Composing *Da You Shi* in English:

Chinese EFL Students' Perceptions and Desires to Write Poetry in English

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Abstract

Replicating Kaldina's (2018) study on Indonesian EFL students' perceptions and desires to write English poetry, this study investigated Chinese EFL students' perceptions and desires to write poetry in English through a culturally relevant poetry writing task. Sixty-seven ($N = 67$) Chinese EFL students completed an online survey, where they composed in English a *Da You Shi*, a Chinese poetic form, and responded to statements and questions regarding their perceptions and desires of writing *Da You Shi* and poetry in English. Specifically, with a focus on the role of *Da You Shi*, it was hypothesized that participants' cultural attachment to this culturally relevant genre correlates negatively with participants' perceived levels of anxiety, stress, and intimidation (Hong, Fang, Yang, & Phua, 2013). Statistical and thematic analyses revealed: 1) Participants perceived composing *Da You Shi* in English as a positive experience, 2) This writing experience significantly improved participants' confidence in writing English poetry, and 3) The aforementioned hypothesis was rejected. The results of this study indicate that culturally relevant poetry writing can offer EFL students a meaningful literacy experience with enjoyment and beneficial challenges and that English instructors should consider incorporating culturally relevant poetry writing as an effective EFL pedagogy in their class.

Key words: *Da You Shi*, culturally relevant poetry writing, Chinese EFL students, perceptions, desires, meaningful literacy

In Chinese literature, poetry has a revered status, which may create a genre phobia and overwhelm Chinese students when they are asked to compose poems (Garvin, 2013). Such genre phobia toward poetry writing, when situated in an EFL writing context, is naturally intensified to generate resistance with assumptions that "only professional, accomplished and first language English speakers write poetry" (Hanauer, 2012, p. 11). However, Hanauer (2012) argues that using poetry writing as a classroom pedagogy in the ESL/EFL classroom can promote meaningful literacy and humanize second and foreign language instruction by positioning the individual language learner at the center of the learning process. Specifically, by enabling ESL/EFL students to shift "from a decontextualized focus on code, communication and cognition to a focus on personal experience and expression" (Hanauer, 2012, p. 114), poetry writing creates opportunities for ESL/EFL students to engage in personally meaningful expressions and helps them to use English as "a personal, emotive and expressive resource" (Hanauer, 2012, p. 114). Therefore, to counter biases against ESL/EFL poetry writing and to respond to researchers' (e.g., Hanauer, 2012; Kaldina, 2018) call to explore poetry writing as an L2 pedagogy, I replicated the research design of Kaldina (2018), which investigated Indonesian EFL students' perceptions and desires to write poetry in English by incorporating *Pantun*, an Indonesian poetic genre. In my study, with a different linguistic and cultural context and a different population, I invited Chinese EFL students who majored in English at a Chinese university to compose in English *Da You Shi*, a local Chinese poetic form, to examine how this culturally relevant writing task affected Chinese EFL students' perceptions and desires of English poetry writing.

Like other scholars who studied incorporating local poetic forms in English poetry writing (e.g., Akiyoshi, 2017; Iida, 2012; Iida, 2017; Kaldina, 2018), the design of my study provided Chinese EFL students with scaffolded challenges. By asking participants to "refract[ing] personal knowledge and experience through an English lexicon" (Garvin, 2013, p. 81), this study challenged Chinese students to compose poetry, a less familiar genre, in their foreign language; meanwhile, by associating poetry writing with a Chinese poetic form and its textual features, my study prompted Chinese students to draw on their Chinese cultural knowledge as a resource. Furthermore, this *Da You Shi* writing assignment qualifies a meaningful literacy writing task because it placed Chinese EFL students at the center of the composing process by incorporating a culturally relevant poetic genre, which might "widen[ing] one's expressive resources and position[ing] oneself in a multicultural and multilingual world" (Hanauer, 2012, p. 114). As such, the goal of this study was to further examine the applicability of poetry writing as an EFL pedagogy, with a specific focus on

combining English writing with local poetic forms from EFL students' cultures. Specifically, this study aims to seek answers to the three research questions:

1. In what ways do Chinese EFL students perceive writing *Da You Shi* in English?

2. In what ways does writing *Da You Shi* in English influence Chinese EFL students' perceived ability as a writer of English?

3. In what ways does Chinese EFL students' cultural attachment to *Da You Shi* correlate with their perceived experience of composing *Da You Shi* in English?

Literature Review

Poetry writing in the ESL/EFL classroom has recently received increasing scholarly attention (e.g., Disney, 2014; Hanauer, 2010; Hanauer, 2012; Hanauer, 2014; Hanauer & Liao, 2016; Hauer & Hanauer, 2017; Liao & Roy, 2017). Incorporating poetry writing in the ESL/EFL classroom can create beneficial learning opportunities for ESL/EFL students, such as engaging students in meaningful literacy experiences (Hanauer, 2012), helping students develop awareness of self-expression (Iida, 2012), and creating a venue for students to express their emotions (Chamcharatsri, 2013). With these various benefits offered by L2 poetry writing, more empirical research is needed to further explore the effect and applicability of poetry writing as an L2 pedagogy.

Among the research on teaching poetry writing to ESL/EFL students, a recent line of inquiry has focused on engaging ESL/EFL students in composing English poetry in a poetic form from their home culture. Having ESL/EFL students compose English poetry in local poetic forms such as *Haiku* from Japan (Akiyoshi, 2017; Iida, 2012; Iida, 2017) and *Pantun* from Indonesia (Kaldina, 2018) is reported to be a valuable practice that can raise students' awareness of voice (Akiyoshi, 2017; Iida, 2017), allow students to develop their L2 linguistic awareness (Iida, 2012), and increase students' enjoyment, language competence, creativity, and confidence (Kaldina, 2018). For instance, through an online survey where participants composed *Pantun* in English and responded to statements and questions regarding their perceptions of the composing experience, Kaldina (2018) studied 127 Indonesian EFL undergraduate students' perceptions and desires to write poetry in English. Based on statistical and thematic analyses, Kaldina (2018) revealed two findings: 1) The majority of the participants reported writing *Pantun* or poetry in English as a challenging yet valuable and enjoyable writing task, and 2) The *Pantun* writing experience significantly enhanced the participants' perceived ability to write poetry.

Culturally relevant L2 poetry writing, i.e., combining L2 poetry writing with local poetic genres from ESL/EFL students' home cultures, are not only endorsed by the empirical research above but also align with the philosophical and theoretical underpinning of meaningful literacy instruction (Hanauer, 2012). Incorporating poetic genres that ESL/EFL writers feel culturally attached to and prompting them to tap into their cultural knowledge as resources, culturally relevant L2 poetry writing creates "a personally contextualized, meaningful activity" (Hanauer, 2012, p. 106). As a form of meaningful literacy instruction, culturally relevant L2 poetry writing does not only position writers at the center of the composing experience but also offer "a sense of depth and ownership" (Hanauer, 2012, p. 109), affecting writers' composing experiences at both emotional and cognitive levels. Based on the potentially beneficial influence on ESL/EFL students (e.g., Hanauer, 2012; Kaldina, 2018), culturally relevant L2 poetry writing is worth more academic attention to delve into how such writing tasks affect ESL/EFL students' writing experience, with student perception as a promising and important research direction.

Therefore, to further explore poetry writing as an L2 pedagogy of meaningful literacy and to answer Kaldina (2018) call for more empirical studies on culturally relevant L2 poetry writing in EFL contexts, I replicated Kaldina's (2018) study and adapted it to the population of Chinese EFL students with *Da You Shi*, a Chinese rhyming poetic form that originates from the Tang Dynasty and aims to create a humorous or sarcastic effect (Li, 2009). By engaging participants in a *Da You Shi* writing task followed by statements and questions, this study investigated Chinese EFL students' perceptions and desires to write English poetry in the culturally relevant genre of *Da You Shi*.

In Kaldina (2018), an important rationale to adopt *Pantun* as the form for English poetry writing lies in Indonesian students' familiarity with *Pantun* and the use of *Pantun* as "an embodiment of local culture" (p. 17). While she provides a rigorous description of participants' perceptions of *Pantun* writing in English, Kaldina (2018) does not elicit direct responses from participants regarding their perceived attachment to *Pantun*, thus providing no direct evidence to demonstrate that students' positive perceptions of *Pantun* writing in English correlated to their cultural attachment to this poetic form. To bring Kaldina's (2018) study to a deeper level and to achieve a more nuanced understanding about how participants' cultural attachment to their local poetic form influences their experience of writing *Da You Shi* in English, I measured cultural attachment in my survey and examined its correlation with participants' perceptions. Based on Hong, Fang, Yang, and Phua (2013)'s definition of cultural attachment, i.e., forming secure attachment to one's culture can help sojourners to cope with anxiety and stress and gain a sense of safety, I hypothesized that there is a negative correlation between participants' cultural attachment

to *Da You Shi* and their perceived levels of anxiety, stress, and intimidation in their *Da You Shi* composing experience.

Methods

Data Collection

With Institutional Review Board approval (IUP Log No. 18-225), a research invitation message that contained the link to an online survey (Qualtrics) was distributed via email to instructors at the School of International Studies at Sun Yat-sen University in China. These instructors forwarded the invitation message to their English-major Chinese EFL students via email. Meanwhile, the investigator posted an invitation message on WeChat, a popular social media application in China, inviting students to complete the online survey and help spread the invitation message through their personal network. Participation in this study was voluntary and participants' confidentiality was ensured. Although instructors helped distribute the online survey among students, instructors did not require, interfere with, or comment on students' participation in the online survey.

Participants

Sixty-seven (*N* = 67) participants above the age of 18 completed the survey. The participants were all Chinese EFL students who majored in English at the School of International Studies at Sun Yat-sen University in China, including 2 sophomores, 16 juniors, 22 seniors, and 27 graduate students. Fifty-eight of them identified as female, 8 identified as male, and 1 identified as other. One participant reported having 3-6 years of experience learning English, 18 participants reported 7-10 years, and 48 participants reported more than 10 years. Despite the mixed levels of participants, for the purpose of this study, I regard all the participants as Chinese EFL students who might potentially benefit from *Da You Shi* writing because of their shared cultural background. In addition, it is noteworthy that all the participants are English-major students from Sun Yat-sen University, a high-rank key university in Mainland China, which is indicative of the participants' relatively high proficiency of English, although no numerical measure was conducted to report the participants' English proficiency.

Instrument

With a shared goal to inquire into the feasibility of L2 poetry writing pedagogy, my instrument adopted the majority of Kaldina's (2018)'s design, an effective mixed-method study that

examined EFL students' perceptions and desires to write English poetry in an Indonesian poetic form. Meanwhile, with participants from a different cultural background, focusing on a different poetic form, and with an additional goal to examine the role of cultural attachment, I adapted my instrument to my research context and population and added four components to measure participants' cultural attachment, i.e., participants' perceived stress and intimidation as well as their perceived familiarity and cultural knowledge of *Da You Shi*. As is illustrated by Figure 1, I required Chinese EFL students to complete an online survey, where the participants composed a *Da You Shi* in English and responded to statements and questions regarding their perceptions and desires of writing poetry in English.
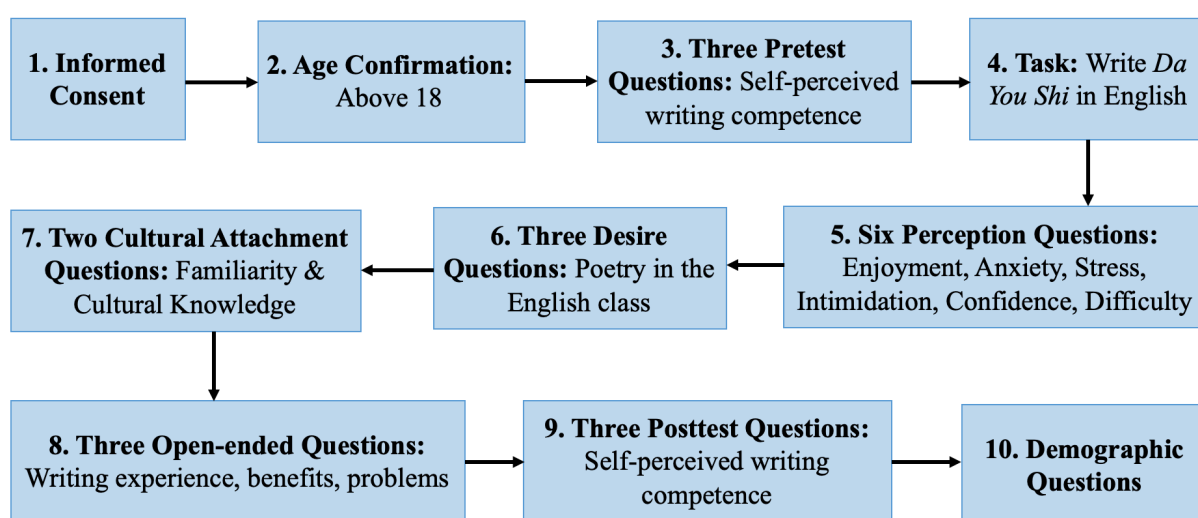

Figure 1. Content and procedures of the instrument

Specifically, after signing informed consent and confirming their age (Steps 1 & 2), on a 7-point rating scale, participants would respond to three pretest statements regarding their self-perceived English writing competency (Step 3), which is followed by a *Da You Shi* writing task (Step 4). To guide participants to compose *Da You Shi* in English, detailed instructions with an encouraging tone are offered, featuring three key characteristics of Chinese *Da You Shi*, i.e., consisting of four lines, with an end rhyme, and producing a sarcastic and/or funny effect. Besides the instructions, the below *Da You Shi* written by the author was provided as an example:

Title: P.H.D.
(1) Reading, writing, never end.
(2) Falling asleep with my pen.
(3) The three letters are NOT far away?
(4) Can't help asking: WHEN, WHEN, WHEN?!

After completing the *Da You Shi*, participants would respond to six statements regarding their perceived enjoyment, anxiety, stress, intimidation, confidence, and difficulty during their composing experience on a 7-point rating scale (Step 5). Then, participants would respond to three statements regarding their desire to write poetry in English (Step 6) and two statements regarding their familiarity and cultural knowledge of the poetic form of *Da You Shi* (Step 7), all on a 7-point rating scale. What followed were three open-ended questions concerning participants' *Da You Shi* writing experience and the potential benefits and problems of writing English poetry (Step 8). Before proceeding to answer demographic questions about their age, gender, class standing, and years of studying English (Step 10), participants would respond to three posttest statements regarding their self-perceived English writing competency (Step 9). The complete survey is presented in the appendix.
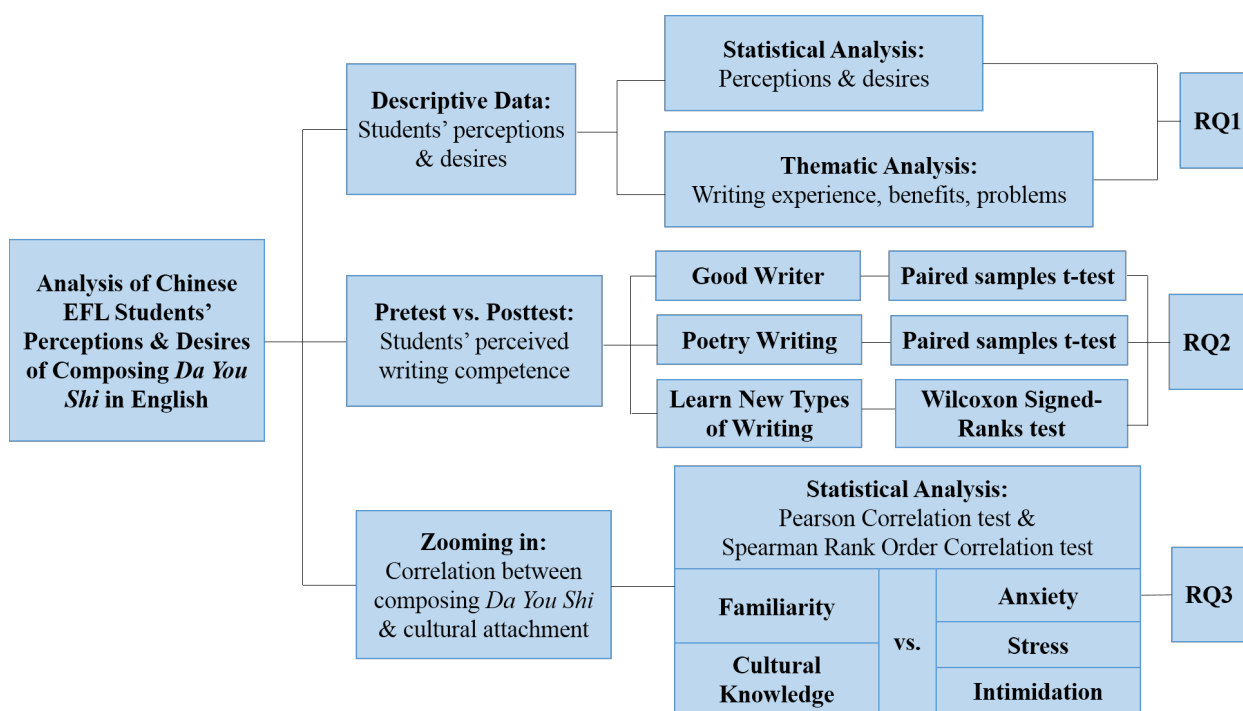
Data Analysis

Figure 2. A schematic outline of research foci and data-analyses

As illustrated by Figure 2, a variety of modes of data analysis was involved in this study. For Research Question 1, I adopted descriptive statistical analyses and an exploratory thematic analysis to describe participants' perceptions of writing *Da You Shi*, their desires to compose more *Da You Shi* and poetry, their experience of writing *Da You Shi* in English, and their perceived benefits and problems of poetry writing. For Research Question 2, based on the normality of the data, I conducted two paired samples t-tests and a Wilcoxon Signed-ranks test to examine whether

the participants' pre- and post-test ratings (their self-perception as a good writer, their ability to write poetry in English, and their confidence to learn new types of English writing) changed significantly after composing the *Da You Shi*, which helps us to understand how the *Da You Shi* writing experience influenced the participants' self-perceived writing competence. For Research Question 3, I conducted two Pearson Correlation tests and a Spearman Rank Order Correlation test to examine the role of cultural attachment in participants' *Da You Shi* writing experience.

Results

RQ1: In what ways do Chinese EFL students perceive writing *Da You Shi* in English?

   Statistical analysis: Perceptions. Descriptive data (Table 1) indicates that on a 7-point rating scale, the 67 participants in general perceived composing *Da You Shi* in English as an enjoyable experience (M = 5.4) with moderate difficulty (M = 3.69), which to some degree improved their confidence as a writer (M = 4.67) and caused low anxiety (M = 2.88).

   Statistical analysis: Desires. Descriptive data (Table 2) indicates that on a 7-point rating scale, the 67 participants expressed their willingness to compose additional *Da You Shi* (M = 5.24) and more poetry (M = 4.94) in their English class; they would also like more variety for the English writing tasks in the English class with a high Mean (5.54).

   Thematic analysis: Experiences, benefits, and problems of Composing *Da You Shi* in English. Participants' responses to the three open-ended questions were coded through a two-pass open thematic analysis, resulting in major categories demonstrating participants' perceived experience, benefits, and potential problems of composing *Da You Shi* in English (Table 3) rendered in three themes:

1. In terms of perceived experience of composing *Da You Shi* in English, on the one hand, participants overwhelmingly reported enjoying this writing experience, with 85 references of positive feelings such as interest, fun, enjoyment, satisfaction, self-expressing, etc., contrasted with 5 references of neutral feelings and 4 references of negative feelings. On the other hand, the participants reported experiencing various challenges in terms of rhyming requirements, inspiration, background knowledge, and vocabulary (44 references).

2. Participants recognized the *Da You Shi* writing task as rewarding with benefits such as the potential to improve their English proficiency (38 references), to arouse their interest in English (19 references), and to increase their knowledge about English writing and poetry (19 references).

3. As for potential problems of composing *Da You Shi* in English, participants voiced their concerns about the linguistic and genre demands, e.g., the demanding requirements of poetry writing (33 references), students' limited English proficiency (31 references), etc.

RQ 2: In what ways does writing *Da You Shi* in English influence Chinese EFL students' perceived ability as a writer of English?

Based on the descriptive analysis in SPSS, participants' pretest and posttest ratings of their perceptions of being a good writer of English and those of their perceived ability to write poetry in English are normally distributed, while their posttest ratings of their perceived abilities to learn new types of English writing are not normally distributed. Thus, I conducted two paired samples t-tests (Table 4) and a Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks test (Table 5) to compare participants' pre- and post-test ratings of their self-perceived writing competence, with the following results:

1. There was no significant difference in participants' perceptions of being a good writer of English between their pretest ratings (M = 4.27, SD = 1.462) and their posttest ratings (M = 4.37, SD = 1.380); t (66) = -0.701, p = 0.486.

2. There was a significant difference in participants' perceived ability to write poetry in English between their pretest ratings (M = 3.44, SD = 1.599) and their posttest ratings (M = 4.61, SD = 1.299); t (65) = -6.525, p = 0.0001.

3. There was no significant difference in participants' perceived abilities to learn new types of English writing between their pretest ratings (M = 5.23, SD = 1.322) and their posttest ratings (M = 5.46, SD = 1.185); Z = -1.687, p = 0.092.

RQ 3: In what ways does Chinese EFL students' cultural attachment to *Da You Shi* correlate with their perceived experience of composing *Da You Shi* in English?

To examine the hypothesis that there is a negative correlation between participants' cultural attachment to *Da You Shi* (familiarity with and cultural knowledge about *Da You Shi*) and their perceived levels of anxiety, stress, and intimidation, based on the normality of my data set, I conducted two Pearson Correlation tests and four Spearman Rank Order Correlation tests, revealing the following results (Tables 6 and 7):

1. There was a very weak, non-significant, positive correlation between participants' anxiety and their familiarity with *Da You Shi*, r = 0.143, *N* = 67, p = 0.249.

2. There was a very weak, non-significant, negative correlation between participants' anxiety and their cultural knowledge about *Da You Shi*, r = -0.004, *N* = 67, p = 0.971.

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3. There was a very weak, non-significant, positive correlation between participants' stress and their familiarity with *Da You Shi*, $r_s = 0.109$, $N = 67$, p = 0.380.

4. There was a very weak, non-significant, positive correlation between participants' stress and their cultural knowledge about *Da You Shi*, $r_s = 0.149$, $N = 67$, p = 0.228.

5. There was a weak, non-significant, negative correlation between participants' intimidation and their familiarity with *Da You Shi*, $r_s = -0.229$, $N = 67$, p = 0.062.

6. There was a very weak, non-significant, negative correlation between participants' intimidation and cultural knowledge about *Da You Shi*, $r_s = -0.149$, $N = 67$, p = 0.230.

Based on the results above, the hypothesis regarding the negative correlation between participants' cultural attachment to *Da You Shi* and their perceived levels of anxiety, stress, and intimidation is either rejected or supported only with a weak/very weak, non-significant negative correlation. That is to say, despite the natural assumption that culturally relevant poetry writing might help reduce EFL students' negative emotions during their composing experience, such an assumption is not supported statistically in my study. However, it does not mean that EFL students' familiarity with and cultural knowledge about *Da You Shi* did not play an important role in their composing experience; rather, further studies, especially those employing methods such as post-composing interviews and think-aloud protocols, are needed to delve into the role of culturally relevant genres in ESL/EFL students' composing experience.

Discussion

Key Findings

With a mixed-method research design, three key findings were achieved regarding the sixty-seven Chinese EFL students' *Da You Shi* writing experience in this study:

1. Participants in general perceived composing *Da You Shi* in English as an enjoyable experience with beneficial linguistic and genre challenges, which improved their confidence as a writer, offered them a sense of achievement, and caused relatively low anxiety. They expressed desires to both write more poetry in English and to welcome more variety of English writing in the English class.

2. Participants' perceived competence as a writer of English and their perceived abilities to learn new types of writing did not improve significantly after the poetry writing task. However, the *Da You Shi* writing experience significantly improved the participants' confidence in writing poetry in English.

3. The hypothesized negative correlation between participants' cultural attachment to *Da You Shi* and their perceived levels of anxiety, stress, and intimidation was not supported statistically.

Culturally Relevant Poetry Writing: An Enjoyable Experience with Valuable Challenges

Having replicated and adapted Kaldina's (2018) research design, my study largely corroborates Kaldina's (2018) findings in terms of EFL students' perceptions and desires of composing English poetry in a culturally relevant poetic form. Overall, participants in both Kaldina's (2018) and my studies reported perceiving English poetry writing as an enjoyable experience with valuable challenges; similarly, both studies revealed that the poetry writing experience significantly improved participants' confidence to write poetry in English and that participants expressed desires to write more poetry in the English classroom. Furthermore, the aggregation of Kaldina's (2018) and my studies does not only attest to the positive influence of culturally relevant poetry writing on EFL students but also align with other studies on L2 poetry writing with alternative foci. For example, our studies are in line with the findings of Hanauer and Liao (2016), which suggests that creative writing engaged L2 writers in more positive experiences compared with academic writing. Similarly, with scholars such as Akiyoshi (2017), Iida (2012; 2017) reporting multiple benefits of culturally relevant poetry writing, our studies add to L2 poetry writing scholarship by revealing the positive affect that EFL students might experience in culturally relevant poetry writing.

Besides the positive influence of culturally relevant poetry writing on EFL students' writing experience and confidence revealed by Kaldina (2018) and my study, my thematic analysis provides a nuanced understanding of my participants' perceptions of the *Da You Shi* writing experience. First, although my participants did address the difficulty of English poetry writing, they also reported achieving a sense of satisfaction by overcoming the linguistic and genre challenges, which can be illustrated by one of the participants' comments: "At first, it was a little bit difficult because I couldn't think of the words that rhyme. But later, I somehow smoothly figured it out during the writing process. When I finished writing it, I felt very satisfied." Second, the benefits and potential problems of English poetry writing perceived by the participants interestingly overlapped, which further confirms the coexistence of benefits and challenges of English poetry writing. It is noteworthy that one of the most salient problems pointed out by the participants was students' lack of English proficiency, while improving English proficiency was meanwhile the biggest benefit

identified by the participants. Similarly, on the one hand, the participants listed the demanding requirements of poetry writing as a potential problem; on the other hand, they also reported gaining knowledge about English writing and English poetry by navigating the demanding requirements of poetry writing. Such overlapping of the perceived benefits and problems is echoed by the participants' reported enjoyable experiences of composing *Da You Shi* in English: although composing poetry in English poses linguistic and genre challenges to EFL students, these challenges are beneficial and can be turned into opportunities for linguistic and rhetorical development, thus providing a sense of achievement arising from writerly growth.

Therefore, we can speculate, the challenges of English poetry writing did not prevent students from completing the writing task; rather, once students overcame the challenges, they not only produced an English poem but might also harvest a sense of satisfaction. Thus, I argue that EFL students' genre phobia toward English poetry writing (Garvin, 2013) might be more or less subjective and grounded in assumptions based on cultural values and personal beliefs. To help their students overcome such phobia, EFL instructors could engage them in culturally relevant poetry writing, which is a powerful means to scaffold EFL students in overcoming their genre phobia by providing them with a positive composing experience and enhancing their confidence as a writer.

Culturally Relevant Poetry Writing: An Opportunity for Meaningful Literacy

By examining the correlation between Chinese EFL students' cultural attachment to their local poetic form and their composing experience, my study moves beyond Kaldina' (2018) and initiates a new line of inquiry to investigate the role of cultural attachment in EFL students' writing. Based on my results, participants' cultural attachment to their local poetic form did not tend to correlate negatively with participants' perceived levels of anxiety, stress, and intimidation. However, a lack of statistical correlation does not mean that incorporating EFL students' cultural poetic forms in English poetry writing is meaningless; instead, culturally relevant poetry writing is a valuable literacy practice because it can provide EFL students with an opportunity to engage in meaningful literacy (Hanauer, 2012). With Kaldina's incorporation of *Pantun* and my incorporation of *Da You Shi* as a cultural poetic form as examples, culturally relevant poetry writing engages EFL writers in a personally contextualized, meaningful activity and enhances their expressive needs (Hanauer, 2012), which is supported by the qualitative results in my study. Specifically, my participants reported finding it easy to express themselves while composing the *Da You Shi* (11

instances) and finding the *Da You Shi* writing experience to improve their self-expression and provoke their thoughts (16 instances).

However, besides recognizing the value of culturally relevant poetry writing in generating meaningful literacy, I also remind readers of a possible constraint revealed by my data. Whereas meaningful literacy instruction aims to offer "a sense of depth and ownership" (Hanauer, 2012, p. 109), the qualitative results in my study revealed that my participants found it difficult to meet the dual requirements of rhyming and self-expression, as is demonstrated by a comment: "I felt frustrated when I couldn't find a rhyme to express what I want to say and have to change my idea." That is to say, although culturally relevant poetry writing can facilitate EFL students' self-expression by engaging them in meaningful literacy, the specific genre requirements might on the other hand restrict the content and hinder the depth of EFL students' expression in their poems. Without room to delve into the potential conflicts between writers' expressive needs and the poetic genre requirements in this study, I encourage future research to explore this topic.

Conclusion

To conclude, my study has corroborated and extended scholarship on L2 poetry writing. By incorporating poetic genres from EFL students' cultures, culturally relevant poetry writing is proved to provide EFL writers with an enjoyable composing experience, improve their confidence in English poetry writing, and engage them in meaningful literacy through scaffolded challenges. Despite the common genre phobia against L2 poetry writing, poetry writing as a pedagogy has the potential to enrich the EFL classroom by contributing a wider variety of linguistic and genre challenges. Therefore, I encourage EFL instructors to design their own culturally relevant poetry writing tasks to introduce their students to poetry writing and to guide them to capitalize on their knowledge of specific poetic genres in their cultures. EFL instructors should be sure to provide their students with necessary scaffolding, such as giving clear instructions, providing illustrative examples, and using encouraging language. In addition, culturally relevant writing tasks can be coupled with oral/written discussions to help EFL students to reflect on the benefits, challenges, and strategies that they perceive, encounter, or employ in the composing experience, thus raising their genre, linguistic, and cultural awareness. In short, I recommend that culturally relevant poetic writing be incorporated as an ESL/EFL pedagogy and a form of meaningful literacy to facilitate EFL students' writerly growth through beneficial challenges.

Two limitations of my study warrant future research: first, my study asked participants to respond to perception questions immediately after they completed their *Da You Shi*, which might

have influenced my participants' responses to some degree. Alternatively, a longitudinal study or an embedded teacher study could mitigate the influence and yield more valid outcomes. Additionally, by examining the role of cultural attachment via Likert scale questions, my study is only the beginning of a larger conversation about how EFL students' cultural attachment to certain poetic forms influences their composing experience. Thus, I call on interested researchers to conduct more rigorous inquiry, especially through open-ended questions and post-composing interview to generate a more in-depth understanding of EFL students' perceptions of the role of cultural attachment.

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Table 1

Descriptive Analysis of Students' Perceptions of Composing Da You Shi in English (N=67)

Item	Mean	SD	Skewness	95% Confidence Internals	
				Upper	Lower
Writing *Da You Shi* in English was an enjoyable experience.	5.40	1.268	-1.407	5.09	5.71
Writing *Da You Shi* in English made me feel anxious.	2.88	1.387	0.887	2.54	3.22
Writing *Da You Shi* in English gave me confidence as a writer.	4.76	1.169	-.396	4.48	5.05
Writing *Da You Shi* in English was difficult.	3.69	1.459	.267	3.33	4.04

Table 2

Descriptive Analysis of Students' Desires to Compose poetry in English (N=67)

Item	Mean	SD	Skewness	95% Confidence Internals	
				Upper	Lower
I would like to write additional *Da You Shi* in English in my English class.	5.24	1.195	.920	4.95	5.53
I would like to write more poetry in my English class.	4.94	1.413	-.888	4.60	5.28
I would like more variety for the English writing tasks in my English class.	5.54	1.439	-1.744	5.19	5.89

Table 3

Thematic Analysis of Students' Perceived Experiences, Benefits, and Problems

Item	Major Categories	References
Experience	Positive feelings (interesting, fun, enjoyable, satisfaction, easy for self-expression, etc.)	85
	Neutral feelings	5
	Negative feelings	4
	Challenges of composing *Da You Shi* (rhyming, requiring inspiration and background knowledge, vocabulary, etc.)	44
Benefits	Improving English proficiency	38
	Arousing interest in English learning	19
	Increasing knowledge about English writing and poetry	19
	Improving self-expression & provoking thinking	16
	Positive affective impact	16
Problems	Demanding requirements	33
	Students' limited English proficiency	31
	Students' lack of background knowledge about poetry	13
	Students' lack of creativity	3
	Poetry writing is not suitable for everyone	1
	Poetry writing focuses less on grammar	1

Table 4

Paired Samples T-test Results of Perceived Abilities: Pretests and Posttests

Item	Pretest		Posttest		t-test	p	N
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
I am a good writer in English.	4.27	1.462	4.37	1.380	-.701	.486	67
I can write poetry in English.	3.44	1.599	4.61	1.299	-6.525	.000*	66

Note. *$p < 0.05$

Table 5

Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks Test Result of Perceived Abilities to Learn New Types of English Writing:

Pretests and Posttests

Item	Pretest		Posttest		Z	p	N
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
I can learn new types of English writing.	5.23	1.322	5.46	1.185	-1.687	.092	66

Table 6

Pearson Correlation between Students' Anxiety and their Familiarity with and Cultural Knowledge

about Da You Shi (N=67)

		I'm familiar with *Da You Shi* in Chinese.	I have cultural knowledge of the poetic form of *Da You Shi*.
Writing *Da You Shi* made me feel anxious.	Pearson Correlation	.143	-.004
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.249	.971

Table 7

Spearman Rank Order Correlation among Students' Stress and Intimidation and their Familiarity

with and Cultural Knowledge about Da You Shi (N=67)

		I'm familiar with *Da You Shi* in Chinese.	I have cultural knowledge of the poetic form of *Da You Shi*.
When I wrote *Da You Shi* in English, I felt stressed.	Correlation Coefficient	.109	.149
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.380	.228
When I wrote *Da You Shi* in English, I felt intimidated.	Correlation Coefficient	-.229	-.149
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.062	.230

Appendix

Complete survey (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Somewhat Disagree, 4=Neither Agree or Disagree, 5= Somewhat Agree, 6=Agree, 7=Strongly Agree)

Category	Statements	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Pre-test	1. I'm a good writer.	
	2. I can write poetry in English.	
	3. I'm confident that I can learn new types of English writing.	
Writing Task	In this section, I invite you to participate in a fun writing activity: you might have heard about, learned about, or even written *Da You Shi* (打油诗) in Chinese; now, you are going to write a four-line *Da You Shi* in English! Here is some useful information that could help you get started: • It consists of four lines • Each line consists of similar numbers of words/syllables. (This requirement is flexible. Just try your best.) • It produces a sarcastic or funny effect. • The rhyming scheme is a-a-a-a or a-a-b-a (namely, the last syllables of three or four lines need to rhyme). • A title is optional. Here is an example: Title: P.H.D. (1) Reading, writing, never end. (2) Falling asleep with my pen. (3) The three letters are NOT far away? (4) Can't help asking: WHEN, WHEN, WHEN?! Although some people might consider poetry writing to be difficult, especially in a foreign language, I want you to relax and keep in mind that *Da You Shi* does not require writers to possess high levels of literary knowledge, because it does not have strict restrictions for tone or couplet (对偶). Try your best—you can do it! • Now, with the instructions and example above, create a four-line *Da You Shi* with whatever theme you like. Since *Da You Shi* usually aims to create a sarcastic and/or funny effect, you can think about what you would like to criticize, satire, or make fun of, etc. • Take your time and feel free to consult a dictionary. • Be creative, have fun, and we would love to see your original work😊	
Perceptions	1. Writing *Da You Shi* in English was an enjoyable experience.	
	2. Writing *Da You Shi* in English made me feel anxious.	
	3. When I wrote *Da You Shi* in English, I felt stressed.	
	4. When I wrote *Da You Shi* in English, I felt intimidated.	
	5. Writing *Da You Shi* in English gave me confidence as a writer.	
	6. Writing *Da You Shi* in English was difficult.	
	7. I would like to write additional *Da You Shi* in English in my English class.	
	8. I would like to write more poetry in English in my English class.	
	9. I would like more variety for the English writing tasks in my English class.	

| Cultural Attachment | 1. I'm familiar with *Da You Shi* in Chinese. |
| | 2. I have cultural knowledge of the poetic form of *Da You Shi*. |

Open-ended Questions	1. Think about your experience of writing *Da You Shi* in English just now. What was it like for you to write this sort of poem? In the box below please describe your feelings or impressions of writing the poem you wrote above.
	2. In the text box below, please answer the following question: What are the benefits of writing *Da You Shi* in English for Chinese students?
	3. In the text box below, please answer the following question: What are the problems of writing *Da You Shi* in English for Chinese students?

Post-test	1. I'm a good writer.
	2. I can write poetry in English.
	3. I'm confident that I can learn new types of English writing.

Demographic Questions

1. What is your age?
   ○ 18-22
   ○ 22-24
   ○ Above 24
2. What gender do you identify with?
   ○ Male
   ○ Female
   ○ Other
3. What is your class standing?
   ○ Freshman
   ○ Sophomore
   ○ Junior
   ○ Senior
   ○ Graduate student
4. How many years have you studied English?
   ○ 3-6 years
   ○ 7-10 years
   ○ More than 10 years