their cultural perspectives and awareness span their lifetime.

Future developments: Considering the results of the present project, I would like to propose a possibility when it comes to how to use a multimodal approach to improving the intercultural competence of foreign language learners who studied Chinese as a foreign language.

I reckoned that the present project could be applied to improving the cultural competence of the people with different nationalities. The social structure within which people were born and grew up might, to some extent, have effects on the shaping of these people's ways of thinking. And the people who were born and live in different sociocultural environment may, in varying degree, have different ways of thinking. The ways of thinking play a great role in people's conceptualization of the external world. However, as people may show their subjectivity in accordance with those of their interlocutor, people's identity may be contextually shaped. Therefore, knowing how they choose to posit their subjectivity may be more important than learning one's sociopolitical structure where one situates himself or herself or his or her surrounding sociocultural environment. The researches in the field of teaching Chinese as a foreign language should focus on how people with different nationalities could realize the meanings based on each other's interests and needs, instead of leaning on the *member resources* that were formed during their primary and secondary socializations.

Second, I reckon that letting Italian language learners immerse themselves in the environment where they could get access to Chinese culture could be one of the agents for improving their intercultural competence, in particular in increasing their Chinese language proficiency and developing their intercultural awareness, especially for the kids and adolescents who have not yet had a more comprehensive understanding of the

Chinese language learning. This immerse environment should not be limited to physical environments but digital museums or situational environment where students may get access to Chinses artifacts for example the jinricksha of the Old Shanghai Golden period, and the embroidered shoes. By letting them get access to Chinese artefacts, the Italian learners may have a better understanding of Chinese history and Chinese culture.

All in all, it is significant to teach Chinese to foreign students and foster their intercultural competence because China has become an emerging powerhouse in the world and a great number of learners of Chinese come to China to find jobs or learning opportunities. Therefore, how to develop foreign learners of Chinese' intercultural competence is becoming increasingly important.

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Appendix A Questionnaires

I Basic information

1. Gender Male
2. Age 25
3. Place of birth Cuneo, Piedmont, Italy
4. Language Background: The number of languages you have learnt before studying Mandarin Chinese:
-2, Italian and English language.
5. Please rate your fluency in the languages you listed them above (please tick your language level)

First Language, Italian. Level 5. Speaking proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate well-educated native speaker and reflects the cultural standards of the country where the language is natively spoken.

Second Language, English. Level 4. Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to needs. The individual's language usage and ability to function are fully successful.

Fourth Language, Spanish. Level 2. Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited requirements in other domains.

II Further Information

1. Why do you study Mandarin Chinese?
2. How long have you been studying Mandarin Chinese?
3. What have you already learnt about China?
4. What do you think about China, Chinese people, and Chinese culture? (at least 100 words)
5. What and how do the Italian media portray people from other countries? (e.g. Italian newspaper, radio, television programs and social networks) (can you think of any examples, referring to Chinese people, but not only to them?)
6. Have you ever learnt how to treat people with different cultural backgrounds from your parents and friends? Could you please quote some examples? (not only Chinese people)
7. What have you been made aware of other cultures when you were in primary, secondary schools, and universities? Could you put forward some examples? (not only Chinese culture)

NB: 1. The questionnaire will be conducted anonymously and confidentially (the consent form is attached in the next page)

2. Please answer the questions in English. If it is difficult for you to express your ideas with English, you can choose to answer them in Italian.

3. Any unreal information should not be allowed in your answers.

1. I started studying Chinese because I interested in Asian cultures and languages.
2. I have been studying Chinese for 4 years.
3. I have been studying Chinese language, writing system culture, history, geography and politics during my bachelor's degree and I am still doing it.
4. I personally believe China is both a huge and complex country. Its history and language are perhaps the most difficult and fascinating in the world, and it will take more than a lifetime to master the second one. Even though China nowadays is already considered one the most important actor in the geopolitical system, it still has not fully implemented some policies which are long present in almost all western countries, such as freedom of speech and workers rights. As far as Chinese people is concerned, I found them polite, friendly and more open minded than it could be believed. One of the traits that always strike me is the profound love that Chinese people feel towards China and the sense of community among all Chinese citizens.
5. There are two different ways Chinese people are portrayed on the media:
 - restless workers and as people who only care about money;
 - citizen from another country with a mysterious and fascinating culture.

Italian medias bear this kind of attitude towards migrants from Africa, portraying them both as desperate people who is trying to flee from war and searching for a new life, and at the same time as criminal or even someone whose objective is to steal Italians jobs.

6. I believe that I am a tolerant person who is always trying to be as much as respectful towards who come from a different cultural background because my parents taught to behave as such since I was a child. In addition, I had opportunity to travel to England, Spain and China, therefore I do not perceive my own country's culture to be superior or better whatsoever.
7. During primary school one of my classmates was from Morocco, and we would always spend time together playing football. One day I invited him to come to my house to have lunch, but he refused because we had pork meat that day. Since then, I learned the differences between a Catholic and a Muslim and tried to not engage in awkward situations again. More then ten years later, I started dating a Chinese girl, and there is always the need to fine tune between each other to better comprehend and appreciate the partner.

Consent Form

Research Title: *A Multimodal Approach to Improving the Intercultural Competence of Italian learners of Chinese ----A Pilot Study*

Researcher: Guo Nianyu

I have been given information about the research title and have been made aware of the research project of *Guo Nianyu* who is conducting this research as part of a *Doctoral Degree* supervised by *Prof. Franca Poppi* in the department of *Studies on Language and Culture* at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia.

I have been advised of the potential risks and burdens associated with this research and have had an opportunity to ask *Guo Nianyu* any questions I may have about the research and my participation.

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If I have any enquiries about the research, I can contact (1. *Guo Nianyu e-mail address: 223577@ studenti.unimore.it* or *prof. Gaia Perini email address: gaia.perini@unimore.it* or if I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted, I can contact the Ethic office, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia

By signing below I am indicating my consent to (please tick):

the full participation in filling in this questionnaire

I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used for improving teaching plans and scientific research), and I consent for it to be used in that manner.

Signed Date

..... .13/06/2019 Name SC

Questionnaire

Introduction

Dear students,

I am a doctoral student and I'm going to teach Chinese in the next semester. Before the beginning of the course, I would like to ask you to fill in a brief questionnaire that concerns intercultural awareness. You are kindly requested to complete the questionnaire within one week and you are invited to convey your ideas fully. I believe that your answers will contribute to improving my teaching plans. Thank you very much!

Basic information:

1. Gender Female x Male
2. Age 25
3. Place of Birth Messina, Italy
4. Language Background: The number of languages you have learnt before studying Mandarin Chinese (please list the specific languages on the dotted line)

X ≤ 2 Italian and English

3.

4.

≥ 4

5. Please rate your fluency in the languages you listed them above

Italian

Level 0. I am unable to speak the language. Oral production is limited to occasional isolated words. Has no communicative ability.

Level 1. I can satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics.

Level 2. I can satisfy routine social demands and limited requirements in other domains.

Level 3. I can speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and occupational topics.

Level 4. I can use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to needs. My language usage and ability to function are fully successful.

X Level 5. I can speak proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate well-educated native speaker and reflects the cultural standards of the country where the language is natively spoken.

English

Level 0. I am unable to speak the language. Oral production is limited to occasional isolated words. Has no communicative ability.

Level 1. I can satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics.

Level 2. I can satisfy routine social demands and limited requirements in other domains.

Level 3. I can speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and occupational topics.

X Level 4. I can use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to needs. My language usage and ability to function are fully successful.

□Level 5. My speaking proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate well-educated native speaker and reflects the cultural standards of the country where the language is natively spoken.

Language

- Level 0. I am unable to speak the language. Oral production is limited to occasional isolated words. Has no communicative ability.
- Level 1. I can satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics.
- Level 2. I can satisfy routine social demands and limited requirements in other domains.
- Level 3. I can speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and occupational topics.
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- Level 5. My speaking proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate well-educated native speaker and reflects the cultural standards of the country where the language is natively spoken.

Language

- Level 0. I am unable to speak this language. Oral production is limited to occasional isolated words. Has no communicative ability.
- Level 1. I can satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics.
- Level 2. I can satisfy routine social demands and limited requirements in other domains.
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- Level 5. My speaking proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate well-educated native speaker and reflects the cultural standards of the country where the language is natively spoken.

Other languages and the corresponding language level.....

II Further Information

1. Why do you study Mandarin Chinese?

-Because I thought that it could be very useful nowadays.

2. How long have you been studying Mandarin Chinese?

-3 years.

3. What have you already learnt about China?

-I've studied for 2 years Chinese culture and literature.

4. What do you think about China, Chinese people and Chinese culture? (at least 100 words)

-In my opinion Chinese people are really different from Italians; not only about their language but also because of their culture and traditions. This is one of the reason why I've chosen to study this language/culture: these kind of differences fascinate me. Furthermore, studying Chinese is really important in order to find an important job because China invested too much in Europe so, in order to be prepared to have a connection with them, I've chosen to study it. When I studied the Chinese culture I understood how religion was important in the society: When I studied the Chinese culture I understood how religion was important in the society: for example, talking about Confucianism, it has a very big role in Chinese people's life.

5. According to you, what and how do the Italian media portray people from other countries:

Instruction: Please tick no less than one option from the following choices and give some specific examples correspondingly. These examples can be related or not related to Chinese people.

Italian newspaper: when there are new financial agreements between Italy and China relating to the Belt and Road Initiative. Thanks to the newspaper Italians may understand the entrepreneurial spirit of Chinese people.

Italian radio

Italian television programs

Others (please name it and quote an example)

6. What kind of attitude that your parents or friends hold on the people with different cultural backgrounds?

Instruction: Please tick no less than one option from the following choices and quote some examples correspondingly. Then, please express your personal opinions on the attitudes that you will exemplify. (not only Chinese people).

your parents' attitudes: They are really open-minded; since I was young they let me travel in order to discover new countries and cultures.

your friends' attitudes

7. What have you been made aware of other cultures when you were in middle schools or universities? Could you remember some examples? (not only about the Chinese culture)

I have to thank the intercultural exchange with the Netherlands during my 4^o year of high school because it allowed me to travel in a different country. The same was for my Erasmus period during my 2^o year as a master student; I went in Austria for 5 months.

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2. Please answer the questions in English. If it is difficult for you to express your ideas in English, you can choose to answer them in Italian.

3. You are kindly requested to try to answer them as truthfully as possible.

Consent Form

Research Title: *A Multimodal Approach to Improvin Intercultural Competence of Italian learners of Chinese - A Pilot Study*

Researcher: Guo Nianyu

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By signing below I am indicating my consent to (please tick):

the full participation in filling in this questionnaire

I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used for improving teaching plans and scientific research), and I consent for it to be used in that manner.

Signed Date Modena 05/10/2019 Name Concetto Saglimbeni

Questionnaire

Introduction

Dear students,

I am a doctoral student and I'm going to teach Chinese in the next semester. Before the beginning of the course, I would like to ask you to fill in a brief questionnaire that concerns intercultural awareness. You are kindly requested to complete the questionnaire within one week and you are invited to convey your ideas fully. I believe that your answers will contribute to improving my teaching plans. Thank you very much!

I. Basic information:

- 1. Gender Female Male
- 2. Age20
- 3. Place of Birth . . .Cento(Fe)
- 4. Language Background: The number of languages you have learnt before studying Mandarin Chinese (please list the specific languages on the dotted line)
 - ≤2
 - 3 English, German, Spanish
 - 4
 - ≥4
- 5. Please rate your fluency in the languages you listed them above

Language English. . . .

- Level 0. I am unable to speak the language. Oral production is limited to occasional isolated words. Has no communicative ability.
- Level 1. I can satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics.
- Level 2. I can satisfy routine social demands and limited requirements in other domains.
- Level 3. I can speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and occupational topics.
- Level 4. I can use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to needs. My language usage and ability to function are fully successful.
- Level 5. I can speak proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate well-educated native speaker and reflects the cultural standards of the country where the language is natively spoken.

Language German

Level 0. I am unable to speak the language. Oral production is limited to occasional isolated words. Has no communicative ability.

Level 1. I can satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics.

Level 2. I can satisfy routine social demands and limited requirements in other domains.

Level 3. I can speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and occupational topics.

Level 4. I can use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to needs. My language usage and ability to function are fully successful.

Level 5. My speaking proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate well-educated native speaker and reflects the cultural standards of the country where the language is natively spoken.

Language Spanish. . .

Level 0. I am unable to speak the language. Oral production is limited to occasional isolated words. Has no communicative ability.

Level 1. I can satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics.

Level 2. I can satisfy routine social demands and limited requirements in other domains.

Level 3. I can speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and occupational topics.

Level 4. I can use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to needs. My language usage and ability to function are fully successful.

Level 5. My speaking proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate well-educated native speaker and reflects the cultural standards of the country

where the language is natively spoken.

Language

- Level 0. I am unable to speak this language. Oral production is limited to occasional isolated words. Has no communicative ability.
- Level 1. I can satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics.
- Level 2. I can satisfy routine social demands and limited requirements in other domains.
- Level 3. I can speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and occupational topics.
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- Level 5. My speaking proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate well-educated native speaker and reflects the cultural standards of the country where the language is natively spoken.

Other languages and the corresponding language level

II Further Information

1. Why do you study Mandarin Chinese?

I study Mandarin Chinese because I like the the culture of China and the attitude of the people who live there. Moreover, the language inspires me and I would like to be able to entertain conversations with Chinese people.

2. How long have you been studying Mandarin Chinese? I've been studying Mandarin Chinese for 4 months.

3. What have you already learnt about China?

I've learnt something about the history of China and about the language. I've learnt how the Chinese language has been affected by the history events.

4. What do you think about China, Chinese people and Chinese culture? (at least 100 words)

First of all, I believe that China is a really interesting state, because of its past, because of the way it is nowadays and because it is a reality different from the European continental world reality.

Secondly, I think that chinese culture is really interesting. I had the possibility to study something about China and I understood that China has rich cultural and philosophical traditions, like confucianism. I would like to learn more about tea culture, martial arts, poetry. I also think that China is an amazing destination for tourists. The landscape is amazing. There many important cities to see and attractions, like the the Great Wall of China, the Terracotta Army and the Forbidden city.

I had the possibility to meet Chinese people. I think they are nice people, who care about their traditions and family. They seem to be really helpful.

Considering all the above, I consider China as a really fascinating place. I would like to visit China.

5. According to you, what and how do the Italian media portray people from other countries:

Instruction: Please tick no less than one option from the following choices and give some specific examples correspondingly. These examples can be related or not related

to Chinese people.

Italian newspaper

Italian newspapers usually talk about celebrities from other countries, like actors.

Newspapers for example underline their life, their career and their qualities.

Italian radio

Italian television programs

Others (please name it and quote an example)

6. What kind of attitude that your parents or friends hold on the people with different cultural backgrounds?

Instruction: Please tick no less than one option from the following choices and quote some examples correspondingly. Then, please express your personal opinions on the attitudes that you will exemplify. (not only Chinese people).

your parents' attitudes

your friends' attitudes

My friends are open minded and they are keen on intercultural exchange. They usually don't have prejudice. For example, a friend of mine would like to go to France for an Erasmus experience and likes the way French people behave and their way of thinking.

7. What have you been made aware of other cultures when you were in middle schools or universities? Could you remember some examples? (not only about the Chinese culture)

During the middle school, the high school and the university, my teachers used to teach us something about other cultures. During high school I studied German, Spanish and English. I studied the language but also the literature and the history of the different states.

NB: 1. The questionnaire will be conducted anonymously and confidentially (the consent form is attached in the next page)

2. Please answer the questions in English. If it is difficult for you to express your ideas in English, you can choose to answer them in Italian.

3. You are kindly requested to try to answer them as truthfully as possible.

Consent Form

Research Title: *A Multimodal Approach to Improving the Intercultural Competence of Italian learners of Chinese ---- A Pilot Study*

Researcher: Guo Nianyu

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By signing below I am indicating my consent to (please tick):

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Signed Date

.....03/02/2019 Name AM

Questionnaire

Introduction

Dear students,

I am a doctoral student and I'm going to teach Chinese in the next semester. Before the beginning of the course, I would like to ask you to fill in a brief questionnaire that concerns intercultural awareness. You are kindly requested to complete the questionnaire within one week and you are invited to convey your ideas fully. I believe that your answers will contribute to improving my teaching plans. Thank you very much!

I. Basic information:

1. Gender Female Male

2. Age .. 20

3. Place of Birth Alessandria (AL), Italy

4. Language Background: The number of languages you have learnt before studying Mandarin Chinese (please list the specific languages on the dotted line)

S2

3 ... English, French and German ...

D 4

D 2':4

5. Please rate your fluency in the languages you listed them above

Language .. English ...

Level 0. I am unable to speak the language. Oral production is limited to occasional isolated words. Has no communicative ability.

Level 1. I can satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics.

Level 2. I can satisfy routine social demands and limited requirements in other domains.

Level 3. I can speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and occupational topics.

Level 4. I can use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to needs. My language usage and ability to function are fully successful.

Level 5. I can speak proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate well-educated native speaker and reflects the cultural standards of the country where the language is natively spoken.

Language .. French ...

Level 0. I am unable to speak the language. Oral production is limited to occasional isolated words. Has no communicative ability.

Level I . I can satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics.

Level 2. I can satisfy routine social demands and limited requirements in other domains.

Level 3. I can speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and occupational topics.

Level 4. I can use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to needs. My language usage and ability to function are fully successful.

Level 5. My speaking proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate well-educated native speaker and reflects the cultural standards of the country where the language is natively spoken.

Language .. German ..

Level 0. I am unable to speak the language. Oral production is limited to occasional isolated words. Has no communicative ability.

Level 1. I can satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics.

Level 2. I can satisfy routine social demands and limited requirements in other domains.

Level 3. I can speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and occupational topics.

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Level 5. My speaking proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate well-educated native speaker and reflects the cultural standards of the country where the language is natively spoken.

Language

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Level I. I can satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics.

Level 2. I can satisfy routine social demands and limited requirements in other domains.

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Other languages and the corresponding language level.

II Further Information

1. Why do you study Mandarin Chinese?

I study Mandarin Chinese because I would like to learn a non-European language, I am interested in Chinese culture and I would like to visit China one day. I also think that learning how to communicate in a language which is so different from the European ones could help me with a future job.

2. How long have you been studying Mandarin Chinese?

That's the first academic year I study Chinese

3. What have you already learnt about China?

I have learnt something about culture, geography and language.

4. What do you think about China, Chinese people and Chinese culture? (at least 100 words)

I find Chinese culture very interesting and fascinating, I am always happy to learn something new about it. China is a fascinating place and would like to visit it, there are some very big cities that deserve to be visited at least once, but I know that there is much more than that.

What I like about Chinese people is the ability to combine development in technology and traditions. The more I learn about China, the more I find it interesting; at the beginning of the course I wasn't sure about my choice of studying Chinese, mostly because it isn't an easy language for Italian students, but now I am more convinced.

5. According to you, what and how do the Italian media portray people from other countries:

Instruction: Please tick no less than one option from the following choices and give some specific examples correspondingly. These examples can be related or not related to Chinese people.

Italian newspaper -newspapers contain news from all over the world, mostly about politics and economy, usually from an objective point of view. Although, according to

me, they generally tend to show more about negative facts compared to the positive ones (probably because bad news attracts more readers than good one).

Italian radio

Il Italian television programs -tv programs tend to be more subjective because they show people having different opinions (positive or negative point of view about other countries or people), for example during debates. The impact of images can be really powerful.

Others (please name it and quote an example) Social media: this is an open source, people can look for everything they want, according to their preferences.

6. What kind of attitude that your parents or friends hold on the people with different cultural backgrounds?

Instruction: Please tick no less than one option from the following choices and quote some examples correspondingly. Then, please express your personal opinions on the attitudes that you will exemplify. (not only Chinese people).

your parents' attitudes -my parents are very open-minded, we hosted some students coming from other countries (as part of a student exchange program) when I was in high school and they were very happy to do it. They also like travelling and they have some foreign friends with different cultural backgrounds. I like how they behave because it shows their positive attitude.

your friends' attitudes - most of my friends are happy to meet people with different cultural backgrounds. Even if some of them are not so good in speaking foreign languages, I can see that they try their best in order to communicate and socialize with foreign people. On the other side, I have friends that seem to be less open but not in a negative way, it's just their personality.

7. What have you been made aware of other cultures when you were in middle schools

or universities? Could you remember some examples? (not only about the Chinese culture)

I studied languages in high school, studying other cultures was part of our teachers' program. I remember, for example, our French teacher discussing with us about French culture, we also had to read books of contemporary authors discussing about today's issues. Both our German teacher and the English one always insisted in reading newspapers from other countries and going abroad in order to study and get to know different cultures. Our class, for example, participated to two different student exchange programs, one in The Netherlands and the other in Germany, here we did a traineeship too.

At middle school we had to study some textbooks about other cultures; also, in subjects like history there were topics about the history of foreign countries, in order to give the students a global view of the world.

NB: 1. The questionnaire will be conducted anonymously and confidentially (the consent form is attached in the next page)

2. Please answer the questions in English. If it is difficult for you to express your ideas in English, you can choose to answer them in Italian.

3. You are kindly requested to try to answer them as truthfully as possible.

Consent Form

Research Title: A Multimodal Approach to Improving Intercultural Competence of Italian learners of Chinese – A Pilot Study as a foreign Language

Researcher: Guo Nianyu

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Signed Date

..... ..2 . /.02./..2019

NameFrancesca Cova..... .

Questionnaire

Introduction

Dear students,

I am a doctoral student and I'm going to teach Chinese in the next semester. Before the beginning of the course, I would like to ask you to fill in a brief questionnaire that concerns intercultural awareness. You are kindly requested to complete the questionnaire within one week and you are invited to convey your ideas fully. I believe that your answers will contribute to improving my teaching plans. Thank you very much!

I. Basic information:

1. Gender x Female Male

~~2. Age 31~~

3. Place of Birth Correggio (RE) Italy

4. Language Background: The number of languages you have learnt before studying Mandarin Chinese (please list the specific languages on the dotted line)

≤ 2 English

3.

4.

≥ 4

5. Please rate your fluency in the languages you listed them above

Language

Level 0. I am unable to speak the language. Oral production is limited to occasional isolated words. Has no communicative ability.

Level 1. I can satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics.

Level 2. I can satisfy routine social demands and limited requirements in other

domains.

Level 3. I can speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and occupational topics.

Level 4. I can use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to needs. My language usage and ability to function are fully successful.

Level 5. I can speak proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate well-educated native speaker and reflects the cultural standards of the country where the language is natively spoken.

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Level 3. I can speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and occupational topics.

Level 4. I can use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to needs. My language usage and ability to function are fully successful.

Level 5. My speaking proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate well-educated native speaker and reflects the cultural standards of the country where the language is natively spoken.

Other languages and the corresponding language level.....

II Further Information

1. Why do you study Mandarin Chinese? Because nowadays it's an important language and I was interested in Chinese culture

2. How long have you been studying Mandarin Chinese? 5 years

3. What have you already learnt about China? I lived in China for one year so I know the culture and Chinese people pretty well.

4. What do you think about China, Chinese people and Chinese culture? (at least 100 words) I think that China is very different from what the Italians think about this country, China is still a country that the 老外 have to discover.

First of all I remember the sense of “safeness” the first time I went to Shanghai, the great organization to manage this huge city and also the curiosity about me.

Chinese people are friendly and shy, I work with students from every part of the world and the chinese students often (and I found the same behavior in China too) stay in their own community of Chinese students, they do not like to open “their world” to “other worlds”. For instance, even the Chinese people were very curious about me, very rarely invited me to their houses.

The Chinese culture is one of the most interesting culture for me, both for its ancient culture and also for the contemporary life: the differences between the countryside and the big cities; the young people and Weixin; the food; the one child policy; the one belt one road...

5. According to you, what and how do the Italian media portray people from other countries: Instruction: Please tick no less than one option from the following choices and give some specific examples correspondingly. These examples can be related or not related to Chinese people.

Italian newspaper Often the foreigner is presented as “dangerous” and a person who cannot integrate himself in our society.

Italian radio

Italian television programs

Others (please name it and quote an example) 6. What kind of attitude that your

parents or friends hold on the people with different cultural backgrounds? Instruction:

Please tick no less than one option from the following choices and quote some

examples correspondingly. Then, please express your personal opinions on the attitudes that you will exemplify. (not only Chinese people).

x your parents' attitudes my parents are open to accept new cultures, since I was a child, we host people from every part of the world: for example two children from Congo for two years, they were "our siblings"

x your friends' attitudes not very open, for example it's very rare that we accept people from other countries in our group.

7. What have you been made aware of other cultures when you were in middle schools or universities? Could you remember some examples? (not only about the Chinese culture) I'm a curious person so I was very interested to know new cultures. During the period of the university I lived in China and Vietnam, but I have to confess that when I lived in Italy I didn't meet foreigners very often.

NB: 1. The questionnaire will be conducted anonymously and confidentially (the consent form is attached in the next page)

2. Please answer the questions in English. If it is difficult for you to express your ideas in English, you can choose to answer them in Italian.

3. You are kindly requested to try to answer them as truthfully as possible.

Consent Form

Research Title: *A Multimodal Approach to Improving Intercultural Competence and Awareness in Foreign Language Learners----A case of Italian students who learn Mandarin Chinese as a foreign language*

Researcher: Guo Nianyu

I have been given information about the research title and have been made aware of the research project of *Guo Nianyu* who is conducting this research as part of a *Doctoral Degree* supervised by *Prof. Franca Poppi* in the department of *Studies on Language and Culture* at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia.

I have been advised of the potential risks and burdens associated with this research and have had an opportunity to ask *Guo Nianyu* any questions I may have about the research and my participation.

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, I am free to refuse to participate and I am free to withdraw from the research at any time. My refusal to participate or withdrawal of consent will not affect *my relationship with the Department of Studies on Language and Culture and my relationship with the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia.*

If I have any enquiries about the research, I can contact (1. *Guo Nianyu e-mail address: 223577@ studenti.unimore.it or prof. Gaia Perini email address: gaia.perini@unimore.it* or if I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted, I can contact the Ethic office, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia

By signing below I am indicating my consent to (please tick):

the full participation in filling in this questionnaire

I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used for improving teaching plans and scientific research), and I consent for it to be used in that manner.

Signed Date

...../...../.....

Name.....Veronica Onesti.....

Questionnaire

Introduction

Dear students,

I am a doctoral student and I'm going to teach Chinese in the next semester. Before the beginning of the course, I would like to have you do a brief questionnaire that concerns intercultural awareness. You are expected to fill in the questionnaire within one week and you are invited to convey fully your ideas. I believe that your answers will contribute to improving my teaching plans. Thank you very much!

I.

Basic information:

Gender Male

2. Age ... 24

3. Place of Birth ... Modena

4. Language Background: The number of languages you have learnt before studying Mandarin Chinese (please list the specific languages on the dotted line)

≤ 2

3 ... this one

4

≥ 4

5. Please rate your fluency in the languages you listed them above (please tick you language level)

Language ... English- Level 5 ... Level 0. Unable to speak the language . Oral production is limited to occasional isolated words. Has no communicative ability.

Level 1. Able to satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics.

Level 2. Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited requirements in other domains.

Level 3. Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and occupational topics.

Level 4. Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to needs. The individual's language usage and ability to function are fully successful.

Level 5. Speaking proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate well-educated native speaker and reflects the cultural standards of the country where the language is natively spoken.

Language ... Level 0. Unable to speak the language. Oral production is limited to occasional isolated words. Has no communicative ability.

Level 1. Able to satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics.

- Level 2. Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited requirements in other domains.
 - Level 3. Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and occupational topics.
 - Level 4. Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to needs. The individual's language usage and ability to function are fully successful.
 - Level 5. Speaking proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate well-educated native speaker and reflects the cultural standards of the country where the language is natively spoken.
- Language . French- Level 3 . . Level 0. Unable to speak the language. Oral production is limited to occasional isolated words. Has no communicative ability.
- Level 1. Able to satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics.

- Level 2. Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited requirements in other domains.
 - Level 3. Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and occupational topics.
 - Level 4. Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to needs. The individual's language usage and ability to function are fully successful.
 - Level 5. Speaking proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate well-educated native speaker and reflects the cultural standards of the country where the language is natively spoken.
- Language . Italian- Level 5 . . . Level 0. Unable to speak this language. Oral production is limited to occasional isolated words. Has no communicative ability.
- Level 1. Able to satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics.
 - Level 2. Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited requirements in other domains.
 - Level 3. Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and occupational topics.
 - Level 4. Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to needs. The individual's language usage and ability to function are fully successful.
 - Level 5. Speaking proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate well-educated native speaker and reflects the cultural standards of the country where the language is natively spoken.
- Other languages and the corresponding language proficiency.....

II Further Information

1. Why do you study Mandarin Chinese? To learn Chinese culture and to be able to work in China
2. How long have you been studying Mandarin Chinese? 5 years
3. What have you already learnt about China? A lot of language and culture stuff, such as food and calligraphy
4. What do you think about China, Chinese people and Chinese culture? (at least 100 words) China is a country full of culture and heritage, Chinese people are polite, respectful of traditions and have a strong ethic towards their jobs
5. What and how do the Italian media portray people from other countries? (eg. Italian newspaper, radio, television programs and social networks) (can you think of any examples, referring to Chinese people, but not only to them?) stereotypes, such as chopsticks
6. Have you ever learnt how to treat people with different cultural backgrounds from your parents and friends? Could you please quote some examples? (not only Chinese people) yes, to respect their culture
7. What have you been made aware of other cultures when you were in primary, secondary schools and universities? Could you put forward some examples? (not only Chinese culture) contact with different people from different culture

- NB: 1. The questionnaire will be conducted anonymously and confidentially (the consent form is attached in the next page)
2. Please answer the questions in English. If it is difficult for you to express your ideas with English, you can choose to answer them in Italian.
 3. Any unreal information should not be allowed in your answers.

RESEARCH TITLE: A Holistic Approach to Fostering Intercultural Competence and Awareness of Foreign Language Learners----A case of Italian students who learn Mandarin Chinese as a foreign language

RESEARCHER: Guo Nianyu

I have been given information about the research title and have been made aware of the research project of Guo Nianyu who is conducting this research as part of a Doctoral Degree supervised by Prof. Franca Poppi in the department of Studies on Language and Culture at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia.

I have been advised of the potential risks and burdens associated with this research and have had an opportunity to ask Guo Nianyu any questions I may have about the research and my participation.

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, I am free to refuse to participate and I am free to withdraw from the research at any time. My refusal to participate or withdrawal of consent will not affect my relationship with the Department of European Languages and Cultures and my relationship with the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia.

If I have any enquiries about the research, I can contact (Guo Nianyu and prof.

Gaia Perini or if I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted, I can contact the Ethic office, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia

By signing below I am indicating my consent to (please tick):
the full participation in filling in this questionnaire

I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used for improving teaching plans and scientific research), and I consent for it to be used in that manner.

Signed Date

Gabriele Ferrarini 02/07/2019

Appendix B: A Literary Text adapted from the Novel *Jia*

This text is adapted from the famous book *Family*, written by baijin, a well-known Chinese writer. The story happened in the early 20th century, at the beginning of May 4th movement. The protagonist was called Jue Xin, the oldest son of the family. When he came of age, his parents arranged an unknown girl for him. The following excerpt portrayed the reaction when Jue Xin first learnt about the proposal and the way he behaved in the wedding ceremony. Now please read this text carefully and share with me:

1. how did Jue Xin react to this proposal? Did he feel happy? What were his feelings?
2. How's the relationship between his parents and him. Could you please describe and explain it a little bit? Please summarize it first with key words and then put examples.
2. Do you think that the family relationship depicted in this excerpt, to some extent, reflects family education in the early 20th century in China. If yes, how's the Chinese family education? Please share your own ideas according to your cultural knowledge.

La versione italiana del testo originale:

Juexin era il maggiore dei fratelli della famiglia nobile Gao. Era un bel ragazzo dall'intelligenza spiccata, una dote quest'ultima di cui aveva dato mostra sin da piccolo. Circondato d'affetto e apprezzamento, Juexin si era fatto ragazzo e aveva iniziato a frequentare la scuola pubblica. Lì si era distinto fin da subito, e al quarto anno aveva affrontato gli esami di fine corso risultando primo di tutto l'istituto. Aveva sempre mostrato un interesse particolare per la chimica, e sperava, dopo il diploma, di andare a Pechino, a Shanghai, oppure – perché no? – persino in Germania per continuare i propri studi. La sua mente era piena di belle speranze, e a quel tempo era ammirato da tutti i suoi compagni. Il dolore non aveva tardato però ad arrivare. Durante il quarto anno di scuola, mentre Juexin si preparava per gli esami di ammissione all'università,

sua madre era venuta a mancare, e poco dopo il padre aveva preso in moglie una giovane donna che era divenuta così la sua matrigna. Questa donna era una cugina di sua madre. La vita di Juexin da quel momento non era stata più la stessa, qualcosa di essenziale non c'era più. Tuttavia la perdita della madre sembrava non avesse lasciato in lui cicatrici troppo profonde. Vi era qualcosa di più importante nella sua testa, ovvero il suo futuro e i sogni che questo portava con sé. Inoltre nella sua vita vi era un'altra persona importante, qualcuno che lo capiva bene e che sapeva confortarlo. Questa persona era la sua cugina più giovane. Venne però il momento in cui i suoi sogni si infransero nella maniera più crudele. Le cose andarono così: la sera del giorno in cui aveva ricevuto il diploma, ancora fresco dei complimenti dei compagni, suo padre lo chiamò nella propria stanza per parlargli:

«Oggi hai ottenuto il tuo diploma. È tempo ora che ti sposi: ho già predisposto per il tuo matrimonio. Tuo nonno si augura di avere un pronipote, e anche io spero di poter abbracciare presto un nipote. Ormai sei giunto all'età di prendere di moglie, e quando lo farai potrò finalmente mettermi l'animo in pace. Sebbene con la mia carriera da funzionario non sia riuscito a metter via molto in questi anni, in questa casa non abbiamo mai dovuto preoccuparci di cibo e vestiti. Adesso però il mio corpo non è più quello di una volta, e per questo sto meditando di andare in pensione e di ritirarmi a casa, perciò spero di poter contare sul tuo aiuto per gestire i nostri affari: è anche per questo che non puoi fare a meno di una moglie che ti stia a fianco. Ho parlato con la famiglia Li, ed è tutto già sistemato. Il tredici del prossimo mese è un giorno propizio, perciò annunceremo il tuo fidanzamento quel giorno. Entro quest'anno ti sposerai». Le parole del padre colsero Juexin in maniera del tutto inaspettata. Juexin le aveva intese tutte, eppure era come se non avesse veramente capito cosa volessero dire. Non disse nulla, annuì soltanto. Non osava guardare suo padre negli occhi, sebbene lo sguardo di lui fosse quello di sempre, calmo e pacato. Juexin non obiettò, e nemmeno nella sua mente vi era alcun pensiero di protesta. Faceva cenno di sì col capo, come a dare a intendere che fosse d'accordo col discorso del padre. Quando però fu tornato nella propria stanza, Juexin si chiuse la porta alle spalle e, gettatosi sul letto, affondò in

lacrime la testa nel cuscino, piangendo i suoi sogni ormai infranti. La prospettiva d'imparentarsi coi Li non era nuova a Juexin, ma i suoi famigliari avevano sempre preferito tenerlo all'oscuro della cosa, e lui provava sempre troppo imbarazzo per domandare chiarimenti. Dentro di sé si era così convinto che queste voci non si sarebbero mai tramutate in realtà. Certo non vi erano dubbi sul fatto che la sua bella persona e il suo rinomato talento potessero far colpo su non poche famiglie con figlie in età da marito. E in effetti da un po' di tempo a quella parte la residenza dei Gao era diventata un crocevia di sensali in cerca di accordi. Dopo molto discutere, suo padre e la sua matrigna erano giunti a una prima conclusione, riducendo la scelta a due pretendenti. Queste erano due fanciulle di famiglia illustre e prestigiosa, fiori all'occhiello nei carnet degli intermediari, al punto tale che il padre di Juexin, incapace di prendere una decisione, aveva stabilito di affidarsi alla sorte: dopo aver scritto i nomi delle due ragazze su due strisce di carta rossa, ne aveva fatto due pallottole che si era stretto nelle mani, e così facendo aveva incominciato a pregare di fronte all'altare degli antenati in attesa di consiglio. Così era stato scelto il nome dei Li. Quel giorno stesso Juexin venne messo al corrente della cosa.

Ba Jin. *Famiglia (Asiasphere) (Italian Edition)* (Kindle 位置 626-632). Atmosphere Libri. Kindle 版本.

Appendix C: Chinese comic Strips: The Wondering of San Mao





Adapted from Le Ping, Zhang. (2020). *San Mao Liu Lang Ji* (Translation: the Wonderings of San Mao). Shao nian er tong chu ban she. Beijing: CN.

Appendix D: The lyrics of the song *Where Has the Time Gone*

by

(Note: during the lesson, I canceled the title of this song and encouraged students to give a title with reference to the lyrics and melody of this song) (Bottiroli, et al., 2014; Jewitt, 2008)

Where Has the Time Gone?

时间都去哪了？

门前老树长新芽

Mén qián lǎo shù zhǎng xīnyá

The old tree before the door has grown new shoots

院里枯木又开花

Yuàn lǐ kūmù yòu kāihuā

The dead tree in the yard is blooming again

半生存了好多话

Bàn shēngcúnle hǎoduō huà

I've held on to so many words over a lifetime

藏进了满头白发

Cáng jìnle mǎn tóu bái fà

— stored them in a head of white hair

记忆中的小脚丫

Jìyì zhōng de xiǎojiǎo yā

In my memory a girl with little feet

肉嘟嘟的小嘴巴

Ròu dū dū de xiǎo zuǐba

and a chubby little mouth

一生把爱交给他

Yīshēng bǎ ài jiāo gěi tā

I gave her my love for a whole lifetime

只为那一声爸妈

Zhǐ wèi nà yīshēng bà mā

All for the sound of "mum" and "dad"

时间都去哪儿了

Shíjiān dōu qù nǎr le

Where has the time gone?

还没好好感受年轻就老了

Hái méi hǎohāo gǎnshòu niánqīng jiù lǎole

I haven't yet enjoyed youth and I'm already old

生儿养女一辈子

Shēng ér yǎngnǚ yībèizi

Raising sons and daughters for a lifetime

满脑子都是孩子哭了笑了

Mǎn nǎozi dōu shì háizi kūle xiàole

My mind is full of children crying and laughing

时间都去哪儿了

Shíjiān dōu qù nǎr le

Where has the time gone?

还没好好看看你眼睛就花了

Hái méi hǎohǎo kàn kàn nǐ yǎnjīng jiù huāle

I still haven't taken care of you properly, and my eyes are already failing

柴米油盐半辈子

Cháimǐyóuyán bànbèizi

Daily necessities for a lifetime

转眼就只剩下满脸的皱纹了

Zhuǎnyǎn jiù zhǐ shèng xià mǎn liǎn de zhòuwénle

In the blink of an eye, all that's left is a face full of wrinkles

Appendix E: an excerpt adapted from the Novel *The Joy Luck Club*

An excerpt adapted from the novel *The Joy Luck Club*. Now read this article carefully and tell me

1. how's the relationship between the mother and her daughter.
2. Does the protagonist's mother love her? If yes, why she wedged a "cold war" to her mother?
3. Have your parents ever showed your off? If, yes, what did you feel? (Natalia, 2011)

I was ten years old. Even though I was young, I knew my ability to play chess was a gift. It was effortless, so easy. I could see things on the chessboard that other people could not. I could create barriers to protect myself that were invisible to my opponents. And this gift gave me supreme confidence. I knew what my opponents would do, move for move. I knew at exactly what point their faces would fall when my seemingly simple and childlike strategy would reveal itself as a devastating and irrevocable course. I loved to win.

And my mother loved to show me off, like one of my many trophies she polished. She used to discuss my games as if she had devised the strategies.

"I told my daughter, Use your horses to run over the enemy," she informed one shopkeeper. "She won very quickly this way." And of course, she had said this before the game—that and a hundred other useless things that had nothing to do with my winning.

To our family friends who visited she would confide, "You don't have to be so smart to win chess. It is just tricks. You blow from the North, South, East, and West. The other person becomes confused. They don't know which way to run."

I hated the way she tried to take all the credit. And one day I told her so, shouting at her on Stockton Street, in the middle of a crowd of people. I told her she didn't know anything, so she shouldn't show off. She should shut up. Words to that effect.

That evening and the next day she wouldn't speak to me. She would say stiff words to my father and brothers, as if I had become invisible and she was talking about a rotten fish she had thrown away but which had left behind its bad smell.

I knew this strategy, the sneaky way to get someone to pounce back in anger and fall into a trap. So I ignored her. I refused to speak and waited for her to come to me.

After many days had gone by in silence, I sat in my room, staring at the sixty-four squares of my chessboard, trying to think of another way. And that's when I decided to quit playing chess.

Of course I didn't mean to quit forever. At most, just for a few days. And I made a show of it. Instead of practicing in my room every night, as I always did, I marched into the living room and sat down in front of the television set with my brothers, who stared at me, an unwelcome intruder. I used my brothers to further my plan; I cracked my knuckles to annoy them.

"Ma!" they shouted. "Make her stop. Make her go away."

But my mother did not say anything.

Still I was not worried. But I could see I would have to make a stronger move.

I decided to sacrifice a tournament that was coming up in one week. I would refuse to play in it. And my mother would certainly have to speak to me about this. Because the sponsors and the benevolent associations would start calling her, asking, shouting, pleading to make me play again.

And then the tournament came and went. And she did not come to me, crying, "Why are you not playing chess?" But I was crying inside, because I learned that a boy whom I had easily defeated on two other occasions had won.

I realized my mother knew more tricks than I had thought. But now I was tired of her game. I wanted to start practicing for the next tournament. So I decided to pretend to let her win. I would be the one to speak first.

"I am ready to play chess again," I announced to her. I had imagined she would smile and then ask me what special thing I wanted to eat.

But instead, she gathered her face into a frown and stared into my eyes, as if she could

force some kind of truth out of me.

"Why do you tell me this?" she finally said in sharp tones. "You think it is so easy. One day quit, next day play. Everything for you is this way. So smart, so easy, so fast."

"I said I'll play," I whined.

"No!" she shouted, and I almost jumped out of my scalp. "It is not so easy anymore." I was quivering, stunned by what she said, in not knowing what she meant. And then I went back to my room. I stared at my chessboard, its sixty-four squares, to figure out how to undo this terrible mess. And after staring like this for many hours, I actually believed that I had made the white squares black and the black squares white, and everything would be all right.

And sure enough, I won her back. That night I developed a high fever, and she sat next to my bed, scolding me for going to school without my sweater. In the morning she was there as well, feeding me rice porridge flavored with chicken broth she had strained herself. She said she was feeding me this because I had the chicken pox and one chicken knew how to fight another. And in the afternoon, she sat in a chair in my room, knitting me a pink sweater while telling me about a sweater that Auntie Suyuan had knit for her daughter June, and how it was most unattractive and of the worst yarn. I was so happy that she had become her usual self. (I was happy that she gave me her support and warmth that I have long taken for granted.)

But after I got well, I discovered that, really, my mother had changed. She no longer hovered over me as I practiced different chess games. She did not polish my trophies every day. She did not cut out the small newspaper item that mentioned my name. It was as if she had erected an invisible wall and I was secretly groping each day to see how high and how wide it was. (her mother tried to pay less attention to her daughter in a way of alleviating her pressure. Her mother loved her in this way. This is the support and the strength her mother gave her, but the daughter did not realize it.)

At my next tournament, while I had done well overall, in the end the points were not enough. I lost. And what was worse, my mother said nothing. She seemed to walk around with this satisfied look, as if it had happened because she had devised this

strategy.

I was horrified. I spent many hours every day going over in my mind what I had lost. I knew it was not just the last tournament. I examined every move, every piece, every square. And I could no longer see the secret weapons of each piece, the magic within the intersection of each square. I could see only my mistakes, my weaknesses. It was as though I had lost my magic armor. And everybody could see this, where it was easy to attack me.

Over the next few weeks and later months and years, I continued to play, but never with that same feeling of supreme confidence. I fought hard, with fear and desperation. When I won, I was grateful, relieved. And when I lost, I was filled with growing dread, and then terror that I was no longer a prodigy, that I had lost the gift and had turned into someone quite ordinary.

When I lost twice to the boy whom I had defeated so easily a few years before, I stopped playing chess altogether. And nobody protested. I was fourteen.

Appendix F: A blog written by an Italian and it was retrieved from the Italian national newspaper Repubblica

LA FAMIGLIA IN CINA: NUCLEO FONDAMENTALE DELLA SOCIETÀ

di moniadri (Medie Superiori) scritto il 05.03.18

Credo che un paese grande come la Cina sia da imitare soprattutto per l'importanza che i cinesi hanno nei confronti della famiglia. Metto in evidenza soprattutto il valore e il rispetto per essa poiché oggi nei giovani non si rispecchia molto. Questo concetto in Italia si è, invece, indebolito e ci sono sempre più anziani soli e con grave difficoltà economiche.

La Cina è stata riconosciuta come un paese in cui varie generazioni che vivono sotto lo stesso tetto formano un nucleo familiare numeroso, in cui è molto importante la relazione padre-figlio che rappresenta la funzione vitale della famiglia cinese. Gli elementi fondamentali della famiglia però non sono i giovani ma gli anziani (saggi) ai quali viene riservato il massimo rispetto, il massimo aiuto e sono loro che comandano e devono essere ascoltati e ubbiditi. In questa cultura il tema del matrimonio non ha portato grandi cambiamenti perché anche tutt'ora viene deciso per convenienza dai genitori delle due famiglie, che stipulano patti anche prima che gli figli nascono; oggi però molti giovani non sopportano la ferrea autorità del capo famiglia, né gli obblighi che la vita familiare comporta. Lo sviluppo industriale, il movimento delle grandi masse dalle zone rurali ai grossi centri urbani, ha quindi modificato la famiglia patriarcale. I giovani hanno preteso di scegliere il proprio partner e di formarsi una famiglia, trascurando l'assistenza dei genitori considerandola più come un dovere morale.

Uno degli sviluppi più importanti è la dimensione sociale della donna, infatti, la sua attività non è più limitata alle cure domestiche all'interno della famiglia o del clan, ma è rivolta all'esterno la quale può intraprendere lavori più svariati e accedervi all'università. In paragone la donna occidentale partecipa anche attivamente all'economia familiare ormai da diversi anni.

Comunque l'importanza della famiglia nella società odierna continua ad avere un ruolo

fondamentale in quanto è il luogo in cui comincia l'educazione del bambino e dove vengono trasmessi valori quali il rispetto, la cortesia, l'obbedienza e la gratitudine verso i genitori ed il rispetto degli anziani, cosa che dovrebbero adottare anche i giovani di altri paesi che decidono di avere figli.

Adapted from <https://scuola.repubblica.it/toscana-firenze-ldsuitisigalilei/tema/la-famiglia-in-cina-nucleo-fondamentale-della-societa/>

Appendix G

The validity and Reliability of my designed questionnaire

IAIS / IAIS / *intercultural awareness*

Questionnaire Design United Kingdom - English

[+ Show Question Text](#)

Quality Prediction

My Quality Prediction

Reliability = 1 - random error r^2 0.776

Validity = 1 - method effect v^2 0.914

Quality = reliability (r^2) x validity (v^2) q^2 0.710

Potential Improvements

All Variables

Variable	Potential Max Quality by Change in Variable	
Total number of words in request	0.736	+ 0.03
Consistency between theoretical range and used range of scale	0.723	+ 0.01
Total number of nouns in question	0.718	+ 0.01
Total number of abstract nouns in question	0.716	+ 0.01
Knowledge provided	0.715	+ 0.01
Balance of the request	0.714	
Order of the labels	0.713	
Neutral category	0.712	
Theoretical range of the concept bipolar/unipolar	0.712	

Number of nouns in introduction	0.712	
Number of categories	0.711	
Correspondence between labels and numbers of the scale	0.711	
Use of gradation	0.711	
Horizontal or vertical scale	0.711	
Start of the response sentence on the visual aid	0.711	
Interviewer instruction	0.711	
Extra information or definition	0.711	
Number of abstract nouns in introduction	0.711	
Numbers or letters before the answer categories	0.711	
Request on the visual aid	0.711	
Showcard or other visual aids used	0.711	
Labels of categories	0.710	
Number of fixed reference points	0.710	
Use of stimulus or statement in the request	0.710	
Interviewer	0.710	
Formulation of the request for an answer: basic choice	0.710	
Position	0.710	
Response scale: basic choice	0.710	
WH word used in the request	0.710	
Visual or oral presentation	0.710	
Absolute or comparative judgment	0.710	
Centrality	0.710	
Don't know option	0.710	
Presence of encouragement to answer	0.710	
Respondent instruction	0.710	
Request present in the introduction	0.710	
Introduction available?	0.710	
Labels with short text or complete sentences	0.710	
Number of subordinate clauses in request	0.710	
Number of subordinated clauses in introduction	0.710	
Information about the opinion of other people	0.710	
Request for an answer type	0.710	
Range of the used scale bipolar/unipolar	0.710	
Scale with only numbers or numbers in boxes	0.710	
Overlap of scale labels and categories	0.710	
Emphasis on subjective opinion in request	0.710	
Symmetry of response scale	0.710	
Number of words in introduction	0.709	

Selected Variable

Click on a variable on the left to see the potential change in the quality that could be produced by a different value for that variable.

Question Coding View Study List View Add / Edit Study Dialog View Home Page Help
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i

(11) Peter: Do you want to go to the cinema?

Mary: I' m tired.

(12) a. Mary is tired.

b. Mary' s being tired is a sufficient reason for her not to want to go to the cinema

c. Mary doesn' t want to go to the cinema because she is tired.

(13) a. Mary had a busy day.

b. Mary wouldn' t want to do a series of press-ups.

ii A detailed instruction can be seen in:

<http://www.chinatraveldepot.com/C281-The-New-Culture-Movement>