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Research Statement

My research has always gravitated towards international students, as second language users, as well as their endeavors pre-, in- and post-sojourn. Being an international graduate student in the U.S. has sparked inquiry into foreign students experiences abroad, both in terms of language and cultural capitals. The work naturally situated itself in-between fields of second language acquisition (SLA), international education, cultural studies, and intercultural communication. Researching diverse groups of students and their teachers calls for interdisciplinary approaches.

The rapidly growing numbers of international students on U.S. campuses is one of the primary challenges American higher education has been facing in recent decades. According to the Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange (2018), the number of international students in the United States increased by 1.5 percent reaching 1,094,792. With a great diversity of academic cultures, cultures of learning and communication those foreign students bring into the U.S. classrooms, both the private and public schools hasten to explore such students' experiences, their needs, and challenges. My dissertation project involves conducting a phenomenologically influenced case study zooming in on the experiences of the Chinese undergraduate students (363,341) at one midwestern U.S. university. The goal is to explore the nature of their experiences as students in the U.S. through the lenses of interculturality and Rancierian educational equity. In the spirit of intercultural encounters as mutual exchanges, the project is also bringing to light their instructors' experiences and the various practices they have implemented to acknowledge and accommodate the international students in the classes they teach.

The project branches out from the field of SLA to international education through the bridge of intercultural communication. It contributes to multiple fields and extends existing theories by modifying them to the benefit of an international student and their instructor. It positions the Chinese undergraduate student as an equal agent in the process of gaining knowledge and their instructor as a facilitator of educational equity.

Prior to current doctoral studies, a 6-year-period of living and teaching in China planted a seed of curiosity related to Chinese students learning endeavors. Out of this experience emerges

a cultural memoir, *Call me LiNana: Memoirs of a foreigner in China*, which examines certain elements of Chinese cultures from a perspective of an outsider-turned-insider. The first research project, entitled “*Life is splendid here in the US*”: *Interculturality in the contemporary Chinese learners’ academic adjustment*, is currently under review with International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education. I also wrote and published *IELTS BAND 9 An Academic Guide for Chinese Students: Examiner’s tips (Volume I and II)*, which is a textbook for Chinese students who plan to study abroad and are required to take an IELTS test.

In the near future, instructional materials for teachers working with international students to help them implement intercultural ways of learning and teaching, regardless of their field of expertise, will be published. Those were developed as part of Interdisciplinary Inquiry and Teaching Fellowship this academic year. Future research activity will continue exploring new ways to engage international students, the Chinese in particular, to help them understand U.S. educational system better as well as to inform their instructors’ about Chinese students’ cultures of learning in hopes to bridge the Western and Eastern academic practices.

The abovementioned research appears significant for the field of second language acquisition because it enlightens all stakeholders on the lessons from lived experiences of Chinese students as undergraduates in the U.S. It also positions them as equal to their domestic classmates and highlights the variety of valuable contributions they bring to the American classroom. Those need to be capitalized on more often to establish stronger intercultural links.