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Discursive ripple effects in language policy and practice: Multilingualism and English as an academic lingua franca in transnational higher education

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Abstract
The advancement of English as an instrument for the internationalization of higher education has foregrounded English as an academic lingua franca (EALF), and the case of China is no exception. This study focuses on the process by which EALF has been interpreted and negotiated across university policies and local practices in China's internationalized higher education. Drawing upon nexus analysis and multisource data, the study traced the discursive (re)location of EALF across different scales of social activity related to multilingualism at an English-medium transnational university in China. Our analysis illustrates the tension between English and other co-existing languages, as presented in educational language policies and as perceived and practiced by multilingual students in the local communicative context. The findings also show an interactive policymaking process through which students and university administrators opened ideological and implementational spaces that linguistically and semiotically pluralized communicative scenarios at the internationalized university in focus.

Keywords: English as an academic lingua franca, transnational higher education, English medium instruction, multilingualism, language policy, nexus analysis

1. Introduction

In the wake of globalization and spread of English as a dominant language for communication in many domains, higher education systems throughout the world have adopted English medium instruction (EMI) as a major strategy of internationalization (e.g., Doiz et al., 2012), foregrounding English as an academic lingua franca (EALF) (Björkman, 2013; Jenkins, 2014; Kirkpatrick, 2014). In China, EMI has been introduced as a main

incentive to enhance the international competitiveness of Chinese universities and to attract international students (Zhang, 2018). This started in 2001 with the promulgation of the Ministry of Education's policy for improving the quality of undergraduate programs, which stipulated that 5-10% of undergraduate level courses at Chinese universities should be delivered in English (MOE, 2001). A primary form of EMI international higher education in China is transnational higher education (TNHE), referring to joint programs and institutions cooperatively run by a Chinese university and a foreign educational institution (MOE, 2004). TNHE in China has three distinct models: (1) Chinese-foreign cooperation universities (stand-alone institutions), (2) Chinese-foreign cooperation second-tiered colleges as part of Chinese universities, and (3) Chinese-foreign cooperation programs as part of Chinese universities (Mok & Han, 2016). In any form, TNHE provisions feature imported EMI curricula, a high ratio of international students and professionals, and the use of EALF. The past two decades have witnessed a rapid spread of TNHE in China. By 2019, China had established 1979 TNHE programs and 9 independent TNHE universities, and 1.5 million Chinese and international students graduated from Chinese TNHE programs (MOE, 2019).

A considerable body of literature has been devoted to investigating language policies and practices in EMI university programs in European and Asian contexts (Doiz et al., 2012; Fenton-Smith et al., 2017; Smit & Dafouz, 2012). Research has problematized the dominant role that English plays in EMI policies and practices and the inherent challenge that English as the sole legitimate language for EMI brings to linguistic diversity in higher education (e.g., Coleman, 2006; Phillipson, 2009). Studies exploring the lived experiences and views of students and teachers in EMI programs also highlight the tension between monolingual English-oriented policies and the diverse communicative needs among individuals (e.g., Baker & Hüttner, 2017). The monolingual normative ethos of institutional EMI policies and practices marginalizes both 'non-standard' kinds of English and language(s) other than English (e.g., the multilingual repertoires of stakeholders) in international higher education (Jenkins, 2017). These EALF contexts thus face challenges in maintaining and promoting multilingualism (Bradford, 2016). Hornberger (2002, 2005) introduced the idea of ideological and implementational spaces in language policy, drawing attention to the roles played by both policy and individuals (i.e., language users, educators, and planners) in carving out space, conceptually and in practice, to foster linguistic diversity and implement multilingual education practices. Taking ideological and implementational space in and around EALF policy into consideration, in turn, calls for an analytic focus across the multiple social scales (e.g., policy text, institutional, and individual) on which policy processes occur (Hult, 2015), with particular attention to how multilingual students and staff engage with education and language policies in international higher education.

In China, while the growth of EMI in higher education (e.g., Hu & Lei, 2014; Zhang, 2018) and TNHE (e.g., Han, 2017; Perrin, 2017) have received increasing attention, language policy and practice of EALF in relation to the linguistic diversity on international campuses remains under-examined (cf. Ou & Gu, 2020, 2021; Song, 2019). Researchers have called for more in-depth ethnographic studies of the linguistic ecology of EMI in international universities (De Costa et al., 2020). Taking up this charge, the present study draws upon ethnographic data collected from observation, in-depth interviews, and policy documents to

provide a situated perspective on the roles of English and other languages at a transnational university that uses EMI in China. In particular, we use nexus analysis (Scollon & Scollon, 2004) to investigate (1) how EALF was discursively constructed in the language policies of an EMI transnational university in China, (2) how EALF was interpreted and practiced by individual students in daily interactions, and (3) how discourses of EALF are interrelated across institutional, interpersonal, and individual scales of social organization at this university.

2. The study

2.1 Nexus analysis

In this study, we employed nexus analysis as a "meta-methodology" (Hult, 2017a) to integrate complementary methods for data collection and analysis (vide infra) that facilitate the exploration of EALF at an international university as a multidimensional social system. Nexus analysis was originally put forward by Scollon and Scollon (2004) as "a way of doing ethnographic discourse analysis" that focuses on the study of "semiotic cycles of people, objects and discourses in and through moments of sociocultural importance" (p. x). Discourse, in this sense, refers to "different ways in which we humans integrate language with non-language 'stuff,' such as different ways of thinking, acting, interacting, valuing, feeling, believing, and using symbols, tools, and objects in the right places and at the right times" (Gee, 1999, p. 13). As a tool for mapping connections, nexus analysis allows for the tracing of how discourses that unfold on varying scales of space and time intersect in the mediation of a given social action (Hult, 2017a, 2019). Nexus analysis, thus, aligns with recent situated and ecological orientations to language policy that foreground the role of social actors who make sense of policy discourses as historically, culturally, and sociopolitically situated (e.g., Barakos & Unger, 2016; Davis & Phyak, 2016; Hornberger & Hult, 2008; Hult, 2010, 2017b; Johnson, 2011).

Scollon and Scollon (2004) identify three types of discourses that mediate social actions: *historical body, interaction order,* and *discourses in place.* Historical body (HB) is the embodiment of one's "history of personal experience" (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p. 13), including inter alia a person's educational experience, communicative repertoire, beliefs about language, cognitive development, and psychosocial change. These life experiences shape the way people engage with others in social activities and influence how people position themselves and others in interaction. HB thus "invokes the role of agency and the potential for individual influence on society" (Hult, 2017a, p. 94). Interaction order (IO) refers to "any of the many possible social arrangements by which we form relationships in social interactions" (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p. 13). The social arrangements include the shared norms that individuals draw upon and the expectations that actors have for each other in relation to their social positions to guide their interactions. Discourse in place (DiP), in turn, includes both material and conceptual manifestations of wider circulating values, beliefs, and ideologies that are co-present in a moment of social action and provide conceptual affordances for individuals' actions (Hult, 2017a).

Nexus analysis proffers a conceptual and analytical framework for a multidimensional and interconnected understanding of EALF in higher education by mapping how it relates to the three types of aforementioned discourses. Scollon and Scollon (2004) explicate that each type of discourse is considered a cycle that has its own timescale of (re)production (e.g., the span of a conversation for the interaction order or a human lifetime for the historical body) and each type also has the potential to affect another type when they intersect in social actions (cf. Hult, 2019). The social actions in focus here, those related to EALF, then, are moments of "layered simultaneity" where the different dimensions of discourse intersect in one moment, shaping the way an action takes place in the context of an international university setting (Blommaert, 2005, p. 126-131). These discursive dynamics are realized through resemiotization, a process whereby "actions often transform a cycle from one kind of action/object or discourse into another" (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p.170), for example when de facto language policies emerging from norms (re)produced through the interaction order are taken up in a de jure language policy.

Using nexus analysis to guide the mapping of discursive relationships allows us to (1) identify discourses of EALF on different social scales (i.e., individual, interpersonal, and ideological) and (2) trace the process of resemiotization through which an EALF discourse in one form transforms into another and thereby leads to various impacts across scales. For instance, this would happen when university ideologies/products of language are drawn upon by social actors to make linguistic choices in interaction, or when individuals draw upon their own language experiences to form language policies. Accordingly, by means of nexus analysis, we attempt to capture the complexity and dynamicity involved in the EALF phenomena at an international university by mapping interpretations of EALF by different social actors and on different scales (i.e., national policies, university language policies and management, and individual students) and make visible the ways in which they connect to each other.

2.2 Research site

The study draws upon data from a two-year critical sociolinguistic ethnography project conducted at a transnational university (pseudonym BU) located on the southeast coast of China (Ou, 2020). The university is jointly run by a highly ranked university from the United States and a top-level Chinese university, offering double-degree undergraduate programs, master's programs, and a small number of doctoral programs. BU adopts the curriculum of the US university and employs an explicit one-size-fits-all EMI policy throughout the curriculum. English is an important requirement for admission to BU. Prospective students' English competence is evaluated via multiple methods, including performance on standardized exams, one-on-one interviews, demonstration classes, and short essays.

As a Chinese university with a high international student ratio, BU has a multilingual and multicultural community of 1300 undergraduate students from diverse backgrounds. Just over half of the student body (57.72%) is from Mainland China with the rest of the student population from over 70 countries, such as the United States, Canada, Mexico, Russia, Turkey, India, the United Kingdom, Germany, Venezuela, Pakistan, Chile, Peru, Thailand,

Ethiopia, Singapore, and Australia, among others. Over 34 different languages are used on campus.

2.3 Data collection and analysis

Methodologically, nexus analysis integrates an eclectic yet principled combination of tools from the traditions of interactional sociolinguistics, ethnography of communication, and critical discourse analysis to facilitate a systematic investigation of relationships between social actions and circulating discourses on different dimensions of space and time (Hult, 2010; Scollon & Scollon, 2004). Insights into the HB (historical body) cycle of EALF in this transnational university were provided by the content analysis of in-depth individual interviews with 25 students from diverse linguistic and sociocultural backgrounds (see Table 1 & Table 2 for detailed demographic information). Between September 2016 and November 2018, 13 Chinese students and 12 international students from different undergraduate programs were recruited via snowball sampling and interviewed formally and informally about their language use, language beliefs, repertoire development, and socialization experiences with intercultural communication on campus. In total, around 25 hours of audio-recordings and 45 transcripts of interview data were collected. The analysis focused on identifying individual participants' (language) education experiences, language practices and beliefs about language use in intercultural contact, how they position themselves and others in relation to language use, and how they experience university language policies.

[Insert Table 1 and Table 2 here]

Examination of the IO (interaction order) was facilitated by interactional sociolinguistic analysis of recorded daily intercultural interactions of the participants. Using interactional analysis (Scollon & Scollon, 2004), the observed and recorded peer interactions, including face-to-face conversations and language use on mobile social networking applications (i.e., WeChat and Facebook), were analyzed with attention to the instances where shared norms of interpretation and interaction occurred and guided the multilingual students' language use. Analytical insight about IO was also informed by inductive analysis (e.g., Saldaña, 2015) of the interview data, which shed light on the process by which multilingual students negotiated existing norms and created new norms for EALF communication.

To identify relevant DiPs (discourses in place), findings from the ethnographic observations, field notes, interviews, and analysis of policy documents were incorporated to make analytical connections to wider circulating discourses that intersected with participants' actions. During the fieldwork, Ou collected 320 pages of paper and digital documents related to BU's EMI and language policies, 520 pages of field notes, and 122 photo entries of language use in the public space of the campus. Critical discourse analysis (Johnson, 2011) was employed to analyze policy documents and other textual and visual data to identify discourses and ideologies that were 'in place' around the participants' actions in daily communication.

Understanding the interplay of discourses on different scales involved identifying instances of resemiotization, specifically, looking for instances of intertextuality (i.e., meanings from one text indexed in another) and interdiscursivity (i.e., elements such as genre, style, or structure of one text type present or blended in other texts) (Blommaert, 2005; Johnson, 2015)[1].When analyzing the relation of multi-scalar EALF discourses, we put special focus on how ideological and implementational spaces for multilingualism (Hornberger, 2005) were navigated by different social actors (e.g., policymakers, administrators, and students). In this way, nexus analysis, which provides a mechanism for mapping the discursive dynamicity within EALF at an international university setting, contributed to a developmental understanding of international university language policy and practice, accounting for individuals' embrace of multilingualism and engagement in the policymaking process.

3. Findings

3.1 Discursive construction of EALF in university language policy

On the institutional scale, English as an academic lingua franca (EALF) is found to be shaped by two major discourses in place (DiPs) materially or semiotically manifested in the university's language policy documents, curricula, and language use in public space. These DiPs, as we show, have an impact on how communication among multilingual students unfolds and what opportunities students have for their personal repertoire development.

First, there was an institutionally situated view of bilingualism at BU where only English and Chinese are legitimate languages on campus while other languages are marginalized as resources for international communication and legitimized only for intragroup communication among certain students. This is reflected in the core curriculum that designates English as the medium of instruction in which all students should be highly proficient, and Chinese as a language that all non-native Chinese-speaking students should learn. In the *Language* section of the core curriculum, it reads[2]:

> *Language study is central to the educational mission of [BU]'s global network. Our goal is for all [BU] students to be fluent in English, the language of instruction, and for non-native Chinese speakers to develop <u>as much</u> proficiency in Chinese, as their major course of study allows, with a minimum requirement of successful completion of the intermediate two level of Chinese or [to] demonstrate equivalent competency through a placement exam.*

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[1] In the tradition of discourse analysis, we take a broad interpretation of 'text' to include oral and written modalities.

[2] To keep the anonymity of the research cite, the references to the university documents are not provided.

Accordingly, Chinese students and international students are assigned divergent language learning targets in their first two years of study. All Chinese students are required to complete two English for Academic Purposes courses to improve their scholarly use of English. The non-Chinese-speaking international students are tested on their Chinese proficiency when they first enter the university and then placed in mandatory Chinese courses at different levels. As specified above, international students must complete the Intermediate 2 level of Chinese or demonstrate equivalent competency through a placement exam in order to graduate.

This language requirement shows how EALF is aligned with an English-Chinese bilingual discourse, in which the relationship between the two languages is indexed with a local model of internationalization of higher education. It first aligns the global trend of adding an international dimension to a university by promoting English as the language of higher education (e.g., Doiz et al., 2012). At the same time, the political uptake of BU to require all non-Chinese-speaking students to achieve fluency in Chinese also embodies China's strategy of internationalization, that is, expanding China's international influence via Chinese language and culture (MOE, 2010). Emphasized by the use of the words "as much", as underlined above, the university seems to set forth equally important roles for the two languages in teaching and learning, with Chinese serving alongside English as another globalized language for international contact.

However, a contradictory discourse was discovered in university policy, which appears to establish a language hierarchy placing English in the dominant position as shown in the university's vision and mission statement:

> *Undergraduate students will pursue a liberal arts and sciences education in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and mathematics, while immersing themselves in English, the language of international communication.*

By framing English as *the* language of international communication and thus placing students within an English immersion environment, this statement manifests a monolingual-oriented ideology which prevails in TNHE as an embodiment of the societal discourse of English as a global lingua franca (Ricento, 2018). It underpins the language management efforts of BU to accept English as the only language of academic communication while undervaluing the other languages on campus including Chinese, another language in which all BU students are ostensibly expected to be proficient.

These two discourses suggest an apparent paradox in the university's language policymaking: pursing a balanced bilingual model of internationalization, on the one hand, and prioritizing English as the academic lingua franca, on the other hand. Within the language curriculum, Chinese was established as compulsory subject knowledge for non-Chinese-speaking international students without being considered as an option for academic communication in other subjects, as English functions. Chinese is positioned as a subject *of* instruction while English is a *medium* of instruction.

Furthermore, the language policy also leaves room for negotiation and compromise on the expected level of Chinese competence that international students may achieve, as shown in the general description of the Chinese curriculum:

> *While English is the language of instruction at [BU], proficiency in Chinese is also required of all students by the time they graduate. The precise level of proficiency expected depends on the major course of study.*

The curriculum presents diversified Chinese language requirements for international students from different majors. Specifically, some participants from the Faculty of Science reported that they were assigned to Chinese courses with reduced difficulty levels:

> **Selina (U.S.A., Year 3):** *We have this science (track) that requires a lot of our time and so what ends up happening was that typically the science students don't have as good a level of Chinese as other students.*
> **Amy:** *Sounds like you don't have time to learn Chinese?*
> **Selina:** *Yeah, ... the first year, our first semester students would take four-credit Chinese classes, but because of the science track that we're taking, we have to take two-credit Chinese classes cos we have so many other credits that we have to take.* (Interview_20171105)

According to Selina, the reduction in the difficulty of the Chinese curriculum for international student science majors is due to the workload of their major courses, and this resulted in their lower Chinese proficiency. This, then, indicates a tension between EMI and Chinese learning in the implementation of the university policy. The flexible Chinese curriculum reflects a DiP of linguistic hierarchy in which EMI overrides all other languages.

The DiP of English domination is also materialized in the linguistic landscape (Dressler, 2015; Gorter, 2013) of the institution. While English and Chinese are the only two visible languages on campus, English has the widest presence and is used as the only language for most written objects, including posters, information boards, decorations, exhibitions of students' work, and others (see Figure 1). Simplified Chinese is used as a supplementary linguistic resource, as it appears after/beneath English in all the bilingual signage and posters on campus (e.g., classrooms, cafeteria, public areas, and elevators), in a smaller font, and repeats the message in English above but not more than that (see Figure 2). The public language use at this university creates a symbolic space where the semiotic objects do not reflect the linguistic repertoires of the diverse student body, but rather serve as a material reproduction of the ideological space of 'Englishization' via its dominance in the linguistic hierarchy (cf. Coleman, 2006).

Figure 1. Posters in a teaching building.

Figure 2. A poster outside the Health and Wellness Center.

3.2 Discursive negotiation: Practicing EALF in intercultural communication

The circulating DiPs of bilingualism and English domination, as noted in the university policies, curricula, and public language usage are reproductions of the socially situated way of conceptualizing the relationship between English and other languages in international higher education (e.g., Ammon, 2001). These discourses were made relevant by individual students and negotiated in their daily communication through regulating their language practices during interactions with other students.

Our analysis of the students' interactive data and interview data shows that the interaction order (IO) of communication among the BU students is consistent with the prevailing discourse of English domination at the university. Observation of the students' language use in different academic and extra-curricular activities on campus suggests English exceeds far beyond other languages as the lingua franca, especially in first meetings when students were not familiar with each other's repertoires. Chinese follows as the second most frequently used language, occurring in conversations between some international students and Chinese students from time to time. Nonetheless, other languages (e.g., Spanish, Japanese, and Korean) are often noticed in intracultural communication but seldomly used for interaction among people of different linguistic backgrounds (see Ou, Gu, & Hult, 2020). For the Chinese and international students, English is considered the only legitimate language for academic communication on campus:

> ***Liu (Shanghai, Year 2):*** *The default is that international students speak English to each other; Chinese speak Chinese to each other; international students and Chinese students speak English to each other.* (Interview_ 201612)

> ***Mila (U.S.A., Year 4):*** *I think there's a hidden transcript and a public transcript. Public transcript is like a dialogue or like communication that happens that everyone can see. I feel like that's mostly English and then sometimes Chinese. Chinese is also a lot more like a hidden transcript, outside the academic space. Like if friends are talking about classes, it'll be in Chinese, but like in the classroom, not usually. But I do hear a lot of different languages on campus. It's just among small groups and like not as noticeable.* (Interview_ 20180918)

Here, we see that the position of English in the linguistic hierarchy on the institutional scale overrides Chinese and marginalizes other languages in the IO scale of peer interactions. A norm was established among students with diverse backgrounds that English is the only legitimate language of academic communication while Chinese is a resource for non-academic intercultural communication and other languages are restricted to intra-group communication.

Furthermore, the position of English as the only academic lingua franca on the IO scale at BU was facilitated by an intersection of the DiP of English domination and the historical bodies (HB) of international students with often minimal functional proficiency in Chinese from the Chinese language education at BU. Indeed, many international students relied on English heavily or entirely in communication with their Chinese schoolmates, and they ascribed this to Chinese competence that was not aligned with interpersonal communication in Chinese. Below is an illustrative response:

> **Hannah (Ethiopia, Year 3):** *The thing is, I learned it (Chinese) in a class setting, which means I learn how to pass tests for it. I just don't know how to speak it outside of the classroom. I know how to prepare for the exams and how to, you know, get good grades in the exams. But then when it's outside of the classroom and someone starts to talk to me in Chinese, I can't really pass. When I see my fluency outside of the classroom, I don't think that I'm that fluent.* (Interview_20171111)**.**

It is indicated that the mandatory Chinese curriculum, with varying requirements of difficulty for students of different majors, has not prepared the international students with communicative competence on par with English, nor has it resulted in substantive improvement in the practical use of Chinese to enable the international students to interact fluently using Chinese. The international students' HBs of Chinese competency were not aligned with daily communication and thus contributed to the dominant use of English in interactions between international students and Chinese students:

> **Yaroslav (Moldova, Year 4):** *So Chinese is like I'm at the best level of Chinese (course), but I don't think I can speak so good Chinese like to communicate with other people. It's easier in English that we speak.* (Interview_20181010)

> **Amy:** *What language do you use when interacting with international students?*
> **Qian (Shanghai, Year 4):** *English.*
> **Amy:** *Is there any time that Chinese is used?*
> **Qian:** *Rarely. Because their Chinese competency, to be honest, is not that good… They can understand Putonghua but may not be able to express themselves that fluently.* (Interview_20180925)

Similar responses were reported by other international students (i.e., Sam, Korea; Hannah, Ethiopia; Mary, Poland; Yoon, Korea; Selina, U.S.A.) and Chinese students (i.e., Fang, Liu, Ming, Shen, Wen, Yang, Yun).

In addition, EALF in internationally oriented university contexts usually accommodates multilingual and hybrid language use in communicative practices (e.g., Baker, 2016; Mortensen, 2014). Our analysis shows that the English monolingualism ideology on the institutional scale was negotiated in the students' local language practices (Hult & King, 2011). In particular, among the Chinese students, the role of English was discursively

invoked as a linguistic resource for academic communication to be used with the non-Chinese-speakers:

> ***Fang (Jiangsu, Year 4):*** *I think only English should be used in class, but when you communicate with Chinese teachers after class, it is definitely unnecessary to continue using English, unless that teacher is an American-born Chinese who must be more comfortable with English. But if everybody is more comfortable with Chinese, then definitely Chinese should be used, you don't have to use English.* (Interview_20180920)

The participant's response illustrates an IO of academic communication at this EMI university that Chinese can be a justified language for academic communication, especially within the large Chinese-speaking community. Different from the value of English immersion imposed by the university, the students regarded English as part of the multilingual landscape of this transnational university and used it as a lingua franca for intercultural communication and not necessarily an overarching language indexed with internationalism.

3.3 From monolingualism to diversity: Opening ideological and implementational spaces for multilingual repertoire development

The discourses about language use and learning at BU are, however, in flux. Since 2017, the university has been gradually opening implementational spaces for multilingualism (Hornberger, 2005) by adding language courses, first in French, and then in Spanish. Although these courses are not included in the core curriculum, students who are interested in these languages can take them as a free elective course for credit. Informal interviews with the participants suggest that these courses are offered to prepare students with the language skills to study abroad in French-speaking and Spanish-speaking countries[3]. This curriculum expansion was conducted in response to feedback from students who had studied abroad in European and South American countries and experienced language difficulties (Fieldnotes_20180907).

    The students' need for learning additional languages (beyond English and Chinese) to study in non-English-speaking countries as part of international education was observed in the online ethnographic data. For example, Figure 3 shows a WeChat Moments[4] status of a Chinese participant, Yang, who shared his experience of sending the first Spanish email to the home-stay family, with whom he would live in the coming study abroad period in Argentina. Yang documented the difficult process through which he generated a written text

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[3] It is part of BU's educational requirements that all full-time undergraduate students will study outside China for at least one semester.

[4] WeChat is a popular multi-purpose messaging and social media application in China. It is used widely by Chinese and international students at BU. Moments, a fundamental feature of WeChat, is a Facebook-like platform which allows users to post text, image, and comments and to share links and articles with their contacts.

in Spanish, a language in which he had no prior knowledge. In the subsequent interview, Yang revealed that he completed this email with the help of Nathan, an American student who had experience living in Spain and South America before university and spoke fluent Spanish as a second language. The participant's experience demonstrates the potential for peer interaction among BU students with diverse linguistic backgrounds to become resources for each other in the development of multilingual repertoires. Furthermore, it also points to opportunities that could be harnessed if a transnational university were to go beyond a bilingual framework to provide resources for cultivating competence in multiple languages to meet the needs and interests of students.
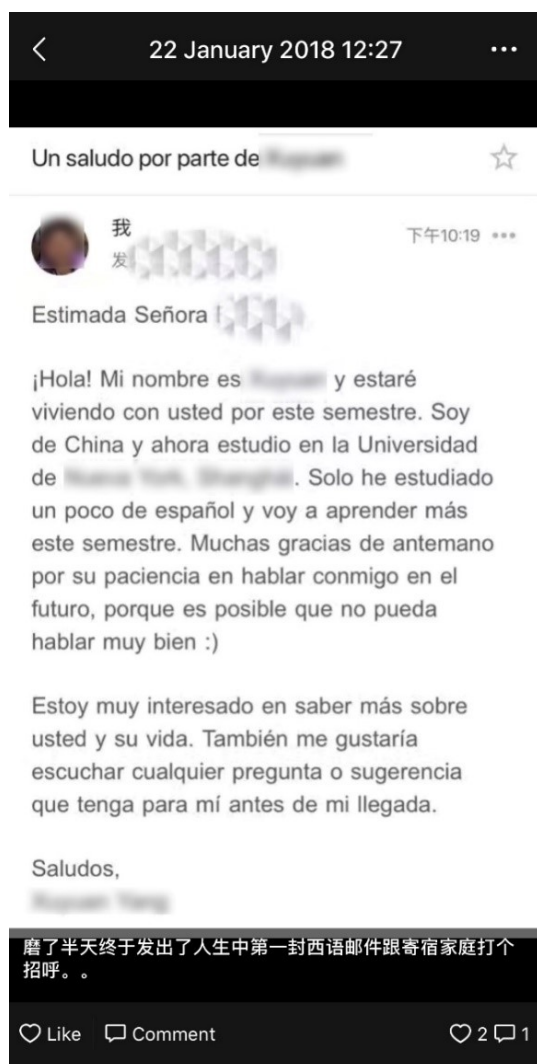
Figure 3. Yang's Spanish email[5]

Hornberger (2020) encourages viewing ideological spaces for valuing linguistic diversity and implementational spaces for enacting multilingual education as "scalar, layered policies and practices influencing each other" (p.122). The process of expanding the additional language curriculum at BU illustrates how multilingual education was fostered through collaborative efforts of university language policymakers and students who, like Yang and Nathan, qua policy actors, agentively cultivated an ideological space that valued multilingualism as a resource for enriching international educational experiences (Hornberger, 2020; Hult, 2018). As two participants explained,

> *Amy: Why did the university start to offer French and Spanish courses?*
> *Yang (Shanghai, Year 4): Because we students have been calling for more languages to be taught. Our provost holds regular student meetings, I attended once, and the most frequently mentioned request in the meeting was for additional language classes. Then I was pleasantly surprised to find that they were offered since last year.* (Interview_20180907)

> *Patricia (U.S.A., Year 4): I mean we started to offer other languages as well. So like more Romanic languages. So I think from a more academic standpoint, they're starting to realize that we can't just focus on Chinese and English and like there's definitely interest in other languages and that we should promote that.* (Interview_20180918)

The regular meetings between the provost and students created a "key point for resemiotization" (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p.167) where the multilingual development needs on the individual HB scale were in dialog with university language policymaking, leading to institutional corrective action in relation to its bilingual language program and a move towards embracing somewhat broader linguistic diversity (cf. Källkvist & Hult, 2016, 2020). The evolution of the DiP of the linguistic order towards additional linguistic diversity opened an implementational space that has the potential to enable students to be exposed to a wider variety of languages and cultures beyond English and Chinese.

In this policy reformation process, the university took an *engaged approach* (Davis & Phyak, 2016) to involve the concerns of students in dialogue and action towards multilingual education policy. For instance, in the 2018 fall semester, the university's academic affairs office distributed a language interest survey (see Figure 4) to all full-time students via email, asking for their willingness to attend additional language classes and the language varieties that they would like to learn. As was shown in the survey, university administrators recognized that students may be interested in a wide range of language varieties associated with diverse cultures and regions, including what has traditionally been regarded as dialects of 'Chinese language' (e.g., Cantonese and Shanghainese). Students were also encouraged to nominate other language varieties that they were interested in but not included in this list. Engaging with students as stakeholders in language policymaking began to open an ideological space for different linguistic resources on campus, further evolving the DiP of the

campus linguistic order through intersection with student HBs that include their language needs and practices as well as their beliefs about language/multilingualism.
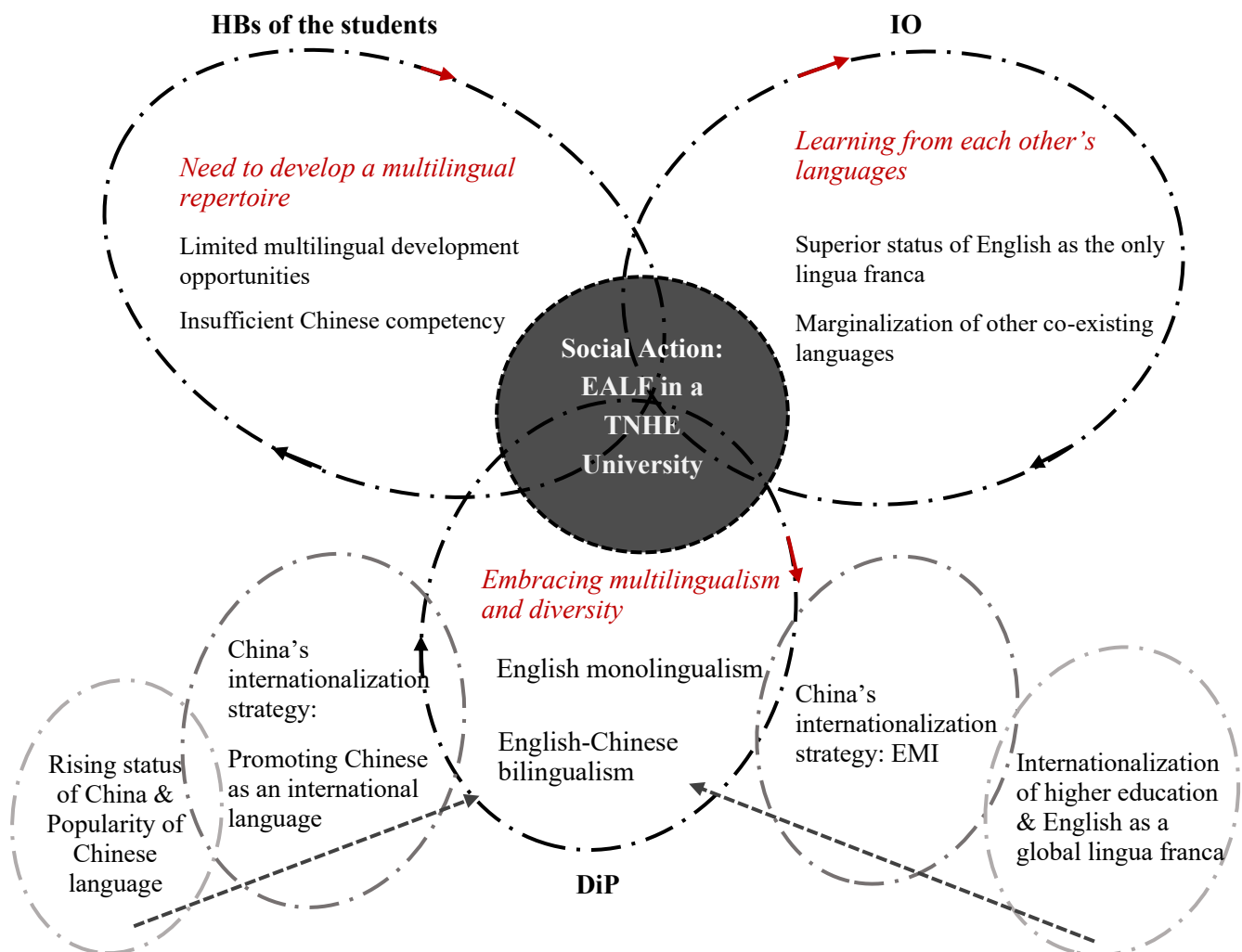

Figure 4. Language Interest Survey[6]

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4. Discussion and conclusion

The present study employed nexus analysis to investigate the process whereby English as an academic lingua franca (EALF) was discursively constructed and negotiated at a transnational EMI university in China. Findings reveal that EALF is a complex, multidimensional, and fluid construct in the context of international higher education. It is, first of all, situated in a dynamic discourse in place that reflects a tension between English-Chinese bilingualism and English monolingualism as materially and symbolically manifested in the university's language policies, curriculum, and linguistic landscape. Under the influences of these discourses, daily communication among multilingual students became English-dominant while other languages were marginalized. In particular, the Chinese language, albeit studied by all international students, was not substantively used in peer interactions, partially due to a language acquisition policy that did not facilitate the development of interactional Chinese proficiency among international students. However, the findings also suggest that EALF was perceived by individual students within a wider multilingual system in which English is a major, but not the only, resource for communication. Needs for multilingual repertoire development were advanced by students as a necessary component of their international education experience. As a result, a bottom-up policymaking process (cf. Hornberger, 1996) emerged, which can be seen as a process of resemiotization (Scollon & Scollon, 2004) through which students' historical bodies intersected with actions of university policymaking, leading to a new language curriculum that shifted the discourse in place about the institutional linguistic order towards greater linguistic diversity.

In all, mapping the interconnectedness of the multiple dimensions of social context for language use is theoretically useful for studying EALF in international university settings, because it highlights the interplay of large-scale and small-scale policy processes (Hult, 2019). This contributes to a fuller understanding of the linguistic ecology of EALF in this TNHE context in China that also highlights the power of stakeholders to bring about structural change. Our analysis demonstrates a "discursive ripple effect" (Hult, 2010, p. 19) where different discourses about EALF in international education reverberated across multiple dimensions at BU, interacted with each other, and brought about multidirectional impacts. As illustrated in Figure 5, societal discourses dropped into the proverbial pond of the social system of EALF in international higher education as discourses in place that ripple across interpersonal and individual scales of social activity. These discourses provided conceptual affordances to individual students' practices in EALF communication. Meanwhile, the landscape of EALF in international higher education was mediated by discourses on the individual scale. Students' need for multilingual repertoire development made ripples that intersected with an interaction order of learning from the peers' languages in daily interaction, which in turn intersected with discourses in place of language ideology and policy at the institutional scale (marked in *italics* in the figure). Through interaction, negotiation takes place, intrapersonally, interpersonally, and between individuals and the institution. Through such process, new norms for communication can be generated and ultimately entextualized in university language policies as was shown in the present study

through designing and conducting courses with languages other than English as a medium of instruction.

HBs of the students

IO

Need to develop a multilingual repertoire

Limited multilingual development opportunities

Insufficient Chinese competency

Learning from each other's languages

Superior status of English as the only lingua franca

Marginalization of other co-existing languages

Social Action: EALF in a TNHE University

Embracing multilingualism and diversity

English monolingualism

English-Chinese bilingualism

China's internationalization strategy: EMI

China's internationalization strategy:

Promoting Chinese as an international language

Rising status of China & Popularity of Chinese language

Internationalization of higher education & English as a global lingua franca

DiP

Figure 5. A discursive ripple effect diagram of EALF at a transnational EMI university in China

Our analysis suggests a tension between English and Chinese in the multilingual system of this transnational university, which reflects the challenge of the coexistence of English and other languages in the localized language ecology of international higher education (e.g., Phillipson, 2009). The inconsistent disposition of English and Chinese in the university's policies and the flexible Chinese language curriculum demonstrate that although the transnational university took account of the rising economic and political status of China and the concomitant popularity of the Chinese language in the global education market (Ding &

Saunders, 2006), the institutional policies that adopt and implement EMI are deeply grounded in the societal discourse of internationalization in line with the global dominance of English (Graddol, 2006). A transnational university in a non-English-speaking country may find it difficult to take a balanced approach to English and the local language in its policy (Källkvist & Hult, 2016, 2020).

The bilingual model of internationalization presented in this case only recognizes Chinese in terms of its symbolic value for international education – a selling point to attract international students – rather than situating EALF in a multilingual ecology. When academic communication is considered as a monolingual English space, it is easy for international students to lose the motivation to learn other languages. Meanwhile, the relevance of Chinese is further undermined when the Chinese knowledge that became part of students' historical bodies through classroom learning could not be effectively resemiotized into communicative resources to navigate the interaction order. Language development research has shown that learners develop their multilingual repertoires in recurring contexts of use, which are created by constant engagement with others in specific contexts of actions and interactions (Rymes, 2010). Without regular use of Chinese in daily communication, the international students could not build the competence and confidence to speak Chinese, and they are not considered by the Chinese students as capable and comfortable speakers of Chinese either. This catalyzed the formation of a cycle of discourses that reinforced the superior status of English in lingua franca communication while Chinese was not considered as a shared language resource among all for "everywhere expressibility" (Silverstein, 2003, p. 535).

In line with research in other contexts (e.g., Baker & Hüttner, 2017; Hu & Lei, 2014; Mortensen 2014), the findings of this study show that the norm introduced by the institutional authority does not necessarily align with the language practices and beliefs of students in daily interaction. The meaning of EALF can be negotiated through communicative practices outside of the classroom, and multilingual students may contest the university's imposition of rules and restrictions on their language use for academic activities. The participants' experience of negotiating the legitimacy of Chinese in certain situations of academic communication highlights the tension between the monolithic English language policy and the students' diverse communicative needs. As others have argued (e.g., Mortensen, 2014), equating internationalization with exclusive use of English is misguided, for it may put unnecessary constraints on the potential that transnational education holds for linguistic and cultural exchange and development. In light of this, policymakers of transnational higher education benefit from adopting an expanded view of language that takes into account communicative practices beyond the official regulations of EMI and transforms the hidden agenda of monolingual language policy into multilingual academic communication contexts.

The present study draws attention to the potential for intercultural communication among multilingual students to become a space for multilingual and multiliteracy development via daily contacts in non-academic settings. Furthermore, through a policymaking mechanism with stakeholder engagement (Davis & Phyak, 2016), the historical bodies of individual students can enter the space of international university language policy and planning to frame a discourse of languages as resources (cf. Hult & Hornberger, 2016) to guide a new language curriculum that meets the students' diverse learning needs. It highlights

the necessity of collective engagement of institutional power and social actors to open ideological and implementational spaces fostering linguistic diversity in educational contexts that otherwise prioritize certain languages over others (e.g., De Korne et al., 2019; Hornberger, 2020). This has practical implications for international universities in China, especially the transnational universities, whose administrators might benefit from reflecting on how language policies might avoid entrenching the dominance of English as the language of academia and better prepare students for multilingual lifeworlds during and after their university studies. Transnational universities in China might also consider how they can engage students as policy actors by involving them as stakeholders in committees of language policymaking and curriculum development, as well as utilizing the multilingual and multicultural resources they bring in order to enhance learning opportunities.

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Table 1. Demographics of the Chinese student participants

Name[7]	Place of origin	Gender	Major study discipline(s)	Self-reported multilingual competence
Ai	Shanghai	Female	Finance	Mandarin Chinese (first language); English; Shanghainese; French
Fang	Jiangsu	Female	Finance	Mandarin Chinese (first language); English; Suzhou dialect
Hu	Yunnan	Male	Finance & Interactive Media Arts	Mandarin Chinese (first language); English
Liu	Shanghai	Male	Economics	Mandarin Chinese (first language); English; Shanghainese; Japanese; Cantonese
Ma	Shanghai	Female	Finance	Mandarin Chinese (first language); English; Shanghainese; French
Ming	Guangdong	Female	Humanities	Mandarin Chinese (first language); English; Cantonese
Qian	Shanghai	Female	Finance	Mandarin Chinese (first language); English; Japanese
Shen	Shanghai	Male	Mathematics	Mandarin Chinese (first language); English; Shanghainese
Shi	Anhui	Male	Social science & Computer science	Mandarin Chinese (first language); English; Korean
Wen	Shanghai	Female	Finance	Mandarin Chinese (first language); English
Yun	Shanghai	Female	Finance	Mandarin Chinese (first language); English; Shanghainese; French; German

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[7] All the names in this study are pseudonyms.

Name	Place of origin	Family origin	Gender	Major study Discipline(s)	Self-reported Multilingual competence
Yang	Shanghai		Male	Humanities & Economics	Mandarin Chinese (first language); English; Japanese; Spanish
Zhang	Shanghai		Female	Humanities	Mandarin Chinese (first language); English

Table 2. Demographics of the international student participants

Name	Place of origin	Family origin	Gender	Major study Discipline(s)	Self-reported Multilingual competence
Hannah	Ethiopia	Ethiopia	Female	Biology	Amharic (first language); Wolitgna; English; Mandarin Chinese
Mary	Poland	Poland	Female	Economics	Polish (first language); French; English; Mandarin Chinese
Mila	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	Female	Interactive media arts & Global Chinese studies	English (first language); Mandarin Chinese; Spanish; Thai
Nathan	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	Male	Humanities	English (first language); Mandarin Chinese; Spanish
Patricia	U.S.A.	Malaysia	Female	Psychology & Marketing; Minor in teacher education	Cantonese (first language); English; Mandarin Chinese; Spanish; Korean
Raza	Pakistan	Pakistan	Male	Finance	Urdu (first language); Panjabi; English; German; Mandarin Chinese
Sam	Korea	Korea	Male	Computer Science & Global China Studies	Korean (first language); English; Japanese; Mandarin Chinese
Samuel	Tanzania	Tanzania	Male	Physics & Math	Haya (first language); Swahili; English;

					Mandarin Chinese; Turkish
Selina	U.S.A.	Philippine	Female	Biology & neuroscience	English (first language); Pilipino; Spanish; Mandarin Chinese
Tom[8]	A Southeast Asian country	The Southeast Asian country	Male	Economics	English; a Southeast Asian language (first language); Mandarin Chinese
Yaroslav	Moldova	Moldova	Male	Finance	Romanian (first language); Russian; English; Mandarin Chinese; Spanish
Yoon	Korea	Korea	Female	Computer science	Korean (first language); English; Mandarin Chinese; Japanese

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[8] Nationality and first language information are excluded at the participant's request.

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