

## **A Conceptual Paper on Future Development of Literacy Theories and Language Learning among Contemporary Chinese College EFL Students**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper aims to further understand the future development of literacy theory and language learning in contemporary Chinese universities through the research on the current situation of EFL students' literacy in Chinese universities and the teaching characteristics of contemporary Chinese teachers. In this study, literature analysis method, literature comparison analysis method, literature synthesis method and other analytical methods were used to obtain the results. Based on our results, the lack of literacy training is an extremely important reason for the defects of literacy skills of contemporary Chinese college EFL students in the process of language learning. The strengthening of literacy training is one of the key measures to improve the comprehensive level of literacy of contemporary Chinese college EFL students in the process of their language learning. Theoretically, the future development of literacy theories and language learning among contemporary Chinese college EFL students is bound to closely connect with the new theory of multiliteracies and critical literacy in literacy development and the multiliteracies teaching methodology in language learning. Practically, the new theory of multiliteracies puts forward a series of hypotheses for school literacy education to cope with the drastic changes facing the world today. At the same time, the critical literacy theory is rooted in critical education theory, focusing on the important role of literacy in the formation of individual human values. Besides, the multiliteracies teaching methodology in language learning explores how to change traditional teaching methods, effectively using multimedia resources, and cultivating language learners' skills of multiliteracies.

**Key words:** Literacy Theories, Future Development, Language Learning, Contemporary Chinese College EFL Students

### **INTRODUCTION**

As mankind enters the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the process of global economic integration is advancing rapidly; cooperation and competition among countries mainly focus on economy, science and technology, and talents. Therefore, innovative thinking is the key for talents to become competitive. As the premise and foundation of innovative thinking, the cultivation of literacy skills has very important practical significance. For contemporary Chinese college EFL students, the ability of English literacy acts as the core of language ability and the focus of adapting to social development (Sheng & Han, 2011). Good literacy skills help contemporary Chinese college EFL students improve their thinking quality and learning ability, so that they can study better, work more efficiently and live happier.

So, what is literacy? What is the development of literacy? What is the close connection between the development of literacy and language learning? Simply put, the so-called

literacy refers to a learner's ability to read and write, however, in the actual concrete operations, literacy is more than that. It contains more contents, showing a richer connotation in its development. In language learning, the development of literacy also embodies more important theoretical as well as practical significance (Street, 1997).

Literacy has attracted much attention in the current international education field. The UNESCO defines it as "The ability to make use of printed or written materials in different situations to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, and calculate" (New London Group, 1996). Obviously, the ability of literacy emphasizes the training of learners' abilities to acquire, to reflect, to evaluate, and to apply the theoretical knowledge. However, in the current situation of language learning among Chinese college EFL students, the development of literacy has got insufficient attention.

As language educators in contemporary Chinese language education, we ought to have more academic contents, wisdom and higher levels to help bridge the gap between

literacy development and language learning among Chinese college EFL students (Sheng & Han, 2011). Previous researches have shown that the “more academic contents, wisdom and higher levels” usually refers to the concrete skills of literacy, or the good quality of literacy. Based on this, we should use various abilities, methods and wisdom with different characteristics in classroom teaching when we are to understand and cultivate students’ language literacy skills.

As language educators in contemporary China, we also have to study the future development of literacy, exploring the essence of multiliteracies (Mills, 2011), developing multiliteracies teaching methodologies as well as paying enough attention to the cultivation and development of contemporary Chinese college EFL students’ literacy skills.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This part of the paper is a focus on the literature review of literacy and literacy development as well as language learning. In detail, the historical development of literacy and literacy development is preliminarily introduced, followed by a detailed description of language learning, together with the interactive relationship between the two concepts among Chinese college EFL students.

### Historical Development of Literacy

Generally, the historical development of literacy is complicated. In different historical periods, literacy has shown different connotations and extensions (Kress, 2003). The definition of literacy is not static; it has been changing due to history, society, and power patterns of some certain groups. In other words, literacy is always closely integrated with specific social and historical functions. For example, the social status and function of a language often determines its status and levels of development in literacy education.

Take China as an example; the changing status of literacy in Chinese education illustrates the above point precisely (Jin, 2013). In the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, at the beginning of China’s liberation, China had a close relationship with the former Soviet Union, and the language of Russian was once the most important language of all. Therefore, during that time period, education on Russian literacy was very important in the field of language education in China.

And then, with the economic and political development of English-speaking countries and the changes in the international structure all over the world (Hyland, 2007), the language of English has flourished in China for a certain time. Let us again use China as an example. After the national policy of Reform and Opening up, China’s national power has become stronger and stronger, and it urgently needs to improve its cultural soft power and international discourse power (Jin, 2013). Thus, the country has begun to adjust foreign language education policies, emphasizing the development of mother tongue and other foreign languages as well, and the language of English fever is gradually cooling down. During this period of time, at the same time, the literacy education of English seems to gradually replace the previous literacy education of Russian in the field of education in China.

In the 1980s and 1990s, there were new subtle changes in the development of literacy around the world. Simply put, the definition of literacy thus changes as the power structure between schools and students changes, reflecting the contests of interests between various power groups. Schools thus play a central role in defining and replicating literacy skills. This is because schools often give legal status to certain knowledge, words, deeds, and ways of doing things, and regard the results of literacy skills as the requirements (Hu, 2007) for obtaining an educational diploma.

This has led to the fact that language learners’ awareness and demand for literacy tend to become greater and greater. This understanding and demand has also been widely reflected in the process of language education, making the majority of students change from “invisible people” who do not pay attention to the development of literacy to “tangible people” who much more pay attention to literacy development (Giroux, 1983).

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the development of literacy has brought new connotations and extensions to mankind’s language learning (Kress, 2003). The historical changes and development of globalization have ushered in a new theory of literacy, which is the New Theory of Literacy. Different from the previous definition, the New Theory of Literacy requires schools to change the existing power model and listen to students’ voices when defining literacy and formulating literacy programs. This thus requires in-depth and meticulous researches on the school’s literacy education practice, incorporating various forms of literacy and different voices into the discussion and studies of literacy skills (Street, 1997).

At present, from the perspective of the New Theory of Literacy, there have long been two different views in the field of literacy research around the world, including “autonomous literacy” and “ideological literacy”. The former holds that reading and writing are individual mental processes, and that reading and writing skills are neutral, universal, and technical cognitive skills that can function independently. The latter emphasizes that there is no objective and neutral literacy skills, and the practice of literacy is always inseparable from its social function, ideology and values. Brian Street (1984) first clearly distinguished these two literacy views and pointed out the irrationality of the mainstream view of “autonomous literacy” at that time, opening the prelude to the research of the New Theory of Literacy.

### Language Learning among Chinese College EFL Students

As an extremely important aspect of human learning, language learning is of course also one of the important topics of linguistics, especially psycholinguistics. The content of language learning is very extensive. According to the order of the target language learned, it can be divided into first language learning, second language learning and so on. According to whether the target language is the mother tongue or not, it can be divided into mother tongue learning and foreign language learning (Ge & Luo, 2010). According to whether the target language is spoken or written, it can be divided into spoken language learning and written language learning.

Only by studying the types of language learning mentioned above can we draw up the theories and disciplines of language learning. At the same time, only under the guidance of those language learning theories and language disciplines can language teaching and language learning be effectively carried out.

In this research, the authors mainly discuss the related issues of second language learning among Chinese college EFL students. The study of second language learning in China began in the middle of 1980s and has experienced about thirty years of development. During this period, a large number of Chinese language scholars have made unremitting efforts in the research and exploration of the theories and practices of second language learning among Chinese college EFL students. It is because of this that the results of these efforts have also made a positive contribution to the development of second language learning.

In contrast, first language learning refers to the first language that human individuals are born to learn. For example, the first language learning in China should be Chinese learning. Since most of the first language is the mother tongue, learning the first language is often called mother tongue learning. Many scholars believe that children learn the first language naturally, so first language learning is also called first language acquisition (Ge & Luo, 2010). Since first language learning is a process of continuous development, it is also called first language development.

In China, the development of first language learning is, to a certain extent, conducive to the promotion of the learning and development of the second language. Language learning among Chinese college EFL students involves many aspects, in which it basically involves various aspects of the language ontology such as phonetics, vocabulary, syntax, and pragmatics (Zhang & Liu, 2014). It also involves language learners' internal factors such as learning motivation, learning strategies, language learning concepts, language learning ability, and their external factors such as language learning surroundings or environment. Therefore, just as Cai (2017) claims, specific English teaching in China should also make language a tool for learning scientific and cultural knowledge, helping Chinese college EFL students to obtain information from all aspects of society and even to conduct international communication.

In language learning among Chinese college EFL students, if they can break the framework of structuralism, paying attention to the cultivation of the ability to use the language, and understanding the differences and relationships between language and culture, it will be of great benefits to the further improvement of their language learning. At the same time, this will also have an important counter impact on the language teachers' language teaching ultimately (Yu, 2016).

In language learning among Chinese college EFL students, language literacy is the most obvious tool for carrying cultural information and reflecting their actual language study and social life. From the perspective of linguistics and cross-cultural communication, it is because every language has its own unique language system and structure, and every

Chinese college EFL student has his or her own abilities of literacy, habits of study and ways of thinking in their language learning (Cai, 2017). Therefore, the cultural connotation of language literacy is extremely rich, which interacts with and helps promote the future development of language learning among contemporary Chinese college EFL students.

## METHODOLOGY

This part of the paper mainly talks about methodology. Since this is about an introduction as well as an understanding of a study on literacy development and language learning among Chinese college EFL students, the authors will focus on the analysis of the historical development of literacy and the interpretation of how literacy development connects with language learning as well as how new changes appear. Therefore, three analytical methods including method of documentary analysis, method of literature comparative analysis and method of literature synthesis are employed accordingly.

### Method of Documentary Analysis

In the initial stage of this research, the first research method used by the authors is the method of documentary analysis. This is the most basic research method that most researchers will use before really starting to do any kind of research. The method of documentary analysis refers to the one that investigates the nature and status of the research objects by studying the collected literature data, and derives the authors' own views from them. This can help the researchers to form a general impression about the research objects. It is conducive to have a historical and dynamic grasp of the research objects, and it can also study the research objects that are impossible to approach, for example, people who have passed away, and so on.

In this research, the authors first use the method of documentary analysis to query and search the relevant archives on the development of literacy and language learning. Next, the authors analyze and studies the collected materials related to literacy development in the future and language learning among contemporary Chinese college EFL students.

At the same time, the authors also conducts analysis and research on other materials including published books and periodicals so as to better understand the historical development and current status of literacy and its relationship with language learning among Chinese college EFL students. In addition, this research method is also based on the documentary analysis of the fields of pedagogy, educational psychology, etc., making full use of network retrieval, collecting effective information resources related to literacy, literacy development and language teaching and learning.

Therefore, based on what has been mentioned above, a more comprehensive understanding of the basic situation of literacy and language learning among Chinese college EFL students, combined with a series of inquiries and translations of domestic and foreign documents, provides a more effective theoretical support for the writing needs of this research.

### **Method of Comparative Analysis**

The comparative analysis method is also adopted for the research. On the one hand, this method can comprehensively sort out some necessary ideas of literacy development and language learning and unify these scattered ideas into a systematic and complete theory. The related theories of regarding literacy development and language learning are compared with the related theories of the New London Group (the NLG) (1996), Mills (2011), Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), Hatch and Brown (1995) etc., so as to have a deeper understanding of the future development of literacy and language learning among contemporary Chinese college EFL students.

The use of comparative analysis method is more conducive for the authors of this paper to accurately analyze the development trends of literacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and to locate the role of literacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Specially, with the help of science and technology and multimedia, the future development of literacy will also compare beforehand and then incorporate elements of language education, thus promoting the development of literacy in turn, and at the same time allowing language education to better display a new face of the entire world.

### **Method of Literature Synthesis**

The literature synthesis method is the most meaningful method used in this research. The authors has read extensively domestic and foreign books and papers on literacy development and language learning, especially those thoughts from the New London Group (the NLG) (1996) as well as the principles from *Harvard Educational Review* (1996). This will make the research as theoretical and original as possible.

At the same time, the authors reads and analyzes through a qualitative means in order to analyze the related theories of literacy development and language learning more realistically and rationally, and extract the view that literacy development and language learning are closely integrated, and then draw up the development trends of literacy and language learning. By synthesizing a large number of relevant documents and data, the authors strives to demonstrate that the analytical processes and conclusions are as comprehensive and objective as possible.

Besides, this paper also draws on relevant contents from other disciplines such as philosophy and sociology, and adopts interdisciplinary research methods, etc., which will definitely help to fully understand the relationship between literacy development and language learning, as well as the development of their mutual interactions. Undoubtedly, the three analytical methods mentioned above will lay a solid theoretical and methodological foundation for the research and the writing of the paper. It will also provide a necessary as well as an important premise for the further writing of the findings discussions which will be shown in the following part.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

This part is about the findings and discussions of the paper, which mainly includes two sections. The first section will

focus on the two theoretical branches in the development of the New Theory of Literacy, including the theory of multiliteracies and the theory of critical literacy. The second section will mainly talk about the practical teaching methodology, which is proposed by the New London Group (the NLG), with the name of the multiliteracies pedagogy in modern Chinese language learning and teaching.

### **Development of the New Theory of Literacy**

The development of the new theory of literacy has produced two new theoretical branches, including the multiliteracies theory closely related to writing and the critical literacy theory related to individual values.

#### ***The theory of multiliteracies***

The theory of multiliteracies has always been regarded as a theory closely related to writing studies, which has started since 1996. At the time, a group of linguists from the New London Group (the NLG) jointly published a paper *A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures* in the journal of *Harvard Educational Review*. The theory of multiliteracies puts forward a series of hypotheses for school literacy education to deal with the drastic changes facing the world today.

Those drastic changes mainly include the increasing trend of cultural diversity and various language variants, especially the emergence of the English variants. The drastic changes also include such a fact that the rapid development of information technology has promoted the combination of traditional means of expressing meaning through words and other ideographic methods such as vision and hearing.

In order to cope with these changes, on the one hand, the theory of multiliteracies cultivates language learners' multiliteracies ability to recognize cultural and sub-cultural differences. While on the other hand, more importantly, it attaches importance to the development of multimodal literacy so that language learner can be able to interpret and create information composed of multiple media and modalities in their writing processes.

Since the theory of multiliteracies has given new connotations to literacy, there also have been certain changes in the instruction of writing of language learners. This is a new perspective of in the domain of language writing teaching and research. In other words, the theory of multiliteracies pays attention to the improvement of language learners' language reading ability, and at the same time more attention is being paid to their development in language writing ability, thus having formed a series of theoretical knowledge and practical operations with regard to their writing skills.

Due to the fact mentioned above, the deduction of the theory of multiliteracies has already promoted the development of the concept of language writing. The theory of multiliteracies believes that writing is "a situated, mediated, dynamic social activity" (Canagarajah, 2011) that occurs in a specific situation and through a certain medium. The theory of multiliteracies breaks through the traditional mode of language-based writing and emphasizes the importance of multi-modal and multimedia writing mode.

Early at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Kress (2003) has predicted that writing will gradually shift from text to images and from books to screens. By saying that, he actually maintains that the shift will completely change the form and structure of knowledge, and will also promote the extension of the concept of “writing” to any resource and form that includes the formation of information.

### *The theory of critical literacy*

The development of literacy is also reflected in the emergence of the theory of critical literacy. Researches on the theory of critical literacy began in the 1960s. In the 1990s, it was then absorbed into the research area of the New Literacy Theory and became one of its most basic theoretical components.

The theory of critical literacy is rooted in the theory of critical education, which focuses on the important role of literacy in the formation of individual human values. The theory believes that the purpose of literacy education is to pursue social justice and personal happiness. Language educators in literacy education should work together to empower the powerless and to find ways to cope with and change social inequality.

In addition, as the main place for critical education, schools should also cultivate language learners’ critical writing, critical reading and critical thinking skills as well. In this way, the theory of critical literacy will help reconstruct the organization and procedures of the social environment (Canagarajah, 2011). The theory of critical literacy broadens the connotation of the concept of literacy and expands the scope of literacy research, thus triggering a rethinking and an understanding of literacy and its education in the corresponding academia.

The theory of critical literacy has changed the contents and purposes of language writing as well. Writing is not a neutral act of expressing publicly recognized knowledge in accordance with the tradition, but rather an expression of the writer’s personality. Through the writing process, the writers reflect on their identities and criticize their personal ideology and individual values. In recent years, the development of personal function in education has been continuously strengthened. This change is not only to express personal emotions, but more importantly, to guide language learners to explore as well as to criticize their own historical and cultural positioning based on their personal interests.

At the same time, language learners are thus aware of the limitations and possibilities of language and discourse; on this basis, they question the history of traditional writing, negotiate and explore new writing methods to meet the personal and cultural needs of them (Pennycook, 1994; Benesch, 2001). This new writing ideology questions traditional language writing standards and norms, and advocates that language teachers and language learners should not be limited to academic writing skills and stylistic knowledge, but should explore broader, critical, and self-reflective multiliteracies skills (Canagarajah, 2011).

The theory of critical literacy encourages language learners to pay attention to the conflicts between the cultural identities of the learners’ native language and target language in

language writing, this is because the power between native language and target language in language learning is not generally balanced. Critically, such an inequality has, to some extent not only led to the so-called “*Helplessness*” and “*Oppression*”, but also given birth to “*Struggle*” and “*Liberation*” (Kramersch, 1998).

### **The Multiliteracies Pedagogy in Chinese Language Education**

As is mentioned above, in order to cope with the increasingly multi-modal and multimedia classroom instruction, the New London Group (the NLG) (1996) thus proposed the teaching methodology of multiliteracies pedagogy. This teaching method explores how to change traditional teaching methods and to effectively use multimedia resources, and most importantly, to cultivate language learners’ multiliteracies skills in their language learning.

### *The theory of multiliteracies pedagogy*

In recent years, under the guidance of the New Theory of Literacy, experts and teachers of the literacy research area from all over the world have also carried out a large number of teaching practices and enriched people’s understanding of the nature of literacy practice, thus effectively improving learners’ language learning and language educators’ literacy instruction. For example, in the annual meeting of the *International Reading Association* held in Chicago in 2012, there were a total of 516 speeches. Among them, as many as 362 speeches had embodied the new concept of literacy, accounting for more than 70% of all the speeches. Thus it is clearly shown that the multiliteracies pedagogy has already been adopted, accepted and applied in Europe and the United States (Cheng, 2013).

In the field of modern language education in China, many researches on multiliteracies pedagogy also reflect the viewpoints of the new literacy theory, such as the application of multimodal text and multiliteracies pedagogy in literacy education (Hu, 2007) as well as the application of real multiliteracies pedagogy materials in English classroom teaching (Sheng & Han, 2011), etc.; however, generally speaking there is still a gap in the comprehensive understanding and active utilization of this new teaching methodology compared with that of foreign countries in the world.

### *Designing steps of multiliteracies pedagogy in chinese language education*

The application of the multiliteracies pedagogy in modern Chinese language education, especially in the language classes of Chinese college EFL students, mainly includes the following four designing steps. Specifically, the first designing step is the situated practice. This refers to constructing a real world for Chinese college EFL students’ language learning environment and life experience, through which the existing experience and knowledge will have been mastered by the learners to acquire new knowledge. In other words, language education should set up a real context. If the purpose

of language teaching is to enable learners to use knowledge proficiently in their language learning practice, then they must be immersed in real practice (NLG, 1996).

And then, the second designing step is overt instruction. Clear guidance requires Chinese college teachers to make full use of images, gestures and other multi-modal resources to provide clear conceptual explanations, and to guide college students know how to construct meaning creatively in a real language learning environment. The multiliteracies pedagogy replaces “grammar” with the concept of “design”. This contains the basic transformation of this teaching method from being grammar-centered to being semantic-centered. In other words, literacy training is not a repetitive exercise of grammatical rules, but a clear guide for Chinese college students know how to construct semantic understanding creatively in a language learning environment (Feng, 2017).

The third step is critical framing. The New London Group (1996) has emphasized that literacy and social values, culture and ideology are inseparable, and at the same time critical framing is to enable college students to surpass the clear guidance given by their college teachers in real-life practice. It should be pointed out that critical framing does not allow college students to criticize things in a negative manner. Thus, in practice, the core of it is to cultivate Chinese college EFL students’ analytical skills so that they can objectively rationalize the textbook texts and the social as well as the cultural phenomena contained in the learners’ language learning process.

The last step is transformed practice. Transformational practice refers to the process by which Chinese college EFL students apply the knowledge they have learned in a language learning environment. In the process, the ability to independently interpret and construct multimodal texts is the ability of multiliteracies.

Kalantzis and Cope (2005) ever pointed out that successful conversion practice included two aspects: “appropriateness” and “innovativeness”; that is to say, in the case of China, Chinese college EFL students can not only proficiently use the knowledge they have learned, but also they can surpass the knowledge they have learned in the process of language learning as well as creatively solve new problems.

All in all, in the current China, the research on multiliteracies pedagogy has developed rapidly in recent years. On the one hand, researchers comprehensively introduce and explain the theoretical framework of multiliteracies pedagogy and its enlightenment to modern Chinese language education, which is English education (Ge & Luo, 2010; Zhang, 2010). While on the other hand, researchers have also begun to apply multiliteracies pedagogy to college English classroom instruction. Based on those empirical studies, efforts are also made to investigate the actual effects of multiliteracies pedagogy in language learning among Chinese college EFL students (Zhang, 2011; Zhang & Liu, 2014).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The last part of the paper deals with conclusion and recommendations. Based on the analysis of the New Theory of Literacy and the description of the application of the

multiliteracies pedagogy in the above chapters, the authors try to entail the relationship between literacy development and language learning among contemporary Chinese college EFL students. Besides, based on the findings described in part 4, an enlightening significance is also introduced to strengthen the study of literacy development and language learning among Chinese college EFL students.

## From Literacy Development to Language Learning

The New Theory of Literacy encourages the redistribution of opportunities and power through democratic reforms, making the needs of language learners as the starting point of literacy education. This is because the phenomenon of “colonization of life world” (Habermas, 2001) has been prevailing in the area of the global education. In the context of the phenomenon, language learners become appendages of the modern education system rather than the masters of it. Thus, modern education has become “a preformed, mechanical, and icy way” for some people to process and discipline another group of people. Moreover, language learners in the context generally have no freedom, but act as a natural existence, or at most, a kind of instrumental existence (Yao & Huang, 2012).

Therefore, the New Theory of Literacy makes efforts to give language learners more power, which requires schools to modify certain norms so as to better understand and alleviate the internal conflicts of a certain marginalized language learners in the practical implementation of literacy development. At the same time, it closely links school literacy and real-life literacy of language learners to promote the awakening and improvement of personal self-awareness, thereby gaining personal freedom and happiness in their language learning.

From literacy development to language learning, for modern Chinese language learners, this is a complicated and organic process. As the New Theory of Literacy gives new connotations to literacy and promotes the emergence of multiliteracies and critical literacy, it will definitely help Chinese college EFL students surpass such a process from a quantitative change to a qualitative change.

Firstly, the development of literacy has promoted the evolution of language learning. In China, English is treated as a foreign language; take the development of English in literacy as an example, globalization has ultimately made English the “world lingua franca”.

That is to say, English no longer represents the language and culture of one or several countries, but the integration of multiple cultures that are constantly interacting and affecting within the same organism. This requires Chinese language education, which is, the English education, to break the dualism of “either or the other” and combine the local language and culture as well. It also calls for Chinese college EFL students to use a dynamic and international perspective to look at and judge the language contexts and cultural characteristics in a more objective and more comprehensive way (Fraiberg & You, 2012).

Secondly, as Canagarajah (2006) specifically pointed out, since language grammar is ideological, thus the non-standard

use of grammar by language learners is not necessarily a “language error”. That is to say, in some cases, language learners can actively negotiate grammatical meanings in order to achieve special rhetorical, cultural and ideological expressions. Therefore, the theory of multiliteracies breaks the so-called “standard English”, releases the initiatives and creativity of language learners in their language learning, and improves their critical thinking ability as well in literacy development.

Finally, from literacy development to language learning, the New Theory of Literacy also poses new challenges for language educators. Simply put, the theory of multiliteracies requires language educators to be aware of and accept the ideological attributes of literacy, and to empower language learners by incorporating the cultivation of multiliteracies skills into the school curriculum system. In China, this requires college teachers to break through the traditional teaching models, construct new theoretical and practical models, expand the scope of teaching, and bridge the gap between school literacy and real-life literacy (Hyland, 2007).

Moreover, the main task of Chinese college teachers is no longer limited to teaching literacy skills, but to guide Chinese college students to explore the socio-political functions of literacy, so as to change the world through literacy development. College teachers should lead their students to discover the hidden values behind language learning and the unequal relationship of power in language learning as well.

At the same time, they should guide college students to comprehend the critical literacy theory, refuse to accept those traditions uncritically. Modern Chinese college EFL students should also be encouraged to challenge the existing knowledge and social structures by exploring new literacy methods, so as to achieve an efficient comprehension from literacy development to language learning (Fairclough, 2006).

### An Enlightening Significance

The emergence and development of the new literacy theories have brought major changes to all the language education stakeholders worldwide. Among them, language educators and language learners can deeply feel those changes and their importance. Thus an enlightening significance goes to how, in the field of language education, the multiliteracies pedagogy promotes and improves the teaching efficiency of language teachers and the language learning methods of language learners.

Undoubtedly, from a theoretical perspective, in the implementation of the multiliteracies pedagogy in China, it helps us establish a more comprehensive and scientific evaluation system (Jin, 2013), especially for the teaching contents of multimedia classrooms. The four designing steps of the multiliteracies pedagogy just provide an effective theoretical framework for the establishment of the evaluation system for the Chinese colleges.

As far as teaching practice is concerned, the multiliteracies pedagogy is excellent in the use of multi-modal resources for the Chinese college teachers and the cultivation of positive values for the Chinese college EFL students.

To a large extent, this pedagogy uses a knowledge instillation model which centers on the Chinese language learners. In the teaching process, it also focuses on conceptual understanding and knowledge mastery, attaching great importance to critical thinking and analytical application skills among Chinese college EFL students.

From the perspective of development research, under the background of foreign language teaching reforms in Chinese universities and colleges, the country has a high demand for new foreign language talents with literacy skills (Cai, 2017; Yu, 2016).

In that case, the multiliteracies pedagogy will enlighten the vast majority of Chinese language educators with regard to sensibly changing teaching methods, effectively using multimedia resources, highly improving the effectiveness of college English classroom instruction and efficiently enhancing the ability of literacy among Chinese EFL college students to solve practical problems. Actually, this is also a key issue and topic that the majority of Chinese language educators and language researchers need to continuously explore.

In short, when the socio-cultural theory becomes a new perspective to improve the thinking and literacy skills of language learners, the new literacy theory requires that any writing context should be closely connected with the world (Canagarajah, 2011). From the future development of literacy to language learning, Chinese college EFL students are given the power to control the language through literacy, so that they can finally liberate their creativity and expression skills, and obtain the means and channels to change their lives.

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