Critical Literacy Practices of Economically Privileged L2 English Readers: Literacy Education for Globalization

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With globalization, observation was made for the need to challenge cultural homogeneity and to diversify readers’ interpretations, defining this as critical literacy. There was a lack of research on engaging the dominant in developing critical minds. This study investigated reading practices of students from privileged background when they were asked to critique what was hegemonic in a globalized society. Three Korean students were from upper-middle class backgrounds and were successful academic achievers. A qualitative research design guided the data analysis of students’ emerging patterns in reading practices. Readers took complicated paths: students were explicit in current beliefs about poverty, were critical about those naturalized view, and were bought into the dominant belief system. The reading practices that re-visit readers’ cultural view and consider diverse perspectives were suggested. Hybrid literacy practices, as opposed to having ability to read across spaces or not\(^1\) was important. Critical positions emerged when including those missing perspectives.

**Key words** critical literacy, reading for transformation, globalization, English language learners

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\(^1\) The term ‘spaces’ was used from Appadurai’s (1996) notion of movement of global cultural flows. When readers imagine other people’s life experiences, I interpreted as reading beyond their cultural spaces. Also, borrowed from Kostogriz and Tsolidis (2008) ‘transcultural literacies as movements through space (real and imagined)’ and Appadurai’s (1990) imagination as social practice, when my students tried to imagine what it would be like to be in those situations, this type of reading is called imagined movement or travel to imagined spaces of others.
1. INTRODUCTION

What kinds of Second Language (hereafter, L2) English readers do we want to develop for globalization? With internationalization, people are bombarded by the movement of information and people, and of political, cultural, and financial commodities (Appadurai, 1996; Hannerz, 2009; Willis, Enloe, & Minoura, 1994). In the process, English and its ideological perspectives became one of the normative standards in individuals’ lives (See the discussion of cultural homogeneity from Bloommaert, 2008 and Hannerz, 2009 for world culture; also see Kachru & Larry, 2008 for English imperialism). English language learners across different social contexts are struggling not only to learn linguistic skills, but also to understand cultural and political knowledge embedded in English language skills; they even feel pressured to acquire the same ways of communicating and thinking as English native speakers (See Bloommaert, 2005 and Street, 1984 for discussion from socio-cultural perspectives of language learning). Bloomaert (2005) defined this type of unintended consequence of globalization as cultural homogeneity. This phenomenon in English education was addressed as English imperialism, because English was used to maintain western interests (Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 1992, 2001).

Bloommaert (2005) and Street (1984) argued that literacy needs to be more about inviting diverse perspectives, instead of a means to impose the dominant socio-cultural, and political perspectives (in this case, those of the dominant English-speaking groups). Not many studies have addressed cultural homogeneity in the context of L2 literacy education, especially with a translocal or transcultural framework, where people are involved in globalized movement across spaces. This paper investigates a pedagogical possibility to address complex ways to critique the global cultural homogeneity to envision using literacy for social justice (Bloommaert, 2008).

There are populations of English language learners who are involved in transcultural movements across different local boundaries. Students from foreign countries to English-speaking countries are among those (This paper will use “early study-abroads” to explain this particular group of students). Their social positioning is different from those immigrants who did not have choices but moving to a new location for economic and political survival (e.g., refugees and immigrants from South America in the US). Early study-abroads generally come from affluent backgrounds, get an elite education and financial support from their families. Previous research on transculturalism (Appadurai,
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1996; Bloommaert, 2005; Guerra, 2007, 2008) focused on critiquing marginalization of these immigrants and empowering them for cultural diversity. However, there was less attention paid to working on students’ social privileges for participating in transformative discussion on cultural domination and diversity. When L2 readers of English with dominant power can take critical perspectives about what seems privileging in their cultural backgrounds, it will suggest an important way to exercise literacy practices for social justice both from the dominant and the marginalized’s social positions.

This study explored students’ relationships between their academic and economic privileges and critical literacy practices (literacy for critiquing and transforming the world) (Freire, 2000, Lewison et al., 2007). To learn about how these privileged students were engaged in translocal literacies (Kostogriz & Tsolidis, 2008) that invited them to challenge cultural domination and homogeneity to embrace diversity, this literacy curriculum centered around the issue of poverty. Poverty was selected to explore what it meant to develop critical perspectives about the issue of others that these target students had not previously considered. The theoretical notions of translocal movements, literacy against cultural homogeneity, and critical literacy practices for imagining social transformation support the present critical literacy curriculum for the purpose of challenging students’ privileges and of engaging them to take critical perspectives that appreciate other values and life experiences through reading in English.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Globalization and Cultural Homogeneity for the Privileged

Many anthropologists identified the impact of globalization in different local communities (Appadurai, 1996; Gutierrez, 2008; Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003; Hannerz, 1990; Kostogriz & Tsolidis, 2008). They found that critical realization of people’s, especially minorities’ unfair social positions related to global movement and could connect to raising their critical awareness and embracing diverse values and cultures. For instance, Appadurai (1996) explained how the global cultural economy became complicated with globalization, and how communication across the boundaries of nations caused people to interact based on the disjuncture among economy, culture, and politics. He proposed that exploration of the disjuncture could be understood by investigating the relationships between five dimensions of cultural flows: ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes and ideoscapes (movements of people, media, technology, finance, and ideology). In the process, especially minorities could realize that these movements of cultural commodities did not help explaining their social lives when considering its
influences on “the historical, linguistic, and political situatedness of different sorts [of individuals]” (p. 33). While movements encourage cultural diversity, their own situatedness would feel still unfair. Appadurai argued that people could become critical about the multiple worlds in this sense, because people understood more about the unfair historical, linguistic and political situatedness of themselves, which is a matter of perspective rather than by objectively given relation. Because it is not objectively given, globalization is likely to help them challenge those perspectives that govern their social situatedness (for example, immigrants or multicultural families in rather homogeneous societies). As a result, people contest what seems natural in the official mind and the entrepreneurial mentality that frames their imagination of the world (Appadurai, 1996). This research interprets Appadurai’s argument of being critical about multiple worlds as challenging what seems normative for globalized communities, thus raising their critical voices about disrupting institutionalized views of power. When people are aware of how they are situated historically, politically, and linguistically in a global community, they are more likely to understand that a hegemonic globalized culture frames perceptions and positions that they have not chosen for themselves.

However, cultural homogeneity, instead of critiquing situatedness and pursuing cultural diversity, is what we usually experience with globalization, the opposite of what Appadurai suggested above. When different cultural commodities merged and intermingled together, hegemonically strong cultural norms or knowledge tended to become a standard for historical, linguistic, and political situatedness of people. One evidence is English becoming a linguistic standard, homogenizing international communities, rather than sharing equal situatedness with other local languages (See Pennycook, 1994; Philipson, 1992, 2001). Another example can be found from the body of research on translocality and identity of what Guerra (2007) named as the disenfranchised. The minorities or the disenfranchised’s realization of their own situatedness did not smoothly move toward raising their critical voices. Rather, their negotiation with a newly defined globalized context was about compromising and becoming submissive. With globalization, cultural homogeneity even strengthened the hierarchical structures of people, without raising and developing critical minds about social situatedness.

To elaborate, Guerra (2007) came up with the notion of transcultural repositioning to explain this individualized process- defined by him as rhetorical work. He recognized how the range of transcultural opportunities differed between the privileged and the disenfranchised. The disenfranchised went through transcultural repositioning at their disposal (assimilating to a new context by getting rid of their original cultural identity), as they were less likely to move back and forth productively among social classes, languages and ways of thinking. He elaborated on the situations of marginalized groups of people, assimilating into a new society by giving up their linguistic and cultural resources to fit
into the mainstream culture. This is a way cultural homogeneity silences cultural minorities.

To interpret this phenomenon of globalization with voice, Bloommaert (2005) argued how translocality needed to be unpacked when a person moves across spaces. He noted that “one does not just ‘have’ or ‘know’ a language. Such seemingly innocuous phrases hide a complex and highly sensitive political-economic dynamics of acquisition and differential distribution” (p. 61). When a person is situated in a new social context, what s/he brings as resources, such as cultural knowledge, norms and values from his/her original social context are re-evaluated and re-interpreted. Bloommaert argued how the resources in one space did not travel well, thus people from minority language speaking backgrounds were treated as unimportant and unappreciated in their new context (See also Guerra, 2007). Bloommaert concluded this idea of obstacles of traveling of cultural values with the notion of voice:

Voice in the era of globalization becomes a matter of the capacity to accomplish functions of linguistic resources translocally, across different physical and social spaces. Voice, in other words, is the capacity for semiotic mobility—a capacity very often associated with the most prestigious linguistic resources (‘world languages’ such as English, literacy, and more recently multimodal internet communication) and very often denied to resources ranking lower on the scales of value that characterize orders of indexicality (minority languages, ‘unwritten’ languages, dialects, and so forth). (p. 69)

In this example, we observe how particular values or resources go through or do not go through relocation from one location to another. To contextualize this type of globalization in English reading practices, we can understand how English readers experience cultural homogeneity differently; the process of negotiation of different knowledge can vary depending on readers’ social positions; in terms of their gender, socio-economic status, education, ethnicity and race, etc.

What is missing from this literature of literacy is how the universally powerful voices of minority groups could be addressed in critical literacy research on globalization. That is, there is a lack of research on different translocal movements of people with strong privileges. Especially with people with strong privileges that are valued with cultural homogeneity, how we help them become critical about unfair cultural homogeneity (Appadurai, 1996; Hannerz, 1990) is what we need more information about. This study applied this idea into L2 literacy education to unpack the process of critiquing people’s situatedness about a social problem that students only thought from the privileged perspective (a perspective of cultural homogeneity).
2.2. Critical Literacy for Globalization: Engaging the L2 Privileged

Considering L2 English reading as an objective linguistic skill is not appropriate when we think of global cultural flows that blur cultural and local boundaries in rather unfair manners (Appadurai, 1996; New London Group, 1996). In explaining the concept of “glocality,” Sarroub (2008) defined literacy as ways of building relationships between themselves and those who sponsor their connections with social institutions or local, national, and global economies. We need to be aware of the impact of power embedded in naturalized ways of reading in English. Luke and Carrington (2002) furthered the recognition of power as follows:

but if we are looking for a refashioning of literacy as a normative preparation for a critical engagement with glocalised economies- we would need to begin talking about literacy as a means for building cosmopolitan world views and identity: of enhancing, in Bourdieur’s terms, historical memories and contemporary understandings of how these economies of flows actually structurally position (and perhaps exclude) one, how differing dispositions will have different effects in the various fields of flows, and how to actively engage with those fields in agentive and transformative ways (p. 16)

Reading in English above involves readers’ making critical connections to local, national, and global forces that frame “appropriate reading of the globalized world in particular institutionalized ways.” Literacy also means raising our critical voices about positions and dispositions, as well as making a difference in transformative ways.

Believing that literacy education should address unfair power distribution of glocalised economies, Lewison et al. (2007) argued that literacy should function as critical social practices that critique existing stereotypes about people and question what seems natural and normal (disrupting the commonplace). “Disrupting the commonplace” helps us invite different ways of looking at things by problematizing existing knowledge in our everyday lives (Shor, 1992) and by analyzing texts to understand how people are positioned in stereotypical ways (Luke & Freebody, 1997; Shannon, 1995; Vasquez, 2000). In this dimension, students understand how texts position them and question stereotypical representations of their experiences. Second, in this model, literacy is about including missing perspectives in readers’ critiques of different reading texts (inviting multiple perspectives). Students take into consideration multiple viewpoints on texts and people. When reading, students approach the texts from different angles: two of which might be that of dominant and marginalized perspectives. This helps to understand others because students can imagine what it would feel like to be marginalized, should they come from an
economically dominant background. This can be one way of considering dispositions. In this paper, these two critical reading practices were relevant when working with students from the dominant cultural backgrounds, as both strategies are connected to challenging cultural homogeneity.

The researcher was interested in learning about how we can address these critical social practices into our L2 literacy education. How L2 English readers maneuvered across different globalized imagined spaces in reading texts and how those reading texts informed their relationships across different global boundaries shed some light on the ways of disrupting what they believed as normal. This research tried to understand if the students’ literacy practices involved critical reflection about what was taken for granted and helped them identify their emerging positions or dispositions as globalized social beings. This will broaden our conceptualization of L2 literacy as more than skill acquisition. At the same time, the way literacy functions as a tool for challenging our stereotypes and taken-for-granted social situatedness of different people against cultural homogeneity will strongly contribute the ways to envision literacy education that addresses globalization and cultivation of critical minds.

2.3. A Journey to be Critical Readers about Other People’s Life with Fluid Literacy

Critical reading practices can be understood as global literacy practices through imagining alternative ways to situate people and through encouraging students to take multiple perspectives that they would not take themselves. Then we come to realize how important it is to engage students to move across different (real and imagined) spaces of others, outside of their own social situatedness. Imagination as a social practice can be a method of helping students to work on critical reading practices. For example, Appadurai (1990) noted that imagination is a type of social practice that constantly imagine something different from what is actually happening in our society. Because people can consider possible alternatives to their daily lives and imagination can alter our worldviews through critical awareness, imagination finally changes into possibilities. According to Appadurai (1990), in a globalized world the imagination no longer only addresses to “mere fantasy […], simple escape […], elite pastime […], and no longer mere contemplation.” Thus, “the imagination has become an organized field of social practices, a form of work (in the sense of both labor and culturally organized practice) and a form of negotiation between sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibility” (Appadurai, 1990, p. 49). Thinking of literacy as imagined social practices about the world, we need to consider how imagination plays a role of challenging and transforming our globalized culture through critical reading about the world. This type of literacy involves negotiation between readers’
realities with what’s presented as a reality from texts. This enables readers to engage in imaginative social practices in their connections to the world (See Lewison et al., 2007 for more details on literacy as critical social practices). Literacy allows movement across different cultural boundaries to broaden our transformative possibilities. In the concept of imagination as a social practice, movement (both real and imagined) is a crucial component of reading. While moving across different cultural boundaries, readers look for new possibilities, or alternatives in their vision of the globalized world. This study investigated how L2 readers of English learned to exercise imagination as a social practice to visualize and imagine alternatives about the global cultural flows that structured hierarchies of local cultures.

The movement across imagined and real cultural spaces brings important methodological insights to literacy education and research. Kearney’s (1995) notion of mobility as transcultural social processes explains that when people are engaged in literacy practices, they tend to construct hybrid space as they negotiated multiple cultural locations and eventually come up with new forms of knowledge. This can be interpreted as imagined movement across local boundaries and negotiation between readers’ previous knowledge with what the texts invite them to believe, desirably to the directions of challenging what is dominant in readers’ minds. It is important to understand what kinds of related beliefs readers bring to their literacy practices, but it is more important to track the processes of negotiation in their imagined socialization in transcultural spaces (Guerre, 2007, 2008; Medina, 2010). Medina (2010) identified the same transformative and dynamic process of exercising social practices “in people’s everyday engagement with texts, popular imaginaries (e.g., iconography, mythology, storytelling, or oral traditions), transnational television media, and other forms of rich cultural expression (such as in the work on Lation/a cultural studies of Anzaldua, 1987; Cantu, 1995; or Gomez-Pena, 1996)” (Medina, 2010, p. 41) (See also Guetierrez, 2008).

Kostogriz and Tsolidis (2008) discussed DeCerteau’s (1984, cited in Kostogriz & Tsolidis, 2008) notion of “trajectory” to explain transcultural literacies as movements (reading) through spaces (real and imagined). They focused on the literacy that people make connections to their participation in hybrid spaces. Medina (2010) similarly argued the importance of tracking students’ real and imagined meaning making in their literacy discussion in a translocal framework rather than thinking of literacy practices as confined connections between texts and readers. Medina (2010) illustrated that “[M]apping spatial trajectories in discourse then provided a lens with which to move away from assigning fixed meanings to people’s participation in cultural practices (Gutierre & Rogoff, 2003) and move toward a dynamic understanding of how people make sense and negotiate across places and communities” (p. 42). The notion of trajectory was useful for the present research to analyze complicated literacy practices these L2 students would take up. It was
convincing that because critical literacy practices were for challenging what was taken for
granted within the students’ own situatedness, it would be crucial to understand readers’
fluid, complex, and contradictory navigations of different locality. It was investigated how
these students’ understanding of L2 reading texts involved constant transformation and re-
negotiation of their previous knowledge and beliefs to imagine other perspectives and to
embrace diverse ways of being through critical literacy practices. These processes cannot
be understood either from fixed meanings of participation in cultural practices or from
confined interactions in a particular locality. These studies helped us to concentrate more
on the students’ process of negotiation through imagining or moving across diverse
cultural boundaries.

This research, therefore, intentionally highlighted students’ strong identity and
documented how they travelled across different cultural boundaries when the literacy
activities asked them to take critical perspectives and to critique cultural homogeneity that
was not fair for others. This paper tried to understand what it would be like to help develop
critical minds that could challenge what seemed natural and common across different
cultural borders (that is, cultural homogeneity). The research questions included:

1) Is it useful to bring in critical literacy practices (inviting multiple perspectives and
disrupting the commonplace) to develop critical approaches to a naturalized
worldview from a globally dominant cultural framework?
2) What is it like to stretch the imagination across different cultural boundaries
(through literacy practices) that are required for social beings that need to deal
with cultures other than their own?
3) What hybrid or fluid process of enculturation does it involve when students are
invited to use literacy to take perspectives outside of their cultural boundaries?

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1. Research Context and Participants

This research was part of a larger research project examining Korean early study-
abroad’s engagement with different media, literature, and field works on poverty. This
research was my one-year literacy engagement with three students from Korean upper-
middle class backgrounds, studying in American elementary schools. This class was an
additional extra-curricular L2 reading class that students were volunteered to participate in
an afterschool setting.

From Units 1 to 4, the goal was to get to know the target students and their original
capacities to critique different social justice issues. From unit 5, poverty was selected as a topic to challenge cultural homogeneity with economical or financial globalization, as these students were not sensitive about this topic, had not thought of inequality with economic access, while they were very critical about their own situatedness as English language learners and as a racial being. Economic and academic privileges positioned these students as those with strong power, which was appropriate to explore the research questions.

Jiyae (12 years old) and Minjeong (11 years old) were females and had been to the U. S. A. for one and half years by the time this research was conducted. Youngjoon (11 years old), a male, has been in the US for six months. They were 6th graders and studied in the US while one of their parents pursued a higher degree in a local university in the Midwest. This particular group was selected because they brought strong backgrounds, different from the populations who came to the US against their will and experienced unfair treatment because of their low socio-economic status. Another reason for selection was that their early experiences with studying abroad would bring dynamic spatial locality to their literacy discussion.

3.2. Data Collection

The participants discussed different representations of poverty through children’s literature, media (magazines, internet video clips, visual images and newspaper articles) as well as observing poverty in their present local community (See Appendix A for the whole curriculum). A total of 49 class sessions were conducted and all the class sessions were video-taped. The researcher took her field notes and reflections after each class session. This article only included three discrete class sessions for analysis (See Appendix B). These class sessions were selected because its representativeness of the whole data sets (See Appendix A for the patterns of students’ reactions). In addition, these data sets showed strong spatial markers in students’ discourses and they took clear positions on the issue of poverty that helped see the interactions of their physical and mental movements across different spaces. Also, students illustrated complicated trajectories from their personal histories of movement and navigations beyond their own lives. These data sets included students’ contradictory and complicated literacy practices that both hindered and facilitated their disruption of the dominant cultural norms on poverty. Other class sessions included similar findings that this paper illustrated and the analysis can be representative of what the whole data showed as students’ reactions.

3 All the names are pseudonyms.
3.3. Data Analysis

The researcher went through the data and indicated both imagined and real spatial markers as units of analysis. The following analytic questions were answered:

1) How did spaces/locality enter students’ literacy discussion about poverty?
2) What was the impact of movement across spaces (space-specific) in their literacy about poverty?

The researcher related spatial markers with content words that showed these students’ emerging thoughts. These new thoughts illustrated how students were engaged in literacy practice that questioned the dominant cultural framework about poverty; and how major content words were connected with conjunctions, and pronouns as indicators. Furthermore, how past tense as confirmation of their actual experiences became important, as linking more than one idea showed students’ complicated and contradictory literacy practices.

The transcript from the end of Unit 8, class 19 from Table 1 was after we read extensively about different texts on poverty (the actual analysis is included in the Findings section of this article). In this transcript, the markers of spaces, such as Mexico, an ancient pyramid, there (again, an ancient pyramid), imagined space of poor people’s lives, imagined world with particular ways of treating poor people were identified. Then, extra attention was paid to action words related to these spatial markers, in this case: selling, keep telling, threw rocks, buy, look down upon, ignore, deserve, work hard, get jobs, etc.

The researcher investigated the relationships between these content words with spatial markers. In the process, negative forms such as can’t, don’t, and didn’t became important linking ideas between students’ experiences, previous knowledge, and their emerging perspectives after they navigated across imagined spaces. In Jiyae’s case the conjunction, but sometimes, is critical in visualizing her positions on the dominant cultural beliefs about the impoverished life experiences when she imagined those spaces.
FIGURE 1
Sample Data Analysis Script

T: Yeah. I think there are something going on that make poor people not have same experiences with rich people.

Jiyae: Well, but sometimes, I don’t think poor people are treated fairly?
I went to Mexico to see an ancient pyramid. There were some people who are selling souvenirs. And they keep telling tourists to come-come to see their goods and some threw rocks at them.

T: Yes. That sometimes happens.

Minjeong: (gasp)

T: Well, what do you think? (To Youngjoon)

Youngjoon: No. They don’t have money. Poor people can’t buy many things.

T: Yeah.

Minjeong: (Raise her hand) And then I think poor people (suddenly switch to Korean) 가여운거 같아요. 좀 무시도 하고, 좀 깨보기도 하고 [Translation: I feel sorry for poor people. People look down upon them and ignore them.]

T: Yes, yes. Sometimes. Well, do you think it’s right to treat poor people badly just because they are poor?

Minjeong: No

Jiyae: (shaking her head) (After thinking for a while) well, but sometimes, poor people deserve it.

T: Uh-huh

Jiyae: Because they didn’t work hard when everybody else does. So that’s why they are poor and they didn’t get jobs.

Once the researcher came up with how spatial markers were situated within students’ translocal movements, she elaborated upon Gee’s (1999) building tasks. This critical discourse analysis helped to see how students made sense of poverty through different literacy practices by visualizing what they thought about reading texts. Gee defined building tasks as “the tasks through which we use language to construct and/or construe [a] situation network, at a given time and place, in certain ways” (p. 85). Particular attention was focused on the ways students talked about poverty in relation to world and political building.

In world building, the researcher concentrated on the ways in which the students constructed particular realities about poverty. She asked what was present and absent, possible and probable, in representing poverty and the lives of the poor and what meanings were given to these elements in students’ discussions. Using cues or clues assembled situated meanings about what is here and now (taken as) “reality,” what is here and now taken as present and absent, concrete and abstract, “real” and “unreal,” probable, possible, and impossible (Gee, 1999, p. 86).

In political building, the researcher asked how students discussed the availability of social goods, using cues or clues to construct the nature and relevance of various “social goods,” such as status and power, and how their discussion of social goods related to their beliefs about poverty. The questions below helped the researcher unpack the students’ ways to make sense of available social goods and their relation to political building:
1) What social goods (e.g. status, power, aspects of gender, race, and class, or more narrowly defined social networks and identities) were relevant (and irrelevant) in this situation? How were they made relevant (and irrelevant), and in what ways?

2) How were these social goods connected to the cultural models and discourses operative in the situation?

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Visualizing the Dominant Cultural Flow

These students had a hard time making connections to different literature that address people’s lives with economical struggles. In Unit 5, students did not want to negotiate their original ideas about poverty. In our 14th meeting (Unit 6), the teacher decided to take students to a local trailer park and to a gated community to enrich their concrete interactions. In our 15th class, students wrote an essay on their experiences. Here is an essay from Minjeong (I have changed the name of our local town as “our town,” and removed the names of the neighborhoods. The researcher did not sanitize the students’ grammatical mistakes to ensure authenticity of the data. Minjeong’s essay was representative of all three students’ reactions, in terms of surprises and failure to be critical about what they observed):

**FIGURE 2**

Minjeong Essay on Local Communities

When I first saw Trailer House, I was very surprised. Because I didn’t think our town had Trailer House. I just thought Florida had Trailer house. But one of the Trailer house was very beautiful and cute.

Second, when I saw the rich neighborhood’s houses, it was big, clean, and more prettier than the Trailer house. I thought I would like to live in one of these houses.

Third, When I went to another rich houses, I was impressed. Because Korea doesn’t have that kind of big & pretty houses.

After I saw all of these things, I thought some of people in our town are poor but some of people are not.

Here, her discourse markers for spaces include: Trailer house, our town, Florida, the Rich neighborhood, one of these houses (villa), another rich houses and Korea. Her descriptions about these localities are: had, very beautiful and cute, big, clean, more prettier, doesn’t have, poor. Her own feelings indicated: very surprised, didn’t think, just thought, would like to live, was impressed, and thought. Her cohesion throughout this writing is linked by her use of “but” and “because.” Minjeong has built clear worlds for poor and rich people.
She used “but” to show how poor people’s housing, trailers, are usually not beautiful and cute. In her political building of the poor’s world, they usually have less resource to make their neighborhoods nice-looking. On the other hand, she implied rich neighborhoods and mansions as something that deserved people’s respect and positive impression. She admitted how people would admire what they had, as if it was what rich people achieved themselves. Her discourse implied how people with economic power are likely to be respected. She herself wanted to live like them and admired what she imagined about those with greater economic power. Her literacy did not articulate more than one perspective that juxtaposed the dominant and the missing voices or did not challenge how people are usually treated in a globally dominant cultural flow. Also, her literacy was not about transforming our histories with economic inequity. When invited to imagine others’ life experiences, Minjeong re-confirmed social hierarchies among people and stabilized the status quo (no sign of disrupting the commonplace from Lewison et al., 2007). This literacy practice was interpreted as supporting cultural homogeneity that complied with her own cultural experiences and beliefs. This was the opposite direction of globalization for diversity, as Minjeong did not challenge what she had experienced.

By distinguishing two different worlds with discrete economic status, Korea and American neighborhoods (rich villa town and nice big houses), Minjeong affirmed her position as an economic being. She did not realize if her current local community had people live in trailer parks. She might have actually travelled physically to the trailer park. However, she failed to think of our target inquiry issue more than just superficial manners. It was superficial, because she remained to explain her own perceptions and feelings about this fieldtrip without emotionally moving to those who were misfortunate. Bloommaert (2005) and Guerra (2007) talked about re-interpretation or re-negotiation of cultural identities and resources in globalized local spaces, especially the disenfranchised. However, Minjeong demonstrated a smooth journey, as her socio-economic status was globally or translocally powerful. Her identity with economic privileges provided her a luxury to have power across two cultural spaces (Korea and America). It is a contradictory analysis from Bloommaert and Guerra and seems to show how people with power and strength can travel across different local spaces smoothly without negotiation. This smooth journey seems to hinder Minjeong’s critical literacy practices about poverty. This pattern was prevalent with all three students’ reader responses in the data, shown in 9 units out of 13 units (See Appendix A). Literacy practices, such as encouraging multiple perspectives and revisiting what is natural for our students through imagining others’ lives, were implicitly resisted in this way.
4.2. Moving Across Cultural Spaces for the Privileged

As the researcher included the data for sample data analysis in Methodology (Unit 8, our 19th class), the participants read various texts about poverty and had a discussion. This data was analyzed, not only because Jiyae’s explicit resistance was important, but also because how dynamic and contradictory students’ imagined journeys to poverty confirmed complicated translocal enculturation that needed to be interpreted as a process, instead of thinking whether or not students were resisting or transforming their original positions about poverty (Medina, 2010). Furthermore, the reactions of three students shown here were representative of how they responded to the curriculum in general (Appendix A).

To analyze the data from Figure 1, Youngjoon’s world and political buildings were associated with negative forms of “don’t” and “can’t.” He seemed to move to other people’s world to imagine what it would be like to be poor. He indicated his negotiation of his personal identity to include others’ perspectives. It was the evidence of critical social practices; because he took a position that he would not take within his own cultural boundary. For example, his discourse demonstrated how poor people are not capable of buying or doing things that a culture of consumerism or materialism encourages us to follow as major social norms. Because they do not have resources to follow what seems natural and normal, they feel disempowered. Although Youngjoon did not go further on critiquing dominant cultural norms, he implied feeling of injustice that came from his imagined local movement. This was a re-negotiation or re-interpretation of his own cultural boundaries and a starting point of his critical mind. In the process, Youngjoon seemed to ground his comments on his previous knowledge that came from his own interactions with people, his relationships across communities, and his connection with others through media, global politics, and economics. He was engaged in literacy practices that came from a hybrid mixture of cultural spaces, an indication of the impact of globalization for critiquing unfair situatedness of others. In his response, we can see how his literacy practices were about inviting multiple perspectives and challenging what was dominant in his own cultural space.

Minjeong also illustrated her moving outside her own cultural location. This was a rhetorical work (Guerra, 2007) of revisiting what seems natural and evidence of experiencing multiple worlds to be critical about poverty (Appadurai, 1996). She switched into Korean as if she felt emotional about what she experienced as a result of imagined movement to Mexico, where people experience physical violence. Her gasp showed how she believed physical violence as something not acceptable and implied her critical view on cultural norms that allowed those types of inhumane acts. Because she could relate to others, she elaborated how she felt sorry for the struggles of the impoverished. Minjeong made use of her discourse to critique what is dominant in poor people’s lives in today’s
society. This is an evidence of exercising critical literacy practices for questioning and for imagining social transformation. What was taken for granted or common with cultural homogeneity for the poor was challenged in her discourse. Youngjoon and Minjeong’s critical literacy practices occurred only four times across 13 class units and were not frequent, while the pattern of critical social practices was similar in that they all showed moving from their own space into others, thus showed more understanding toward others. This is one way how imagining others through challenging their own world and inviting more than one perspectives encouraged students’ critical reflection about a social issue.

However, Jiyae’s discourse consisted of different worlds and political buildings, which were much more common way to make sense of poverty (10 units across 13 units). Her first storytelling about Mexico and physical violence was to argue her second point about ‘the poor deserves to be poor, because they are lazy and don’t want to work hard.” She was aware of social injustice of poor people from her actual trip to Mexico. However, she stayed in her own world that constructed a hierarchy between the poor and the privileged. She described a dominant stereotype about the poor as lazy individuals. She also articulated one prevalent social belief that working hard always makes people succeed economically. She seemed to naturalize what she believed and what her own life experience was like as true for everybody else without critical imagination of others’ social spaces. Jiyae’s cultural belief disguised any type of marginalization people experienced from economic, social, cultural, and educational access. Even though some poor people would try the hardest, they could not meet the standards for economically desirable life styles that our global cultural flow encouraged us to pursue. Instead of questioning the social structure or system, Jiyae bought into a dominant belief about poor people as lazy beings and the rich as diligent beings who deserved to enjoy what they have achieved, a strong impact of cultural homogeneity and what can be considered as a dominant stereotype about the poor. Moving across different cultural boundaries did not require Jiyae to revisit what she believed as normal. This type of literacy practice was interpreted as an imposition of globally dominant social norms that seemingly and effortlessly traveled across different spaces.

4.3. Literacy for Disruption

In our 25th class session (Unit 12), we finished discussing a text: *Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys* written by E. F. Howard (2000). There was an interesting observation from students’ conversation about locality. The similar pattern was observed 9 times out of 15 units and a very dominant way to make connections to readings. For instance, Minjeong and Youngjoon brought in their unique physical movement from Korea to America with particular racial, ethnic identities. Minjeong here talked about how stereotyping minority
racial groups affected her, and how Korean Americans experienced unfairness. Youngjoon added that stereotyping people was wrong:

(...)  
T: That’s a very interesting observation. Where do you think you have learned it from? Do you think that’s true?  
Minjeong: What is true?  
T: Black people and people who are not White are poor?  
Minjeong: No.  
T: And then they are not educated and then they are not having good life or something?  
Minjeong: No. No. In here, many Korean people are living here and then they are very. Many Korean people here have very good education. That’s why they came here, because they are good.  
T: Uh-huh  
Minjeong: good at studying?  
T: Uh-huh  
Minjeong: It doesn’t mean if you are Asians, you don’t have money. (inaudible) They can’t come here if they don’t have money.  
T: Ah. But many people seem to think that White people are rich and that’s a good thing to be White. I think that’s a very powerful comment you are making here. What about you, Youngjoon? Have you thought about that?  
Youngjoon: Kind of.  
T: Yeah? What are your thoughts on that?  
Youngjoon: It’s pretty sad and bad.  
T: Uh-huh  
Youngjoon: There are some people, like African Americans are rich?  
T: Yeah, some of them. We have talked about one person who is really rich. Remember? Tiger Woods!  
Minjeong: Ah!  
T: Anyway, ok, keep going!  
Youngjoon: So, that’s kind of 고정관념 [Translation: Stereotyping]?  
T: Stereotyping  
Youngjoon: Stereotypes are sad and bad?  
(...)  

Minjeong explained what people usually believed about Korean study-abroads. Being in the U. S. A. (one locality) meant having excellent academic abilities (a resource that travels
across spaces without decreasing in its value). However, as Bloommaert’s (2005, 2008) notion of stratification of identity, her racial identity seemed to be marginalized in her new social context. Her direct experiences had her challenge the dominant discourse around minorities and their negative representations in our translocal culture. Her discourse addressed the nature of critical social practices and imagination for transformation, as she imagined a better world without stereotyping minorities. Similar to what Guerra (2005) found as the disenfranchised negotiation to a new context, this was an example of how less dominant groups’ resources or identities in multiple worlds became silenced, when people, knowledge, and ideology moved and blurred the boundaries of spaces (the opposite phenomenon from Appadurai, 1996).

Youngjoon commented that stereotyping Koreans and African Americans as poor was sad and wrong. As a person with histories of movement to a new cultural location (the US), he named a culture with social inequity and critiqued those dominant cultural stereotypes. It was important to note that Youngjoon also made a movement from his specific local movement (Korea to the US) into a general space (imagined space where minorities are negatively stereotyped). He articulated a space of African Americans who were stereotyped as poor. His imagined movement to African American’s world elaborated how their worlds were not portrayed as having economic resources. He synthesized his interactions with African Americans, his knowledge from mass media and different literature on African Americans, then constructed a hybrid space to come up with his new perspectives (emerging disruption about African Americans’ negative stereotypes). This is the evidence of utilizing literacy for social transformation that does not stereotype people according to their racial backgrounds. Youngjoon took a position of concerning citizen who did not take for granted about what seemed dominant and natural.

These analyses confirmed what Bloommaert (2005) and Appadurai (1996) found as globalized movements which led to critical minds. These students brought their own experiences as Asians and exercised critical literacy practices that disrupted what was considered commonplace and invited more than one racial perspectives to articulate their reader responses. This type of critical social practices were more common than being critical about poverty that they did not have any personal identity to connect to (four times from Units 1 through 4). When students had some direct experiences, they could exercise critical literacy practices (disrupting the commonplace and inviting multiple perspectives) with relative ease. This was different from the second analysis of Minjeong and Youngjoon’s discourses, because this time, students had some experiences as Asians to connect to other racial groups or to challenge the dominant stereotypes about Asians. This similar connection was made in Unit 15, when students were asked to rewrite the book character’s experiences to be more justice-oriented and better for everyone (9 times in 15 units).
5. DISCUSSION

The data analysis visualized the global cultural flows that L2 English readers with dominant cultural power were engaged in. These students demonstrated two different reading practices: one that disclosed the hegemonical hierarchies among people, depending on their socio-economic status (Minjeong from class session #14) and the other that complied with the dominant cultural knowledge (Jiyae’s discourse from class session #19). When students brought powerful resources that people usually respect across cultural spaces, they did not feel motivated to challenge that knowledge. Students seemed to see dominant beliefs as absolute truth, instead of thinking of them as particular perspectives. The teacher felt that it was okay for students to comply with the dominant cultural knowledge. However, it was concerned when they confused what they believed as absolute truth for everybody else. This was because their real and imagined movements to others’ lives did not involve reflection, re-interpretation or re-negotiation (Bloommaert, 2005). When many people admired their power or social status, people did not challenge the status quo. Different from previous research on globalization where local knowledge and multiple worlds were challenged and critiqued (Appadurai, 1996; Bloommaert, 2005), global movement for people with dominant cultural power across spaces were easy and smooth. We should include the discussion on global cultural flows that consider challenges of engaging these groups of people in transforming the status quo that appreciates their social privileges. Also, we can extend Appadurai’s argument, in that globalization and potentials for critiquing cultural homogeneity can differ, depending on individuals’ social situatedness. Therefore, critical literacy educators need to reflect the individual situatedness when teaching critical literacy practices, because students from the privileged background would need different and more intentional approaches to think beyond their own cultural boundaries.

Second, there were moments where students used critical reading practices, even about the topic that was not their own. Students made movements to different imagined spaces, experienced familiar situations afresh and articulated certain perspectives that were usually silenced in a dominant cultural framework. Youngjoon and Minjeong from the class session #25 made movements to the lives of the impoverished. These social practices can be seen as disrupting the commonplace, because students challenged what they took for granted as stereotypes of poverty as lazy individuals’ problem. They seemed to think of poverty as more than lazy individuals, because for Youngjoon, the impoverished did not share same access to economic resources with others. For Minjeong, poor people were treated not equally as well. Students considered more than one perspective –those from mainstream culture and those from marginalized culture. This finding seemed to help us understand imagination as a social practice (Appadurai, 1990) functioned as a crucial tool.
for students to position themselves in someone else’s situations. In globalized literacy classes, we need to facilitate students’ imagination and relate that imagination to critical minds about what is happening in our world. The traditional notion of creativity and imagination was not connected well with critical literacy. In terms of literacy educational methods, helping students read the texts from more than one perspective through imagination seemed important. In addition, since many texts do not tend to include more than one perspective, it would be important to have explicit and intentional guiding strategies that invite L2 readers to travel across different imagined cultural boundaries.

Third, while we could think of ‘not moving beyond the dominant cultural norms’ as resistance, there were important functions of this position taking: articulating the dominant norms and clearly demonstrating readers’ positions. Jiyae resisted thinking of poverty as a social problem that our global culture constructed by individualizing poverty as lazy, unmotivated people’s issues. Her discourse built a discrete world and political portrayal of the poor and the rich. It was necessary for her to be clear on the dominant cultural norms to be able to take her own position. By considering both the marginalized (Mexicans who experienced physical violence) and the dominant (people with economic power who have strong motivation to study and to work hard), Jiyae provided her positions and also a space for teacher to help her find contradictions between her beliefs and the realities of the impoverished. On the other hand, Minjeong’s essay did not actively look for her positions about this particular ideology and it was difficult for teacher to initiate a dialogue around this dominant belief. In this sense, it might be less important to know whether students can be critical or compliant to the dominant ideologies than it is to facilitate students’ active position taking. Resistance can become potential to be challenged in critical literacy education.

Fourth, these L2 readers’ responses included meanings from hybrid spaces of old, new, and co-existing body of knowledge. Students’ complicated reading practices could not be understood as a binary framework of reading critically or not. Students created a hybrid space that scholars of hybridity and translocal literacies found fluid and complicated (Guerra, 2007; Medina, 2010). The analysis not only confirmed what they found in their research, but also described sometimes-contradictory reader responses. One reader can be critical at one point and can read to empower the dominant cultural norms at another. Instead of interpreting this as not learning or lack of coherence in students’ reading practices, the researcher suggest to conceptualize this as a natural process of reading about globalized culture. This implies a broader concept of reading for social transformation that cannot be understood as a binary framework of whether or not. This idea can also accommodate diverse ways to make meanings about the texts that came from students’ different experiences with translocality.
6. CONCLUSION

This paper described the actual and imagined movements L2 readers took to challenge their dominant cultural beliefs and to invite marginalized groups’ perspectives. It was important to understand how the social privileges of the dominant travelled smoothly, which hindered their critical reading against the naturalized worldview. Empathy was created when students articulated their feelings from others’ perspectives. Contradiction was an important part of the learning critical reading of the world; it should be included in existing educational frameworks to capture complex literacy practices of students.

There is a great deal of room for future research to expand upon this article. It was interesting to observe the connections between students’ critical reading practices and their prevalent emotions. How to make connections between students’ emotional reactions and their critical reading practices need to be explored. Future research can address how students’ motivation to remain in the privileged positions could be addressed in research about globalization and the development of critical minds. Literacy research on globalization can address this question in diverse L1 and L2 social contexts. The present data also demonstrated students’ strong attraction toward globally dominant cultural knowledge, which can be unpacked to investigate people’s desire, and its connections to developing critical reading practices.

REFERENCES


**APPENDIX A**

Curriculum on Poverty and Brief Analysis of Students’ Reactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Brief contents</th>
<th>Students’ translocal movement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Exploring and Understanding Poverty | Unit 5. Revisiting Our own Beliefs on Poverty | Analyzing underlying assumptions about poverty from students’ previous written works | • Smooth journey to different localities  
• Comply with cultural homogeneity by clearly buying into hierarchy of power (hereafter, Comply with cultural homogeneity) |
| | Unit 6. A Fieldtrip to a Local Neighborhood | Discussion of discrete housing conditions in our present local community | • Smooth journey to different localities  
• Comply with cultural homogeneity |
| | Unit 7. Our Own Interactions with Poverty | Discussion of their indirect experiences about poverty | • Smooth journey to different localities  
• Distant response to poverty |
| | Unit 8. Expanding Our Connections on Poverty with Different Texts | Discussion of Salvador Late or Early, The Table Where Rich People Sit, Children of Heaven | • Smooth journey to different localities  
• Comply with cultural homogeneity  
• Youngjoon’s critical reflection on others |
| | Unit 9. Interviewing Parents | Sharing students’ parents’ stories | • Smooth journey to different localities  
• Distant response to poverty |
| | Unit 10. Poverty as an Issue of Our Community | Responses to a visual image of Southern/Northern Seoul | • Smooth journey to different localities  
• Distant response to localizing the issue in Korea |
| Challenging Ourselves | Unit 11. Poverty is More than an Individual Fault | Discussion of Indian Caste System as a Social Marginalization | • Smooth journey to different localities  
• Distant response to poverty |
| Unit 12. Looking at Our own Privileges | Discussion of Virgie Goes to School and Our childhoods that are discrete from Virgie | • Smooth journey to different localities  
• Minjeong’s critical reflection on her own locality  
• Imposition of their beliefs |
| Envisioning Alternatives | Unit 13. Guided Social Action | A volunteer for a local Food Bank | • Actively engage in helping others |
| Unit 14. Evaluation on Changes or Resistance in our Perceptions on Poverty | Writing an imaginative conversation with people from diverse socio-economic backgrounds | • Smooth journey to different localities  
• Imposition of their beliefs |
| Unit 15. Rewriting Just Juice to Imagine the Ideal | Identifying Juice’s problems  
Re-writing the story to solve Juice’s problems  
Writing emails to book characters to negotiate the ideal world for Juice | • Smooth journey to different localities  
• Imposition of their beliefs  
• Thinking of others’ issues from more than their own perspectives |
| Challenging Ourselves | Unit 16. Writing on What We Think of the Question | Response to one article about how poor people are not merely lazy | • Challenging the stereotypes about the poor |
| Unit 17. Research on Unfair Educational Access: it is More than Laziness | Discussion of Elite education in terms of who can get good education and what can be done to address unfair educational access | • Smooth journey to different localities  
• Imposition of their beliefs  
• Youngjoon’s critical reflection on others |
| Envisioning Alternatives | Unit 18. Possible Social Action Studies | Students’ initiation of reading texts about poverty | • Thinking of others’ issues from more than their own perspectives |
## APPENDIX B

### Overall of Activities and Sources for Data Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Titles</th>
<th>Texts used</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Data collected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Fieldtrip to a local neighborhood (2 sessions)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Fieldtrips to a local trailer park And rich villas</td>
<td>1. Students’ written responses*** 2. Students’ imaginative dialogue writing 3. Discussion transcript</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Expending Our Conversations on Poverty with Different Texts</td>
<td>Virgie goes to school with us boys, Salvador Late or Early, The Table where rich people sit, Children of Heaven</td>
<td>Creating a chart to compare book characters and myself Literature discussion on book characters’ lives</td>
<td>1. Students’ oral discussion about authors’ beliefs and perspectives** 2. Students’ written reader responses to the texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Looking at Our own Privileges</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Writing my childhoods</td>
<td>1. Students’ written essays 2. Students’ oral discussion about poor people’s lives and those of their own**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Applicable Levels: Elementary

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4 The data marked with ** is what I analyzed for this article.