2 Artifacts and their Agents: Translingual Perspectives on Composing Processes and Outputs

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This chapter describes a longitudinal study of nine Chinese international students. Drawing on writing samples and interview data, we sought to understand how their writing changed over time as well as how they perceived these changes at the end of their junior year. Over six semesters, English L2 writers learned to navigate and succeed in disciplinary contexts characterized by both hegemonic and negotiated pedagogies. Analysis of their writing reveals statistically significant improvement in clarity and accuracy. During interviews, participants attributed their growth as writers to the self-confidence they gained with increased familiarity of disciplinary practices and strategic use of campus resources. They did not report, however, feeling discouraged or disempowered by what some believed to be a reduction of their L1 skills or the perceived rigidity of disciplinary expectations and practices. Driven to excel academically and as writers, they learned to use writing resources strategically and gained control of their writing processes. The study suggests that context as well as L2 student priorities and desires complicate any monolithic application of translingual approaches.

Keywords: translingual approaches, agency, accuracy, clarity, syntactic complexity, L2 writing, longitudinal research

Over the past two decades, changing student demographics in higher education in the United States have increased pressure on institutions to support multilingual student learners. Such is the case at our traditional liberal arts institution,

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which has experienced changes in enrollment, specifically, shifting countries of origin for international students. Previous college efforts to address language needs of students learning English as an additional language (EAL) through special sections of first-year writing met resistance from international students, who, like other multilinguals (Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008; Matsuda & Silva, 1999), were concerned about the rigor and stigma of a separate course. In response, the college discontinued offering any separate EAL sections and instituted a mainstreaming model in 2007 in which all students select from and enroll in first-year writing courses with varied topics, taught by faculty across disciplines. When they desire support, multilingual students can meet with their professors, schedule peer tutoring in the Writing Center, and/or opt to work with the campus language specialist, whose services are available to any student seeking individualized writing instruction. In general, this range of student services is primarily exploited by international multilingual students. Although domestic multilingual students comprise a small but growing population, they rarely identify as such or seek out writing support beyond peer tutoring.

Shifting to a mainstreaming model, accompanied by an institutional increase in enrollment of Chinese international students, exacerbated faculty anxiety about working with writers whose first language is not English. Situated at a highly selective institution that privileges academic standard written English (SWE), many faculty did not have experience with non-English-dominant academic writers or, for that matter, a translingual disposition that respects the multiple linguistic traditions and repertoires of students and empowers them to draw on these resources (Bailey, 2012; Canagarajah, 2006, 2011; Garcia, 2009; Horner et al., 2011; Lape, 2013; Matsuda et al., 2003; Olson, 2013). With our positions situated in whole or part in the campus Center for Teaching and Learning (the umbrella organization that supports both faculty and students), we set out to facilitate what Horner refers to as "a post-monolingual condition," in this collection, through research on best practices to support our growing multilingual population and diversely trained colleagues. However, given that the extant writing research on international and multilingual students at U.S. colleges has primarily focused on EAL classrooms at large, cosmopolitan universities, we could not find sufficient models that resonated in the context of our small, highly selective liberal arts college.

Recognizing the complexities of language learning and use, as well as writing development, we were eager to promote a translingual disposition when working with such students. L2 as well as translingual scholars continue to explore how to create conditions in which students can resist static linguistic norms and to provide examples of these practices in action (Atkinson et al., 2015; Blau & Hall, 2002; Bruce & Rafoth, 2009; Garcia, 2009; Grimm, 1999; Lape, 2013; Lu &

Horner, 2013; Olson, 2013). At the same time, wholesale adoption of translingual approaches without considering how local conditions and experience impact the affordances—the *possibilities*—of translanguaging could be problematic. After all, affordances may be false (seemingly possible but not really possible) or hidden to the student actor, which can lead to misunderstanding and challenge (Gaver, 1991). For us, clarifying best pedagogic practices required study of how one particular group of students translanguage, drawing on linguistic features and modes of more than one language, throughout college as well as how they experience and describe the linguistic complexities and contexts they negotiate.

In this chapter, we report on the results of a longitudinal study of nine students who have finished three full years of college and have declared majors (as well as double majors or minors in some cases). We include writing samples and interview data from all students, including four who were studying at universities in Great Britain during their junior year. Our study is unique for its length, its focus on an under-studied population—top-tier Chinese international students attending a highly-selective and writing-intensive liberal arts college—and our analysis of writing samples produced in classes from multiple disciplines. In addition to common performance descriptors (accuracy, syntactic complexity) in second-language writing, our analysis includes another key variable—clarity—that our experiences suggest matters more to faculty than superficial correctness. Further, participant interviews provide insights on student experience and highlight the imperative to work with individuals and honor their agency.

We excluded domestic multilingual students and native English speakers, not out of lack of interest, but because Chinese international students were a relatively new and under-researched student population at the time. We were attracted to notions of translinguality and translingual dispositions; however, we also needed to develop evidence-based instructional approaches, grounded in L2 writing research (Leki et al., 2008) and our students' unique characteristics in order to prepare them to navigate the writing demands of our specific institutional and political context. Research at large, urban universities in the United States or within heteroglossic communities in nations such as India, Sri Lanka, and Lebanon elsewhere in this collection did not resonate because of the small size of our non-English-dominant population and the stridently monoglossic ideologies of our region (Banes et al., 2016).

Yet beyond our specific population and institution, our research may reveal the affordances of a translingual orientation (Canagarajah, 2013) within traditional institutions and societal contexts with deeply entrenched monoglossic language ideologies, which "[value] only monolingualism, [ignore] bilingualism," and "[see] language as an autonomous skill that functions independently from the context in which it is used" (Garcia & Torres-Guevara, 2010, p. 182).

In such settings, students and faculty are more likely to resist efforts at normalizing linguistic heterogeneity (Matsuda, 2006) for philosophical or practical reasons (whether real or imagined), including perceptions that translanguaging may indicate "incomplete mastery" of SWE (Ray, 2015, p. 88) and/or adversely impact students' long-term economic prospects (Neeley, 2012).

Researcher Positionality

Similar to our institution's students, we have divergent linguistic and educational backgrounds. An English L1 speaker with a doctorate in Modern Literature and Rhetoric and Composition, Shireen founded the campus Writing Center in 1995, rotates as director with a colleague, and works closely with the first-year writing program. Rebeca holds a doctorate in Language and Literacy, teaches first-year writing and second language acquisition courses, and currently provides individualized writing support to multilingual students at our college. A generation 1.5 speaker of English, her formal Spanish language education ended in third grade when she and her family immigrated to the United States. Kyosung is an L2 speaker of English with a doctorate in Second Language Acquisition and, during the project, managedthe implementation of technologies for instructional use on our campus. He began studying English in middle school and moved to the US from Korea to attend graduate school.

Research Methodology

Student-centered, longitudinal studies have a robust history in composition (Carroll, 2002; Herrington & Curtis, 2000; Sternglass, 1997), with recent research including large numbers of students, varied types of data collection and methodology (Fishman et al., 2005; Sommers, 2004, 2008). Despite acknowledging great variability in writing processes and products between subjects, most longitudinal studies in composition have a majority of English L1 participants and a relatively monolingual focus. Limited longitudinal research has been conducted on L2 writing development in immersive higher educational environments among adult learners of intermediate or higher proficiency. In such studies, a range of performance descriptors of L2 writing proficiency have been applied to student writing samples collected before, during, and after either a specific course or length of time (e.g., Larsen-Freeman, 2006; Tsang & Wong, 2000). Few studies have explored L2 writing development for longer than a semester (Yang & Sun, 2015). Also, unlike studies reported in the translingual literature, none of the L2 studies cited above focused on authentic student texts in specific institutional contexts (Donahue, 2013).

Aiming to understand the relevance of translingual theory and practice in light of students' products and experiences, we opted for a mixed methods approach. Mixed methods research can provide opportunities for representation and legitimation (Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2003). Through the process of triangulating student products, background information, and self-reports, we sought to represent the students' subjective as well as measurable (potentially more generalizable) aspects of our students' college writing experience.

The following questions guided our inquiry:

1. How does the writing of Chinese multilingual students develop in a mainstream English L2 context with respect to linguistic accuracy, syntactic complexity, and clarity?
2. Does pre-college achievement as measured by tests (SAT, TOEFL) predict any aspect of writing development in college for L2 students?
3. What factors mediate student writing development for English L2 students? Specifically, what strategies do L2 students rely on and how do these evolve over time?
4. What evidence of translanguaging do student writing products and self-reports provide for? What role does the L1 and/or its culturally-specific writing norms exert on students' development and confidence as writers in an L2?

Participants and their Educational Context

Our small liberal arts college is located in suburban countryside several miles north of a thriving financial hub in the Southeastern United States. Ranked tenth among liberal arts colleges and with an acceptance rate hovering around 20 percent, it was described as "most selective" by U.S. News and World Report. International students at the college, less than 9 percent of the student population, have all the same curricular options as the general student population. Chinese international students comprised 28 percent of the international student population and 6.8 percent of the total student body at the time of writing (2016–2017 school year).

In the past five academic years, we have invited all first-year Chinese international students to participate in our study. Each year, a majority (75 percent or more) have participated. This chapter focuses on the progress of our first research cohort, the graduating class of 2016, at the end of their junior year. These nine students represent 75 percent of the Chinese international students in the class of 2016 and the educational backgrounds and disciplinary interests typical of this population at our college, as shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Participant backgrounds and fields of study

Pseudonym	Major and minor (if any)	English exposure in high school
Karina	Political Science major	Chinese national high school plus one year in U.S. high school
Helen	Economics major	Chinese national high school plus one year in U.S. high school
Kyle	Mathematics and Chemistry major	Chinese national high school; one English as a Foreign Language class per year
Li	Math major Economics minor	Chinese national high school; one English as a Foreign Language class per year
Camile	Chemistry major	Chinese national high school; one English as a Foreign Language class per year
Tan	Philosophy major Communication Studies minor	Chinese high school plus one year in U.S. high school
Celia	Economics major Math minor	Chinese national high school; one English as a Foreign Language class per year
Victor	Math and Economics major	Chinese foreign language school, more than one English course per year
Hogan	History major	Chinese national high school; one English as a Foreign Language class per year

Although a few participants completed some high school as exchange students in the United States, all of them, ostensibly, are products of China's national education system and its English language curriculum. Most began studying English either in elementary or middle school and continued to do so in high school either as a subject or in a foreign language school, where they received additional coursework. We consider them advanced L2 writers because of their years of English language study, and TOEFL iBT scores, which range from 100 to 108 (average =105); similarly, their verbal SAT scores range from 530 to 730 (average = 630).

Data Collection Procedures

From their freshman through junior year, the cohort of international students submitted an untutored writing sample from courses they took each academic term. If students were not required to write papers in a given term, we accepted other extended writings such as special project proposals or internship applications. In collecting samples of student work from both classroom and

non-classroom contexts, we aimed to capture both the varied topics, genres, and disciplines in which student wrote and the strategies whereby they negotiated their identities in the writing process.

For our qualitative data, we conducted and audio-recorded oral interviews with the students, some face-to-face and others via Skype, after the conclusion of their junior year. Our interview protocol consisted of 18 questions, shown in the appendix, derived from theoretical notions about translanguaging (Canagarajah, 2013) and previous scholarship on writing self-concept, development and strategies of English as a Second Language students (Ching, 2002; Martinez et al., 2011; Mastan & Maarof, 2014; Usher & Pajares, 2008; Zimmerman & Pons, 1986;).

Quantitative Analysis

In the section that follows, we define the performance descriptors of L2 writing proficiency studied and the specific tools we used to measure them.

Linguistic accuracy

We recognized that examining accuracy (i.e., grammatical errors) in student work reflects a conventional monolingual approach to L2 writing efficacy. In our study, we also wanted to build on, rather than cast aside, L2 research (Atkinson et al., 2015). In L2 research and practice, accuracy is a common, albeit controversial measure of L2 writing development. In this study, we measured linguistic accuracy by counting grammatical errors per clause (Bardovi-Harlig & Bofman, 1989; Fischer, 1984; Storch 2005, 2009). Concluding in an earlier research phase (Campbell et al., 2013) that the process of both counting and assigning grammatical categories to errors produced results too disparate (Polio, 1997) to be pedagogically useful, we focused solely on counting errors. We read the papers and identified errors independently, only re-examining results if they differed by more than 20% between readers, and recorded the final counts on ATLAS.Ti by entering them as a summary variable on a spreadsheet that would ultimately be imported to SPSS for statistical analysis.

Complexity

Another common performance descriptor, syntactic complexity, may be measured to evaluate L2 development (Ortega, 2003). Syntactic complexity can be measured by length of production unit, amount of coordination, and sentence complexity (Lu, 2011, 2015; Ortega, 2003; Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998).

We measured sentence complexity according to the number of clauses per sentence, as computed in Version 3.3.1 of L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyzer (2014) developed by Xiafei Lu at Penn State University. This computational system automatically analyzes syntactic complexity in written English (Lu, 2010). We hypothesized that, with greater exposure to English and more writing opportunities, both accuracy and complexity would increase between freshman and junior year.

Clarity

One atypical discourse-analytic marker included in our study is clarity. Because conversations with faculty, tutorials with students, and analysis of feedback on student writing revealed that a lack of comprehensibility—not grammatical error or even concerns about intercultural rhetoric (Kaplan, 1966)—most impeded perceptions of efficacy in student writing, we decided to evaluate this aspect of student prose. Our use of "clarity" and measurement therefore differs from both traditional and contemporary uses. Traditionally, writing handbooks and style guides cite awkward shifts in tense, voice, and sentence syntax as well as repetitious or inexact word choice (in other words, usage practices) as impediments to clarity. We reject this definition, as scholars in rhetoric and composition (Barnard, 2010; Crowley, 2006) have done, on account of its culturally-embedded prescriptions on academic style and register (Kreuter, 2013). In our research, we define clarity simply as a textual site of communication breakdown, a sentence in a paper that, without authorial input, we could not understand—even with speculation. Further, instead of designing our examination of clarity issues as studies have approached grammatical accuracy, assuming a uniform standard and expecting high interrater reliability, we expected that our subjective relationships to the text and the English language would impact our findings.

We read the 54 student papers for sentence-level problems with clarity independently first and, afterward, deliberated until we reached consensus. In sociolinguistic and translingual terms, these conversations involved negotiation for meaning between readers of different language and disciplinary backgrounds and the texts of our multilingual Chinese writers. Our final results were recorded in ATLAS.Ti software version 7.5.2 and subjected to quantitative analysis in SPSS version.

Quantitative Analysis

We evaluated whether the difference in mean accuracy, complexity, and clar-

ity scores in the 54 papers collected over six semesters from our nine students were statistically significant by conducting a single group one-way repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA). In order to measure the strength and direction of the linear relationships between accuracy, complexity, and clarity, we calculated Pearson's Correlation coefficient.

All interviews were transcribed and subsequently analyzed through an iterative process of independent coding and group norming. We first read and assigned categories to random transcript samples independently and then submitted these preliminary categories to the group for further refinement. We met again to deliberate about categories before concluding our second round of individual transcript analyses (Hruschka et. al., 2004). For this chapter, we examined the relationship between our categories and translingual theory, as well as in view of our quantitative data.

Results

Development of Accuracy, Clarity, and Complexity

We compared the likelihood of grammatical error per clause (accuracy score) over six semesters. As shown in Table 2.2, the one-way ANOVA yielded a significance value of .032 ($p < .05$) with a sphericity level of .106 ($p = .106$).

Table 2.2. Descriptive statistics and ANOVA on mean accuracy scores

Semester	Mean	Standard Deviation	One-way Repeated ANOVA
1	76.59	32.29	$F(5,40) = 2.739$, $p = .032$
2	66.28	25.12	
3	54.19	20.71	Test of Sphericity $p = .106$
4	68.13	39.62	
5	47.37	23.60	
6	38.40	.56	

Overall, accuracy scores decreased significantly over six semesters. The mean difference also shows linear relationships, or a steady decrease in grammatical errors, from semester one through semester six, with the exception of an increase between semester three and semester four as shown in Figure 2.1. After pairwise comparison through a post-hoc test, no pairs of semesters emerged as significantly different.

For syntactic complexity, we compared the mean number of clauses per sentence over six semesters as shown in Table 2.3.

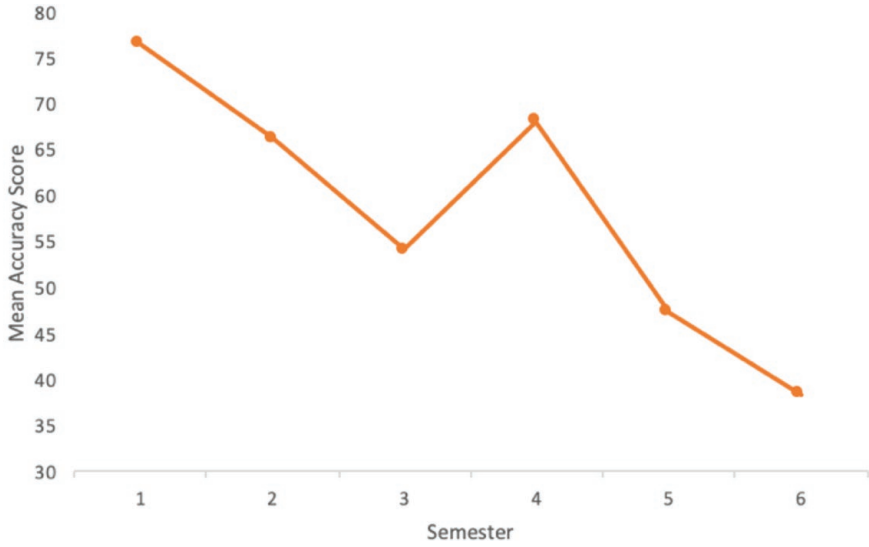

Figure 2.1. Chart for Mean Accuracy Scores over the Six Semesters.

Table 2.3. Descriptive statistics and ANOVA on syntactic complexity

Semester	Mean	Standard Deviation	One-way Repeated ANOVA
1	1.94	.266	F(5,40) = 1.645, p = .171
2	1.92	.16	
3	1.78	.18	Test of Sphericity p = .024
4	1.64	.26	
5	2.05	.38	Greenhouse-Geisser
6	2.01	.67	F(1.917, 15.338) = 1.645, p = .226

The one-way repeated ANOVA test reported in Table 2.3 produced a significance value (p) of .171 with a sphericity level of .024. However, there was no overall significance between means at different semesters (p = .226). We can, therefore, conclude that syntactic complexity did not increase significantly over six semesters. As Ferris (2003) and Ortega (2003) have noted, substantial changes in syntactic complexity for L2 writers require at least a year of post-secondary instruction. Even after three years, syntactic complexity might not increase significantly; however, these English L2 students succeed in a traditional monolingualist environment, suggesting, as others (Crossley & McNamara, 2014) have noted, that syntactic complexity is only one way of assessing sophistication in writing.

Finally, in comparing the likelihood for clarity issues per sentence (clarity score) over six semesters, the one-way repeated ANOVA and the tests of

within-subject effects yielded a significance of .002 as shown in Table 2.4. After testing for sphericity (p = .011), we used a correcting factor, Greenhouse-Geisser, which was significant (p = .011). The means decreased from semester one through semester six with the exception of an increase between semester three and four (see Figure 2.2). In other words, as students wrote across time, problems that interfered with reader comprehension texts decreased. Noticeably, standard deviation scores decreased drastically in semesters five and six compared to previous semesters.

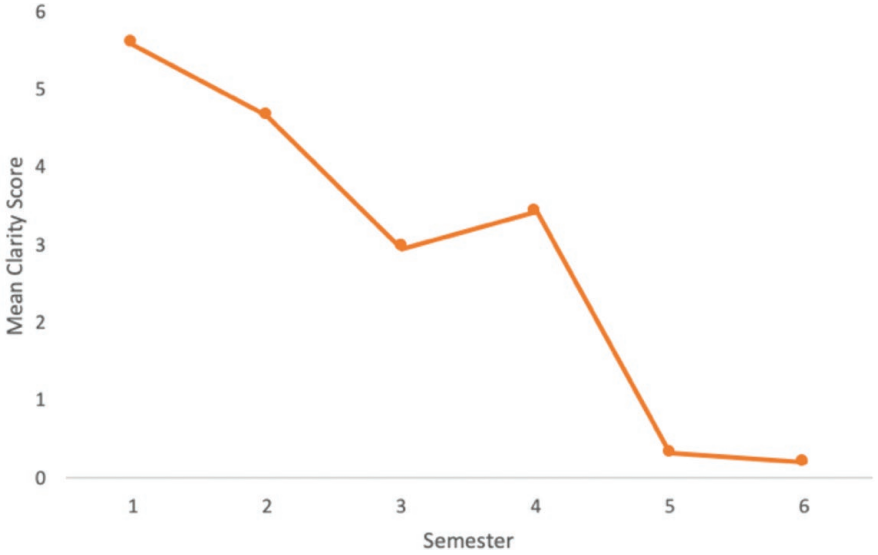

Figure 2.2. Chart for the mean clarity scores over the six semesters.

Table 2.4. Descriptive statistics and ANOVA on mean clarity scores

Semester	Mean	Standard Deviation	One-way Repeated ANOVA
1	5.57	4.33	F(5,40) = 4.787, p = .002
2	4.65	4.39	
3	2.95	2.96	Test of Sphericity p = .003
4	3.41	4.24	
5	.31	.63	Greenhouse-Geisser
6	.19	.56	F(2.859, 22.874) = 4.787, p = .011

Overall, results show that clarity problems decreased significantly, suggesting that communication breakdowns in student writing, as judged by readers from different language and disciplinary backgrounds, decreased over the six semesters. Specifically, problems with clarity decreased every semes-

ter with the exception of the fourth semester—typically, the spring of their sophomore year—when our students are pressed to declare their majors and commonly encounter both increasingly challenging disciplinary content and specific practices for communication. Their struggles in this semester may have manifested in decreased writing clarity, reflecting the predictably uneven development of "novice" writers (Sommers, 2008, p. 158) facing greater and shifting cognitive and rhetorical demands.

Although accuracy and clarity improved while syntactic complexity did not at the level of means across semesters, correlation analyses revealed relationships between the three sets of results: accuracy-clarity, syntactic complexity-clarity, and accuracy-syntactic complexity. Accuracy and clarity were strongly positively correlated (Pearson Correlation = .708), with significance at the .034 level. In other words, as errors in grammar diminish, so do problems with clarity.

In contrast, accuracy and complexity were negatively correlated (Pearson Correlation = -.956; p = .000), suggesting that students made fewer grammatical errors when they produced more syntactically complex sentences. Although research (Biber et al., 2011; Ortega, 2003; Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998) challenges the assumption that L2 writers will produce more clauses at higher levels of language proficiency, our findings suggest that when advanced L2 writers in English *do* increase their number of clauses, a stronger command of SWE grammar may allow these to manage them successfully.

Influence of pre-existing factors (SAT and TOEFL Scores)

An analysis of students' SAT scores-accuracy, students' SAT scores-syntactic complexity, and students' SAT scores-clarity, revealed no correlation between pre-existing student performance on standardized tests and college writing performance. Expecting SAT scores to correspond to first-semester college performance (Mattern et al., 2012), we further explored whether there was a negative linear relationship between the two sets of scores of the first semester and SAT scores.

Table 2.5. Pearson Correlation for first semester's accuracy scores and SAT Scores

		SAT
First Semester Clarity	Pearson Correlation	-.686
	Significance	.0419
First Semester Accuracy	Pearson Correlation	-.696
	Significance	.0379

Table 2.5 shows that students with higher SAT scores produced texts with fewer clarity and grammar problems in the first semester. Beyond the first semester, however, there was no correlation.

Furthermore, we found no correlation between students' TOEFL scores-clarity, TOEFL scores-accuracy, and students' TOEFL scores-syntactic complexity. We did find a negative correlation between first semester accuracy scores and the TOEFL scores (Pearson Correlation = -.788) with a significance level of .012 (p = .012) as well as a negative correlation between second semester accuracy scores and TOEFL scores (Pearson Correlation = -.773) with a significance level of .015 (p = .015). That is, similar to the SAT, students with higher TOEFL scores produced fewer grammatical errors than their counterparts with lower TOEFL scores in the first two semesters only.

Qualitative Results

The interviews covered multiple topics, beginning with the amount and extent of writing produced through the junior year and including questions on the student's writing processes, changes to the process over six semesters, and types of support used, when and how, as well as questions about L1 and L2 confidence. Key results with an emphasis on second language and translingual concerns are reported in the section that follows.

Opportunities to Write

Knoch et al. (2015) found that their undergraduates did limited writing over three years of university: students studying in the institutional subdivisions of medicine, dentistry, health sciences, business, or economics were required to produce little to no writing. Such was not the case for our participants. Student majors and specific course choices over three years led to a wide variety of writing experiences and differing amounts of writing, but even as juniors in their majors, with the exception of Kyle (Math and Chemistry) and Camile (Chemistry), the students reported doing moderate to substantial amounts of writing for courses. Moreover, those not assigned writing for class continued to write for professional and personal purposes in both Chinese and English outside of class.

Changes in Writing Process

Echoing findings from fluency research (Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001), most participants reported that writing had become easier and less time consum-

ing than it had been initially. Karina reported considerable confidence in L2 academic writing after three years of study:

> [W]hen I think back to my freshman year, I remember my first paper ever, I was so, like so nervous and so anxious. I [couldn't] express myself very well in English, so . . . I wrote a Chinese like outline and like translated it to English, which is, which . . . [didn't] help very much. I [didn't] really get really good grades, and it [took] a lot of time for me like to translate between languages and stuff. But now, I don't even write an English outline. I just do my research and record all the- the bibliography and all works cited and stuff and then just write it. And I don't even really check my grammar. It just flows out.

While not all nine students voiced Karina's confidence, eight commented that their English L2 speaking, reading and writing skills had all increased substantially while their reliance on L1 support had diminished. In contrast, Celia felt that her writing had remained "about the same" since she came to our institution—despite evidence to the contrary from her scores for clarity, accuracy, and complexity—because her written work continued to receive the same grades.

Resource Use

As Leonard (2014) notes, multilingual writers are not "fixed and stable" (p. 228) in the linguistic resources they bring to writing occasions, but flexible depending on rhetorical demands. Participant comments suggest that their need for writing support resources reflects a similar flexibility. Overall, participants reported that their need for and/or use of resources, whether technological or tutorial, had diminished over time. When asked if they used electronic resources, such as a thesaurus, concordancers, Word tools, or an electronic translator, when writing, Li, Camile, and Celia mentioned Word's autocorrect feature, while Karina, Camile, and Hogan turned to dictionaries on occasion. After the first year, students did not report using electronic translating programs. As Li explained,

> I used to use Google translator but after- for the first year maybe, but after I [found] out the translation is not as accurate or . . . it [didn't] make sense most of the time. So, also I [relied] a lot on that; I feel like . . . it kind of [blocked] my

> ideas because sometimes when it [gave] me translations and they [had] like different words and I [felt] like, I [felt] like I [became] more like focused on the wording and the grammar, the grammatical like, things, instead of like trying to get the flow of the idea which I really want to do.

In other words, Li felt that the translator impeded her ability to focus first on conventional higher-order concerns (depth of ideas, development of ideas).

Helen echoed Li's concern about inaccuracy, commenting that translator use in the first year had kept her from learning subtle distinctions between words. Tan, who attended part of high school in the United States, went beyond rejecting translation programs to stress the importance of not reading any class materials in Chinese, a practice which she believed had impeded her ability to succeed in the English L2 environment during her first year.

In terms of help-seeking behaviors, students described a range of strategic approaches contingent on need and time. Eight consulted professors to discuss class content and assignment parameters, seek advice about sources or rhetorical models, or preview a working thesis. Victor singled out these discussions as the most pleasurable part of the writing experience, explaining,

> I mean, definitely it is not enjoyable because . . . when you are . . . dealing with a paper or assignment, you are trying to just get it done before the deadline or something. But, . . . when [what] you're trying to do [for] a paper is to figure out an idea, talk to the professors and well if you guys agree on something and you feel it's very exciting maybe do some research on it; that's definitely one enjoyable thing in the whole writing process.

In addition to discussing ideas and research with professors, Hogan, Karina and Li mentioned having had professors who willingly discussed style and grammar as well, and Helen reported reviewing graded papers with faculty to learn what had worked and what had not worked. Not all students mentioned frequent or useful contact with their professors. For example, Celia sought feedback from her professors at multiple stages in the writing process but felt that they weren't sufficiently directive in comments and/or gave suggestions too near deadlines to help her improve as a writer.

All participants reported that the second language specialist, with whom they could make hour or longer appointments, provided a helpful mix of open-ended and directive assistance. In Karina's estimation,

> . . . the most important thing she did was not like helping me to write anything that she thinks I'm trying to say, but asking me what I want to say, and like ask me to verbally say it. Because I feel like the way I say it and the way I write it are very different. And the way I write it, I always want to make things more complicated when I write it out. So if I say it clearly, and if I can express myself well to her, and then she just records whatever I said, it really looks much better than the original text I wrote myself.

Karina's comment emphasizes the difference between oral and written communication and also reveals the give-and-take characteristic of the specialist sessions. This process of collaborative meaning-making was often time-intensive, especially in the first year, when students spent a total of 95.75 hours (11 hours, average) working with the language specialist.

While the second language specialist's strategy of asking students questions to help them clarify wording and recording these responses was considered helpful, her attempts at reformulation, in which teacher rewrites student sentences in order to analyze them and develop greater accuracy, could be disconcerting at times. Kyle, in particular, mentioned anxiety during tutorials in his first year:

> [W]hen we were working together I was always bothered by the idea that [she] corrected my papers so much that it [didn't] show my work anymore . . . Like I was so afraid that I mean [the specialist tutor corrected] my work so much; I mean, I was afraid, oh my God this doesn't sound like what I wrote and I was so afraid at how, how my work actually turned into [hers] . . . that was like my biggest fear when I was writing my essay then coming to [her].

The fear and lack of confidence Kyle expressed was anticipated by Ferris (2010). In presenting studies on reformulation and its appeal to second language acquisition researchers, Ferris (2010) argued that, even if it were shown to be a more effective way of improving student accuracy than corrective feedback, "reformulation puts teachers' words into students' mouths (or pens or word processors) . . . [and] is thus antithetical to the larger goal of helping students explore their ideas and develop their own voices" (p. 190).

Another option for students seeking support comes through the writing center, which is staffed by peer tutors with majors in many disciplines and

provides half-hour appointments. Victor explained that his interest in this tutoring depended on his confidence in a subject:

> Yea so I think the main reason we sought help [was] . . . the first maybe middle paper, and get a bad grade, and the professor's advice . . . is get some help. . . . But first year I definitely, you know, [sought] help a lot because I [was] a new, like, writer for whatever style I [was] trying to write and definitely [wanted] to learn more. But when you go into sophomore year and like so junior year especially when you go into a specific subject. I think firstly that the writing style, you know doesn't require a lot of . . . writing help anymore.

When students felt confident, they generally did not want tutoring. Students also reported working with center tutors mainly on grammar, style, and citation issues. However, even when they preferred to focus on style with peer tutors, students did not want someone to "fix" articles and tenses, as has been reported in writing center literature (Blau, & Hall, 2002). Helen, who repeatedly stressed her desire to use not just accurate but aesthetically effective diction, explained that

> the writing center tutors . . . I would go to . . . are the ones who are very particular about word choices and very particular about structure, I mean in terms of sentence structure, not the whole structure of the essay. I found them to be really helpful, and they tend to be the philosophy or English majors. Um, but in terms of other tutors, . . . I think it's less helpful compared to professors . . . because they are used to helping students who just simply don't know how to write, who don't know how to form arguments or grammar mistakes, which, those things are not my primary concern.

Tutors who viewed Helen as a student writing in English as a second language who needed remediation did not meet her interests in stylistic revision, a situation she experienced even more strongly during her study abroad experience:

> this year I tried to talk to one of the writing tutors in the center . . . at [a college in London] but it was funny because she look at me and thinking, wow, she's from China, and doesn't really- she expects I don't know that much . . . because the level of English the Chinese students here speaks are a little

> bit—I would say it's a little bit lower than [at our college]. So she saw me and she kind of expects that I didn't really speak that much English and/or write that much English and she saw my paper and was like, wow this is really good, but to me that was a very rough draft, it was not good at all, there was too many mistakes with the way I wrote . . .

While noting that perhaps "priorities" (e.g., expectations) for student writers differed between our institution and her abroad institution, Helen experienced the tutor's assumptions as a kind of L2 profiling, a behavior that reduced tutor expectations and denied her useful conversation about aesthetic and rhetorical improvement. In contrast, she felt that sessions with the second language specialist at our institution built on the assumption that Helen wrote well in English and wanted to write with style and grace.

The Role of L1

Most students said that L1 had little to no overt role in their academic writing. "In my first year," according to Li,

> I didn't think in English, but in Chinese when I was doing the planning but . . . like now, I think in English too. I think that's better because it's quicker, also . . . in [the] first year, . . . one of the reasons that my wording [was] so awkward [was] I [thought] in Chinese then I [translated] . . . But so basically the Chinese grammar is different than the English.

Li cites both efficiency and clarity as reasons to use English for academic purposes. The language in which students learned material also impacted language use. Helen noted that her choice of conversational language depends on purpose and context. Others explained that they used English for academic work, while communicating with family and friends in Chinese. In his interview, Kyle explained that he wrote poetry in Chinese.

While English may be the lingua franca for academic discussions, rhetorical preferences within disciplines sometimes felt and continue to feel confining. In Karina's words, "in my freshman year, I was more creative, and I was more, I was braver in, I guess trying out new things, trying out new techniques, and in making sentences that are not [dry], but more in a creative way to express myself. But now, I'm more, I don't like to experiment. I just want to write my sentences clear." Karina indicates that in adopting a hegemonic monolingual value for the clear, concise, and "dry" argumentation favored in

academic SWE, she experiences what she suggests is a loss of autonomy and linguistic agency.

Overall, participants reported feeling as if their L2 growth was accompanied by a comparable loss of academic competence in their L1. Hogan's extended answer to this question reveals a complex relationship between his L1 and L2 use and his chosen adjustments to the campus monolingual environment.

> When I first [came] to America . . . [and was] formulating my ideas in my mind, I always like [thought] in Chinese of what I should write and what kind of things I should look for and what kind of ideas I actually put down on my paper. I think there was a transitional period where I was forcing myself to think in English first, so for example like if like I pick up a book . . . I will think . . . first like the Chinese word for book first and then translate that to English . . . but then there was like a transitional time probably about half a year to a year [when] I was forcing myself that everything I see or that everything I read into my mind like I need to recognize the English first . . . And right now like [for the past] two years [everything] . . . like everything like I am thinking . . . or talking [about] . . . or writing. English always comes first in my mind.

Keenly aware of shifts between his linguistic abilities in L1 and L2, Hogan described responding with a deliberate attempt to maintain his L1 competence. Victor, in contrast, expressed language confidence related to exposure and function:

> Definitely [when] writing in Chinese [I am] more confident because [I wrote] it for like 80 years [sic] and yea, [I] know most of the characters that are used. . . . Because when [I'm] writing in English using single sentence[s], [I] can express [myself] clearly, but for some complicated situations or longer phrases, Chinese would be a better way to communicate it. English for me is more of a way to write academically, properly. . . . If you want me to write a poem or novel or whatever [in English] I have no confidence to do that. In Chinese maybe I am confident to write that. . . . *It would be a great novel*. (emphasis ours)

His characteristic humor aside, Victor clearly distinguishes between situations for L1 use and L2 use, with L2 use preferred for what he perceives as

straightforward and necessary communication or for academic work.

Translanguaging

Examples of translanguaging commonly show speakers or writers switching between languages, integrating them in a communicative act that draws on two or more languages to create a hybrid (Ayahs, 2018; Lu & Horner, 2013). The students interviewed for this study provided examples of translanguaging in conversation with other Chinese speakers, as in Helen's comment about speaking with another woman in her economics course. In writing, student comments suggest that visible translanguaging happens less often, primarily when class content provided opportunities for use of cultural knowledge or specific Chinese language. Both Kyle and Camile reported drawing on their L1 for some assignments. Whereas Kyle reports translanguaging specifically when referring to Chinese historical figures or locations, Camile's description suggests a stage in her drafting process during which she fluidly draws on both languages:

> [I write] certain things in English and certain things in Chinese. Because it depends on the class. But like for Buddhism, a lot of things are related to Chinese ideas, so it is easier to write Chinese. Because Buddhism, especially classical Buddhism, it has many texts in like ancient Chinese, not ancient Chinese writing, but like, you know, like those poems or old stories, those kind of styles. It's very simplified, so you can just summarize a lot of things in one or two characters. Yeah, so that's how, that's when it's easier to write Chinese words.

Unclear from her response is how she goes from hybrid text to final form in submitted papers. Both Kyle and Camile discuss their translanguaging choices as easy or efficient strategies ("more quickly") as well as contingent upon class content. Their description of choices contrasts to comments offered by students included in the Ayash study included in this collection.

Even though students seldom deploy their L1 in final written products, course content that allows students to draw on their L1 culture clearly mattered to Celia, whose interview responses reflect challenging and difficult experiences in the English L2 setting. She found opportunities to draw on her cultural background a particular comfort, explaining: "I think my strength is knowing like the different culture. [Not] necessarily the language helps enrich the content of my writing [but] when I was taking the Chinese detective, fiction, and film course, I'm like *I can write about this*."

Discussion

In our mixed methods, longitudinal study of a cohort of advanced Chinese L2 writers, we found that students' writing grew notably in terms of accuracy and clarity but not in syntactic complexity. For the most part, as the quality of student writing developed, so did their reported confidence and strategic competence in academic writing in a traditional monolingual environment.

The students' stories are complex. In comparison to an idealized multilingual writer who creates hybrid text from multiple linguistic traditions, such as the three writers profiled by Bou Ayash (2019), the English L2 writers we studied inevitably translanguage at the topic and conceptual levels, but rarely at the lexical and rhetorical level on the page, where cross-language transfer from Chinese to English, and vice-versa, is often perceived in traditional SWE environments as "interference." As some participants noted, they grew as L2 academic writers but felt a corresponding loss of L1 confidence. Yet in contrast to the multilingual students featured in Ayash's analysis (2019), our participants, did not voice desire to push back against Western academic writing conventions and instead spoke of wanting to write in a rhetorically appropriate and disciplinary way.

Overall the L1 loss should be understood as contingent on their situation as international students trying to succeed in an L2 context. Unlike domestic multilingual and immigrant students who are pressured to adhere to a monolingual norm, most of our participants expect to return to China after graduation, suggesting that their L1 loss may not be permanent. They've learned new academic concepts and information in English and may not know how to talk about these things in their L1, which would make them feel less confident when they return to China to work, as studies and anecdotal evidence suggest. With workplace experience, however, they will learn the appropriate technical vocabulary and ways of talking about the topic at hand.

Second language scholarship has moved beyond a simplistic view of "other" (e.g., non-American) academic writings, such as that presented in early studies of contrastive rhetoric (Kaplan, 1966). At the same time, research illustrates clear differences in expectation, genre, and rhetorical preferences between academic writing in American and China (Mina & Cimasko, this collection; Sullivan, 2012; Wu & Rubin, 2000). Our students remarked on these differences. In Camile's words,

> I was so surprised when I just got here and then I learned [from faculty] about how . . . English writers like to give out the ideas in the beginning . . . as a thesis sentence . . . [but]

> sometimes in Chinese writing, you want to save more [of the argument to lay out] like as you read along.

Just as the five-paragraph form taught in secondary systems across the United States is not necessarily well-received in college, L2 writing strategies taught in an L1 environment may not work. Our students realized this early. Kyle spoke directly to these differences at one point.

> [i]n freshman year, I [would get assigned a paper] I [would] make sure that I [saw] the specialist tutor at least once for each paper before I hand it in, just because I was at a very like total [starting] point at writing an English essay and yea and for a lot of things that I feel good about- for example, grammar or sentence structure that I feel it is extremely reasonable and logical [to put it that way for the tutor] and other American people it's it may be bizarre and weird to actually read it. I think one of the most common mistakes I made was that I tend to write a sentence super long. About like extended to like three rows for a single sentence and I thought it was extremely fine and like logical, and actually, *that's actually something we were taught when we were English learners back in China,* that you should always use a lot of, you know, [substance] in your sentence to, you know, make it better, to make it more complicated so that you know it actually can kind of reflect that you are very good at manipulating sentences and [running them together]. . . .[Such sentences] could be very confusing for native [L2] speakers.

The insights that Kyle and his peers shared about their L2 writing development reflect increased strategic competence, a hallmark of translingual agency. Canagarajah (1999) describes the learning strategies that lead to successful language acquisition as a "curiosity toward the language, the ability to intuit linguistic rules from observation of actual usage, a metalinguistic awareness of the system behind languages, and the ability to creatively negotiate meaning with speakers and texts." (p. 91). In their submitted papers, our participants did not exhibit translingual strategies at the syntactic or grammatical level touted in many studies (Canagarajah, 2013), but we argue that, in this language context, they were by no means passive conduits or victims of English-only pedagogy. They learned to exploit resources (faculty, the campus writing center, the second language specialist) to their benefit, transforming the assumptions and pedagogies that they initially encountered. In response

to these students' needs, the second language specialist has shifted to more negotiated pedagogies and a greater focus on clarity over correctness. At the same time, the writing center has adapted to meet students' requests for directive feedback that addresses the rhetorically appropriate and disciplinary ways of writing preferred in the SWE context.

In contrast, we must note that translingual agency manifests differently in foreign language settings. In one study of native English-speaking writing faculty at Chinese universities (Shi, 2009), professors reported resistance from students, whose concerns about national examinations and emphasis on form undermine Western EFL process-oriented and communicative-focused approaches. In such a context, the EFL teachers—not the students—must adapt their teaching methods to the local context.

Limitations

While faculty evaluations as manifested by grades suggest a high degree of achievement for our L2 writers, we did not analyze argument or content knowledge and do not offer evidence to link linguistic growth to L2 rhetorical efficacy because we were unqualified to evaluate content knowledge and ideas forwarded in the texts about which students were writing. In addition, our research did not address whether the extent of growth in clarity and accuracy in the students' writing would have been possible without student willingness to embrace the hegemonic expectations of a predominantly English speaking campus community. Yet even in such an English-dominant institutional context, students seized opportunities to exercise agency, seeking assistance when they wished it on their own terms. As confidence in English L2 academic writing increased, their sense that they needed support through the writing process (from invention through revision) decreased.

Moreover, we must concede that our study focuses on a highly privileged group of L2 writers, high-achieving at home, successful abroad, and with considerable control of their language choices. Consider, for example, a remark Helen made in response to her sense of L1 loss.

> And of course I still read, and still write, trying to write a bit, but it depends on where I am, in China I write in Chinese a lot more and in English-speaking countries I write a lot more in English, just because the environment, um . . . you can't have both, so I try to read as much Chinese, I write as much Chinese as I can when I'm in China, and I have this

> good friend who studied literature, she sends me things, and I try to catch up.

Though multilingual writers conforming to monolingual disciplinary expectations, these students are also mobile, moving between cultures on a frequent basis. Privilege enabled them to study at a highly selective liberal arts college that provides a writing and discussion intensive monolingual environment yet continue to choose to maintain L1 fluency.

Lessons Learned

Through this study, we better understand how our L2 writers from China learn to navigate the writing-intensive demands they face in a traditional SWE environment as well as how we can support them. Their growth as writers testifies to a resilient, persistent approach to L2 writing growth and strategic use of a variety of campus resources. We are better equipped to encourage faculty toward what Horner (this collection) terms a "post-monolingual state." Through the lens afforded by student interviews, we have also become more confident that faculty support their L2 student writers despite a lack of exposure to a translingual disposition. Finally, we better understand the limited reliability of standardized measures for admission, which predict first-year performance but not beyond.

The implications of this study are greatest for L2 specialists and writing center educators who support translingual approaches in theory, but struggle to balance its call for students to challenge dominant ideologies about correctness and standardized language rules (Horner et al., 2011) with institutional pressures such as those expressed by Bobbi Olson (2013) when asked to "clean up" a multilingual student's paper so that "no trace of her status as a non-native English speaker remained, which is exactly what her instructor wanted and expected." (p. 1). Our research has provided evidence of what composition and L2 researchers have argued for decades: that students will continue to progress as writers, even when we hold back from discussing every error; limiting error-correction to instances in which communication breakdowns (problems in clarity) occurred in student texts does not prevent students from developing grammatical accuracy. Such a finding should reassure well-intentioned, mainstream faculty who want to support multilingual students but worry that they cannot address every language issue they encounter in papers. Furthermore, we hope that findings showing multilingual students are able to progress with respect to grammatical accuracy over the course of three years prompts faculty to rethink notions of fairness in evaluation and grading.

Even in monolingual institutional settings such as ours, a translingual approach that "encourages reading with patience, respect for perceived differences within and across languages, and an attitude of deliberative inquiry" (Horner et al., 2011, p. 304) is not only desirable but possible. We can help multilingual students "translate" the ideas they want to express in English through open-ended questions about meaning and intent. A modified language experience approach in which the specialist or peer tutor records the student's oral clarification of specific passages and, with the writer, considers whether this version should replace the original, can balance the open-endedness of such sessions with the explicit, direct instruction that multilingual students often request (Williams & Smith, 1993). In other words, making room for student voices does not mean we should refrain from "translating" the dominant academic culture's assumptions about language and rhetoric for them. A truly empowering translingualism would help students decide when to push boundaries and when to remain within them.

Above all, we have learned not to engage in writer profiling by engaging in assumptions about student needs and desires. Our results also suggest caution before embracing translingual approaches that eschew *any* directive tutoring. Some students want to adapt their rhetoric and style to American contexts. Others, cognizant of the American preference for plain and concise prose, still prefer to focus on developing a sophisticated, syntactically complex SWE style. For example, consider Hogan's ambitions as a writer:

> . . . when I am thinking about writing or thinking of myself as a writer is when I find something in the historiography that is hotly debated, and I want to be part of that debate and that's when I conceptualize myself as a scholar, not as an undergrad who is learning from all the scholars. Like I am a peer of [my, my own peers]. That's when I pay attention more to my style, I want to develop that Ph.D., you know that Ph.D. style writing.

In our quest to apply translingual approaches, listening also means the willingness to honor student requests and desires, even if they run counter to our instincts or agendas.

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Appendix

Structured Interview Questions (Adapted from Zimmerman & Pons, 1986)

General/Preview

1. What are your major, minor and concentration (if any)?
2. How has your year been? What sorts of courses have you taken? What writing assignments have you had, if any?
3. How has this year compared to freshman and sophomore years with respect to writing and your English language development as a whole?

Writing Strategies

4. Describe your writing process from the time you receive a writing assignment to the point of final submission.
5. Do you use any resources regularly when you write? For example, do you use material resources such as a thesaurus, concordancers (Corpus of Contemporary American English), Microsoft Word tools, Google, an electronic translator, etc.? What about people resources such as your professor or tutors?
6. How has your use of these different resources (material and people resources) changed over time? For instance, perhaps you went to a professor or a tutor each time you had a paper as a freshman but now only go for longer papers.

7. What do you consider to be the role of your native language in your writing process, if any? Do you, for example, jot down translations or ideas in Chinese on the margins of your books or in your notes or perhaps draft in Chinese before writing out your paper in English? When do you find your native language a resource? If it's ever a hindrance, explain why.
8. What kind of writing do you do outside of class? If you write outside of class, how often do you engage in the different kinds of writing you describe?
9. If you were to give an incoming Chinese international student tips for getting good grades on papers at Davidson, what would you say? What about advice for becoming a better writer?

Writing Self-Efficacy and Self-Concept

10. How much do you enjoy the writing process? Explain your answer.
11. How competent do you feel as a writer in English overall? And in Chinese? Explain why you feel this way?
12. What do you consider your strengths and challenges when writing in English? What about in Chinese? How have these strengths and challenges changed since freshman year?
13. How do you think you compare to other Chinese international students at Davidson? How about to American students?

Curricular and Instructional Issues

14. As you think back to your freshman year, how did your choice to take the WRI 101 in fall or spring impact your writing development, if at all?
15. At other institutions, international students must take special sections of first-year writing. How do you believe having to take mainstream writing courses alongside native English-speakers has influenced your development as a writer?
16. What impact do you believe your curricular choices (e.g., choice of major, courses, study abroad, etc.) have made on your writing development? Which courses helped you the most? Which helped you in other ways but did not contribute to your growth as a writer?
17. What impact do you believe certain ways of teaching or mentoring have had on your writing? Please explain.
18. What role, if any, have your peers (Davidson students or study abroad friends and classmates) had on your development as a writer? Please explain.