

Problematizing Language Policy and Practice in EMI and Transnational Higher Education

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Given the global implementation and expansion of English-as-a-medium of instruction (EMI) policies, higher education institutions have transcended the geopolitical and sociocultural borders of its host country thus creating a new type of institution, transnational higher education (TNHE), which has begun to proliferate. From a language policy perspective, this EMI-inflected educational sector has, however, been criticized for its hegemonic tendencies (Phan, 2017). Building on this critique and recent research on university-based language policies (Hult & Kalkvist, 2016), our six-paper colloquium problematizes EMI language policy and practice in TNHE and adopts an ecological approach (Han, De Costa, & Cui, 2019) to understand how English monolingual biases are negotiated within multilingual academic and social settings. Using Western-partnered institutions in Asia and the Middle East as focal points, the panel examines how students, faculty, and administrators reclaim local languages through making strategic policy and pedagogical decisions.

Paper 1 utilizes an ecological and posthuman approach to explore how a group of students in a British university in China students negotiate within a language related episode through an ecological and a posthuman lens.

Paper 2 examines how multilingual Chinese and other international students redefine translocal space and negotiate language norms to accommodate varied communicative needs.

Paper 3 investigates the experience and identity negotiation of a pre-service English teacher in Hong Kong who participated in an EMI program in UK.

Paper 4 analyzes teacher ideologies and pedagogy with regards to Arabic use at a U.S. international branch campus in Qatar.

Situated in Saudi Arabia, Paper 5 unpacks the rhetoric of speed, a valuable commodity in higher education, and the drive for profit generation as teachers negotiate tensions in their pedagogical practices.

Paper six unpacks essential concepts and interpretations of both EMI and TNHE and considers future theoretical and methodological, and policy directions for EMI-oriented TNHE research.

Keywords: *EMI, Transnational higher education, Language policy, Monolingual ideologies, Policy negotiation*

1. K-pop, coffee, and air-con: The unsettling ingredients of a language related episode in EMI China

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Taking a critical, ecological and posthuman approach to Transnational Higher Education, this paper visits the campus of a British university in China and, through a single case analysis. The goal is to illustrate the relational and more-than-human networks (or assemblages) within which such a mundane episode can become embedded.

Language related episodes are critical moments in classroom interaction that involve collaborative dialogue and assisted performance, having long been recognised as rich moments in which students contribute various forms of competence to negotiating linguistic understanding (Author et al., 2018).

The actual mechanics of the language related episode in question (selected from the Multimodal Corpus of Chinese Academic Written and Spoken English) have been analysed in detail with a combination of gesture studies and multimodal interaction (Author, 2018; Mondada, 2016), and accordingly, we will show how the successful resolution of the episode depends on “the embodied way in which people communicate and gather together, as well as the ecology of the activities they engage in, and their material and spatial environment” (p. 337).

It is upon encountering the embodied, material, spatial, and other phenomenal qualities of this episode’s environment that the paper takes a more critical and posthuman turn (also drawing insights from a retrospective participant interview).

The intersection of a student’s Korean-pop dance move, Starbucks coffee cup, and Mandarin Chinese speech with the teacher’s repeated directives for the group to only speak “English please” creates a more-than-human assemblage, shifting our perspective to an object-oriented and relational ontology (Pennycook, 2017). Using a dolly zoom or contextualising backtrack (Authors, forthcoming), we situate the contours and operations of this assemblage in relation to the environment of this British campus in China specifically, and to the broader horizon and changing picture of transnational higher education more generally.

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2. Beyond English: EMI transnational university as a translocal space

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Internationalization of higher education in many parts of the world has been institutionalized around a linguistic hegemony of English through English-medium programs and partnerships (Phan, 2016). In such EMI university contexts, linguistic tensions between English and other languages have been widely reported, problematizing the inherent prestigious position of English language and its subsequent impacts on teaching, learning and international interaction in general (Doiz, Lasagabaster, & Sierra, 2012).

The present study explores the language practices and perceptions of local and international students in an EMI transnational university in China. It focuses on the process by which multilingual students negotiated language norms and reshaped interactional contexts to their own advantage. The notions of translocal space (Appadurai, 1996) and scale (Canagarajah & De Costa, 2016) were employed to unravel the hybridity, fluidity and complexities of language use and power relations involved in intercultural communication in EMI university contexts. Findings of this study problematize the English monolingualism ideology that prevails the language policy and planning of TNHE by showing multilingual students' scale-making practices of challenging the existing language norms in English-dominated academic and interactional spaces and making room for more equal and flexible intercultural communication and multilingual development beyond English language.

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3. Negotiating experience in an overseas immersion programme: A narrative inquiry of a pre-service English teacher

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Overseas language immersion is an essential component of language teacher education programmes in Hong Kong. It is believed or hoped that these immersion programmes can develop students' target language competence and understanding of the culture of the target languages. Studying in an 'authentic' EMI programme is also considered particularly desirable, especially for pre-service English teachers, because some EMI programmes in Hong Kong reportedly do not (fully) adopt English as the medium of instruction (Evans and Morrison, 2011), depriving students of the promised benefits. As these participants engage in this popular form of transnational education, they need to negotiate new identities across space and time, which can be unpredictable and challenging. Drawing on positioning analysis (Bamberg, 2006; Davies and Harré, 1990), this narrative inquiry examines the experience and identity negotiation of a third-year undergraduate pre-service English teacher in Hong Kong, who participated in an eight-week immersion programme in the UK and had been looking forward to claiming his membership in his imagined community. Narrative data were collected through in-depth interviews and Instagram posts before, during and after the programme. Attention was paid to how he positioned himself in relation to English learning and academic studies in the UK and how his identity positionings developed and shifted throughout the programme. Although he was invested initially, he later evaluated the programme negatively and gradually became withdrawn, which appeared to be a turning point in his identity trajectory. The study discusses some potential benefits and limitations of similar programmes designed for advanced English learners and pre-service English teachers.

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4. EMI and the imported international branch campus: Examining language ideologies, policies and practices

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Transnational higher education (TNHE), often based on export models of Western-based universities and driven by neoliberal market economy agendas, has spread across the globe (De Costa et al., 2020; Phan, 2017). Numerous Western-based, international branch campuses (IBCs) have been established, particularly in countries like the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and China, which deliver academic content through English-medium instruction (EMI). One of the largest concentrated TNHE projects in the world is Qatar's Education City, where six prestigious American IBCs, along with one British and one French, all administer their degrees through using EMI (Hillman et al., 2019). These IBCs allow Qatari national students to remain living at home with their families, but "receive a Western education in a Middle Eastern setting" (Qatar Foundation, 2020) and obtain the same degree as they would if they were studying at the university's main campus.

While there has been a plethora of research investigating and problematizing language ideologies, policies, and practices in EMI higher education in recent years (e.g., Jenkins & Mauranen, 2019), studies have largely focused on national universities undergoing internationalization policies, as opposed to imported IBCs. We know relatively little about the language policies of individual IBCs and the on-the-ground language practices, such as the pedagogical practices enacted in the classroom. In heeding De Costa et al.'s (2020) call for "more in-depth ethnographic studies" (p. 6) of TNHE universities, this study takes an ethnographic case study approach to examine the language policies and practices of an American IBC offering engineering degrees in Qatar.

Drawing on multiple sources of data such as orientation documents, the university website, the linguistic landscape, interviews, and surveys, the study reveals both the overt and covert language policies of the institution and the extent to which languages other than English are used and accepted.

Keywords: transnational higher education, EMI, ethnography of language planning and policy, translanguaging, Qatar

5. Transnational educational mobility and the cult of speed in Saudi Arabia today

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Speed as a theory with a history and practice has been thoroughly discussed and documented in such fields as social theory, the theory of time, cognitive studies, psychology, science and technology studies and economic studies (e.g., Bauman, 2000; Harvey, 1989; Simmel, 1991; Thompson, 1967; Wajcman & Dodd, 2017). Yet, the ways in which transnational education intersects with the cult of 'speed' in the age of 'time-space compressed' (Harvey, 1989) neoliberal mobility remain under-explored, a critical research gap this paper aims to fill. Specifically, this paper views speed as a social construct that arises through the discursive interactions that take place within/between different actors in a given social and educational setting. Using two Saudi HE institutions as example cases, it examines, identifies and theorizes the intersection between English language learning/teaching and the cult of speed in the age of transnational educational mobility. It addresses the following questions: in what ways has the cult of speed been envisioned, celebrated, negotiated with, enacted, justified, and then protected from being challenged by the various actors (i.e., language teachers, administrators as well as engineering, business and management faculty members)? What are the implications of the ideology of speed for language policies, curricula and pedagogical practices?

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**6. Transnational higher education and English as a medium of instruction language policy:
Negotiating and navigating key social actors**

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This paper is comprised of two parts. The first part examines current and future theoretical methodological, and policy directions for EMI-oriented transnational higher education (TNHE) research. Building on recent calls within language policy and planning research to examine language policies from an institutional level (Hult & Kalkvist, 2016), we briefly review research on transnational higher education (TNHE) and English medium instruction (EMI) policy implemented at TNHE institutions. While both areas of investigation have been increasingly popular over the last 10 years with numerous empirical studies (e.g., Macaro & Akincioglu, 2018), reviews (e.g. Williams, 2015), state-of-the-art articles (e.g., Macaro et al., 2018), and books (e.g., Phan, 2016), focusing within one or both of these subjects and context, there has been no review of empirical applied linguistics research that has examined both open collaboration between Western off-shore campuses located within Asia and the Middle East and the language policies that these collaborations enact on multiple stakeholders on these campuses. Given this emergent sociolinguistic reality, and the palpable threat of linguistic and cultural hegemony, we discuss the five preceding papers and highlight how they (1) investigated the experiences of teachers who have had to enact EMI policies in TNHE institutions, and (2) problematized policies that affect both the students and the surrounding communities in which the TNHE is located. Particular focus will be given to explicating how top-down language policies are negotiated on the ground by various social actors such as administrators, instructors and students. We unpack essential concepts and interpretations of both EMI and TNHE discussed in the extant literature and the other papers in our colloquium. Then we close with recommendations for future research.

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