L2 Cultural Negotiation and Visual Literacy: A Multilingual Perspective

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L2 CULTURAL NEGOTIATION AND VISUAL LITERACY:
A MULTILINGUAL PERSPECTIVE

A Dissertation
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in Partial Fulfillment of the
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Doctor of Philosophy

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Indiana University of Pennsylvania
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This dissertation examines L2 cultural negotiation and usage of sequential art to negotiate culture in order to formulate a theory of cultural negotiation that can be used in the field by second language learners. The aim is to understand how L2 students can negotiate culture through visual literacy materials. Bringing to light new theoretical work from multilingual sources, including a joint position derived from the non-Western work of Vygotsky, Gromov, and Brudny, this dissertation illuminates the process of cultural negotiation as subjective, affective, and reliant on imagination and stress for personal growth and applies this theoretical basis to using comics for negotiating an L2 culture. This dissertation thereby re-examines the Vygotskian concept of meaning-making in the ZPD and identifies sequential art as a unique medium that can enable cultural negotiation in a diverse and increasingly globalized society. This dissertation challenges the position that sequential art is not a legitimate academic medium and explores the mechanism employed by learners reading comics to make meaning. In the process, it establishes multilingual, interdisciplinary research as a valuable form of research, draws upon the concept of multiliteracies to explore the multimodal nature of meaning making, and suggests a new epistemological approach to pedagogy with a set of practical recommendations within the broader orientation toward intercultural understanding.