

# Introduction

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This volume presents a compilation of studies from across the globe, all investigating multifarious intersections of *translanguaging* and *English-medium instruction* (EMI). Although translanguaging involving the use of multiple languages may be seen as paradoxical in classrooms where instruction is nominally English-only, the phenomenon of translanguaging – as a theoretical perspective and a pedagogical practice – in such contexts is, in fact, not a new one. While employing English as the sole intended language of instruction has long been prevalent in widely diverse linguistic contexts, the ensuing reality has been a plethora of de facto policies as well as classroom materials and methods that rarely are monolingual. What is new in this volume is therefore not the fact that EMI and translanguaging may exist side by side, but rather that these contexts are now studied with an innovative understanding of the affordances available for learning, communicating, building identity, dismantling hierarchies, promoting social justice, and resisting monolingual ideologies when EMI and translanguaging are allowed to be juxtaposed.

In this introductory chapter, we begin with an overview of EMI and translanguaging, tracing their origins and current definitions. We then briefly present the chapters of the volume and how they relate to the intersections of EMI and translanguaging as both concepts and practices.

## **EMI: English-Medium Instruction**

Although it is but one of many global languages, English has a particularly privileged status as it has in many cases become the de facto lingua franca in communication involving speakers of different languages. Increasingly, English is not only the language of choice for international business and media, but also as a medium of instruction in contexts where it is not a majority language. Perhaps due to the perceived socioeconomic value associated with the improved proficiency in English that stakeholders may attribute to the increased exposure to English, EMI programmes may be seen as a way of attracting students in a competitive global education market (Doiz *et al.*, 2011; Paulsrud, 2019). However, while Rose and

McKinley (2018: 113) make the point that ‘internationalization is viewed at its worst as an economic ploy to drum up student numbers and tuition’, it may also be considered ‘a way to positively influence universities’ global outlook’. Although educational institutions at the primary, secondary and tertiary level offer EMI for a variety of reasons, these programmes nonetheless provide a space where students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds meet on common linguistic ground in shared learning experiences.

## Definitions

The concept of EMI has not been easily or consistently defined in either research or practice. Related terms include the following: teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL; Pecorari & Malmström, 2018); integrating content and language in higher education (ICLHE; Pérez-Vidal, 2015); content and language integrated learning (CLIL; Nikula *et al.*, 2016); English-medium education in multilingual university settings (EMEMUS; Dafouz *et al.*, 2016); and English-medium education (EME; Gardner, 2012). Whereas TESOL is mainly concerned with teaching the English language, approaches such as ICLHE and CLIL focus on language as well as content, with an aim to integrate them in instruction. By contrast, EMI does not necessarily include such integration, as its ‘overarching teacher focus is on content’ (Macaro, 2018: 8). Little attention is thus given to language issues in EMI (Toth, 2018a), perhaps due to a general lack of specific language goals in many EMI programmes (Yoxsimer Paulsrud, 2014). After comparing several definitions across recent studies, Pecorari and Malmström (2018: 499) have identified ‘four characteristics of EMI settings’, which they summarise as follows:

- (1) English is the language used for instructional purposes.
- (2) English is not itself the subject being taught.
- (3) Language development is not a primary intended outcome.
- (4) For most participants in the setting, English is a second language (L2).

These characteristics can be considered to align with Macaro’s (2018: 1) definition of EMI: the ‘use of the English language to teach academic subjects (other than English itself) in countries or jurisdictions where the first language of the majority of the population is not English’. The term EMI has often been associated with secondary and tertiary education, yet this definition can be applied broadly to also include primary education as well, and is appropriate for all of the contexts addressed in this volume.

## EMI in global research

In recent years, research on EMI has been gaining attention, with a number of edited volumes devoted to the topic (see, for example, Dimova

*et al.*, 2015; Doiz *et al.*, 2013; Fenton-Smith *et al.*, 2017). The phenomenon of teaching subject content through the medium of English in contexts where it is not a majority language is not a new one, although internationalisation trends in education have raised concerns in the research community regarding how EMI programmes are equipped to meet the needs of learners. Shohamy (2013: 203) has highlighted a number of issues associated with learning content through ‘a language that is not fully familiar to students’. These issues include equity in learning conditions for different student groups, bias in assessment through a second language, and outcomes of content learning versus development of language proficiency (Shohamy, 2013). Likewise, in their systematic review of EMI in higher education, Macaro *et al.* (2018: 36) state that there is as yet insufficient evidence that EMI benefits the development of English proficiency with no cost to students’ content learning. They maintain that ‘key stakeholders have serious concerns regarding the introduction and implementation of EMI’ (Macaro *et al.*, 2018: 45), calling for studies of EMI classroom discourse that demonstrate ‘the kind of practice which may lead to beneficial outcomes’ (Macaro *et al.*, 2018: 36).

Although limited in number and scope, there have been a few such studies of EMI programmes in secondary education, where classroom discourse in which multiple languages (rather than English-only) are employed has been shown to potentially promote content learning (see, for example, Paulsrud & Toth, 2020; Yoxsimer Paulsrud, 2014). Similarly, research on EMI in Sweden at the primary school level has found that in spite of language hierarchies privileging the use of English in EMI, students’ use of the local language – here, Swedish – allowed access to the EMI subject content and encouraged participation in the lessons (Toth, 2018a; Toth & Paulsrud, 2017). While Pecorari and Malmström (2018: 499) note that the practice of conducting instruction in English can be considered to be ‘axiomatic’ in EMI settings, practices that include the use of other languages may thus also be present in EMI classrooms, such as in the form of textbooks, support words and peer scaffolding (see, for example, Paulsrud & Toth, 2020; Toth & Paulsrud, 2017). In many cases, such practices reflect *translanguaging* as both theory and pedagogy.

## Translanguaging

Owing to its potential to build on the dynamic bilingualism of learners (Lewis *et al.*, 2012b), the term *translanguaging* has caught the imagination of many bilingual educators and scholars across global contexts (e.g. Adrian Blackledge, Suresh Canagarajah, Angela Creese, Ofelia García, Nancy Hornberger, Li Wei, Angel Lin, Leketi Makalela) in the 21st century. Originally coined as *trawsieithu* when it was first developed in Welsh education circles in the 1980s (Williams, 1994), its definition and use have been extended from Welsh-English bilingual classrooms to classrooms

across international contexts (e.g. Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Lin & He, 2017; Mazak & Carroll, 2016), as well as from classroom pedagogical practices to bilinguals' everyday meaning-making practices (e.g. García, 2009a; García & Li Wei, 2014). More importantly, the concept of translanguaging has been infused with social justice purposes, with the possibilities of challenging linguistically structured inequalities and transforming language-minoritised students' learning environments (e.g. Flores & García, 2013; García & Sylvan, 2011). Similar to the increasing research interest on EMI, the past decade has also witnessed an ever-growing boom in educational research focusing on translanguaging. While a comprehensive review of the term translanguaging is beyond the scope of this chapter (for a full review see, for example, Conteh, 2018; García & Lin, 2017; Li Wei & García, 2016; Paulsrud *et al.*, 2017a; Poza, 2017; Vogel & García, 2017), we briefly explicate the concept here from two perspectives: translanguaging as theory and translanguaging as pedagogy.

### Translanguaging as theory

As theory, translanguaging represents an epistemic shift from traditional theorisations of bilingualism as two separate, bounded language systems. Instead, a translanguaging perspective affords a holistic, dynamic view of bilingualism (García, 2009a; Grosjean, 2010). Translanguaging focuses on the observable, communicative practices of bi/multilinguals and posits that they have a unitary linguistic repertoire composed of meaning-making features that are selected and deployed in different contexts (García & Li Wei, 2014). Translanguaging theory takes the point of view of speakers themselves to describe bilinguals' flexible and fluid use of language features to mediate social and cognitive activities (García & Kleyn, 2016). Through this lens, bilingual speakers/writers are seen as creative and critical language users (Li Wei, 2011), using the totality of their linguistic resources 'without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages' (Otheguy *et al.*, 2015: 283).

Translanguaging was borne out of a need to empower speakers from language-minoritised communities, to protect their language rights as well as to affirm their complex discursive practices (García, 2009a; García & Kleifgen, 2018). Such mixing of different linguistic (and semiotic) codes to perform identity, creativity and criticality is thereby seen as a normative practice of bilingual speakers, instead of being stigmatised according to a monolingual norm in society (Li Wei, 2018). In this sense, translanguaging theory seeks 'to dismantle named language categories and counters ideologies that position particular languages as superior to others and the language practices of monolinguals as superior to those who are said to speak with linguistic resources that go beyond the strict boundaries of

named languages’ (Vogel & García, 2017: 6). As a theory, it thus challenges colonial and modernist-era structuralist ideologies of language standardisation (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007) by liberating and privileging language-minoritised speakers’ bilingual performances and legitimising all their linguistic varieties.

### Translanguaging as pedagogy

As pedagogy, translanguaging originally referred to requiring students to deliberately switch the language mode of input and output in bilingual Welsh/English classrooms (e.g. if students read a book in Welsh, then they wrote a text in English). Williams (2002) suggests that this type of language alternation strategy often uses the stronger language to develop the weaker language, thus contributing toward a potentially relatively balanced development of a child’s two languages.

In recent years, García (2014) has argued for the use of translanguaging as both a constructivist and a transformative bilingual pedagogy in classrooms. As a pedagogy, it refers to ‘the ways in which bilingual students and teachers engage in complex and fluid discursive practices that include, at times, the home language practices of students in order to “make sense” of teaching and learning, to communicate and appropriate subject knowledge, and to develop academic language practices’ (García, 2014: 112). Translanguaging pedagogy seeks to create a heteroglossic, inclusive space for all learners to draw upon their full linguistic repertoires to acquire, understand and demonstrate knowledge (Khote & Tian, 2019). In this space, bi/multilingualism is acknowledged as a resource and teachers strategically incorporate students’ cultural and linguistic funds of knowledge in academic tasks while also showing students ‘when, where, and why to use some features of their repertoire and not others, enabling them to also perform according to the social norms of named languages as used in schools’ (García & Kleyn, 2016: 15). Therefore, translanguaging pedagogy holds the promises of ‘support[ing] young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence’ (Paris, 2012: 95). It empowers language-minoritised students by focusing on their marginalised voices and supporting their positive identity development. Ultimately, translanguaging pedagogy aims to advance a social justice agenda to ensure that all students are educated deeply and justly (Tian & Link, 2019), and that all linguistic resources are seen as legitimate for learning (Rosén & Wedin, 2015).

### EMI and Translanguaging: The Present Volume

This volume comprises 11 theoretical and empirical studies, all addressing translanguaging in EMI settings across the globe. It

commences with Sahan and Rose's problematisation of the 'English-only hegemony' in tertiary education offering EMI. A number of other chapters also address translanguaging in universities, offering studies spread over a wide context, from South Africa (Luckett & Hurst-Harosh) and Malawi (Reilly) in the Global South to studies of Asian contexts, such as Cambodia (Boun & Wright), Japan (Adamson & Fujimoto-Adamson) and Kazakhstan (Goodman, Kerimkulova & Montgomery). In addition to these studies, Dalziel and Guarda present an Italian perspective on translanguaging in a European tertiary setting, while Pun's study of science classes in Hong Kong affords an understanding of translanguaging at the secondary level. Meanwhile, the chapters focusing on the primary level offer unique considerations of EMI, as they expand the field beyond secondary and tertiary education. In their chapters, Crisfield, Gordon and Holland investigate a private school in Kenya, Probyn considers research on the primary level in the postcolonial South African context, and Mohamed explores translanguaging practices among young learners outside the school context in the Maldives.

One assumption associated with EMI is the belief that the more students are exposed to English in lessons, the more fluent they will become (Macaro, 2018: 88). According to Pecorari and Malmström (2018: 497), 'EMI presupposes and is enabled by the ability of all participants (e.g. teachers, students, administrative staff) to use English as a *lingua franca*'. Thus, the paradox is that the expectation that more exposure leads to greater proficiency also relies on the students having enough proficiency to manage the EMI lesson. This illogicality may be assuaged through pedagogical translanguaging practices that do not limit students to English as a language for learning, recognising that simply because students (or teachers) choose EMI does not mean that they have the ability to manage the EMI lesson. Jaspers (2018), however, warns us that the transformative claims of translanguaging pedagogies cannot be taken for granted because translanguaging research 'always needs to be considered against the background of *continuing inequalities, predominant discourses, local circumstances, and personal considerations*' (Jaspers, 2018: 7, emphasis added). In other words, it is essential to recognise that context matters and translanguaging pedagogies must be strategically and purposefully planned, designed and implemented considering multiple contextual factors at both macro and micro levels, such as imbalanced power dynamics among languages, learner background, programme context and lesson goals. In the studies in the volume, the authors do consider issues such as practices, policies, language ideologies, language hierarchies, attitudes, beliefs, social justice and the imagined self, with a focus on the particularities of their own contexts. The chapters here do not focus on outcomes of EMI programmes, nor on the proficiency of the stakeholders participating in such programmes per se, but rather on a diverse range of themes exploring what happens on EMI programmes

when translanguaging is afforded space. Some of the many themes illustrating the crossroads of EMI and translanguaging are briefly presented below.

A translanguaging perspective may offer affordances rather than constraints for EMI practices in the classroom and, as **Adamson and Fujimoto-Adamson** state, both pedagogical challenges as well as opportunities. In their study of pedagogic practices of translanguaging, they relate how translanguaging strategies provide scaffolding for less proficient students, or deepened understanding for more proficient students, creating a responsive environment for teaching and learning. **Dalziel and Guarda** identify several functions of translanguaging in the classroom, such as task management and strengthened student cooperation, especially as speakers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds interact. Likewise, **Goodman, Kerimkulova and Montgomery** describe how allowing flexible language use also encourages transfer of academic skills among university students. These findings reflect those of **Luckett and Hurst-Harosh** who, also in the tertiary context, see how student engagement can increase as opportunities for ‘drawing on funds of contextual knowledge’ expand.

As seen in numerous previous studies (e.g. Ali, 2013; Bolton *et al.*, 2017; Borg, 2016; Coleman *et al.*, 2018), the expectation (be it implicit or explicit) with EMI has often been that students are already highly proficient in English, and prepared for instruction to be solely through the medium of English. However, this is not always the case (Jiang *et al.*, 2019), as students in EMI programmes still benefit from the flexible use of all of their linguistic resources for accomplishing lessons. Studies such as **Probyn’s** reveal how interventions that develop translanguaging pedagogies in the multilingual primary classroom can instead promote both epistemic access and identity affirmation, when teachers explicitly adopt heteroglossic orientations in classrooms. Likewise, **Pun’s** study illustrates how translanguaging spaces in the classroom encourage peer scaffolding for developing both content and language knowledge (see also Toth, 2018a).

Possible tensions between official and de facto language policies may arise due to the Englishisation of education (Coleman, 2006; Dafouz *et al.*, 2016; Hultgren, 2018). **Reilly** notes that ‘language-in-education policies through a monoglossic lens’ do not reflect the realities of multilingual spaces, such as the university context in Malawi. **Sahan and Rose**, as well, argue against policies promoting English-only ideologies, and call for a resistance to monolingual educational practices in the EMI classroom. As a means to this, **Probyn** stresses the need for more targeted pre-service and in-service teacher training, to ensure that teachers know how to develop positive, flexible translanguaging pedagogies and thus promote social justice in the diverse classrooms of many contexts (see also Paulsrud & Zilliacus, 2018).



Previous research on EMI in upper secondary schools has found that translanguaging offers a disruption of language hierarchies (Yoxsimer Paulsrud, 2014; see also García & Li Wei, 2014). According to Risager (2012), levels of language hierarchy can range from the macro to the micro. Studies in this volume reveal how translanguaging can unravel hierarchies, both those implemented by institutions governing school decisions and those created *de facto* in everyday lessons. In their chapter, **Boun and Wright** maintain that translanguaging practices bolster all languages in the EMI classroom (not just English), in order ‘to support multiple languages and literacies, irrespective of the status and spread of such languages’. Furthermore, **Crisfield, Gordon and Holland** argue that translanguaging practices in an elite international school actually afford ethical bilingual education by granting greater status to the local language, Kiswahili.

**Mohamed**, in her study of young children using their linguistic resources creatively in storytelling, articulates: ‘The English-first ideology promoted by schools is out of sync with the sociolinguistic reality of the everyday languaging in which young people in the 21st century engage.’ She sees the possibilities for translanguaging practice to empower young children in their linguistic and cultural identities. This is echoed in **Reilly’s** study, where he concludes that ‘the use of translanguaging allows students to effectively perform their identities as young, educated Malawians’.

This brief overview has only offered a glimpse of the rich understandings offered by new research at the crossroads of EMI and translanguaging. Our aim with this volume is to address the gap in publications by presenting a global view of EMI in relation to translanguaging theory and pedagogy. The studies within are of interest to those who are curious about the roles of languages in the EMI classroom and who want to know more about EMI settings where students and teachers are allowed – or even encouraged – to use their entire linguistic repertoires for communicating and learning.