

English Medium Instruction in Higher Education: An Attempt to Understanding Teacher Identity in Malaysia and China¹

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Abstract

Universities in Asia have observed a conspicuously large-scale adoption of English Medium Instruction (EMI), particularly in China and Malaysia. With the requirement that content teachers conduct classes in Chinese and Malaysian universities, content teachers' identities would be reshaped into that of EMI teachers. However, the nature of policy directives concerning EMI, code-switching to mother tongue in the classrooms, the dearth of professional development programs, the intervention of local materials and instructional deficiency of the teachers, and nationalism have complicated the development of content teachers' identity as EMI teachers. The current study aimed at understanding the identities of university teachers involved in EMI courses in Malaysian and Chinese universities. Undertaking a systematic review of the published studies concerning the EMI phenomenon in Malaysian and Chinese universities, and discussing the findings in the light of the *dialogical approach* proposed by Akkerman and Meijer (2011), the study reported that tensions between teachers' identity as content teachers on one hand and as EMI teachers on other hand, offered multiple - positions (I-positions) that teachers need to interpret and evaluate through dialogues. The dialogues have continued among several I-positions. Eventually, the coherent identity of the EMI teachers developed as bilingual teachers, which has been incongruent with the policy directives. The implication of this study would help the stakeholders rethink bilingual higher education where English along with the national language would prevail to pave the way for knowledge acquisition. Moreover, the study set ground for future researchers to consider such an area for empirical exploration since teacher identity in conjunction with EMI has been relatively less explored.

Resumen

Las universidades de Asia han adoptado a gran escala el uso del inglés como medio de instrucción, inglés, particularmente en China y Malasia. Con la estipulación dirigida a los profesores de contenido para impartir clases en universidades chinas y malacias, la identidad de los profesores de contenido se moldearía como profesores de EMI. Sin embargo, encontramos que la naturaleza de las directivas de política con respecto a EMI, el cambio a la lengua materna en las aulas, la escasez de programas de desarrollo profesional, la intervención de materiales locales y la deficiencia en la instrucción de los maestros, y el nacionalismo producen dificultades para desarrollar el contenido. Sobre la base del "enfoque dialógico" sugerido por Akkerman y Meijer (2011), el estudio profundizó en que las tensiones entre la identidad de los docentes de contenido por un lado y los docentes de EMI por otro, engendran múltiples entidades que los docentes necesitan interpretar y evaluar a través de diálogos continuos entre varias posiciones. Finalmente, la identidad coherente de los profesores de EMI se desarrolló como profesores bilingües, lo que ha sido incongruente con las directivas de la política.

Introduction

The globally recognized and current trend of higher education institutes (HEIs) is their large-scale adoption of English Medium Instruction (EMI) that is prevalent due to the overarching demand to provoke students' critical thinking and produce globally efficient workforces (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2020). English language teaching and learning in Asian countries is linked to British colonialism. It is believed that proficiency in English empowers citizens to participate in the global economy. This belief is strengthened when the discussion of Language Policy and Planning (LPP) occurs in different countries (Ali & Hamid, 2018; Galloway et al., 2020; Kim & Tatar, 2018; Rose & McKinley, 2018). For instance, at the forefront of LPP in China, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam is the globalization of higher education (HE) through

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the use of English. Ensuring participation in the international market is another motivation for adopting EMI in HE.

As regards EMI in Malaysia, it appears that in 2003 the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) instituted a change in the form of a verbal directive related to language policy concerning the introduction of EMI for science and technology courses for first-year students in public universities, with an apparent change in ideology, from the previous *linguistic nationalism* to *knowledge-driven nationalism*, as well as *development-oriented nationalism* (Abu et al., 2008; Ali, 2013; Gill, 2006). The motivating factor that drove the MOHE was its goal, (2011, cited in Kaur, 2020), to increase the immersion rate of international students in HE from 150,000 by 2015 and to 200,000 by 2020. In response to the call of MOHE, public Universities at the forefront in the internationalization of HE commenced EMI in all science and technology-focused courses (Hashim & Leitner, 2014; Kaur, 2020). Fundamentally, Malaysia, a nation that is comprised of multiple ethnic groups speaking a broad range of first languages, has a decades-long history of EMI with its origin in British colonization (Kaur, 2020).

In the case of China, the English language has been of the utmost priority since the late 1970s. Moreover, the use of English as a medium to impart knowledge in HE is perceived as a key element for internationalizing Chinese HE. In a review article, Rose et al. (2020) identified and documented some prominent discourse that underpinned the formulation of institutional policy regarding EMI. The policy consists of several motivating factors including cultivating student talents, responding to globalization and promoting internationalization, improving the quality of teaching and curricula, all of which inspired the establishment of EMI in HEIs. As a result, the internationalization of HE underwent a significant shift from inward-oriented to outward-oriented (Wu, 2018), signifying an attempt to replace Chinese by EMI.

There have been multiple models developed for EMI policy implementation in China (Rose et al., 2020). For example, to maintain and consolidate the operation of English, EMI was mandated for 5-10% of the undergraduate courses in 2001, documented in the 2001 policy directives titled '*Opinions on strengthening undergraduate teaching work in HE and improving teaching quality*' that intended to spur global competitiveness among local talents (Dang et al., 2021; Macaro et al., 2018). After that, EMI programs experienced a rapid growth in Chinese HE. By 2006, 132 out of 136 universities in mainland China had programmed EMI courses (Rose et al., 2020). For succeeding EMI programs, the Ministry of Education (MoE), China administered '*Outline of national medium and long-term education reform and development plan 2010-2020*' that further underscored the necessity to ingrain internationalization of HE by introducing and increasing EMI courses (Ministry of Education, as cited in Dang et al., 2021).

A large body of research evidence, which encompassed the adoption and implementation of EMI, has documented the extent to which EMI has been implemented in Malaysia and China, and its outcomes (Ali, 2013; Ali & Hamid, 2018; Gill, 2006; Hu & Lei, 2014; Hu et al., 2014; Jiang et al., 2019; Macaro & Han, 2019; Qiu & Cheng, 2018; Tong & Tang, 2017). These studies discussed various impediments, e.g., teachers' poor proficiency in the English language, students' limited understanding and comprehension of the lectures, and inadequate professional development for the teachers, that challenged the implementation of EMI in the classrooms. From these studies, we can see that the adoption and implementation of EMI has remained a focal point of research. Hence, we intended to look at EMI in association with teacher identity (hereafter TI), with the conviction that the primacy of TI remained unexplored in EMI studies (Huang, 2019).

The commonly observed phenomena related to the studies pertaining to EMI concern the exploration of language ideology, language management, and language practice of teachers and students, and identity of young learners in HEIs (Ali & Hamid, 2018; Briggs et al., 2018; Cots, 2013; Ekoç, 2020; Hamid et al., 2013; Islam, 2013; Jiang et al., 2019; Kim & Tatar, 2018; Karim et al., 2021; Macaro & Han, 2020; Rahman and Singh, 2020; Rahman et al., 2020; Sarkar et al., 2021; Sultana, 2018; Yeh, 2012). While much work has been done on LPP, language ideology, language management, language practice, and perceptions about EMI, study entailing EMI and teacher identity is relatively scarce around the globe (Huang, 2019). Gill (2005) reported that it is expected that EMI would deliver a change in teachers' identity. Similar anticipation might be maintained for teachers in Chinese universities. As such, after a decade of policy implementation, it appears timely to undertake a thorough examination of teachers' identities in these contexts.

With the rapid growth that has made China a dominant player in the Asian region, EMI in Chinese HE drew our attention for this study (Gao & Liu, 2020). Malaysia's recognition as one of the first Asian countries to

institutionalize EMI in HE induced us to select it for the current study (Ali, 2013). Most significantly, we addressed this issue to add to the existing knowledge that would not only be useful for Malaysia and China, but also other parts of the globe endeavoring to implement EMI in HEIs. It is noteworthy that the LPP, more precisely language-in-education policy, often exhibits limited attempts to embrace the interplay between Medium of Instruction (MOI) and TI. Therefore, our study would lead the way to success in LPP implementation in various contexts. Finally, it would necessitate the integration of EMI in professional development (PD) or teacher education (TE) programs.

Problem Statement

We built on certain observations from several studies. Soren (2013) claimed that university teachers' professional identity concerning teaching by adopting EMI in the classroom stretches beyond that of their identity as language users. On a practical level, the newly introduced (MOI) brings changes in university teachers' roles, and eventually, results in the creation of their new identity (Soren, 2013). Besides, Preisler (2008) postulated that when teachers attempt to teach through a foreign language, the English language, their identity remains subject to vulnerability. Using an illustration, Preisler noted that using a language which is not the mother tongue as a MOI can be restrictive, limit teaching performance, and can confuse teachers' identity. In another sense, the use of foreign language as MOI in universities curtails teachers' preferred medium of interaction and causes them to play a role with a new identity that is less desirable than their conventional identity (Harder, 1980).

Moreover, it is also argued that teachers' low proficiency in English can marginalize their identity (Dearden, 2015; Harder, 1980; Pennington & Richards, 2016). Besides, the most common problem in the EMI settings concerns the limitations on a teacher's liberty to maintain their former identity just because a new MOI is being used. The new role the teacher must assume to put EMI into practice often conflicts with their former identity. Westbrook and Henriksen (2011) showed that training in the English language to strengthen a teacher's lecturing skills for EMI showed limited success in creating a professional identity as an EMI teacher.

In Malaysia and China content teachers had been advised to take EMI to the university classrooms. Yet it was more convenient for them to lecture students by putting more emphasis on the contents of the course than on focusing on EMI because students showed better success in receiving knowledge that is imparted through Bahasa Malaysia and Chinese (Ali & Hamid, 2018; Jiang et al., 2019). Likewise, Beijaard et al. (2004) explained that tensions in professional identity can be derived from the professional demands imposed by the teachers' own institutions. Moreover, an imbalance between teachers' individual subjectivities/ideologies and their professional selves might also cause an identity threat for the teachers (Aslup, 2006). "What is found relevant to the profession may conflict with the personal desires of teachers and what they experience as good" (Beijaard et al., 2004, p. 109). Finally, professional identity tension might evolve into real dilemmas when teachers have to choose techniques from equally undesirable alternatives (Berube, 1982).

Theoretical Framework

The dialogical approach (Akkerman and Meijer, 2011) consists of three fundamental dimensions: (1) Multiplicity and Unity, (2) Social and Individual and, (3) Continuity and Discontinuity, and it was chosen as the theoretical foundation for the current study. We argue that the creation of a new identity for content teachers as EMI teachers created a discomfort zone, and consequently, they began experiencing multilayered dilemmas related to their identity. Akkerman and Meijer (2011) shed light on this dilemma experienced by the teachers. They termed such phenomenon as *conflicting I-positions* that emerge when teachers undergo dilemmas and tensions inside their classrooms. They further stated that when distinct I-positions disagree, the persuasive one negotiates with other I-positions through dialogues. Hong et al. (2017) concluded that throughout the negotiation process, the self constantly readjusts, adapts, and guides itself throughout the negotiation process in order to fit the pieces of their self together to build a cohesive self. Our study aimed at addressing the identity of the university teachers working in China and Malaysia. To understand TI, as Akkerman and Meijer (2011) noted, the dialogical approach is also effective for the researchers to understand how teachers present themselves. Notably, a dialogical approach underpins a conceptualization of TI that comprised multiple I-positions related to particular situations, and therefore, it is easy to draw the identity of the teachers based on the contexts undertaken in the study (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). Eventually, it continues to shape the trajectory of teachers' identity creation through the

various tensions that appear in their professional lives. Therefore, we used the dialogical approach as the theoretical perspective to carry out this study since its fundamental concern is to understand the creation of identity through the tensions yielded from the MOI policies and practices in two distinct countries.

Multiplicity and unity

The theory of the dialogical self is embedded into the understanding of the self, which is perceived as a composite of “multiple I-positions in the landscape of the human mind” (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011, p. 311). They claimed that “an I-position can be considered as a ‘voiced’ position; that is, a speaking personality bringing forward a specific viewpoint and story” (p. 311). Multiplicity or multiple I-positions, as Hong et al. (2017) suggested, implies that an individual teacher has multiple roles to perform, concerning the specific context they worked in, and the individual brings a change in their actions to play a role demanded at that time. The emergence of different roles depending on the situations brings multiplicity in teachers’ identities. For example, a teacher may be a lecturer, facilitator, coach, or even a drill sergeant according to the demands of the situation. That same teacher might also carry the identity of a spouse/partner, father/mother, friend, or basketball player. As such, the self consists of multiple I-positions, any of which may appear to serve different purposes depending on the requirements of the situations (Hong et al., 2017). When dealing with a given situation, a particular I-position temporarily gains prominence in rendering service to that situation. As an illustration, to take prominence, I in one position can perform certain functions. For example, it has the ability to comprehend, misinterpret, agree, disagree, repel, query, deny, challenge, and even condemn the I in a different viewpoint (Hermans and Hermans-Jansen, 2001). One I-position can be assigned to play a role in a particular situation by segregating another I-position.

Generally, the conflicting I-position appears once teachers undergo tensions or dilemmas inside and outside of their classrooms (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2011; Pillen et al., 2013). For instance, a teacher who is advised by the administration of the university, conducts classes by adopting EMI; yet students demand their content discipline knowledge be carried out through Bangla Medium Instruction (BMI) (Sarkar et al., 2021). In such a case, the teacher, who identifies himself as an EMI-teacher, starts lecturing by incorporating BMI to secure students’ understanding. This kind of phenomenon creates tensions or dilemmas for the teacher because this practice contradicts the requirements of not only the university but also his own identity. When the conflict between multiple I-positions occurs, the dominance of a particular I-position is negotiated through dialogues, in other words, dialogical relations, with other I-positions. Hong et al. (2017) enunciated that throughout the negotiation process, the self continues to realign, readjust, and redirect to combine the pieces of the self together to shape a coherent self. To elaborate differently, the urge to sustain one’s sense of self leads the self to generate a space for dialogue between I-positions (Scavette, 2016). Akkerman and Meijer (2011) called this “unity of self” (p. 315). The unity of self acts as a compelling factor that drives the internal dialogue among differing I-positions, and the alignment of the various I-positions functions to maintain a uniformity of the self that results in coherence and consistency.

Social and individual

The dialogical approach demonstrates how an individual interprets synergy with other individuals and external environments and assesses them in different ways within the self (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). The interactions with multiple entities are interpreted and evaluated by the dialogues continued among several I-positions. Eventually, multiple agencies are developed. Hong et al. (2017), in that regard, claimed that only the active agency of an individual casts light on how a decentralized and fragmented self retains a coherence of individuality over time and puts forward an active negotiation process of identity construction. Additionally, teachers experience assimilation and disequilibrium in the process of negotiations. Assimilation becomes prominent when an individual’s interactions with the social environment are perceived as linear to their values and meaning structures.

On the contrary, disequilibrium becomes visible if the interactions with the dynamics and relations with the people are interpreted and evaluated by the individuals as conflicting with their dominant I-position. It is the natural action of the teachers that when disequilibrium appears in their daily affairs, they attempt to recalibrate the external stimuli and reexamine or reshape or modify their established meaning structure (Ibarra, 1999). Disequilibrium draws much attention from researchers on the premise that it has a formidable influence on the development progress, especially when the experiences of disequilibrium are accompanied by deliberate reflections and agency (Holt-Reynolds, 1992). The process of reflection involves

the identification of the challenges that are faced by the teachers so that they can modify or discard any teaching strategy (Hong et al., 2017). Besides, this process informs teachers about what aspects of being a teacher need to be maintained or even strengthened. Regarding the social-individual dimension of identity, a dialogical approach places emphasis on how the social environment and dynamics inform or can be the basis of I-positions within the individual's self, while individuals are featured with unique and transcendent agents precisely because of their multiple, dialogically related I-positions.

Discontinuity and continuity

Akkerman and Meijer (2011) conceptualized discontinuity and continuity as focusing on the variability of TI; that is the changing pattern of TI due to the passage of time. TI construction is a continuous process in nature (Pillen et al., 2013). Discontinuity and continuity of identity occur based on the contexts and particular phenomenon that emerged in the contexts. As Hong et al. (2017) stated, a teacher might act in an authoritative way to handle a particular classroom dynamic, and it might be the perfect approach to deal with that situation. Yet such an authoritarian self might not be the teacher's central I-position. This kind of discontinuity is observed when the tensions appear between multiple agencies (I-positions) and when dilemmas concerning the environment a teacher are situated in start emerging. Discontinuity of identity has been instrumental to provide insights into complex identity creation. (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011).

Continuity, on the other hand, sheds light on how teachers preserve their sense of self with time through repetitive behavior that establishes habitual routines, as well as cultural mediations and language that bring in shared adoption and norms. Given the prevalence of discontinuity of TI due to various pedagogical factors, teachers should attempt to maintain a coherent sense of self as the absence of continuity might lead an individual to suffer psychological issues (Chandler et al., 2003). Akkerman and Meijer (2011) have claimed that continuity of identity is maintained through narratives. They furthered the discussion by explaining how "personal continuity of self is warranted by narration, taking place both within the self and in the form of verbal accounts to others" (p. 313). They put forward that these dialogues play a vital role in organizing meaningful experience into a narrative structured system: the self-narrative. Building on the view of the dialogical approach, continuity remains in function more implicitly by maintaining routinized personal behavior as well as by cultural and historical mediation.

The Study

The study was designed to explore teacher identity in EMI-driven HEIs in Malaysia and China. Precisely, our study was guided by the following research question:

What are the identities of the university teachers involved in EMI courses in Malaysian and Chinese universities?

Methods

Planning the review

The major components, Multiplicity and Unity, Social and Individual, and, Continuity and Discontinuity, of the dialogical approach suggested by Akkerman and Meijer (2011) are linked to the practices of the teachers in order to understand their identities. The relevance of these components to the research question - What are the identities of the university teachers involved in EMI courses in Malaysian and Chinese universities? - requires the authors to review the studies that highlighted MOI policies, implementation of the policies and practice of the teachers in EMI universities in Malaysia and China (Kitchenham, 2004). After carrying out a review of the literature and discussing the data in the light of the dialogical approach proposed by Akkerman and Meijer (2011), the authors attempted to understand the nature of the identity of teachers affiliated to universities using EMI in Malaysia and China. The following studies were found to be strategically relevant: Karim et al (2017), Karim et al (2018), Rahman & Pandian (2018), and Rahman et al. (2018). In addition, a systematic review of the relevant literature shaped the data for the current study since Kitchenham (2004) stated that a systematic review of relevant literature enables the researchers to evaluate and interpret all literature that is relevant to the specific study.

Development of a review protocol

The researchers prioritized extracting a large portion of the data from studies indexed in SCOPUS, Emerging Source of Citation (ESCI), and Social Science Citation Index (SSCI). SCOPUS, ESCI and SSCI indexing preceded the assessment of the quality of individual study considered in this paper (Kitchenham, 2004). We also considered the books from well-known publishers. In addition, any report published by an organization

that was perceived authentic by the authors, was also taken into account. The relevant literature was planned to be searched based on EMI policies, implementation, and practices in the classrooms in Malaysian and Chinese HEIs. Initially, the inclusion criteria concerned the studies published in the last ten years. The researchers assumed that this time span would capture a clear picture of EMI policies and practices in two countries and see the phenomena using the lenses of dialogical approach for understanding TI. The keywords used in the searches were: *MOI in Malaysia and China, English Medium Instruction (EMI) in Malaysia and China, Implementation of EMI in China, EMI in Malaysian and Chinese Universities*.

Google Scholar was used as a search engine due to its academic structure. It encompasses more scientific and scholarly literature than Web of Science (WoS) and SCOPUS as these are more selective in terms of which journals are included in their databases (Orduna-Malea et al., 2015). Moreover, Google Scholar has expanded its coverage over time which makes it a powerful database for this kind of research. (Halevi et al., 2017).

Conducting the Review

For Malaysia, we considered the nine studies which reflect the EMI policy changes and its implementation with dates ranging from 2005 to 2018. We had to revise the initial planning of incorporating studies published in the last ten years because there were fewer studies on Malaysian EMI in HEIs. As regards China, we included eleven studies that ranged from 2009 to 2019. These studies offered us a meticulous overview of EMI policy implementation at Chinese universities. We also considered five book chapters on EMI in Malaysia and China because of the content and the number of citations available. In addition, we took into account a report published by the British Council containing vast amount of information concerning EMI and Chinese HE. We selected the studies that shed light on EMI policies and, university teachers' perception and classroom practices in the EMI-driven courses. Given below is a table that demonstrates the studies we selected, along with the rationale of the selection. Building on the theoretical perspective suggested by Akkerman and Meijer (2011), we extracted and reported the data from the studies included in Table 1.

Country	The study	Focus of the Study	Sources
Malaysia	Gill (2005)	Overview of the language policy	Journal - Language policy, Volume and Issue - 4(3)
	Gill (2006)	An overview of the EMI implementation in public universities	Journal - Current Issues in Language Planning, Volume and Issue - 7(1)
	Gill (2007)	Language policy change and conflict due to the change	Journal - AILA Review, Volume and Issue - 20(1)
	Gill (2012)	Complexities due to language-in-education policy	Book Chapter, Publisher - Springer
	Ali (2013)	EMI policy and its practice	Journal - Current Issues in Language Planning, Volume and Issue - 14(1)
	Gill (2014)	Change in the MOI: Bahasa Malaysia to English	Book Chapter, Publisher - Springer
	Ali and Hamid (2018)	EMI and teacher agency	Book Chapter, Publisher - De Gruyter
	Kaur and Zainuddin (2019)	EMI policies and Practices in the universities	Book Chapter, Publisher - Routledge
	Kaur (2020)	Experiences and challenges derived from EMI classrooms	Book Chapter
China	Hu (2009)	EMI and looming consequences.	Journal - English Today, Volume and Issue - 25(4)
	Hu and Lei (2014)	Language Ideology and Language practices of the professors.	Journal - <i>Higher Education</i> , Volume and Issue - 67(5)
	Hu, Li, and Lei (2014)	EMI policy and reality in Chinese universities	Journal - Language policy, Volume and Issue - 13(1)
	Tong and Tang (2017)	Observation report on EMI in the university classrooms	Book Chapter, Publisher - Routledge
	Qiu and Cheng (2018)	EMI in Chinese universities	Journal - International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, Volume and Issue - 23(10)
	Zhang (2018)	EMI policies and practice	Journal - Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, Volume and Issue - 39(6)
	Jiang, Zhang, and May (2019)	EMI implementation; teachers' practices and perceptions	Journal - International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, Volume and Issue - 22(2)

	Macaro and Han (2019)	EMI and teachers' perspectives of competencies, certification and professional development	Journal - Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, Volume and Issue - 41(3)
	Rose et al. (2020)	Investigation of EMI policy and implementation in Chinese HEIs	A report published by British Council
	Dang et al. (2021)	EMI and professional development for the content teachers	Journal - Teaching in Higher Education
	Qiu and Fang (2019)	EMI and non-native English-speaking content teachers in Chinese universities	Journal - International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism

Table 1: The relevant studies reviewed in this study.

Reporting the review

In their proposed theory, Akkerman and Meijer (2011) described the conflicting I-positions of teachers. From the studies reviewed, we encountered different phenomena that constituted conflicting I-positions for the content teachers in EMI-driven universities. For instance, the policy-oriented data documented in the studies concerning both Malaysia and China included problems related to the change in policy directives and the lack of written directives for science and technology courses in Malaysia (Gill, 2006). Similarly, in China, there was an unavailability of a specific directive to notify the content-teacher which courses should be taught using EMI (Macaro & Han, 2019).

Akkerman and Meijer (2011) held that these kinds of phenomenon could be responsible for generating dilemmas or conflicting I-positions in constructing TI. Thus, it was noted that a content teachers' identity in both countries continues in conflict due to the ambiguous nature of the policy initiatives. Finally, in line with the theoretical aspect (e.g., tensions or dilemma encountered by the teachers in their respective institutions confusing the formation of their identities) and considering the kind of results (ambiguity in policy ratifications) reported in earlier studies, we tended to situate the case under the theme titled *MOI Policy and Confused Teacher Identity*.

Results of the Review

We present the results of the literature review divided into several themes to help understand the identities of the teachers in EMI universities in Malaysia and China.

MOI Policy and Confused Teacher Identity

As regards the societal factor, the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), Malaysia circulated a verbal directive to public universities in 2005 to institute EMI to teach science and technology courses for the undergraduates enrolled in Academic Session 1, 2005/2006 (Abu et al., 2008). With this, EMI was put into practice in public universities. The strategy to institutionalize the use of EMI was not announced in any other way than the publication of the decision in newspapers reports of the then Prime Minister addressing the Vice-Chancellors and later from Vice-Chancellors to deans and from deans to the heads of the department (Ali, 2013). However, no written document was issued to formally describe procedures related to how EMI was to be used to teach science and technology courses (Gill, 2006). Ali (2013) postulated that the absence of formally legislated or codified directives left all "open to interpretation by academic staff at the university level" (p. 73). This informal method of policy circulation created ambiguity coupled with a "degree of uncertainty and also the latitude for those involved in policy implementation" (Ali, 2013, p. 86). Gill (2005, 2014) also stated that the new policy became troublesome for universities since they had to shift from Malay Language Medium Instruction (MLMI) to EMI in science and technology courses.

There was room for doubt associated with the extent to which English should be put into practice as the MOI (Gill, 2007), whether teachers would use English only to teach subject matter or if they could use English during the interaction with students. Hence, they were in a dilemma – whether they were to act as EMI or MLMI teachers as they attempted to implement EMI. Gill (2006) reported that the lack of clarity about the direction the change would take became a demotivating factor for the teachers.

It is interesting that EMI was chosen to teach science and technology courses; yet the Malay language had become the official MOI at all public universities. To clarify, Ali (2013), citing Malaysian education icon Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dr. Mohd Rashdan Baba who was Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) and Universiti Putra Malaysia, reported,

For undergraduate level, the policy on the medium of instruction is in Malay [Bahasa Malaysia] but subject lecturers are encouraged to conduct lectures in English at the final year(.) only in the final year. Also, we welcomed people [lecturers] who want to do it in the early years. But there is also a policy when there are international students in the class, all lectures have to be done in English. (p. 82)

As a result, the policy relating the language of instruction showed several inconsistent legislative orientations. Ali (2013) documented four explicit policies related to the new MOI at public universities: "(1) Bahasa Malaysia (Malay language) is the MOI for the undergraduate program; (2) EMI has been encouraged to be used in final-year undergraduate courses; (3) lecturers have the flexibility to use English in the early-year courses; and (4) EMI is the de facto policy when there are international students in the classroom" (p. 82). This may mean that teachers would have to have multiple identities as a result of such policies. Concerning the first provision, they would perceive themselves as MLMI-teachers. Yet, the same individuals had been previously told to identify themselves as EMI teachers, as stated in the second and fourth clauses. Evidently, a level of the dilemma was generated for them as to if they were MLMI teachers or EMI teachers.

Understanding the perceived ambiguity, MOHE (2011, as cited in Kaur, 2020) reissued the circular that details the following directives for the HEIs:

1. Ensure all course materials and assessments are in English.
2. Ensure all documents related to academic programs delivered to international students are in English.
3. All administrative documents are available in English.
4. All communication media including emails, signboards, and announcements are available in English. (p. 136)

The revised policy, recognized as 'enabling policy', directed by MOHE clearly suggests a shift from the MOE's earlier reluctance to issuing an explicit written statement on implementing EMI for teaching mathematics and science courses (Kaur, 2020). Yet to sustain the national sentiment as relates to Bahasa Malaysia, as Kaur added, the policy was identified as 'proposed measures'. The Ministry expected the HEIs to further its implementation for achieving internationalization. Eventually, the proposed initiatives were clearly left to the individual universities to decide the extent to which "action steps" would be taken for using EMI and communication. Kaur (2020), in fact, claimed that the revised policy did not specify the language of interaction in the classrooms. He argued that the absence of explicit guidelines regarding the use of classroom language indicates that the authority permitted the individual teacher to determine the language to be used for question-answer sessions, pair and group work activities, seminar discussions and the like.

As for EMI in Chinese HEIs, with the introduction of twelve key policy initiatives undertaken by the MOE, China joined the era of EMI for undergraduate education to improve the quality of HE that is required to survive the 21st century challenges (Hu et al., 2014). Fundamentally, MOI policy in China was preceded by the momentum begun in 2001 when China entered the World Trade Organization (WTO), and eventually, EMI was perceived as a driving force for cultivating an English-proficient workforce (Rose et al., 2020). Consequently, the Ministry of Education (2011) claimed,

Provision of English instruction at the compulsory education stage can lay a foundation for raising the quality of the Chinese citizenry, developing talents with strong innovative capacities and cross-cultural communicative skills, and enhancing China's international competitiveness and its citizen's ability to engage in international communication. (p. 1)

Furthermore, MOE (2007b) emphasized that English learning is "an integral component of higher education" that is capable of "raising students' all-round cultural qualities to meet China's needs for development and international interaction" (p. 1). As such, it is manifestly evident that HE in China resorted to EMI, with the ratified directives, to improve not only the quality of education but also the English language proficiency of the university graduates. Eventually, with the EMI policy being implemented, EMI created a new identity for content teachers as EMI teachers. However, the disintegration originated with the unavailability of a specifically articulated directive that would notify the content teachers about which courses should be taught in EMI (Macaro & Han, 2019). Such inconsistency associated with the macro-level policy of HE created another level of discrepancy in the development of content teachers' identity as EMI teachers. Therefore, the identity of the content teachers to become EMI teachers varied considerably among HEIs.

Instructional Deficiency, the Intervention of Materials Developed in the Native Language and Vulnerable Teacher Identity

In part in Malaysia teachers' poor proficiency can be held accountable for dismantling the implementation of EMI. This happened because the teachers themselves had received their education through Bahasa Malaysia (BM) as MOI. Gill (2005) established a rationale for this statement that there was a generation of school and university graduates who had experienced their learning process in BM. Gill (2012; 2014) furthered the analysis reporting that university teachers of science and technology courses had been receiving their education in MLMI since post-independence days, when English was marginalized for academic usage. Consequently, little exposure to English in their earlier education hampered the development of their English language proficiency and problematized their identity as EMI teachers.

In China, the problems were related to the level of competencies that a teacher needs to possess to be an EMI teacher. No independent body, as Macaro and Han's (2019) study revealed, is involved in the selection process, and the English proficiency required for content or subject teachers is not defined. Teachers' orientations as EMI teachers, in most cases, depends on self-interest or real-world necessity; whether they intend to use EMI or not. Moreover, the presence of international students induces them to continue EMI in the classrooms. This suggests that when the classroom is constituted wholly by Chinese students, the teachers are likely to conduct classes in Chinese. The phenomena reported in Macaro and Han's study exemplifies the immense difficulty the content teachers in HEIs have when trying to create their sole identity as EMI teachers.

Moreover, in Chinese universities, the teachers actually have limited ability to teach students thoroughly in English (Hu & Lei, 2014). The insufficient command of English precludes teachers from communicating their knowledge to their students. Their study found it challenging for the teachers to explain scientific concepts and technical terms, discuss the fundamental process and principles of their disciplines, analyze complex cases, construct thought-provoking arguments, and critique opposing views in English. The recent literature pertaining to EMI and Chinese HE also highlighted a similar barrier (Dang et al., 2021). For instance, they reported the limited command in English language proficiency of the teachers who endeavor to adopt EMI in teaching.

To mitigate these difficulties, as Hu et al. (2014) revealed, teachers frequently use Chinese reference books as supplementary materials for reviewing the lecture slides and translating subject knowledge from English to Chinese. This approach in trying to alleviate the barriers created by EMI, leads them to abdicate their identities as EMI teachers. They often find themselves in confusing situations, for example, if they focus on EMI, they have to compromise students' adequate understanding of the subject matter; if they intend to impart knowledge properly, they have to compromise EMI. With their low English proficiency or limited ability to construct knowledge in English and the students' limited understanding of the subject matter when teaching occurs through EMI, teachers have to resort to Chinese alongside English in the HEI classes.

Classroom Practice and Teacher Identity

In Malaysia, after the MOHE circulated a verbal directive to public universities in 2005 to incorporate EMI, teachers attempted to use English entirely in the classroom, but they switched to the Malay language when they found students' comprehension of the concepts being taught was being affected (Ali & Hamid, 2018). The classroom observation data from this study also suggested that content teachers switched from English to Bahasa Malaysia when they needed to clarify specific concepts of the content. For example, topics like electrical wiring demand a lot of explanation which cannot be delivered through English alone to achieve students' comprehension. Kaur and Zainuddin (2019) noted a similar phenomenon with an illustration that non-understanding on the part of the students signaled a need for the teachers to change to the Malay language in lectures.

Gill (2007) commented that the magnitude of EMI compromised the acquisition of content knowledge of science and technology courses because of the challenge posed by English. Eventually, 'students' request' to switch from English to the Malay language remains a highly cited effective factor that compels content teachers to adopt bilingualism, as highlighted by Ali and Hamid (2018). The emerging difficulty concerning students' understanding of English set the stage for the teachers to include the Malay language in their lectures. Therefore, teachers find themselves in a confusing situation regarding whether they should

continue their identity as MLMI-teachers to assure students' understanding of the subject matter or they should maintain their roles as EMI teachers at the expense of students' understanding of the subject matter.

In China, EMI is predominantly affected by teacher-centered pedagogy, driven by Confucian ideas of a teacher's role, which complicated teachers' shift to the student-centered pedagogy in EMI (Dang et al., 2021). Considering the practice in the universities, content teachers entrusted to conduct classes through EMI underwent traumatic experiences in the classroom (Zhang, 2018). For instance, EMI has increased teachers' burnout as they have to prepare new teaching materials for EMI courses (Rose et al., 2020). Apart from this, code-switching was mentioned by the researchers as teachers attempted to incorporate Chinese in the EMI classrooms to bring clarity in students' understanding of the difficult concept or challenging content (Hu & Lei, 2014). Tong and Tang (2017) uncovered that content teachers spent 67% of the instructional time on teaching content in Chinese, whereas English was perceived as an instructional language that was supposed to account for a much larger percentage of the class time. They claimed that Chinese was the dominant instructional language in the courses. The subsequent study conducted by Qiu and Cheng (2018) was a testimony of the imbalance between content and language in the EMI classrooms. The content teachers emphasized content more, with no specific language goal. Their study estimated that 70% of the instructional time in the content-area was in Chinese.

The strategy of code-switching (from English to Chinese) was also seen in the concurrent study conducted by Jiang et al. (2019). Content teachers demonstrated the belief that their priority was the transfer of subject knowledge, rather than the teaching English (Qiu & Fang, 2019). A relatively recent finding indicated that average use of English ranged from 74.5% to 86.52% in PowerPoint (ppt) slides demonstrated in the classrooms; yet English was seen to be less often used in verbal delivery of lectures (Rose et al., 2020). Rose et al. explained that classrooms containing mixed-ability (both in language and in academic performance) students challenged teachers to deliver lectures in English. With such a reality in place, EMI teachers had to transform themselves into bilingual teachers since they were forced to put code-switching into practice. Eventually, their identity as EMI teachers was lost.

The Dearth of Professional Development and TI in China

To adequately equip teachers with the training needed for the implementation of EMI in China, HEIs (micro-level) kept attempting to fulfill the national interest (macro-level policy). Dang et al. (2021) described the strategies adopted by Chinese universities to offer professional development programs to maintain the growth of EMI. These strategies centered on the initiative to send educators to universities situated in English-speaking countries to receive intensive training in English teaching techniques. Locally arranged intensive training in the English language was also organized for the teachers. The common problem observed in these training programs was their short duration (i.e., two to four weeks) that made it difficult for trainees to qualify for teaching EMI courses (Dang et al., 2021). Moreover, Dang et al. also claimed that professional learning (PL) programs typically emphasize the English language, with minimal focus on the development of general pedagogical competence. In a similar vein, Rose et al. (2020) identified the training for EMI as offering teaching methods, or in other words, pedagogical practices, in general, rather than connecting EMI to pedagogical concerns., Qiu and Cheng (2018) also cited the inadequacy of EMI professional development for university teachers.

Macaro and Han (2019) reported that there were no institutional certifications in EMI given to the teachers for participating in the PD programs. Some of the teachers in their study stated that they were not informed about the arrangement of such PD programs. As such, they were unable to join the institutional EMI training programs. Eventually, the lack of certification acknowledged by the HEIs, and teachers' ignorance of such PD and certification programs impeded the identity creation of content teachers as EMI teachers.

Nationalism and Dilemma in Developing TI in Malaysia

In the case of Malaysia, nationalism was another affective factor that came to light when the teachers were directed to carry out EMI in their classes. For instance, Gill (2006) documented that a considerable number of the teachers in public universities did not agree with this decision since they believed that their national identity might be compromised from EMI. Furthermore, the issue of nationalism and the implementation of EMI have caused further conflict due to EMI as the change of the previous language policy was ignored by the teachers since the use of English as the language of instruction had not been officially circulated in the form of a written directive (Ali, 2013). The teachers perceived that EMI was imposed on them and feared

that it might negatively affect their nationalism. The strong sentiment from the teachers toward retaining Bahasa Malaysia was reported by Ali (2013). Thus, the sense of nationalism and the absence of a formal directive to institute EMI resulted in a dilemma for the teachers, and ultimately, exacerbated the creation of their identity as EMI teachers.

Discussion

In Malaysia, no officially written provision has been stipulated concerning EMI at the macro policy level, except for a verbal directive that was transmitted to advise science and technology content teachers to implement EMI in the classroom. Citing the necessity of a written directive, Gill (2006) suggested that an important element for the successful implementation of MOI policy should have been written directives, which are essential for language management in higher education. Spolsky (2004) described language management as “any specific efforts to modify or influence LP by any kind of language intervention” (p. 5). Due to the absence of the written directive language management created ambiguity for the teachers regarding the extent to which EMI should be implemented: whether to use only English only to teach subject matter or also while interacting with students. For this reason, teachers, as one of the major actors to implement language policy (see Cooper, 1989 for details about the actors involved in implementing EMI policy as part of language policy and planning), have been suffering an identity crisis, which might thwart their attempts to achieve the ultimate aims of newly created policy.

In China, in a similar vein, EMI was introduced through the written directives suggesting that content teachers at the universities conduct classes by incorporating EMI. However, no clearly articulated benchmark was set at the policy level to confirm the level of English language proficiency required for the content teachers to be EMI teachers. This lack of officially written documentation in Malaysia and the lack of written benchmarks for the teachers to teach through EMI in China demonstrated the ambiguity associated with the governmental decisions. University teachers, therefore, attempted to interpret the directives themselves. The dialogical approach is congruent with such acts of the teachers in that the teachers interpreted the oral or written directives issued by the macro policy level and evaluated them in certain ways within themselves (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011).

Several interactions took place due to these complications. Akkerman and Meijer (2011) identified similar reactions as multiple entities, and teachers interpreted and evaluated their interactions by the dialogues continued among several I-positions. Teachers in both contexts created their initial I-position as content teachers. When EMI was imposed, their new identity emerged as EMI teachers. Identity as content teachers on one hand, and identity as EMI teachers on other hand, gave birth to multiple entities that teachers needed to interpret and evaluate through dialogues among several I-positions. The initial I-position interacted with the new I-position as an EMI teacher. Eventually, multiple agencies, for example, content teachers and EMI teachers, were introduced among teachers’ selves (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). The active agency of the teachers in both contexts continued as content teachers. Hong et al. (2017) claimed that only the active agency of the teachers suggested a negotiation in the interaction process of teacher-identity creation. In that capacity, teachers had to yield interaction between their identities as content teachers – the dominant agency – and EMI teachers – the new entity. Therefore, when they endeavored to negotiate, they experienced *disequilibrium*, as their domineering I-position as content teachers conflicted with the new policy-generated I-position as EMI teachers.

Ibarra (1999) suggested that when teachers experience *disequilibrium*, they attempt to adjust the external stimuli, such as new MOI policy and benefits in the policy regarding English, and then reshape or modify their identity. Considering this, content teachers in both contexts redefined their identity as EMI teachers. Now the pressing question is how long the teachers have been able to retain this new identity or how long the teachers would be able to sustain their identity as EMI teachers. The voices of the teachers in the science and technology courses in Malaysian universities suggested the ripple effect of EMI and corroborated the emergence of such a question. The frequent adaptation of code-switching has become a regular phenomenon in the classroom. Citing the necessity of making the content clear and understandable for the students, teachers often switched to Bahasa Malaysia. Likewise in China, the teachers code-switched to Chinese in the classroom to assure clarity in students’ understanding. Various studies (e.g., Tong & Tang, 2017; Qiu & Cheng, 2018) have also confirmed that Chinese was used more in instructional time than English was. Integrating the idea of continuity and discontinuity could open an avenue for our understanding such phenomena in both contexts.

Continuity and discontinuity of teachers' identity were also suggested by Akkerman and Meijer (2011). Continuity entails how teachers maintain their sense of self with time through patterned behavior which forms routine practices and, cultural mediations and language that yield shared assumptions and norms. In Malaysia and China, the university teachers maintained their sense of self as content teachers from the beginning, and they shaped their language activities in the classroom by adopting the mother tongues of their respective contexts since the students were culturally biased to learn through mother tongues. As such, their identity was defined as MLMI and CMI teachers. However, the new imposition of the MOI policy to adopt EMI spurred discontinuity in teachers' identity. We addressed discontinuity by considering two distinct effects. Discontinuity takes place in terms of teachers' conventional practice of using MLMI or CMI. With the new language policy being implemented, teachers switched to EMI in the classroom. According to the new provision, they attempted to create their identities as EMI teachers. Yet they underwent the creation of another layer of discontinuity. Immediately after incorporating EMI, teachers started experiencing multifaceted problems. Reporting students' limited comprehension, their own lack of professional development and certification, and their limited command of English as pitfalls, teachers in both contexts claimed that they had to restore MLMI and CMI in their pedagogical practices. Hong et al. (2017) advocated for teachers to be authorized to include or exclude any practice in the classroom which they think is appropriate to deal with a particular situation. Eventually, to mitigate different instructional problems that emerged in the classroom, teachers utilized this latitude to switch to MLMI and CMI. However, this might not be the teachers' central I-position (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). To control the tensions that appeared in the classrooms, teachers suffered discontinuity.

To sum up, this discontinuity resulted from the tensions that appeared between multiple I-positions (MLMI or CMI teachers and EMI teachers) and the dilemmas (e.g., the undefined level of proficiency required to teach through EMI, the unexplored extent to which EMI should be put into practice, the presence of confusion of the students about different concepts) associated with the pedagogy (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). Chandler et al. (2003) suggested that when teachers experience discontinuity among several I-positions, they should move forward to maintain a coherent identity as the presence of discontinuity might lead them to suffer from psychological issues. Taking the contextual reality related to official policies in both contexts, we supposed that the teachers in the current study have not been in the state of developing a coherent identity as EMI teachers. Now, the relevant question raised about China is whether they are CMI teachers in EMI classrooms or they are EMI teachers as the policy expects them to be or are they are really bilingual teachers. In Malaysia, the pertinent question concerns whether the teachers are still EMI or MLMI or bilingual teachers, as the four directives reported in Ali (2013) left room for the teachers to choose any of these possibilities.

We reviewed the relevant literature ranging from 2014 to 2019 concerning China and from 2005 to 2018 related to Malaysia. The entire review projected the submissive nature of the teachers that had existed for years and which caused the discontinuous nature of their identity. In the EMI classrooms, instead of continuing their identity as EMI teachers, they attempted to address various problems by switching their identity. Hong et al. (2017) also advocated teachers' multiple roles, which they called multiple I-positions, to perform concerning the specific contexts they worked in and to bring change in their actions to address the needs that appear at a particular time. When the students fell short of understanding the lecture delivered in English, the teachers played the role of bilingual teachers, even though the policy generated an identity for them as EMI lecturers or teachers. Akkerman and Meijer (2011) illustrated that when dealing with a situation, a particular I-position temporarily occupies the domineering role to serve the purpose of that situation. For the teachers in our study, their identity as bilingual teachers became dominant to bring clarity in the discussion of theories, concepts, and criticisms, and to ease the delivery of the instructions.

Furthermore, it was claimed that the I in the one position might contradict, oppose, disagree, and even ridicule the I in another position (Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 2001). Additionally, one I-position can be entrusted to play a role in a particular situation by segregating another I-position. The new I-position for the teacher, EMI teachers, was opposed to their previous identity featured as content teachers. Generally, the conflicting I-positions become visible when teachers experience dilemmas inside and outside the classroom (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2011; Pillen et al., 2013). A closer look into Malaysia and China suggested that the policies and classroom realities produced some dilemmas for the teachers both outside and inside

of the classrooms. These resulted in teachers' tendency to code-switch from English to the Malay language and Chinese, and eventually, created their identity as bilingual teachers.

It happened as Akkerman and Meijer (2011) noted that when conflicts between different I-positions become prominent, the dominance of a particular I-position is negotiated through dialogues with other I-positions. Hong et al. (2017) believed that throughout the negotiation process, the self continues to realign, readjusts, and redirects to create a coherent self, which Akkerman and Meijer (2011) dubbed as 'unity of self'. In the process, the teachers researched in this study perhaps continued the dialogue between dominant I-position (EMI teachers) and their previous I-position as content teachers (regardless of any stipulated condition for language usage) and shaped a coherent self as bilingual teachers with both languages, that is, the Malay Language or Chinese and English, brought into account.

Conclusion

The present study aimed at understanding the identities of the university teachers involved in EMI courses in Malaysian and Chinese universities. The findings of the study indicated the coherent identity of the EMI teachers developed as bilingual teachers. The limitation of the study concerns the inclusion of previously published literature to understand the teachers' identity in EMI universities in Malaysia and China. Although a juncture between the theoretical perspective and the previous literature was observed, the inclusion of empirical data would strengthen the quality of such studies. The findings captured in this study can be the point of departure for future empirical studies. Based on the phenomenon – relevant to EMI and TI – reported in this study, future researchers can design questionnaires and administer a nationwide survey in Malaysia, China, and other similar contexts that instituted EMI in HEIs to examine the nature of identity contained by university teachers

We reported the development of the teachers' identities as bilingual ones in Malaysia and China, where EMI occupied the operational command in the LPP for HEIs. Building on Spolsky (2004) and looking into Malaysian and Chinese universities, we observed that the language ideologies and language practices remained biased to bilingualism. Language ideology derives from commonly conceived attitudes and assumptions about what has been perceived as an appropriate language to choose and use in a context of communication. Taking this view into account, we can justify their bias to bilingualism since university teachers in Malaysia have been seduced to the extreme nationalist sentiment that gravitates to their choice to Bahasa Malaysia as a language of education. In the language management segment, strategies were identified as insufficient to sponsor the implementation of EMI. For example, the absence or inadequacy of PD and certification has been visible in both contexts even after a decade of EMI implementation. With such pitfalls prevailing, teachers' identities as bilingual teachers have been created.

If the contexts require them to identify as EMI teachers, the first step would be to arrange adequate PD and certification programs for them. Every university should operate PD programs for content teachers, in which the emphasis would be placed on specific vocabulary items of each discipline.

We strongly recommend the inclusion of some aspects in the PD, "both in regard to the cultures (e.g., social, academic, etc.) their international students bring to the EMI classrooms, as well as how the educational culture at home is interpreted and understood by the students" (Soren, 2013, p. 170). This is a crucial aspect for China and Malaysia due to their emergence as educational hubs in the Asian region. Furthermore, to witness the effectiveness of the proposed PD and certification programs, a rigorous discussion must be initiated with the teachers to enlist the needs to be addressed in the programs. Moreover, PD or teacher education programs should not only include English skills, but also generate a critical reflection on teachers' past and present identities. Apart from these, teacher educators should focus on how discipline-specific and sociocultural contexts shape teachers' identities and hence filter their classroom practices. Our review on this pressing issue can also be delivered as content in the PD for drawing teachers' attention to resist the probable deviation of their identity, considering that we reported how the journey of EMI teachers' identity led them to becoming bilingual-lecturers or teachers. Accumulating all strategies suggested above can contribute to creating TI, which would empower teachers to dedicate themselves to EMI implementation.

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