Canadian Literacy Curricula in Macau, China: Students' Lived Curriculum

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Abstract

This ethnographic case study documents students' lived experience at a Canadian offshore school in Macau through students' multimodal artifacts, interviews, and teacher-student interactions in English and Mandarin literacy classes. Undergirded by the theory of cosmopolitan literacies, this study revealed the opportunities at MCS for difference negotiation and fluid identity formation that were enabled by MCS's curricular emphasis on celebrating multiculturalism and multimodality. However, interview and observation data showed that literacy practices in the English literacy classes also centered around pen to paper meaning-making. This study identified human and non-human actors that enabled and constrained students' literacy and identity options in the unique cross-border education context in Macau, such as MCS's multicultural reality, school's curricular emphasis on celebrating multiculturalism and multimodality, individual teachers' preferences in literacy practices, and the expectations of the standardized Alberta test. The paper discusses the pedagogical potentials of cosmopolitan literacies to expand transnational education students' literacy and identity options.

Keywords

transnational education – lived curriculum – cosmopolitan literacies – actor-network theory – identity and literacy options

1 Introduction: Transnational Education and Students' Lived Curriculum

Countries such as Canada have made strides into branding and delivering their K-12 and postsecondary education to overseas learners. Such overseas

educational activities focus on program mobility or institutional mobility and are termed as transnational education in extant literature (McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007). As of July 2018, 23 countries hosted 126 Canadian transnational education programs at the elementary and secondary levels (CICIC, 2018). In China, the number of Canadian K-12 transnational education programs increased from 48 in 2001 to 86 in 2018. These K-12 Canadian offshore programs have extended to 20 provinces in China, 4 municipalities under the direct administration of China's central government, and 2 special administrative regions (CICIC, 2018).

Inquiries into lived curriculum (Aoki, 1993), that is, embodied accounts of students' lived experience are "pedagogically crucial" (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 2008, p. 530) because they tend to "recover human feeling and motivation for studies of education" (Grumet, as cited in Pinar *et al.*, 2008, p. 540). The existent literature on tertiary transnational education explored how new identities and cross-border learning emerged when students were engaged in various transnational education programming such as twinning programs, on-line education, and offshore campus (e.g., Debowski, 2008; Pyvis & Chapman, 2005). However, except for the author's endeavors (Zhang & Heydon, 2014; Zhang, Heydon, Li, & Malins, submitted), there is a paucity of research that investigates secondary school students' experience in literacy learning and identity formation in the cross-border education spaces. This study responded to the gap and focused on students' lived curriculum at a Canadian transnational education school in Macau, China (The Macau-Canada School [MCS]; pseudonym) that used the Alberta literacy curricula for its students that represented 34 countries.

In line with the Actor-Network Theory (ANT) quest for multiple perspectives (Fenwick & Edwards, 2010), this paper draws on both emic perspectives (i.e., local perspectives or intrinsic cultural understandings of a context) from four student participants and etic perspectives (i.e., outsider, external perspectives on cultural understandings of a context [Pike, 1967]) from myself who observed 50 English and Mandarin literacy classes that these participants attended (Creswell, 2007). Focusing on students' lived curriculum, this paper documents students' cross-border experiences in meaning making and identity construction through multiple sources of data, namely, students' multi-modal artifacts, their interviews, and teacher-student interactions in English and Mandarin literacy classes. My intent in this study was to uncover tensions, fissures, and resistance that were embedded in the literacy curriculum of MCS as a globalized schooling context. The study asked: What actors and associations shaped MCS students' lived literacy learning experience and identity options? What are the implications for literacy teaching and learning in globalized schooling contexts?

2 Literature Review

An emerging but sporadic scholarship has traced the trajectory of transnational education students' lived experience. Though not specifically on literacy, the existent literature unveils the inextricable link between differing social practices of learning and learners' identities in transnational education contexts.

First and foremost, extant research findings indicate the impacts of a marketing discourse upon learner identities in transnational education sectors. Such a discourse constructs an image of students as consumers of transnational education products (Kuehn, 2002; Lim & Moufahim, 2008), hence students' "self-transformative" investments in education (Pyvis & Chapman, 2007, p. 236). Such a consumer-oriented model of transnational education provides a wider spectrum of learning opportunities to transnational education students as consumers (Knight, 2002). Thus the key to marketing transnational education in various contexts was to follow student and parent customers' needs, demands, and desires (e.g., Yang & Hsiao, 2006). Kuehn (2002) points out that the Asian students studying in British Columbia offshore schools were paying for the British Columbia curriculum and buying the Dogwood secondary school diploma. The diploma provided transnational education students with relatively easy access to post-secondary education in British Columbia and Canada. Guttman (2000) argues that transnational education might further demarcate two camps of students in host countries, that is, a "privileged class" that have access to a brand-name foreign education and an "underprivileged class" that attend a local educational institution (p. 35). Similarly, Ziguras (2008) challenges transnational education's potential to spread a neoliberal ideology and justify "elite privilege" while ignoring the majority others (p. 44). In the context of postsecondary transnational education programs in China, Huang (2008) also states that no clear evidence was available to conclude that these programs had led to Chinese students' "wider access to higher education" (p. 32).

Existent literature also unearths transnational education students' hankering after global identities. When students shopped for educational alternatives, they tended to choose transnational education products to overcome the limitations of their own parochialism and procure "'international' beings" (Pyvis & Chapman, 2007, p. 236). It is partially students' desire to engage in a mix of the local and global and seek to be more culturally mobile (McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007). The twinning of the local and the foreign, therefore, work together to shape how transnational education students think, who they are, and where they belong. Studies also show the power negotiations pertaining to identities and local and international languages in the transnational education arena (e.g., Zhang, 2015). Wallace and Dunn (2008) problematize the hegemony

of English in transnational education programs and globalized communities. Their research findings indicate a relationship between transnational education students' sociocultural capital accumulation and their identity formation. Students were relying on enhanced English proficiency and the Western-centric skills to optimize their global career opportunities. Lee (2009) also points out that mastering international languages such as English was perceived by transnational education students as "the achievement of economic prosperity on both personal and national levels" (p. 2).

Studies report transnational education students' challenges that were incurred by the different teaching and learning styles in their prior parochial and current transnational education settings and how such challenges might have impacted identity transformation. Pyvis (2008) and Debowski (2005) found that Asian students had to switch from a model with authoritative guidance to a more eclectic, inquiry-based model, that is, students were supposed to interact with peers and critique knowledge and its applications. Debowski argues that such transformative learning processes in the transnational education contexts might extend to other spheres of students' life and thus result in a profound shift in awareness and subjectivity. She also remarks that hybrid foreign and local teaching strategies in transnational education programs might lead to students' inconsistent expectations and confusion about education and identity. Pyvis' findings indicate that students liked the interactive model of learning and teaching because they were engaged with the learning community through talking, sharing, seeking help, and getting to know more about what global others might think.

There are studies that investigated the ways through which transnational education enabled or constrained opportunities to expand students' identity options (i.e., the possibilities that learners have for identity formation [Cummins, 2001]). McBurnie and Ziguras (2007) highlight the transnational education communities that simply transmitted generic knowledge from their Western centres to "students who are made to feel peripheral in relation to the home institution" (p. 66). The Mauritius students in Pyvis' (2008) study reported restrictions that hindered them from achieving their aspirational learning experiences and identities, such as limited resources in the host country (e.g., library, computers, equipment in film and television laboratories), parent university's strict ethical requirements for students to conduct research, and limited contact with students learning the same curriculum in the home country. Transnational education students felt alienated and realized that they did not seem to belong to the parent university. Studies also show that strong senses of belonging and engagement with educational communities in the home countries were hard to obtain even though transnational education

students might seek membership of home-country learning communities (e.g., Chapman & Pyvis, 2006a, 2006b; Debowski, 2008; Pyvis, 2008; Pyvis & Chapman, 2005). One of my prior studies otherwise relates that the hybrid Chinese and Canadian secondary school curriculum that was used in a transnational education program in South China mobilized students' engagement with their imagined global others (Zhang & Heydon, 2014). We contend that participation into the imagined communities in the host country (See also Norton, 2001) might have the potential to inspire new actions and transformation.

The documented literature on transnational education students' learning experience and identity formation is mainly rooted in tertiary transnational education. There is a scarcity of research that addresses literacy learning at cross-border schooling contexts and the ensuing implications for literacy learners' subjectivities. With the purpose to expand the horizons of existent knowledge, this study mapped students' lived curricular landscape at MCS.

3 Theoretical Underpinning

This study was undergirded by the theoretical lens of cosmopolitan literacies. My prior studies on secondary school transnational education found that the epistemological configurations about regional parochialism, mono-mode and mono-lingual literacy, and national identities have less interpretive power to account for transnational education students' lived experience and identity formation in cross-border learning spaces (Zhang, 2015; Zhang & Heydon, 2014, 2015). I therefore anchored my study in the scholarly work on cosmopolitan approaches to literacy education (e.g., Hawkins, 2014; Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2010, 2014; Saito, 2010; Vasudevan, 2014; Wahlström, 2014) that focuses on engaging students in the interlocution between locality and globality.

Reflecting the 4th Century BC notion of cosmopolitan, Beck (2002) foregrounds three features of cosmopolitanism, namely, globality, plurality, and civility. Cosmopolitanism positions learners as having autonomy, agency, and creativity to reconstruct "spaces for new cultural and social configurations" in face of increasing global mobility and connectivity (Hansen, 2008, p. 294). Smith (2006) proposes "genuine openness to the Other" (p. xxiv). Hansen furthers such a stance and states that educational cosmopolitanism features a desire to learn from the traditions and insights from both self and global others. Rizvi (2014) suggests a "dialectical mode of thinking" (p. 211) when cosmopolitan individuals commit to learning about others through learning about themselves and vice versa. Likewise, Hull and Stornaiuolo (2014) use the term cosmopolitan literacies to underscore meaning makers' "cognitive, emotional,

ethical, and aesthetic meaning-making capacities” when they take into consideration the differently situated others (p. 17). Cosmopolitan literacies scholars espouse learning opportunities that challenge stereotypical or deficit imagining of foreign others and encourage learners to locate themselves in relation to others via reflexivity in meaning-making practices (e.g., Dunkerly-Bean, Bean, & Alnajjar, 2014; Harper, Bean, & Dunkerly, 2010; Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2014; Smith, 2006). Hence, cosmopolitan approaches to literacy look for spaces to foster dialogues across cultural, historical, linguistic, geographic, and ideological differences (e.g., Hansen, 2008; Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2014).

According to the cosmopolitanism theorization, creative and reflective explorations of one’s own and others’ traditions have the potential to leverage subjectivities and create “non-determinist, critical, and ethical dispositions” (Jupp, 2013, p. 48) (*italics in original*). Cosmopolitan literacies scholars underscore the enactment of multiple subjectivities through reflexivity on the self and otherness in meaning making. They buttress meaning-makers’ fluid identities as both local and transnational workers/citizens/meaning-makers (e.g., Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2014). Cosmopolitan literacies scholars also attend to the affordances of symbolic pluralism and learners’ capabilities to reconstruct new meanings through multiple languages, cultures, and semiotics (e.g., Bean & Dunkerly-Bean, 2015; Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2014; Luke, 2003).

Another focus of the cosmopolitan literacies lens relates the nurturing of students’ capacities and interests to disturb “existing relationships of power which may be working to limit their lives” (Yasukawa, 2003, p. 26). Advocates of cosmopolitan literacies encourage meaning-makers to critically negotiate meanings. Meaning makers also bear responsibilities in literacy practices for pressing local and global issues. Scholars position meaning makers as active participants into literacy practices that could help effect societal changes locally and globally (Bean & Dunkerly-Bean, 2015; Hansen, 2008; Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2014).

The conceptualization of cosmopolitan literacies facilitated my data analysis and interpretation regarding how cosmopolitan literacy practices were enacted in the unique transnational education space in Macau, China. Its main concern in power effects and social actions also enabled the discussions around pedagogical possibilities for literacy education in transnational education settings.

4 Research Design and Data Analysis

4.1 *Research Design, Methods, and Participant Profile*

To investigate students’ lived curriculum, I employed various ethnographic tools (e.g., class observations, semi-structured interviews, artifacts, and assignments)

TABEL 1 Profile of Student Participants & Observed Classes

Pseudonym	Length of Studying at MCS	Observed Class	Periods of Class Observed
Aaron	About 2 years (previously studying in Canada for two years)	Ms. Xie's grade 12 Mandarin literacy class	24
Kelly	About 6 years (previously attending a local British school for elementary school)	Ms. Tyler's grade 12 English literacy class	13
Mason	About 12 years since senior kindergarten	Mr. Johnston's grade 11 English literacy class	13
Chloe	About 9 years since grade 2 (previously attending a British school in Hong Kong)	Mr. Johnston's grade 11 English literacy class	13

that are proven to be appropriate for literacy inquiries focusing on local particulars and complex sociocultural dynamics (Dyson & Genishi, 2005). I observed Ms. Tyler's and Mr. Johnston's English and Ms. Xie's Mandarin literacy classes which the four focal student participants attended (See Table 1 for participant profile). I recorded descriptive and reflective field notes about student-teacher interactions to shed light on students' lived experience at MCS.

Students were given the choice of sharing their assignment samples from the observed classes. I also interviewed students to document their lived experience at MCS. All students chose to be interviewed in English. Apart from student-teacher interactions as recorded in classroom observations, interviews with students co-created "a situationally cohesive sense of reality" (Fontana, 2003, p. 36) of how students experienced the transnational education literacy curricula. Prior to the student interviews, I invited students to use their preferred communication modes (e.g., drawing, painting, creating a collage, and writing) to depict their learning experience and identity formation in the globalized schooling context. Studies show that using multimodal artifacts can make succeeding interviews more relevant to students' local practices (e.g., Stein, 2008; Zhang & Heydon, 2014).

4.2 *Data Analysis*

Highlighting the dynamic, temporary, and interconnected human and non-human actors that might have impacted students' lived experience at MCS,

I used ANT as a broader frame of reference in data analysis. ANT scholars argue that learning does not take place “in enclosed or contained spaces” because these spaces are “assemblages of the human and non-human and multiple in their enactments” (Fenwick & Edwards, 2010, p. 47). For example, for class observation data analysis, I attended to the material, social, and conceptual resources that were made available in class for meaning-making. I made constant connections between data on class observations, student interviews, their multimodal artifacts, and shared assignments.

Adopting ANT sensibilities, the identification of relationship between data emphasized “what has been naturalized and under what regime” at MCS (Edwards, Ivanič, & Mannion, 2009, n.p.), what “different socio-material negotiations” (Fenwick & Edwards, 2010, p. 44) existed in the networks, and the ensuing consequences upon identities of transnational education students. Neither the student participants nor I used terms related to cosmopolitanism in our conversations. Yet, data show a range of cosmopolitan literacy practices that the students were involved in MCS’s English and Mandarin classes. I generated both deductive themes in accordance with the concepts of cosmopolitan literacies and emergent themes pertaining to students’ literacy learning experience and identity formation at MCS.

Fenwick and Edwards (2010) state that ANT-inspired scholars are interested in multiple representational practices. I therefore took up the ANT challenge of encouraging student participants to identify “multiple ways of enacting reality” through creating multimodal artifacts to shed light on their literacy learning and identity construction at MCS. Different from the multimodal ensembles in one of my prior studies (e.g., piano music, hip-hop song, and videos) (Zhang & Heydon, 2014), all of the three artifacts contributed by MCS student participants were paper-based artworks. I employed Kress’s (2009) micro-analysis approach that focuses on the “semiotic logic” (p. 56) of the artworks, that is, attending to the framing devices (e.g., spatial gaps), directionality of images and layout, and relations of simultaneously present entities such as lines, bands, shapes, photos, self-drawn images, and written texts.

5 Findings and Discussion

Findings and discussion of this paper root in data on students’ emic perspectives as expressed in their interviews and represented in their multimodal artifacts and shared assignments. I also incorporate narrative sketches of student-teacher interactions in observed English and Mandarin literacy classes to further demonstrate what the student participants experienced and the ensuing effects upon their identity options.

5.1 *Multimodal Representations of Literacy Learning and Fluid Identities in Artifacts*

Both students' multimodal artifacts that they created for the research purpose and their emic perspectives about these artifacts reveal how they orchestrated semiotic resources to express their literacy and identity options in the cross-border space at MCS.

Kelly chose to make a collage for her multimodal artifact (See Figure 1).

On her artifact, Kelly hand-cut and pasted images of Canadian and Macanese flags, herself in a graduation gown, and symbols of a university and globe. She shared that her ink and wash painting on the top was an imitation of the Japanese artist Yumeji Takehisa's artwork. This artifact was originally an assignment and she decided to add the identity piece to the artwork for the research. Kelly expressed that the lady in the painting represented herself contemplating upon her identity and her future while graduating from the high school. Kelly shared that the two flags reflected how studying in a Canadian school in Macau had shaped her as a "Third Culture Kid." She shared that the two symbolic images next to her high school graduation photo represented her future endeavors, that is, leading a university life and connecting to the world as a global citizen.

FIGURE 1 Kelly's Collage of Third Culture Kid and Global Citizen

MCS's material reality of multiculturalism helped her establish friendship with peers from diverse backgrounds and supported her appreciation of different cultures. In the artifact, Chloe created images of different skin colors that represent students at MCS from 34 countries such as the United States, Korea, France, and Singapore. She also drew a musical note with different colours, lines, and patterns to represent the diverse genres of music and artists of diverse origins that she enjoyed. Besides, the symbols of digital/new media literacies (e.g., notes on laptop, mobile conversations on cellphone, and English channels on TV) and print-based literacy (e.g., the image of "Macbeth essay" and those of the novels of "To Kill a Mockingbird" and "Lord of the Flies") further reflected her lived experience with multimodal literacies at MCS. This is in line with the finding of my companion paper on MCS's curriculum that espoused multimodal literacies (Zhang, 2019). As Chloe shared in the interview, "It [MCS's curriculum] has influenced me to do more things related to my experience here, like English songs, English channels, and getting updated on what is happening in Canada."

Mason's artifact reflected his exploration of a hybrid identity (See Figure 3).

Explaining his modal choices for the artifact, Mason humbly expressed that "I am not creative so I just did this." Mason intentionally folded an A4 paper in half and situated himself right on the centerline to show his hybrid identity of being both Canadian and Macanese. According to him, his hand-drawn images on the left-hand side (e.g., McDonald's golden arches, Christmas tree, skateboarding, YouTube, and Facebook) represent opportunities that MCS offered to validate a Canadian identity. In contrast, the images of crackers, lantern, mooncake, and the Chinese characters of "月饼" ("mooncake") symbolize his local home and community life that mediated his identity of being Macanese. To quote Mason:

That actually represents me. The two signs on his chest are two flags, one is Canadian and the other one is the Macau flag. So really on the right side is education at MCS and how it shapes my identity and on the left side it's just my identity being Macanese.

Similar to Chloe, Mason exhibited his awareness of how education at MCS influenced his becoming of Canadian. In his view, students at MCS were expected to speak a mono-language (i.e., English) and study the Canadian Alberta curriculum. Different from Chloe, through the yellow question mark and hybrid Canadian-Macanese chest, Mason highlighted that his experience at MCS nurtured both identities in him and validated both his being Macanese and becoming Canadian. The real-life encounters with global others at MCS and

FIGURE 3 Mason's Multimodal Artifact of "Who am I?"

the school's curriculum that accentuated multiculturalism validated his fluid identity formation. He said, "meeting new people from different places changes who we are and how we look at the world." This connects to his expressed reason of why he used the image of a wooden man for self-representation:

You see it moves in all sorts of shapes and directions. It would be better to represent myself, like it's faceless and has no physical features. It can be moved really easily so it's really representing my identity and it can be shaped.

Mason added that he saw his hybrid identity formation as undergoing dynamic changes.

The multimodal artifacts created by Chloe, Kelly, and Mason for the research purpose made visible their fluid identity formation that was enabled by MCS's curricular emphasis on celebrating multiculturalism and multimodality, be it global citizen, membership in the imagined community, or flexible identities. All the students expressed the rich semiotic resources that they accessed and possessed in the cross-border space of MCS. However, different from my prior case study in South China (e.g., Zhang & Heydon, 2014), these MCS students' artifacts did not manifest their multilingual resources in English and variations of Chinese languages.

5.2 *Lived Experience with Creative Meaning-Making in Classes*

Classroom observation data and students' shared assignments show the diverse meaning-making resources that were made available in the observed literacy classes at MCS.

Mr. Johnston encouraged his grade 11 students to create modern images that "translate" the best-known quotes from Macbeth:

You yourselves are going to pick one or two-line statements from Macbeth and come up with a modern representation for it. For example, translate them into a picture that shows the theme of the "so fair and foul a day I have not seen". Especially with world events and things like that. Okay, so I want to give you some time to check it, to think about it, and to come up with a representation that you're going to do and put it up on the bulletin board.... It can be more than one image. It can be a collage of images if you wish.... I'd really like to see what kind of images you can come up with, okay. And then, if time allows, I'd like to discuss your caption.

Working on their individual laptops, students searched online and orchestrated a wide array of new media and images for their re-mixing. Socially, students

brainstormed and discussed throughout the session while they created their rendition of the best-known Macbeth quotes. Being wary of reproduction permissions of the online and digital images that the student used, I hereby insert a reproduction of Chloe's photo collage (See Figure 4).

FIGURE 4 Chloe's Modern Representation of "What's done cannot be undone"

Chloe's modern representation for this assignment was a collage of two images that she found online. The top image captures two soldiers in a war. One younger-looking soldier was crying out of fear. The bottom image contains a fallen medication bottle, scattered pills, and a hand holding a pill, which according to Chloe represented an ill person taking medications for treatment. The photo collage linked to Chloe's selected best-known line of Macbeth: "What's done cannot be undone." This appropriated artifact exemplified the social practices of "digital remixing" (Jenkins, 2009, p. 55) in which students were often engaged in Mr. Johnston's class. Observation data reveal that students' accessibility to personal laptops and the Internet in class helped to naturalize their digital remixing and appropriation. The conceptual resources that Mr. Johnston provided in assignment instructions also engaged students in deconstructing Shakespearean texts and connecting the classics with contemporary events.

Classroom observation data show less salient emphasis on multimodal ways of expression in the Mandarin teacher Ms. Xie's Mandarin literacy class. But occasionally she incorporated opportunities to develop students' creativity through reconstructing stories. In the Unit of Chinese cuisine culture, Ms. Xie first invited students to orally introduce a Chinese dish of their own choice. Aaron introduced the dish of "All ages safe" ("老少平安") (Steamed tofu with fish paste) and was dialogically engaged in sharing the story behind the name of the dish and the recipe. Then Ms. Xie explained in class that for MCS students who plan to go abroad in the future, it would come handy if they know how to cook their favorite Chinese dishes and write up the recipes for interested foreign friends. Aaron went home, consulted his mother, cooked the dish by himself, wrote up a recipe in Mandarin, and brought the dish to class the next day.

In the hand-written recipe, Aaron attended to all the details that he was asked in the in-class conversations about the dish, such as the steps, ways, and length of cooking, the exact amount of each ingredient, and the reason why it was called "All Ages Safe". The meaning-making practices involved speaking, dialoguing, cooking, and writing in different spatio-temporalities.

Furthermore, in the interview Aaron appreciated the connections that they made in the Mandarin class about literacy works, culture, and history. In one of his Mandarin assignments, Aaron wrote about how traditional Chinese serial novels were reproductions of a traditional oral literacy called "History Narratives" (讲史). He wrote that since narrators could not finish story-telling of a certain period of history within an allocated time slot, they had to stop and resume at another time. Later, the timed history narratives became narrative episodes in serial novels. Aaron also expressed that studying at a transnational education program at MCS and studying abroad created venues for students to promote the Chinese culture.

Reflecting upon what might be missing and not taught in literacy classes, Kelly confirmed that more creative writing might be helpful. Though pedagogically Ms. Tyler espoused creative meaning-making through multiple modes and media (See Zhang, 2019), her grade 12 lessons were more focused on writing drills for the Alberta Diploma Exam. Kelly preferred “more kind of story writing, because I think I am better at making up stories.” Nevertheless, she lamented that analyzing long literature for themes such as destiny and kindness featured most of Ms. Tyler’s grade 12 lessons because these were the expectations of the Alberta Diploma Exam and students had to be well prepared for these expectations.

Both Aaron and Kelly commented on the stress around the Alberta Diploma Exam and how the test expectations constrained their English literacy learning and identity options. Aaron commented, “It [The Alberta Diploma Exam] limits our way of expressing our ideas. Sometimes, over-restricting the way language should be expressed will limit how ideas can be expressed.” Kelly communicated that “That’s the hardest diploma exam, of all exams” particularly due to the limited writing time. Kelly’s outside of school literacy practices involved reading diverse English literature, both pop and classical. She read for leisure, whenever and wherever she could find time. She expressed that the literature included in her English class was “definitely more difficult.” However, she was aware that “these kinds of things [are what] we must know for preparation for university.”

Commenting on the constraints of standardized testing, Aaron contended that it was important for teachers to take a leading role in curriculum and assessment. He reasoned, “Teachers have more direct contacts with students. They know what students are good at, what they are not good at. Some potentials in students could be constrained if the curriculum is fixed.” In a similar vein, Kelly said:

What I think is like, the material chosen for teaching in school was more trying to fit within curriculum and the questions given in curriculum. And the questions are fixed. Like these questions must be asked to the students. And then the job for teachers and the policy makers is to find materials that fit those questions. And after students read those materials, they can answer those questions.

In her view, her outside of school reading preferences were barely reflected in the readings that they did in the English literacy class.

As is mentioned in 5.1, the student participants’ multimodal artifacts reflect their perceptions of how learning at MCS validated their hybrid and

fluid identity as emerging global citizens. The creative construction of meaning in their artifacts and shared assignments reflected students' manoeuvre of multiple modes and media and the school's focus on multimodal and new media literacies. However, it is worth noting that the majority of Kelly's literacy practices in Ms. Tyler's class centered around pen to paper meaning-making due to the mediation of the standardized Alberta test.

5.3 *Engagement with the Local and the Global at MCS*

Elicited students' perceptions and classroom observation data relate actors that enabled MCS students' negotiations and celebration of differences.

Observation data and student interview data relate that the Mandarin teacher Ms. Xie encouraged perspectives that were more rooted in students' Chinese identities. Both Kelly and Aaron concurred that in the Mandarin literacy classes, they focused on more the Chinese history and culture. Aaron commented that the teacher "gave us a chance to express our opinions with our identity, where we come from, and how we think about the source." When teaching "Tune: Phoenix Hairpin" ("钗头凤"), Ms. Xie reminded the students of their trip to the Shenyuan Garden in Shaoxing where the poet You Lu and his lover Wan Tang wrote this poem back in the 1100s. After being situated in the cultural uniqueness of Shenyuan Garden, students seemed to have a deeper understanding of the poem and concluded that this classic Chinese literature could serve as the Chinese classic version of Romeo and Juliet. Aaron also communicated that analyzing history in the Mandarin class had helped his writing for the Canadian courses. He shared:

Even if the materials are different, it's all about history, different parts of history. I learnt about analyzing history about specifics in Mandarin class, such as what's wrong in that history, what forms history and what should be continued. After that when I analyzed the materials in the [English] Social Studies class again, I find it easier.

Aaron's dialogic interaction with Ms. Xie in the Mandarin class echoes all the student participants' views that their embodied literacy learning experience at MCS welcomed negotiations of differences. In the unit about culture and what constitutes culture, Ms. Xie elicited students' opinions about Chinese culture/identity and MCS's school culture. Aaron thus responded:

Even though we will eventually study abroad, we need to be clear about which part of our identity should be changed and which should be maintained. Going abroad would not necessarily affect our Chinese identity.

I somehow feel that studying abroad as a Chinese is a way to promote the Chinese culture. (Translated from Chinese)

Aaron shared in class that MCS hosted students from diverse backgrounds in terms of culture, language, and custom. When Ms. Xie asked specifically about whether differences would incur tensions, Aaron responded:

There are peaceful negotiations. Being exposed to different perspectives our viewpoints will also transform and evolve. We will become more objective and rational to analyze various global matters. (Translated from Chinese)

In the interview, Aaron accentuated that through celebrating different cultures MCS nurtured mutual respect:

In this school, we all come from different places that with sort of mixed, a sense of equality, because we are all individuals. We all have stories of our own to share. So everyone has the sense to respect each other, living in very equal and peaceful environment. When I go back to Macau, talking with my local friends, there is very strong, clear difference between us. They think what they study and what we study are different. Their experience in school and our experience in school is totally different. When we meet together again, that difference is very strong, kind of post us apart as well.

In his in-class conversations in the Mandarin class, Aaron appraised the opportunities at MCS to negotiate about differences, which in his view was in contrast with local public schools where the curricular emphasis was more on “knowledge transmission” (Aaron).

When I asked about Mandarin and Canadian English teachers’ encouragement of incorporating global perspectives, Aaron conceived Canadian teachers’ classes as more focused on “human natures.” For example, students were expected to analyze the allocated materials with respect to “what sorts of human nature you review from that source.” Similarly, Kelly expressed that in the Canadian literacy classes students talked more about the need to “tolerate and respect” different cultures due to interconnectivity. For instance, when reading “Death of a Salesman” (Miller, 1998), Ms. Tyler opened the unit by introducing that the author Miller took the play to China and the play was performed in Mandarin:

Practically everyone in the room was crying, because it resonates with them, they could identify with a father like this, or a relationship that they had with their parent, or their father's need perhaps to be the Head of the Household, and his word is the word, it's the last word.

In Ms. Tyler's literacy class, Kelly was engaged in conversations about such local and global nexuses. Likewise, Mason also emphasized that the school itself set the stage to "celebrate a lot of different people from different backgrounds." In his view, offering students a global vision was how MCS differed from other international schools that he knew. In a similar vein, Chloe emphasized the importance of being immersed in a culturally diverse school because "the people you meet here tell you about their stories and you learn about their countries and what they do. It is like you sort of get to know their countries on a more personal level." Compared with her Macanese public school peers, Chloe said that being surrounded by students from diverse backgrounds, MCS students acquired more social skills to negotiate differences.

Both Kelly and Aaron agreed that setting up a Canadian curriculum school in Macau rendered local students more educational and curricular choices. But it is worth noting that Aaron and Kelly also shared that most of the materials that were used in the Alberta curriculum focused more on the Canadian facts. To quote Aaron:

Everyone who has different backgrounds would come [to MCS]. They all share different perspectives, but they all learn about the Canadian perspective. It's sort of funny that we all have to answer questions basically from a Canadian perspective. It makes us think that Canadians are standing at a pretty neutral position within the world.

Both Kelly and Aaron communicated that they would like to explore different perspectives besides the Canadian ones within MCS's Alberta curriculum.

In contrast with cosmopolitan sensibilities that were nurtured within the observed classes, Chloe and Mason expressed that student-student interactions outside of the classrooms were less inclusive. They specifically addressed how MCS students' social network outside the classrooms was constructed based on students' linguistic origins. To quote Chloe, "The Chinese-speaking kids just stick together and the English speakers stick together. So the ESL students are just one big group... They are not willing to interact with other people." Mason's observation was similar since "they don't interact with people outside the group." Chloe further reasoned that most Chinese students who

did not mingle well was just because “they are not confident; so they are just rather passive and stick with their Chinese speaking friends.” Both Chloe and Mason agreed that it might be difficult for some Chinese-speaking students to walk out of their linguistic and cultural comfort zones to engage with students from other backgrounds at MCS.

Comparing English and Mandarin literacy classes, both Kelly and Aaron communicated that there was more memorization in the Mandarin class than in English classes. Kelly otherwise accentuated, “I think Chinese has to be learned that way. Like I don’t know a different way to learn [Mandarin].” In Aaron’s view, memorization was present in both English and Mandarin literacy learning:

If you’re learning ancient quotes from Chinese, it’s kind of like learning Shakespeare languages... That’s all the similar way. Because it’s kind of old, we wouldn’t need to spend more time and the simpler way is just trying to memorizing, which is one way to understand. I mean it is sort of cool.

Students’ emic perspectives convey that their lived experience of MCS’s curricular focus that celebrated diversity enhanced their skills to negotiate meanings across differences. Also, through negotiating differences, students reported their affirmation of fluid identity, their being and their becoming. However, students also reported that for their peers with limited facility with English, they might not find the environment at MCS as enabling and might adhere to their identity of being Chinese and associate with peers with like-wise mentality.

6 Discussion and Conclusions

Fenwick and Edwards (2010) contend that learning in the forms of new ideas, changes in behavior, and transformation would “emerge through the effects of relational interactions” (p. 22). Various data sources triangulated to reveal various actors and their dynamic associations that impacted the fluidity of students’ identity and their literacy practices with diverse modes and their negotiations with differences at MCS.

Students’ multimodal artifacts, interviews, and their literacy practices within English and Mandarin literacy classes show that these MCS students’ social practices of meaning-making involved multimodal, multimedia, and biliterate resources. According to the students, such meaning-making practices

were validated by MCS's multicultural reality, school's curricular emphasis on celebrating multiculturalism and multimodality, and individual teachers' preferences in literacy practices. Students' multimodal artifacts reveal that their lived experience with a Canadian curriculum in the local Macau context had mediated their identity formation and enabled an on-going exploration of who they were and what they were becoming.

Though the student participants expressed their engagement in multiple semiotic resources, findings also refer to "a hierarchy between different literacy practices" at MCS (Fenwick & Edwards, 2010, p. 48). It was clear in students' narratives that the Alberta Diploma Exam naturalized print-based literacy practices and genres that were prescribed as exam expectations. This standardized test played the role of purification (Edwards *et al.*, 2009) by excluding other modes and genres that the grade 12 teacher and students preferred.

The dialogic teacher-student interactions in the English and Mandarin literacy classes mirrored transformative interpersonal spaces and meaning-making practices (Cummins, 2009). Student participants also shared that their interactions with a diverse body of foreign others at MCS enabled their negotiations of differences in life experiences, interests, perspectives, languages, cultures, and identities. Similar to my prior study on a Canadian offshore school in south Mainland China (Zhang & Heydon, 2014), all the MCS student participants' artifacts reveal the mobilization of imagined communities in the network of their lived curriculum. Data of students' artifacts relate how the imagined communities helped shape their fluid identities. However, students such as Chloe and Mason argued that in a curricular milieu where English was the dominant medium of communication, meaning making and membership building turned out to be transformative for students with stronger facility with English. Moreover, to counter balance the dominant Canadian perspectives in the Canadian Alberta curriculum, student participants such as Kelly and Aaron recommended expansive transnational education curricula that could mobilize diversified perspectives that reflect the local students' backgrounds.

The MCS student participants' multimodal artifacts reflected "material inequalities" in languages and literacies (Darvin & Norton, n.d., n.p.). These MCS students' artifacts did not manifest their multilingual resources in English and variations of Chinese languages. When probed why, the answers relate their easy access to English in composition. This might bear relationship with MCS's English immersion-based curriculum. Darvin and Norton recommended a critical approach to cosmopolitan literacy education that allows students in cross-border contexts to critically examine the politics around valuing or undervaluing certain forms of linguistic, cultural, and symbolic capitals and take up responsibilities to creatively address associated inequalities. Combining

ANT insights into what to examine, I advocate approaches to critically “tracing the micro-strategies of power” (Fenwick & Edwards, 2010, p. 54) and make visible learners’ valued and marginalized literacy practices in translocal spaces. The purpose of power examination is to enact multiplicity in linguistic and semiotic uses, subjectivity, and cultural and linguistic resources to achieve the dual goals of cosmopolitan literacies to empower the self and transform the world (Darvin & Norton, n.d.).

Moreover, MCS student participants’ shared assignments, artifacts, and in-class interactions did not mirror literacy educators’ and students’ engagement in the “ethical dimensions of new textual and semiotic practices” to interrogate issues pertaining to global connectivity (Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2014, p. 39). Harper, Bean, and Dunkerly (2010) state that to incorporate cosmopolitan dispositions to literacy learning suggests efforts to encode global elements in local literacy practices. A cosmopolitan approach to literacy is about integrating into literacy classes “the highly dynamic interface of local and global” (p. 11). Hull and Stornaiuolo (2010) perceive “self-problematization and pluralization” (p. 89) as a central component of cosmopolitanism. They contend that without reflexivity of oneself, it is impossible to understand one’s obligations and develop a moral responsiveness toward the global Others.

Adopting ANT sensibilities, this study contributes to the existent literature on human and non-human actors that mediated transnational education students’ literacy learning and identity formation in cross-border educational settings. The value of this study also roots in the pedagogical potentials of cosmopolitan literacies to expand transnational education students’ literacy and identity options.

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