ENGAGING STUDENTS IN AN ENGLISH-MEDIUM STEM CLASSROOM: POSITIONING LEARNERS THROUGH TEACHER-DIRECTED QUESTIONING

by

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Acronyms Used throughout the Study

BICS - basic interpersonal communicative skills
CALP - cognitive academic language proficiency
CLIL - content and language integrated learning
DA - discourse analysis
EAP - English for academic purposes
EME - English-medium education
EMI - English-medium instruction
ESP - English for Specific Purposes
FL - Foreign language
ICLHE - integrated content and language in higher education
L1 - First Language
L2 - Second Language
PT - positioning theory
STEM - science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
TN(H)E - transnational (higher) education

ABSTRACT

Rapid changes in international education globally have led to growth in transnational partnerships between institutions around the world (Altbach et al., 2019a; Knight, 2016). These partnerships often employ English as the medium of instruction (EMI) as a marketable recruitment tool (De Costa et al., 2022) with varying program structure (e.g., McKinley et al., 2021), stakeholder input, and quality assurance measures (McBurnie, 2008). Of special interest is how instructors are(n't) prepared to shift their language of instruction or begin teaching students for whom English is an additional language. While language teacher agency has a growing body of research (Kayi-Aydar, 2019a), less is known about content instructors' agentic actions in transnational EMI classroom contexts. To address this gap, this dissertation describes a six-month longitudinal, ethnographically-oriented, case study conducted in a transnational higher education partnership between a U.S. and Chinese institution providing English-medium instruction. Participants included 2 STEM instructors and over 100 students. The instructors' discursive positioning and instructional choices were analyzed in recorded classroom observations, and their observed agentic choices were retroactively discussed in semi-structured interviews. The findings highlight that in-class interactions prompted through teacher-directed questions were minimal and nearly all rhetorical, limiting students' opportunities for language practice and instructors' in-class, formative assessment. Students were generally positioned as unwilling interlocutors but agentic individuals who should question instructors and the program. In contrast, students' written interviews highlighted the many challenges of comprehending content delivered in an EMI context. This reflects a growing awareness in EMI research (Galloway et al., 2021; Macaro et al., 2018) that changing the language of instruction does not necessarily support simultaneous content and language acquisition. However, language acquisition remains one of the main reasons students consider participating in EMI programs and a "benefit" under which they are recruited. As such, the study concludes with suggestions and implications for supporting content teachers and English language learners in content-focused courses.

Chapter 1: Instruction in Transnational English-Medium Classrooms

Global Shifts in Higher Education

> *Understanding the changes that have taken place in higher education worldwide in the past half century is a difficult task because of the scope and complexity of those trends. One can, without risk of exaggeration, speak of an academic "revolution" - a series of transformations that have affected most aspects of postsecondary education worldwide. (Altbach et al., 2019a, p. 1)*

Higher education globally has undergone significant changes in recent decades. Globalization has connected once-disparate regions. Internationalization, as a process or change, has spurred competition for higher institutional rankings and a larger percentage of international faculty and student populations. Internationalizing higher education, at its best, offers opportunities to train and prepare a global workforce to meet United Nations (UN) sustainable development goals and to further develop cross-cultural competencies in an increasingly interconnected world. However, internationalization efforts are often conflated with and or driven by neoliberalism, neocolonialism, and market-driven demands. These drivers often determine who has access to international experiences and can achieve the more noble goals of community development and increased access to education. Teasing out the mission and purpose of international collaborations from these underlying currents can be challenging.

Simultaneously, *massification*, or the increase in students attending higher education around the world, poses serious long-term consequences for global higher education (Altbach et al., 2019a; De Wit & Altbach, 2021). Developing regions with burgeoning middle-class populations, such as China, may soon account for half of the future world's enrollment. In contrast, countries like the United States are experiencing an "enrollment cliff" where fewer domestic college-aged students are enrolling in higher education institutions (Altbach et al., 2019b). Because of this demographic shift and declining state and federal funds, U.S. higher education institutions are recruiting students in new ways. For example, *transnational education* (TNE) partnerships are developing to educate these students and are delivering programs increasingly in multiple modalities to new regions, and redefining what it means to be an "international student" as mobility across national boundaries may no longer be a prerequisite for participation (Davi, 2020; White & Lee, 2020), but rather institutions are moving operations or instruction to enroll students in new areas.

In her guiding framework, Knight (2016) defines transnational education as "[t]he mobility of an education program or higher education institution (HEI)/provider between countries," noting that in contrast to *international education* as a term focused on student mobility, transnational education instead focuses on the institution's mobility as either a sending or receiving institution (p. 36). That is, sending institutions are outsourcing their curricula and faculty, rather than recruiting inbound students to their domestic campus location. TNE partnerships generally follow a North-to-South global flow, and English has been commonly adopted as the language of instruction due to its prominence in the sending countries and its current role as a global lingua franca. While the number of transnational partnerships is growing, so too are their varying formats, for example, fully online programs, franchise universities, branch campuses, and so on (Li et al., 2021).

Knight (2015) contends that these types of co-founded institutional partnerships are emblematic of a third generation of internationalized university models, the first generation being international partnerships/students/faculty, and the second being variations of satellite or branch campuses. By virtue of their transnational nature, transnational higher education programs have varied and underdeveloped national and international regulations guiding their implementation (McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007). For example, TNE students commonly earn dual-degrees from each partnering institution for shared or “double-dipping” coursework that is often not much more than what a student would need for a single degree. This structural practice, Knight (2015) argues, is an “increasingly important and controversial issue” that persists and will continue “until appropriate legislation and practice are established” (p. 118). Higher education’s accreditation standards vary by region/nation, so it is difficult to collaborate on degree requirements aligned with different governing bodies. Indeed, institutions and instructors may be asked to ensure consistency across all course offerings and modalities rather than contextualizing coursework to reflect diversity across disparate student populations (Shea, 2024). Transferring course information between participating institutions to “double-dip” course requirements, thereby reducing the number of credits for dual-degrees, is just one example of how the novelty of these types of partnerships may exist beyond the bounds of institutional or regional regulation and best practices. There is also not a clear consensus on what types of regulations, if any, are best to govern transnational education though some initiatives (as discussed below) have made efforts in recruiting participating institutions (Shea, 2024).

Within TNE partnerships, it can be unclear between the two institutions who is responsible for quality assurance and learning and also how these concepts are measured and understood in cross-cultural contexts. The Organization for Economic and Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) are the primary international organizations where efforts are being made to ensure TNE partnerships deliver quality programs (McBurnie, 2008). Others, like the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) are rapidly recruiting institutions around the world (INQAAHE, n.d.). Some countries like the United Kingdom or United States have relatively longer histories of regional and national accrediting bodies overseeing their higher education systems, yet, there has been rapid growth in national and regional oversight globally (OECD, 2009). The United Kingdom, through organizations like the British Council, or U.K.-based Ecctis' EMI Quality Mark, has begun to provide quality assessment for aspects of these partnerships, for example, if the language of instruction is in English. However, it is important to remember that "the assessment of learning is a difficult task, and measuring learning cross-culturally is even more complicated" (Altbach et al., 2019a, p. 17).

Further complicating the spread of transnational education is the simultaneous rise in the use of English as the medium of instruction, which makes it challenging to measure student learning because of reported varying proficiency levels of instructors and students impacting the acquisition and distribution of content knowledge (for meta-analysis, see Macaro et al., 2018). As curricula are outsourced in TNE partnerships, faculty may be placed in the often-challenging position of delivering their courses to a new student body in what might be a new language of instruction for their students.

These TNE initiatives tend to be top-down decisions from institutional leaders that are then implemented by staff and faculty who may be less familiar or even unaware of the partnership dynamics. Despite this disconnect in investment, faculty play a critical role in the implementation and ensuing learning. Institutions can and should involve faculty members early in the process, as well as encourage their continued training and professional development to teach in a new context. However, research (e.g., Dunn & Wallace, 2008) suggests that this is far from common practice. In contrast, surveys of faculty often highlight a lack of awareness of departmental/institutional goals (e.g., Beltran-Pelanques, 2021; Dearden & Macaro, 2016), variation between department heads within a singular institution (e.g., Studer & Gautschi, 2017), and considerable variation across peer institutions (e.g., McKinley et al., 2021).

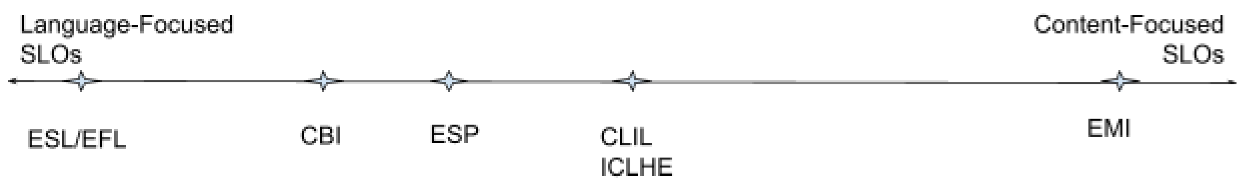
English as the Medium of Instruction

English-medium instruction (EMI) is generally defined as academic subject material delivered through the English language in regions where English is not the dominant or first language of students (Macaro et al., 2018). EMI is also generally understood to be in reference to courses, programs, or majors offered in post-secondary institutions of higher education. The exact terminology used to discuss EMI varies, as does the structure used to implement these courses. For example, EMI has a long-established history in European institutions of higher education and may also be described as Integrated Content and Language in Higher Education (ICLHE), English Medium Education (EME), or Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). While commonly adopted, Macaro et al.'s (2018) definition simplifies an immensely complicated phenomenon. Proponents of EMI argue that EMI benefits both learners' language proficiency and content knowledge acquisition simultaneously. In a meta-analysis of global English medium of instruction (EMI) models, Macaro et al. (2018) concluded there was insufficient evidence to support this common assertion. Rather, their findings support that stakeholders (instructors, students, school leaders) have concerns with its implementation despite increasing pressure to offer content-based EMI courses. Macaro et al. (2018) note that language policies, ideologies, and local usage reflect these trends and concerns to varying degrees in numerous countries.

Thinking of EMI as falling along the language and content spectrum provides a useful visualization to understand the ways in which language and content interact in different types of academic courses (for additional reading on this, see Lin, 2016). On one end of the spectrum, disciplinary content is the focus of the course and its learning objectives, and the language of instruction is solely viewed as the medium through which that information is relayed; for example, a heat transfer course for mechanical engineering students.

Figure 1

The Language Content Spectrum



Conversely, language-focused courses on the opposite side of the spectrum integrate content to support language-oriented learning objectives. For example, a unit on ordering food could be used to introduce modal verbs. English-medium instruction, thus, lies on the far end of the spectrum where courses are assumed to have no language-focused learning objectives. However, while EMI assumes there is no need for supplemental language support, it is often desired by students learning in these environments, and instructors may struggle to provide it (Airey, 2012; Block & Moncada-Comas, 2019). ICLHE or CLIL courses fall closer to the center of the spectrum with both language and content learning objectives and may offer co-taught instruction from both subjects and language experts (e.g., Zappa-Hollman, 2018). In the United States, content-based instruction (CBI) is also often used to refer to courses with a focus on academic content learning objectives through English language instruction. English for specific purposes (ESP) can also provide specific content and learning objectives while having a language focus. Importantly, CLIL has a well-established pedagogy behind its implementation, whereas "EMI makes no claim to a method nor is it… described anywhere as a method" (Dearden & Macaro, 2016, p. 456). Despite the lack of pedagogy associated with EMI, there is a significant (and growing) body of research detailing professional development and training for instructors teaching in EMI contexts (Sanchez-Perez, 2020).

Just as Knight (2015) contends, there are three waves of higher education internationalization (partnerships, branch campuses, and transnational partnerships), I argue that English-medium instruction has also developed in multiple waves, with transnational partnerships being one of the most recent waves. The discrepancies between the multiple waves of EMI make comparisons across regions and classroom contexts increasingly difficult. Critical applied linguists (e.g., Shohamy, 2012) highlight that instruction solely through the English language is not an emerging trend, as EMI literature often proclaims, but was rather put into widespread use through colonialism and is continually perpetuated through neoliberalist educational policies. I would argue this is an initial or first wave of EMI, or what Willans (2022) has more recently labeled as “the ‘Old EMI’ postcolonial context” (p. 546). In a second wave, others (e.g., Tsou & Kao, 2017) date the expansion in EMI offerings in higher education contexts to recent decades. In this more recent history, a second wave of EMI can be seen in European institutions that adopted EMI to recruit students for exchange programs like *Erasmus,* and because English is a global lingua franca, and especially used in the advanced vocabulary of STEM fields. Thus, EMI literature from Europe more commonly speaks to instructor’s adaptation to the new language of instruction (Ball & Lindsay, 2013; Beltrán-Palanques, 2021; Dearden & Macaro, 2016), as well as programmatic evaluation and the development of regional and national guidelines for its implementation (e.g., Ávila-López, 2021). The third, most recent wave of EMI has led to its rapid surge in the Middle East and Asia and increasing reach into Africa and South America, and continued calls for more empirical research into EMI provisioning, implementation, and learning outcomes (Galloway et al., 2024; Sah, 2022).

Here lies an important distinction between the two terms of EMI and TNE. EMI can exist and be developed separately from transnational educational partnerships, as it is often seen as an internationalization effort more broadly, that is, a way for a higher education institution to recruit international students. In contrast, TNE rarely exists without EMI. There are a growing number of examples, however, (e.g., China's Belt and Road Initiative) where TNE employs another language of instruction. Ultimately, much of the research in EMI focuses on contexts outside of TNE partnerships, yet TNE partnerships are increasingly making use of EMI. In an unfortunate twist, because much of the TNE research stems from regions where English is the dominant language, and the neoliberal market drivers that encourage EMI are often overlooked or rarely considered in TNE research (De Costa et al., 2022). There is relatively little overlap in research between these contexts (TNE and EMI), although efforts in understanding aspects of higher education i.e., the differing language support and admission requirements (McKinley et al., 2021), and student motivation and mobility (Li et al., 2021) have been conducted in EMI contexts. Yet, these fields do and should intersect more as EMI is seen as an advantageous way to improve institutional rankings, as higher education internationalization efforts factor into overall institutional scores (Tsou & Kao, 2017).

Criticism of EMI and TNE

Studying the discourse around higher education's internationalization efforts highlights the pursuit of institutional prestige, global rankings, scholarly collaboration, and, often more discreetly, the additional revenue brought in by such programs (Wilkins & Huisman, 2012). A critical discourse analysis of higher education's internationalization efforts highlights the contradictory focus on joining a multilingual world, and at least within the United States, a simultaneous lack of institutional support for foreign language learning (Tardy, 2015; Warner, 2011). Shohamy (2012) summarizes this contradiction succinctly, saying: "[i]t is becoming clear that more languages are needed for functioning in global societies…. The main belief nowadays is in multilingualism, and the use of EMI at HEIs in fact defies this goal. The use of a number of languages may be a more effective policy at HEIs" (p. 209). If U.S.-based institutions aspire to prepare students for a globalized world, there should be a simultaneous effort to increase foreign language learning as there is to recruit international students, rather than a near constant threat of dismantling foreign language programs.

While language learning appears not to be valued for U.S. domestic students to the same extent, transnational higher education partnerships often market the use of English as the medium of instruction (EMI) as a commodifiable aspect of the partnership. As a result, Zhang (2018) explains that the desire for EMI inherently creates inequality in the pursuit of improved global rankings between English-speaking countries and those adopting EMI. English instruction is also wrought with issues of coloniality, linguistic imperialism, and inequitable access and TNE partnerships that commodify EMI perpetuate these issues (De Costa et al., 2022). Xu (2021) elaborates on this aspect of TNE and EMI saying, "[i]n the field of education, neocolonialism can be through multiple practices: using the foreign model of administrative structures to manage a school; adopting Western pedagogy and curriculum; using English or other languages of the former colonial power as the medium of instruction; and/or seeking foreign aid and technical assistance" (p. 73). Some TNE partnerships highlight the often-conflated pairing of "Englishization" and "Internationalization" (Galloway et al., 2020) as English is increasingly an exported commodity in TNHE programs and partnerships. In contrast, scholars argue that EMI curriculum should be culturally contextualized for the local student body and that internationalizing an institution should not mean "Englishization" or Westernization (Galloway et al., 2020).

This third wave of EMI, where EMI is commodified in neoliberal transnational partnerships, is defined by rushed implementation and "surging' growth (Galloway et al., 2024), and a focus on revenue (De Costa et al., 2022) as institutions seek to be more competitive in a globalized higher education environment. As a result of this surge, in many regions of the world, EMI is increasingly being implemented without clear language policies, institutional support, and/or student/faculty preparation (Galloway et al, 2020; Macaro et al., 2018). While scholars (e.g., Dafouz & Smit, 2020) continue to call for more empirical research to develop best practices for EMI program development, rapid program growth has largely outpaced these efforts.

China and U.S. Transnational Partnerships

My study was conducted in Northern China at a Chinese institution in a transnational partnership with a Southwest U.S. institution. The partnership embodied many of Knight's (2015; 2016) features of transnational education as students shared courses between the institutions thereby earning two of the same degrees from each partner institution, faculty and curricula were sent by the U.S. institution, and courses were offered primarily in-person, but also occasionally in online or hybrid modalities. Given the Chinese context of my study, I highlight below some of the unique facets of higher education in China.

Notably, Chinese students are the leading demographic of international students who relocate for higher education. China is also the largest host country for transnational education partnerships (Li et al., 2021) and is considered a surging EMI context (Galloway et al., 2024).

Thus, China continues to be a critical region for continued research on both EMI and TNE partnerships.

In China, English as a foreign language is studied intensively throughout primary and secondary education for several high-profile exams. The highest stakes exam is the *gaokao* (高考), the University entrance exam, of which a foreign language, most commonly selected as English, comprises its own section. Students who graduate from college are also expected to pass the College English Test, abbreviated as CET 4 or 6 (全国大学英语四、六级考试), to prove their proficiency. English undergraduate majors take a separate, more difficult exam, the Test for English Majors (全国高等学校英语专业四、八级考试) or TEM 4 or 8.

Many English-medium programs are top-down government initiatives. Within China, Project 985 and Project 211 describe two hierarchical university ranking systems that direct Chinese government funding and internationalization priority efforts. Project 211, named for its abbreviation of the "21st century," was launched in 1995 and includes approximately the top 100 schools in the nation. Project 985, named to describe its date of inception, May 1998, and also known as "world first-class university," further defined a focus on the top 39 schools in China (Li et al., 2021; Rhoads et al., 2014). In 2017, China also launched the "Double First-Class University Plan" that broadened the institutions included in Project 985. Altogether, the Project 211 institutions receive prioritized government funding to compete globally among the world's top universities (Li et al., 2021). It is within these top 211 and 985 institutions that transnational partnerships, also known as Joint-Sino programs, are most commonly introduced. As of 2022, the latest data from China's Ministry of Education reported that there were more than 46.5 million students enrolled in higher education institutions across the country, of which over 9.2 million were enrolled in 764 non-state higher education institutions (MOE, 2023).

The vast majority of Chinese students are enrolled in institutions outside of 211 and 985 institutions. However, enrollment in a 211 or 985 school is highly coveted and sought after for the academic training as well as the opportunity for developing social capital that will improve future career prospects. These tier 1 schools generally require higher gaokao scores, although TNE partnerships are allowed to "recruit students whose gaokao scores meet the minimum requirement for the particular tier" (Li et al., 2021, p. 642). In their study examining micro- to macro-factors influencing students' enrollment in TNE programs within China, Li and colleagues (2021) found that "[c]onsistent with Fang and Wang (2014) and D. Liu and Zhu (2019)'s findings, our study indicates that TNE programmes, which usually require a lower score than the equivalent domestic programmes, provided an alternative way for students to enter a prestigious university. *This strategy was a primary factor that drove many interview participants to choose the TNE programme"* (Li et al., 2021, p. 646, emphasis added). Whereas much TNE research on student mobility and motivation highlights the sending partner prestige (Davi, 2020) or the marketing of an EMI program (Gu & Lee, 2019) as a reason for enrollment, Li et al.'s (2021) study highlights that Chinese students enrolled in a partnership with a 211 or 985 institution, may be more so motivated by the prestige of the Chinese university, not necessarily the partner institution or the use of EMI in a given program. This finding's significance cannot be understated and is critical in framing the context in which my own data were collected, as it means that a joint-Sino TNE program can recruit students using the gaokao (which isn't considered an English proficiency exam comparable to TOEFL or IELTS) to admit students who may or may not be interested in learning in an EMI program, but primarily desire the highly coveted admission to a prestigious Chinese institution.

Transnational partnerships throughout China vary in a number of ways, so it can be difficult to generalize findings. McKinley et al.'s (2021) survey of administrators at 8 Chinese institutions (including both TNHE and domestic EMI programs) is a reflection of EMI program implementation broadly, as their results highlight inconsistencies across language admission requirements, support programs available, and language usage in the classroom. Specifically, the type and structure of language support varied greatly between institutions. One EMI administrator interviewed in their study summarized the conflicting priorities saying: "We have probably the largest language centre, we have 200+ English teachers teaching varieties of EAP and study skills. We need to support [the students] throughout their journey, but there's a financial burden to the university" (McKinley et al., 2021, p. 243). There are two prevailing arguments regarding benchmark admission requirements for language proficiency. Proponents for admission standards argue they ensure that students are prepared to participate and learn from English-medium courses. Opponents cite admission requirements as a form of gatekeeping that may further societal inequality where access to English education at primary and secondary levels is closely tied to socioeconomic status (e.g., Chang, 2017; McKinley et al, 2021). Institutional administrators, like the one cited above, often have to evaluate the financial aspect of increased admissions (as revenue) and increased linguistic support (as a cost) when making decisions about the structure and support offered. Again, in the specific context examined in this study, students were admitted using the gaokao (which does not test listening or speaking comprehension) and were likely very motivated to participate in the dual-degree EMI program due to the Chinese institution's status as a 211 institution.

What is classroom communication, and why study it?

Classrooms, and the instructors and students within them, create a complex research context. As teaching and learning are mental processes that are difficult to identify, evaluate, and measure, observers are often reliant on *what is said*. But, of course, there is also much more behind simply *what is said*, and researchers who analyze discourse, or language in use, also study a number of other communicative components. Analyzing discourse has many approaches depending on the purpose and goals of a study and is further complicated in intercultural communicative settings like the transnational, English-medium environments examined here where instructors and students are navigating dual institutions, policies, teaching practices, and often differing linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Yet, interaction between students and instructors has long been argued as beneficial and foundational for learning. Student-directed or class-wide questions are some ways through which instructors can discursively guide and scaffold this interaction. Of course, questions can vary greatly, as well as the purpose they serve in advancing classroom communication and learning.

To gain insight into classroom communication, the theoretical framework employed in this study draws on post-structuralist second language acquisition (SLA) approaches and epistemologies (e.g., Pavlenko, 2002) involving instructor and student identities, their agentic actions, and discursive positions as described in Davies and Harré's (1990) positioning theory. The theoretical tenets of positioning theory recognize that inherent in any classroom is a power dynamic between instructor and student, there are underlying expectations or *moral rights* and *duties* of each respective individual(s), and that a speaker enters any conversation with at least some expectations for what they might say, how it might be said, and why depending on their interlocutor and their *prepositions* or presumptions about the conversation and its participants.

Instructors are often granted or take control over classroom management and the following discourse patterns, so it is especially enlightening to understand their pedagogical choices and underlying assumptions that guide their discursive (in)actions. Thus, instructor agency, or the choices they make as it relates to their professional and personal and professional identity are complementary theoretical constructs to further consider when analyzing classroom discourse. When instructors and students are from differing cultural backgrounds, it is also possible that their prepositions and discursive patterns may not align resulting in miscommunication or varying interpretations of classroom behavior.

Positioning theory as a research methodology seeks to identify linguistic and paralinguistic features in moment-to-moment interactions, but importantly also asks *why* individuals might be positioned in certain ways. Kayi-Aydar (2019) describes positioning as situated between conversation analysis and critical discourse analysis for its additional attention to "the why" positioning occurs. The positioning analysis may not be inherently "critical" as critical scholarship is commonly understood to be focused on marginalized populations or combatting injustices; but, positioning theory acknowledges that power dynamics influence who, how, and when discourse occurs. In a previous study I conducted on transnational EMI classrooms (Shea et al., 2024), the two co-instructors observed the students positioning them as "assistant" and "lead teacher" which they presumed was based on their racial and national backgrounds rather than their actual co-teaching dynamic, where the "lead instructor" was the White American, and the "assistant" was the bilingual Vietnamese instructor. Thus, larger geopolitical inequalities and language ideologies within the community impacted the classroom environment and the ways in which the instructors were positioned by their students. EMI classrooms are not implemented, nor do they exist within a vacuum. Rather these classrooms are embedded in complex sociocultural and geopolitical spheres and require an equally complex conceptual framework to understand them.

A multi-layered approach to understand both language use and the cultural constructs in which it is embedded is necessary. In an introduction to ethnographic discourse analysis, Roth-Gordon (2020) describes four layers of analysis: (1) linguistic, (2) interactional context, (3) ethnographic context, and (4) sociopolitical context, which allows for both a linguistic and cultural analysis. Other analyses commonly use “micro”, “meso,” and “macro” to describe the similarly embedded nature of these layers of analysis (Kayi-Aydar, 2019). The sociocultural and ecological conceptual ROAD-MAPPING framework developed by Dafouz and Smith (2020) is adopted in this study for its multi-layered approach to understanding the variability and complexity of EMI classroom contexts. Within this study on transnational undergraduate classrooms, the data and methodology are intended to guide analysis across the spectrum of micro- and macro-levels, to see how students and instructors position themselves and others in these complex classroom environments within the classroom, the institution, and as participants in a transnational partnership between two countries’ separate educational systems.

Instructors in transnational contexts are navigating two institutions’ policies, norms, and curricular expectations. Complicating this context, instructors may also be new to teaching English language learners who comprise the EMI student body. While instructors may be assigned to teach different subjects, such as mathematics or philosophy, they all do so through the medium of language(s). Thus, instructors play critical roles in introducing both language and content knowledge to their students, whether they identify as language instructors or not, as they socialize their students in discipline-specific terminology, communicative practices, genres, etc.

Indeed, students are socialized into the language of their classroom and disciplinary field just as they are socialized within social circles, family dynamics, and so on. Cummins' (1979; 1999) seminal work introducing the concepts of *basic interpersonal communicative skills* (BICS) and *cognitive academic language proficiency* (CALP) provides a useful framework for distinguishing two common registers in which language learners may have variable proficiencies, exposure, and/or instructional support. His work highlights the difference in time required (in both first and second language acquisition) to learn to speak among peers in an interpersonal register and develop the skills to read, write, and speak academically. Continuation of this work also reminds policymakers and educators that these language skills can develop differently for individuals depending on their exposure and language learning goals. As briefly discussed earlier in this first chapter, the students in this study had extensively studied English as a written language in preparation for the *gaokao*, a high-stakes University placement exam in order to be admitted to the Chinese institution in which they enrolled. However, they did not have to submit TOEFL, IELTS, or equivalent scores to be admitted as a non-degree-seeking student at the U.S. institution, so they may not have spent as much time preparing for oral English encounters. This prior educational experience understandably could lead to divergence in their respective BICS and CALP communicative registers and struggles they might encounter in an English-medium classroom environment.

For instructors whose specialty lies in fields outside of language learning and teaching, it can understandably be challenging to support students as they develop discipline-specific language skills or to recognize discrepancies in varying degrees of confidence or proficiency in students' different registers. Indeed, a growing wealth of research shows the hesitation or frustration of EMI content experts to engage in language learning support (e.g., Airey, 2012;

Airey, 2020; Block & Moncada-Comas, 2019) despite recognizing the need within their classrooms. Hence, the need for this study to better analyze how EMI instructors position students discursively, especially within the context of a transnational classroom, and the ensuing impact of these classroom communication patterns on students' learning and experiences.

As this chapter has highlighted, transnational education and the growth of English-medium instruction are both rapidly growing and frequently overlapping phenomena shaping higher education classrooms around the world. However, much of EMI research continues to be conducted in contexts outside of TNE partnerships, despite TNE partnerships increasingly using EMI to recruit students. This growing body of EMI literature, without a focus on TNE contexts, is increasingly seeking to research student proficiency gains (or lack thereof) (e.g., Galloway et al., 2017), instructor professional development (e.g., Perez-Canado, 2020; Wang et al., 2025) language-related challenges, (e.g., Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2020) and stakeholder perceptions (e.g., Dearden & Macaro, 2016, see also the *Journal of English-Medium Instruction*'s 2024 special issue). Yet, research into these respective phenomena less commonly focuses on the intersections of TNE and EMI, with notable exceptions being focused on the neoliberal drivers behind these trends (De Costa et al., 2022). Continued research must situate both of these phenomena together in order for findings to truly support students and instructors in these contexts, and needs to focus more so on micro-elements of these contexts by conducting more in-depth classroom studies.

Transnational English-medium classroom environments are especially complex classroom environments where students' and instructors' multicultural and multilingual backgrounds naturally exacerbate differing expectations for instructor and student roles and responsibilities, and classroom communication. Gu and Lee's (2018) study on Chinese students' imagined identities in transnational EMI contexts yields valuable insight into how TNE students perceive language policies and dual institutional norms. For example, all (nine) students reported in semi-structured interviews that English courses inhibited overall learning and that instructional quality varied greatly. Yet, instructor-student communication remains foundational for learning. Positioning theory is thus an invaluable analytic and theoretical tool to highlight the complexity in classroom communication.

In the next chapter, I further address the literature surrounding these topics and the gaps identified that spurred this study's conception and design as an ethnographic case study (Casanave, 2015; Starfield, 2015). By focusing on a transnational EMI context, where instructors receive no institutional training or support to support EMI instruction, do not share a linguistic or cultural background as their students, and analyzing instructors' pedagogical practices through a qualitative ethnographic case study incorporating discourse analytic techniques addresses the gaps in the research that currently focus on:

1. EMI contexts where instructors and students share an L1 or cultural background,
2. Instructors' professional development after training, rather than classroom practices prior to EMI instructional training,
3. Potential for (mis)alignment in instructors' pedagogical practices and agentic choices as reflected in pedagogical practice and retroactive reflection

To my knowledge, there is no other study that addresses EMI at this micro-level, focusing on instructors' agency and pedagogy and its impact on student learning in a transnational EMI classroom environment.

Study Design and Research Questions

This longitudinal case study spanned the 2023-2024 academic year. Through 50+ hours of recorded classroom observations, 4 semi-structured interviews (varying in length from 30 minutes -1 hour) with 2 participant faculty members, and written interview questions distributed via an online survey platform with over 100 students, I used positioning theory to understand how instructors discursively positioned themselves and students as members of transnational partnerships and how importantly, instructors differentiate their instruction and in-class activities for students' varied English language levels. The following research questions guided my analysis:

1. How do instructors discursively position themselves and students as participants in transnational EMI classrooms? How does this impact communicative opportunities in class?
2. How, if at all, do instructors differentiate their instruction for their English-language learner student body?

Manuscript Organization

This study has been organized into 6 chapters. Chapter 1 has briefly situated the context of the study within the larger international higher education shifts by introducing both transnational education and English-medium instruction and their increasingly overlapping implementation. Chapter 2 continues providing valuable context for this study by providing a literature review of EMI instruction, classroom discourse, and instructor agency and professional development. Chapter 3 introduces the methodology, research context, data collection, and analysis procedures. Chapter 4 focuses on my first participant instructor, Jai's discursive positioning of himself as an educator and students as correctors, and the ensuing interactions afforded/limited by these positions. Notably, Chapter 5 highlights my second participant instructor, Roger’s (un)intentional efforts to differentiate instruction for language learners, his positioning of himself and students, and his retroactive consideration of pedagogical practices. Finally, Chapter 6 concludes the study by offering a discussion of the findings and implications for teaching and learning in these complex classroom environments.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter explains the research literature in several interrelated fields in order to contextualize my study on classroom communication and instructor agency in transnational EMI contexts. I first introduce discourse analysis (DA) briefly before explaining my adopted theoretical framework of positioning theory and its application as an analytic tool for understanding underlying norms and power dynamics inherent in any conversation. As I transition from my theoretical framework to the supporting literature, I also introduce the ROAD-MAPPING conceptual framework (Dafouz & Smit, 2020) to highlight the importance of a micro-to macro- level analysis of these complex classroom contexts. In beginning my literature review, I first discuss related classroom-based studies that used positioning theory to better understand classroom discourse. The focus then turns to discourse studies in English-medium classroom environments and the lacuna of transnational partnerships where students and instructors may not share a linguistic or cultural background and are navigating two institutions' learning environments simultaneously. Recognizing the role instructors have in facilitating classroom communication, I discuss the importance of teacher agency and identity in a classroom as they are positioned as the creators and facilitators of student learning. Finally, I conclude with a discussion about language ideologies and neoliberalism as they create macro-level considerations for explaining some of the often-reported issues with transnational EMI classrooms. Ultimately, this study intends to address some of these critical issues by providing a deep, rich qualitative study on the micro-level features of classroom discourse.

Theoretical Framework: Discourse Analysis as a Theoretical and Analytical Approach

A number of disparate scholarly fields adopt varying theoretical and analytical approaches to understanding and analyzing *discourse*, or language in use. Teun van Dijk and predecessors are often considered founding scholars of discourse studies starting in the 1970s and 1980s. In this study, I adopt *positioning theory*, a theoretical and analytical approach to discourse analysis developed by Rom Harré and colleagues' writings in the field of psychology in the 1990s to understand classroom communication in a transnational, English-medium context.

A discourse analysis approach to studying classroom contexts is valuable for the attention paid to not just *what is said*, but also the implications of these words. Wood and Kroger (2000) clarify that discourse analysis as both a theoretical and methodological approach moves away from the conventional ways of viewing language and talk. Discourse analysis views language as "not simply a tool for description and a medium of communication (the conventional view), but as a social practice, as a way of doing things" (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 4). The conventional view, in contrast, championed by Noam Chomsky and others focus on the foundational or syntactical elements, but not necessarily the meaning associated with it. Yet, the associated meaning and its ensuing implication(s) are crucial for understanding the complexity of classroom communication, or truly any communicative event. Therefore, by conducting analyses at different levels, e.g., lexical, pragmatic, discourse, and social, discourse analysts are especially focused on the phenomena that are discursively constructed and constitutive beyond just the language itself. The focus is on how speakers construct their social reality through language and how they are also in turn impacted by the social constructs these words have built. As Wood and Kroger (2009) elaborate, "generally speaking, the topic for discourse analysts is more properly framed not as language or talk, but in terms of the phenomena that are constructed discursively (e.g., racism, abuse), that is, in terms of what people are doing with words" (p. 9). Importantly, within discourse analysis, talk is context-dependent and highly variable within and between persons.

Positioning Theory

Positioning theory is both a theoretical framework of viewing language and the social realities language creates as well as an analytical approach to studying discourse (Kayi-Aydar, 2019b; 2021). Positioning theory recognizes that discourse is heavily impacted by the social context and expectations of interlocutors and that each utterance can shape the following's outcome. Positioning theory is often attributed to Davies and Harré's (1990) early work where they emphasize the way in which communication shapes realities and lived experiences. Positioning theory tenets elaborate on several crucial elements of discourse, specifically: *position, speech acts,* and *storylines*. These three elements dynamically interact and influence ensuing shifts throughout the course of any communication. The theory also explains the *rights, duties* and *moral orders* that guide communicative norms. In the following sections, I define these key terms while connecting them to communication commonly found in classroom contexts.

The term *position* as opposed to the more static "role" is intended to highlight the dynamicity and discursive shifts in any given interaction. For example, while a "teacher" can be understood as a "role" the person embodies in the classroom that imbues them with certain rights and moral obligations (e.g., to educate their students), they may adopt different positions (e.g., caretaker, rule-enforcer, subject matter expert) throughout a single lesson. Within any context, but specifically a classroom environment, positioning can be viewed as bi-directional and dynamic where students' and teachers' communication informs one another's ensuing verbal and non-verbal responses.

A position can thus be also understood as *interactive* and *reflexive*, where respectively, positions are assigned to others and oneself. For example, when an instructor adopts a student-centered approach with group work, they are, in turn, interactively positioning students as conveyors of knowledge and valuable informants to their classmates. Based on how students perceive an instructor's or classmate's role in the classroom, this position may be reflexively adopted or rejected. Their adopted positions can then be understood as a "complex cluster of generic personal attributes, structured in various ways" (Harré & Van Langenhove, 1999, p. 1) Further clarifying the term, Harré et al., (2009) explain how positions can be "taken-for-granted practices" and that "[p]ositions are clusters of beliefs about how rights and duties are distributed in the course of an episode of personal interaction" (p. 9). Positions then also inform how *rights* and *duties* are assigned and distributed through an exchange.

Harré and colleagues' use of the terms rights and duties refers to the *moral landscape* in which the interaction occurs and the expectations that guide many interactions. Harré et al., (2009) define rights and duties as "shorthand terms for clusters of moral (normative) presuppositions which people believe or are told or slip into and to which they are momentarily bound in what they say and do" (p. 9). Interlocutors' rights and duties are *glocalized* practices - glocalized in the sense that they are both characterized by local and global features - discourse is contextualized within a local context and communicative expectations normalized or presumed often in a larger, cultural context. For example, broadly speaking, instructors have the duties of educating and providing feedback to students and the rights to speak in class and command the attention of their students in order to perform their duties. However, this is slightly more nuanced as, for example, expectations for "ideal" student interaction vary culturally. In some classrooms, interrupting a teacher to ask a question may be considered rude or disrespectful. In others, this behavior might be viewed as that of an engaged learner.

Positioning theory recognizes the importance of localized discursive expectations and classroom contexts are examples of how instructors nurture an environment and micro-culture with its own communicative norms that exist within a larger sociocultural context. Harré and colleagues (2009) articulate this recognition by "attending to features of the local context, in particular normative constraints and opportunities for action within an unfolding story-line, it becomes clear that access to and availability of certain practices, both conversational and practical, are determined not by individual levels of competence alone, but by having rights and duties in relation to items in the local corpus of sayings and doings" (p. 6). That is to say, an individual may have something to say but not be afforded the opportunity to do so.

Positions and their related rights and duties exist within and influence *storylines,* or social, discursive episodes that follow these morally guided communicative norms. Indeed, positioning theory often speaks of a positioning triangle between position, *speech acts*, and storylines (Harré & Van Langenhove, 1991). Speech acts have also been referred to as a *social force of an utterance* as they are a "socially meaningful and significant performance" (Harré & Moghaddam, 2003, p. 5). These acts include anything from greetings to handshakes. In a classroom context, this can also be exhibited in verbal and nonverbal communication, such as when a student stands in order to answer or ask a question of their instructor as a sign of respect. Importantly, within this "triad", it is clear that speech acts, positions, and storylines are all bidirectional and dynamically influence one another. Furthermore, storylines can be identified by shifts in topics or an introduction of new characters or biographical elements that align with shifts in positions as signaled by speech acts (Kayi-Aydar, 2021).

Positioning theory can be understood as situated between a critical discourse analysis (CDA) and conversation analysis for its additional attention to "why" conversations unfold, and while perhaps not centering the marginalization or oppression of CDA work, there is an awareness that power dynamics and imbalance greatly influence the positions we adopt, negotiate, and reject (Kayi-Aydar, 2019b). As a result, how we position ourselves and others is also inextricably linked to concepts of *identity* and *agency*.

In this study, I adopt Bonny Norton's post-structuralist definition of identity as "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is structured across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (Norton, 2013, p. 45). The concept of identity is closely related to that of positioning theory. Indeed, the aforementioned "positioning triangle" has been extended by ensuing scholars (McVee et al., 2019; Slocum-Bradley, 2010) to that of a diamond that includes an additional nexus for identity.

To further clarify the connection between positioning theory and agency, Van Langenhove (2017) proposes that positioning theory's *moral orders* can be thought of as invisible "strategic fields" in which people share understandings about rules and power distributions among individuals and collectives. These fields overlap, meaning the moral orders that apply to an individual's position in one field may be different from or in conflict with the moral orders that apply in a different field. For example, a student's moral orders in interactions with their teacher will differ from their moral orders in interactions with a parent. Because moral orders are normative judgments regarding what one can and should do, they shape the ways in which people enact agency (Van Langenhove, 2017). Agency can then be seen as decisions to act (or not act) in accordance with or opposition to one's position and associated moral orders, and the shifts between strategic fields may correspond with shifts in the ways agency is enacted. In the following sections, I further detail the theoretical importance of instructor agency and identity as they relate to the transnational, English-medium classroom context examined in this study.

Teacher Agency

It is critical to ground the concept of agency within a theoretical frame as “[a]gency remains a rarely defined and poorly conceptualized construct in much of the education literature, often constituting little more than a label, with little appreciation of its problematic nature” (Priestley et al., 2015, p. 129). Instructors’ actions, or teacher agency can be defined as the ability to make decisions, act upon them, and reflect on their impact in the classroom context as it relates to teaching, learning, and professional development (Kayi-Aydar, 2019a). Priestley et al. (2015) further define agency as “something that is achieved by individuals through the interplay of personal capacities and resources, affordances and constraints of the environments” (p. 19). This agency can also be seen as enacted in multiple, dynamic contexts and at varying levels: micro, mezzo, and macro (Kayi-Aydar, 2019a). At these varying levels, instructors are navigating pedagogical choices (micro), institutional constraints (mezzo), and are instructing within larger socio-political language policies and ideologies (macro).

Priestley et al. (2016) describe the ecological approach of understanding teacher agency as different in that one must consider the individual’s (in)ability to act and the greater context influencing those (in)actions. Priestley et al. (2015) clarify this as “something that is achieved by individuals through the interplay of personal capacities and resources, affordances and constraints of the environments” (p. 19). Agency, then, is not something that an individual possesses, but rather something that they do or achieve within their environment recognizing that the structure surrounding them plays a mediating role (Priestley et al., 2016). This structural ecosystem is both temporal and material, meaning that it is grounded in a specific time and place.

The long-standing philosophical debate between agency and structure, briefly summarized as, "to what extent organization derives from agency exercised by its members or results from structures enabling and/or constraining such agency" (Bunzell, 2008, p. 46) questions which came first - agency or structure. For example, if a structure is built from individuals' aggregated agentic actions, or whether the structure itself informs the individuals' agentic capacity. Rather than viewing these concepts as preceding one another, the ecological approach sees agency as dynamically emerging in relation to structure. By analyzing instructor's agency at varying levels within an EMI context, this study will highlight the macro- to micro-level variables that support instruction and could be considered for implementation elsewhere.

An ecological approach is frequently adapted to understanding language teacher agency and language teacher identity (De Costa & Norton, 2017; Kayi-Aydar, 2019a). Within the ecological approach, the classroom is examined as an ecosystem with affordances and constraints at the micro-macro level with considerations for the individual, institution, and greater society. At these varying levels, instructors are navigating pedagogical choices, institutional contexts and are instructing within larger socio-political language policies and ideologies. Their actions can be both influenced by these external multi-layered forces or rejected (e.g., De Costa & Li, 2019).

(Language) Teacher Identity

In a seminal work on language teacher identity, Varghese et al. (2005) highlight that the emergence of language teacher identity work drew from two separate, but simultaneously emergent lines of research: the first focusing on teacher beliefs, knowledge, and attitudes, and the second on identity within the larger sociocultural and political context (e.g., Norton (Peirce), 1995). Varghese et al. (2005) offer three defining attributes of this emergent understanding of identity that also provide the underlying assumptions adopted within this proposal: 1. Identities are dynamic, negotiated, and with the potential for imposition and resistance; 2. Identities are embedded within greater contexts, be it social, political, cultural, and so on; and 3. Identities are shaped, mediated, and understood through language. That is, identities are discursively constructed, negotiated, and communicated.

Theorizing Classroom Discourse

The aforementioned sections discuss theoretical tenets of positioning theory, and constructs of instructor identity and agency as they relate to positioning theory. Together, I apply these interrelated concepts to highlight micro-level phenomena occurring in English-medium classroom contexts where students' and instructors' multilingual and multicultural backgrounds require further investigation.

Discourse, or *language in use* as it is commonly defined, is generally viewed in a classroom context as student-teacher talk. Pedagogical terms such as "teacher-centered" or "student-centered" used to describe communicative opportunities recognize that there may be an imbalance between the amount of talk between the students and instructors. However, as I have briefly discussed, within positioning theory, instructors also hold the rights and duties to position students so as to encourage, guide, or limit student participation. Instructors make these agentic choices to guide their pedagogy and students' learning. However, we must also remember that "[t]o talk about classroom discourse is to talk about interindividual communication. But the goal of education is intraindividual change and student learning" (Cazden, 1988, p. 99). With the broader focus on student learning, we recognize that classroom talk alone does not necessarily tell a full story.

However, as stated, interlocutors' storylines are also normative, that is, they often follow socialized conventions that may be unique to that classroom context. That is, classrooms are cultural-contexts influenced by the localized moral orders and discursive expectations of their participants - both instructors and students. Indeed, Courtney Cazden seminal work in the field of discourse analysis (1988) reminds readers that "[a]ll human behavior is culturally based. Ways of talking that seem so natural to one group are experienced as culturally strange to another . . . . so patterns of teacher-student interactions in typical classroom lessons are cultural phenomena, not "natural" in any sense either" (Cazden, 1988, p. 67).

Yet, classroom communication is understood to be critical for the dissemination of knowledge and the ensuing student learning. In recognition that instructors guide this communication, researchers have examined the cognitive difficulty of questions, ratio of teacher-talk time, etc… *Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* is frequently employed to assess the cognitive complexity of questions (e.g., Hu & Li, 2017). Of the taxonomy's popularity, Cazden writes: "[i]t can even be considered the prototype taxonomy, representing commonalities among all the schemes developed in the last 50 years" (Cazden, 1988, p. 100).

Examining the cognitive complexity of classroom communication builds on educational research on the importance of scaffolding and instructors acting as mediators in student learning (e.g., Vygotsky's zone of proximal development). However, Cazden (1988) cautions about the generalizability of these assumptions that discourse acts as a scaffold for three reasons: the process of internalization, answering versus understanding, and the nature of knowledge. "[S]caffolds as an instructional model cannot account for the mental leap to a new idea" because students must comprehend content and be able to apply it to novel situations without future instructional support in order to truly show mastery or learning (p. 108).

As I've continued to emphasize the importance of classroom communication and instructors' influential role in guiding it (and therefore the ensuing positions students are adopting and rejecting), I must also emphasize that not all communication is verbal and that silence and inaction is also a form of communication. Silence can be a form of resistance, power, or protection, (un)structured, a response to trauma, or a time and space for creativity (Schultz, 2009).

After the above theorization of discourse analysis broadly, positioning theory more specifically, and its close connections to instructor agency, identity, and the classroom context as a cultural-context with its own norms for communication, I want to broaden the theoretical scope to remind readers of the sociopolitical, geographic, and historical complexity of transnational education and English-medium instruction contexts by introducing Dafouz and Smit's (2020) sociocultural and ecological-oriented ROAD-MAPPING framework (2020).

ROAD-MAPPING Conceptual Framework

Dafouz and Smit's sociocultural and ecological-oriented ROAD-MAPPING framework (2020) provides a way to analyze the myriad of ways EMI classrooms can be impacted by macro-to-micro level variables. Their framework focuses on the: Roles of English, Academic Discipline (language) Management, Agents, Practices and Processes, Internationalization and Glocalization. When analyzing the roles of English (and other languages present), Dafouz and Smit (2020) contend that there are different factors, such as societal, institutional, pedagogical, and communicational, that exemplify how English is conceived in an EMI program.

Language policies are reflective of a region's and institution's ideologies and are often reflective of and situated within the larger sociocultural and geopolitical contexts. The reality that language policies are highly ideological is as important underlying assumption about the creation and implementation of TNE EMI programs, as they tend to be guided by national policy (at a macro-level), implemented by institutional administrators (at a meso-level), and potentially adopted or resisted by faculty and students (at the micro-level). Within China, a number of studies have analyzed national policies' guiding influence in EMI and TNHE (e.g., Zhang, 2018) the ways in which these policies are interpreted by administrators (e.g., Rose & McKinley, 2018) and the resulting impact on students and faculty members (e.g., Galloway et al., 2020; Gu & Lee, 2018) to name a few.

Table 1

Dafouz and Smit's (2020) ROAD-MAPPING Conceptual Framework

Roles of English	The roles of English refers to the ways English interacts with other languages dynamically, but also potentially in conflict, within the HEI.
Academic Discipline	Academic disciplines, Dafouz and Smit (2020) clarify encompasses both "two-related notions: academic literacies and academic (disciplinary) culture" (60). The former connects to products of academic work (e.g., papers, speeches), whereas the latter recognizes that specific subjects will have norms guiding genres used in their discipline.
Language Management	Language Management refers to policy statements that influence or direct language use.
Agents	Agents are "the different social players (whether conceptualized as individuals or as collectives, concretely or abstractly)" (60). They are found at different levels and respective of their role as stakeholder may or may not be able to influence the use of English in their HEI.
Practices and Processes	Practices and processes recognize that the ways we think and do things are themselves often social constructs and processes. Thus, this area of the framework is "concerned with the administrative, research and

	educational activities that construct and are constructed by" EMI classroom realities (60).
Internationalization and Glocalization	Finally, internationalization and glocalization refer to the synergies between national, international, and transnational organizations influencing HEIs.

In summation, instructors' discursive positioning and (in)actions do not exist within a vacuum; rather they are dynamic concepts existing within a complex arena of social, political, and ideological forces. Instructors' identities and actions are almost always subjected to these external multi-layered forces and this, in turn, influences the ways in which they conduct their classes, guiding classroom discussion and the ensuing student learning. In an effort to capture this complexity, this study highlights the nuanced role the English language plays in these instructors' lives as a part of their teaching, but also in their positioning as content experts, international scholars, and educators.

Literature Review

Classroom Discourse Studies in EMI

While a large and growing body of literature exists examining discourse within English-medium classroom contexts, many focus on the deficit view of English language skills of either the students' or instructors' (e.g., Macaro et al., 2018; Soruç and Griffiths, 2018; Zhou & Thomas, 2025). A smaller subset examines micro level classroom phenomena such as the internationalized or imagined identities in students (Gu & Lee, 2019) and instructors (Dafouz, 2018) within transnational EMI classrooms. Of specific interest to the transnational, English-medium study I conducted, I focus in this section on discourse studies that emphasize STEM, English-medium classrooms and transnational partnerships within China. In doing so, I highlight the anticipated and identified disciplinary differences in classroom communication.

Because proponents of English-medium programs argue that students benefit from mastering both academic content while improving English proficiency, scholars argue more research is needed to measure students' proficiency gains as results are generally inconclusive (Galloway et al., 2017; Macaro et al.; 2018 Sah, 2022). The assumption underlying this belief is that EMI instructors are providing valuable linguistic input and opportunities for communicating in class so as to improve students' English proficiency. Research has posited that the extent of student-teacher interaction and opportunities for communication, and thus, improved English proficiency will vary by discipline (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2023; Lasagabaster & Doiz, 2023) and the nature of the discipline's knowledge system (Airey, 2012). For example, while Lasagabaster and Doiz (2023) found no statistical difference across disciplines after classroom discourse in 36 Spanish lecturers' classrooms, Airey (2011) contends that subjects like physics have hierarchical knowledge systems, where content is cumulatively built over a strict progression of courses and is largely communicated via applied mathematics at advanced levels thereby reducing the linguistic burden for instructors and students learning in English-medium environments.

Discourse analysis within EMI classrooms have also studied the cognitive complexity of teacher-to-student questions in an effort to understand the type of linguistic input that students receive. In a follow-up to their aforementioned (2023) study, Lasagabaster and Doiz (2024) observed nine EMI lecturers within history, economics, and engineering and still found no statistical difference in the lexical or syntactical complexity of the lecturers' questions across disciplines. They calculated syntactical complexity by using T-units (the number of clauses) with the assumption that a more linguistic or syntactically complex sentence structure would also stimulate a syntactically complex response. However, the syntactical complexity of a sentence does not necessarily reflect the intellectual rigor of the questions being posed to students.

As an example of another approach to measuring cognitive complexity, Hu and Li (2017) examined teacher questions and student responses in ten classrooms across two institutions at EMI institutions in China. To measure the cognitive complexity of the questions, Hu and Li (2017) modified *Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating) and added an additional tier at the bottom for "respondent silence" for a total of 7 levels. They found that across languages lecturers predominantly asked lower-order cognitive questions (level 1-4), and that there was no significant difference between lessons taught in English, Chinese, or a combination of the two languages. However, there were more comprehension-related questions (level 2) used in the English-medium classes suggesting instructors felt a greater need to check for comprehension in those courses. Student responses did differ depending on the medium however, with the researchers arguing that "students were more likely to remain silent to teacher questions in EM interactions and more likely to construct understanding in Chinese" (p. 196). Silence can have a communicative purpose in class, but when silence is received in response to attempts for formative assessment, instructors can feel unsure of students' comprehension and learning. Thus, studying students' listening and learning strategies in EMI contexts is especially useful.

To navigate the linguistic challenges of learning in an English-medium environment, students report multiple strategies for in and out of class supplemental learning (e.g., Soruç & Griffiths, 2018; Zhou & Thomas, 2025). Soruç and Griffiths (2018) interviewed 39 multinational students at a Turkish institution to identify struggles and strategies in EMI contexts and found that struggles were primarily: listening, comprehension, and vocabulary acquisition, which also led to challenges understanding the teacher, topic, and affective communication concerns. An and Macaro (2022) highlight a similar point that English-only language policies in the classroom can obstruct in-the-moment acquisition of new disciplinary vocabulary sharing the example of the word ‘magma’. Students reported that simply looking in their bilingual dictionary would have allowed them to readily understand the term and move on with the lesson, whereas the extended English-only definition, which included terms like “molten basalt,” only further caused confusion and delay. These challenges are exacerbated when students do not have adequate language skills to take EMI courses and have to supplement course time with extensive listening practice in order to “survive their English-medium lectures” (Zhou & Thomas, 2025, p. 281).

As discussed, this study has used positioning theory as both a theoretical framework and analytical tool to understand power dynamics, affordances, and constraints of teacher-guided communication in an EMI context. In the following section, I detail how positioning theory has been applied to classroom contexts and can also be used to guide instructors’ reflection and professional development (e.g., Kayi-Aydar & Steadman, 2022; Shea et al., 2024).

Positioning Theory in Classrooms

Positioning theory is increasingly being used in educational studies in new modalities and contexts as it yields valuable insight into communicative patterns and pedagogical practices within a classroom. An analysis of student or instructor positioning in classrooms can yield valuable insight into classroom patterns, norms, or moments of importance for redirecting classroom talk. In the following section, I discuss the positioning of students and instructors more broadly before detailing the theory’s application in transnational EMI contexts.

Positioning theory provides a valuable analytic tool to observe how instructors may preposition students based on their communicative behaviors or previous histories. For example, Chinese international students have long been stereotyped as “quiet” in Western classrooms. These students have also experienced discrimination for the use of their mother tongue (Xu,

2019) and unfairly accused of plagiarism or cheating among other negative instructor presumptions (Valdez, 2015a; 2015b). However, these prepositions unfairly ignore the cultural classroom context from which the students are accustomed. Noman and Xu (2023) studied Chinese students in joint-Sino EMI programs to understand why these students may remain silent in classes and found their answers could be understood as either a psychological factor (e.g., fear of making a mistake, peer pressure, etc…) or the influence of Chinese culture and education system. For example, students reported that asking questions could be seen as interrupting or disrespecting the "teacher's teaching process" as they had been taught to listen attentively to show respect in their prior educational experiences (p. 280). This may be in sharp contrast to some instructors' expectations that engaged students ask questions and participate actively in class. Noman and Xu's (2023) findings conclude that "Sino-US universities in China must strengthen English language support, particularly in the first year, and train foreign teachers to better understand Chinese students' silence" (p. 283). In contrast, Cheng (2000), drawing on an extensive literature review, disputes the generalization that Asian students are culturally trained to be passive learners in classrooms, and argues that new/Western teaching methodologies and foreign language proficiency will commonly cause reticence to participate in classes like those in transnational, EMI partnerships.

This potential disconnect between foreign instructors and their students is an often overlooked aspect of EMI classroom research as the body of EMI literature commonly features instructors and students who share the same first language (L1). An and Macaro (2022) studied high school science EMI classrooms in China where the instructor only spoke English. Not to be confused with positioning theory's use of the term position, the researchers use *virtual position*, *maximal position*, and *optimal position* to refer to the instructors' stance regarding L1 use that respectively 1. It should be banned in a foreign language (FL) class, 2. L1 is allowed only if it supports second language (L2) learning, and 3. L1 has a pedagogical benefit and should not be excluded in L2 classrooms. Through questionnaires, interviews, and lesson observations, An and Macaro (2022) concluded that instructors held a range of opinions about the role, inclusion, and acceptability of L1 use, although generally felt that L2 should be prioritized. However, in sharp contrast, students "showed a clear and consistent need of L1" which aligned with the researchers' term *optimal position* (p. 14). This discrepancy between instructor and student-identified needs is in contrast to research supporting translanguaging in EMI contexts and highlights the challenges of English-only teaching.

Positioning theory as an analytic tool allows researchers to highlight how language use positions instructors and students. Shea et al. (2024) used positioning theory and identity theory to analyze the ways in which two instructors were positioned due to their linguistic backgrounds. The Vietnamese instructor was positioned as an "assistant" rather than as a co-teacher to his English-speaking, American colleague, presumably because he offered substantial translation support. Hoang (2023) looked at EMI instructors' positioning in EMI classrooms in Vietnam and concluded that there were numerous misalignments stating that "lecturers' unchanged perceptions of their rights and duties despite their engagement in EMI as an educational reform have all painted a complex picture of EMI implementation in Vietnam" (p. 296). That is, instructors did not position themselves or enact different rights or duties despite the change in the language of instruction, which the author concludes that, despite the instructors' best intentions and coupled with the lack of institutional support, likely negatively impacted students' content and language acquisition in EMI courses.

To conclude, positioning theory can highlight linguistic misalignment and its ensuing impact on students as well as serve as a critical reflection tool for professional development (e.g., Shea et al., 2024). Kayi-Aydar and Steadman (2022) provide invaluable suggestions on how positioning theory can also be used to increase student receptivity to new pedagogies and increase verbal participation in EMI classroom contexts.

Multimodal Positioning Theory

While the aforementioned studies that employed positioning theory analyzed classroom discourse through audio recordings (Hoang, 2023) and oral discourse in semi-structured interviews (Noman & Xu, 2023), positioning theory is also increasingly being employed for multimodal analysis i.e., instructor written communication, PowerPoints, etc. (Hoang, 2023; Shea et al., 2024; Steadman, 2020). This is because multimodal course design also positions students and instructors to converse in a certain way and about certain topics. For example, discussion board posts specifically provide a class-wide communicative venue in online classrooms but are generally guided by instructors' prompts and designed alongside evaluative rubrics.

Instructor self-positioning can be less clear in online spaces or through multimodal course design. For example, Dennen (2007) describes traditional positions of instructors as *authority, expert,* or *leader*, and alternate positions as *co-leader, guide*, or *peer* in her analysis of three instructors' positioning in an intercultural, online classroom. Instructors may move between these positions over the course of a lesson or may predominantly position themselves in a singular position throughout. Importantly, instructors may not recognize when their adopted position differs from how students preposition them. Dennen (2011) observed an instructor who simply did not use the discussion board as an area for communicating with students, viewing having a student-only discussion space as beneficial. This, however, led to students viewing him as an "absent" or "missing" instructor. Insights such as this, when shared with the instructor, can prompt reflection and professional development, benefiting both student learning and the instructors' teaching and course design. In contrast, students may also view these speech acts differently. Steadman's (2020) online MA candidate student participants describe the performative nature of their discussion board posts, stating that the academic tone was used to position themselves as "good students" to an instructor, but was not necessarily used to advance the conversation with classmates (p. 141). In another example, Dennen (2011) found that one instructor's use of techniques like reframing questions asked of them rather than solely lecturing, which the instructor believed facilitated a peer-like connection and co-learning with the students, actually caused the students, many of whom were unfamiliar with this instructional style, to question the expertise or competence of their instructor.

Positioning theory's application in classroom settings provides insight into how instructor communication guides students' responses, be they verbal or silent, with implications for students' learning. As I have shown in the cited examples above, the ways instructors and students position one another are informed by previous utterances, pre-existing expectations for classroom dialogue, and the medium in which the communication occurs. Further complicating positioning theory is the way in which the teacher's agency and identity can preposition them or their students. I discuss these interrelated concepts in the literature in the following sections.

Teacher Identity

As previously stated in this chapter, in this study I adopt Bonny Norton's post-structuralist definition of identity as: "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is structured across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (Norton, 2013, p. 45). The concept of identity is closely related to that of positioning theory because our identities influence how others may interactively and discursively preposition their interlocutors. Indeed, the aforementioned "positioning triangle" has been extended by ensuing scholars (McVee et al., 2019; Slocum-Bradley, 2010) to that of a diamond that includes an additional nexus for identity. Our identities can include demographic, biographical, personal, and professional attributes among many other facets. While some of my previous work (e.g., Shea et al., 2024) has highlighted the way racial, national, and linguistic identities intersect to form privileged or marginalized instructor identities (and ensuing positions) in an EMI classroom, the body of research on EMI instructors more commonly focus on their professional and personal identities related to language (e.g., non-native English speaker, identification as an international scholar or context expert, etc.). It is thus, this element of EMI instructor identities that I focus on in this section.

In a meta-analysis of teacher identity research in higher education, van Lankveld et al. (2017) found that at the University level, instructors' identities are often overlaid with their professional responsibilities as researchers, teachers, and other past professional identities. They reiterate the previously mentioned studies' findings of the importance of the sociocultural context in the development of instructor identities. Specifically, administrative support for teaching, such as development programs, strengthened teacher identities, whereas the contextual aspects of higher education (i.e., pressure to publish over teaching) were described as constraining the development of a teacher identity.

Within EMI literature, there is a wealth of research regarding instructors' conflicting identities as both context experts and language educators, as they observe their students requiring additional linguistic scaffolding (e.g., Airey, 2012; Block & Moncada-Comas, 2019) but may not feel comfortable accommodating pedagogically. The change in the language of instruction for the receiving or host institution in a TNE program is especially significant as it has implications for instructors' teaching and students' subject mastery and language acquisition. Even when this secondary role of language instructor is resisted, instructors may still make curricular adjustments (e.g., Block & Mancho-Barés, 2020) during which an understanding of language pedagogy and acquisition would be helpful. Providing EMI teacher support courses recognizes that the change in the medium of instruction warrants further support and pedagogical considerations. While the instructors remain subject matter experts, and not language instructors per se, through these types of training programs, "the teacher is not asked to change identity but to merely consider the impact that language and discourse might have on his/her area" (Ball & Lindsay, 2013, p. 59).

To my knowledge, only one study (Dafouz, 2018) has studied the imagined identities of EMI instructors. In doing so, Dafouz (2018) employed Norton's investment and identity theory and Dafouz and Smit's ROAD-MAPPING framework to examine the imagined identities and agency of EMI content instructors. Dafouz (2018) used thematic analysis of written interviews from 41 Spanish instructors to answer the research questions of how instructors viewed and made English instruction part of their personal and professional identities. Drawing on Norton's investment theory allowed Dafouz to also view respondents' answers about imagined professional identities through the lens of linguistic capital. She concludes, "EMI is perceived as a tool to develop their agency in international contexts and adopt a wider range of teacher identities beyond the balanced bilingual or the native speaker paradigm, which is often entrenched in their imagined identity" (p. 549).

Teacher Agency

As previously stated, agency is a complex, relational phenomenon between instructors and their teaching context, institution, and greater societal context. Priestley et al. (2015) state that agency is "something that is achieved by individuals through the interplay of personal capacities and resources, affordances and constraints of the environments" (p. 19). This agency can also be seen as enacted in multiple, dynamic contexts and at varying levels: micro, mezzo, and macro (Kayi-Aydar, 2019a). Teacher agency includes both actions and inactions in the classroom and is reflected in instructors' pedagogical choices and rationale. As positioning theory analyzes conversation power dynamics, speech acts, rights and duties, agentic choices are often brought to the fore to explain "why" a position is adopted or rejected.

Hoang (2023), as the closest counterpart to my own study, highlights clearly the ways in which instructor positioning in an EMI context informs the adopted positions and ensuing perception of instructors' rights and duties and their instructional practices within an EMI classroom. Hoang's participants were Vietnamese lecturers newly adapting to English-medium instruction and who continued to identify as content-experts, resisting related rights and duties expected of language specialists to support their students' learning in a new medium.

Adopting Priestley et al.'s (2015) ecological framework to understand language teacher agency, Peña-Pincheira and De Costa (2021) also incorporate the multi-layered macro-, meso-, and micro-structure to highlight how instructor agency can develop to advocate for educational justice. Their focal participant Camila, was able to exercise agency in the curriculum and program direction due to her long-standing role at the school, but found herself directed towards the profession, less so by personal choice, but because of family pressure/expectations and societal views of English language instruction. Thus, her greater social (macro) context and immediate (micro) classroom context afforded and restrained her agency in different ways. Extensive research on stakeholders in EMI contexts have found that macro-level institutional efforts to adopt EMI instruction are then negotiated, resisted, or adopted to varying degrees by mezzo-level stakeholders, such as department heads (Studer & Gautschi, 2017) or instructors (Macaro et al., 2019; 2021; Macaro & Han, 2020).

When teachers feel they have agency or the ability to make decisions about their work, in the micro-level classroom context, within their institution, or the greater macro-level social or cultural contexts, they are more likely to feel as though their work is "a meaningful profession rather than just a job" (Priestley et al., 2015, p. 149), and this in turn impacts their job satisfaction and their professional development. This is why some institutions have adopted EMI teacher training programs to support instructors in the shift to teaching in a new language for themselves or their students.

EMI Teacher Training

In a recent systematic review of papers between 2018-2022, Wang and colleagues (2025) identified three general professional development trends for EMI content lecturers, including: 1. formal training activities; 2. opportunities for teacher collaboration; and 3. self-initiated practices. As aforementioned, there is a common theme among EMI instructors rejecting the instructional role of providing linguistic scaffolding or support to students (e.g., Airey, 2012; Block & Moncada-Comas, 2019). However, that is not always the case. Beltrán-Palanques (2021) surveyed 6 Spanish instructors on their needs while teaching in an EMI program to inform their development of an EMI teacher training program. Their survey findings reflect that instructors desired extra support in communication, language use, and improving pedagogical practices.

A number of institutional efforts have been made to evaluate instructors' EMI-specific language abilities as well as provide this type of training. Macaro et al.'s (2019) survey of Spanish department managers and EMI instructors suggests a widespread belief that an international EMI certification process was needed, but widely varying views on what form this training should take, or who should administer the certification (and with which funds). In a later, wider survey of over 400 EMI instructors in 8 countries, Macaro et al. (2021) found that nearly half of the respondents said their institution did not have a required certification to teach EMI, while roughly another quarter responded that they were unaware. Unclear institutional requirements for teaching in an EMI context are echoed in several other studies (e.g., Beltrán-Palanques, 2021; Macaro et al., 2019).

In strong contrast to the aforementioned studies (largely conducted in Spain), instructors participating in a TNE program may or may not find themselves changing their language of instruction. The sending partner institution, often an institution in an inner circle, English-dominant community, likely has instructors and curriculum that have always been in English. Thus, the institutions and instructors must also consider the curricular, cultural, and pedagogical implications of providing their curriculum to a new student body for whom English is an additional language and with whom the instructor may not share a linguistic or cultural background. It may be that they are merely relocating their curriculum to a new student body. However, the content of these types of support courses or professional development opportunities (i.e., second language acquisition and discourse analysis concepts) are also critical for L1 English-speaking instructors to become more linguistically responsive to teaching students for whom English is an additional language.

In keeping with the ROAD-MAPPING conceptual framework, I have discussed both micro (e.g., classroom communication) and mezzo-level (e.g., institutional EMI training) considerations for transnational EMI classrooms. In the final section of my literature review, I discuss macro-level, societal language ideologies and policies and their impact on transnational higher education. In doing so, I highlight that classroom discourse and instructor agency are embedded within complex social, cultural, historical, and political realms that intersect to shape transnational, EMI classrooms.

Language Ideologies and EMI in Higher Education

Language policies are often reflective of a community's language ideologies and are often reflective of and situated within the larger sociocultural and geopolitical contexts. "Language ideology can be understood as the values, beliefs, and ideas guiding an individual's or community's understanding of their social world and language is the medium through which this understanding is communicated and maintained (Lippi-Green, 1997). Importantly, language ideology can refer to how linguistic structures reflect thought, but also the ways in which thoughts regarding a language impact the social world. In studying the role of English in South Korea, Park (2009) compares a language's social impact as closely connected to the society's social evaluation of the language. He argues that Korean speakers both reject and adopt the role of English as an important global lingua franca, as evident in varying levels of discourse from national media to local communication. He highlights the dual adoption/rejection users can feel regarding English as a lingua franca, arguing that any research on global Englishes (e.g., EMI classrooms) cannot be apolitical. More specifically, considering the spread of English as simply a byproduct of globalization risks discounting the inherent and persistent structural imbalance in prestige, power, and access that has spread the English language across the globe. Research in EMI classrooms must also attend to this reality.

The reality that language policies are highly ideological is as important underlying assumption about the creation and implementation of transnational EMI programs, as they tend to be guided by national policy (at a macro-level), implemented by institutional administrators (at a meso-level), and potentially adopted or resisted by faculty and students (at the micro-level). A number of studies have analyzed national policies' guiding influence in the overlap between EMI and internationalization efforts (e.g., Zhang, 2018), the ways in which these policies are interpreted by administrators (e.g., Rose & McKinley, 2018), and the resulting impact on students and faculty members (e.g., Galloway et al., 2020; Gu & Lee, 2019).

The aforementioned studies used discourse analysis to analyze how national and institutional policies shape EMI classroom policies and implementation. Rose and McKinley (2018) examined 37 Japanese universities within Japan's *Top Global University Project* (TGUP). Their analysis of public-facing websites, press releases, and policy documents emphasized the impact national funding had on institutional language planning and focused on how internationalization aspects (e.g., faculty, student mobility, etc) were positioned in relation to English. The authors argue that "Englishization" and Internationalization are often conflated, but showed historical improvement in that English users were not "othered" or viewed as solely foreigners. Instead, the updated Japanese policy documents recognized English as a lingua franca. In a similar study, Zhang (2018) adopted Bernard Spolsky's (2004) language policy theory to discuss how language ideology guides language management and language practice. Using classroom observations, interviews, and policy documents from three Chinese institutions, Zhang concluded that language ideology and language management often conflated English medium programs with internationalization efforts in Chinese Higher education institutions. Thus, the macro-level discourse analysis of institutional and national policies examined in these studies highlights ideological forces such as native-speakerism, neoliberal markets, neocolonialism, and linguistic imperialism propelling the implementation of EMI programs.

These macro-level language ideologies are especially relevant for EMI and TNHE's stakeholders. Language policies at the national and institutional levels are often ideological and trickle down to micro-level classroom contexts (De Costa et al., 2022). Recent calls to problematize this neoliberal macro-level discourse. Some examples include the marketization of English language education (De Costa et al., 2022) and, within the United States, a seemingly abundance of institutional funds for student recruitment but lack of institutional support for (international) students who are English language learners (Kubota, 2009). Indeed, Matsuda (2006) argues that language has been made "invisible" in institutional rhetoric and curriculum design as "the vast majority of U.S. college composition programs remain unprepared for second-language writers who enroll in the mainstream composition courses...the dominant discourse of U.S. college composition not only has accepted English-Only as an ideal but it already assumes the state of English-only, in which students are native English speakers by default" (p. 637). These, among other criticisms, highlight the role language ideologies play in English education.

Indeed, neoliberal ideology is a root cause for many of the identified issues in transnational, EMI education like insufficient language proficiency and support. De Costa et al., (2022) explains neoliberalism as an economic ideology which:

> constructs an unregulated market – commonly referred to as a free market – as being beneficial to society due to competitive access to goods and services. However, as Codó (2018) has argued, these goods and services do not become more readily accessible to everyone; instead, neoliberalism often actually causes greater levels of inequality in the

> world by restricting the choice of most individuals through the guise of political liberty. (p. 81)

Higher education institutions pursue transnational partnerships for the focus on revenue, prestige, and internal rankings (Huisman & Wilkins, 2012), and many institutions are similarly “cutting costs” by admitting and advancing students without the proficiency to learn in English-medium environments (e.g., Soruc & Griffiths, 2018) and not investing in the necessary language support or instruction (e.g., McKinley et al., 2018) so that students must struggle to “survive’ rather than ‘thrive” (Zhou & Thomas, 2025). In doing so, “English becomes both the driver and vehicle through which neoliberal impulses are realized” (De Costa et al., 2022, p. 81) and exacerbates societal inequality and access to higher education. Students in these transnational EMI classroom contexts deserve instruction that is linguistically and culturally responsive to their needs and allows them to master their discipline’s academic content, be it through English or any other language. By using positioning theory to analyze classroom discourse and instructor agency, this study seeks to improve the educational experience of students in these dynamic, but often rightly critiqued, classroom contexts.

Research Gaps in the Literature

In Chapter 1, I provided an overview of trends in both transnational higher education and English-medium education, their increasing overlap, and some of the emerging research gaps of this classroom context (e.g., instructor and students not sharing an L1 or cultural background, and an oversight in the language of instruction on the part of the sending institutions in these partnerships.) In a continuation of Chapter 1’s focus on EMI and TNE broadly, in Chapter 2 I discussed the theoretical framework, positioning theory, that I employ to study this overlapping classroom context. I highlight that much of the existing research on EMI instructor surveys have been conducted in Europe where instructors are also adopting English as a new language of instruction. Thus, these institutions are also more likely to offer EMI training to support instructor teaching and ensuing student learning. By focusing on a transnational EMI classroom context, where supplemental instructional support was not offered and instructors do not have the same L1 or cultural background as their Chinese students, I add further complexity to the growing body of work examining pedagogical practices (like teacher-guided questions), and discursive positioning and its ensuing impact on student participation and learning.

Research Questions

To address these gaps in the literature and contribute to the larger body of work being done in the related fields of transnational education, classroom discourse analysis, and English-medium instruction, my study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do instructors discursively position themselves and students as participants in transnational EMI classrooms? How does this impact communicative opportunities in class?
2. How, if at all, do instructors differentiate their instruction for their English-language learner student body?

In the next chapter, I discuss my methodology, positionality, and research context in greater depth to explain how I designed my study to answer these research questions.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Following the previous chapters, which broadly introduced the study and the scholarly literature surrounding the topic, this chapter shares the choices made in the research design, data collection, and analysis. In discussing these, I also highlight points of divergence when the research did not go exactly as intended, and some of the associated affordances and challenges.

Research Design and Rationale

This research project was a longitudinal case study of two English-medium instruction (EMI) professors in a transnational education (TNE) partnership based in Northern China. The research project spanned an academic year and used positioning theory (Davies and Harré, 1990) as a guiding theoretical and analytic tool as this approach to discourse analysis allows for an in-depth understanding of classroom communicative norms and patterns as well as learner and teacher identities. Collecting longitudinal data in a myriad of forms provided extensive data for analysis and further triangulation in support of the research questions focused on instructor agency and discursive positioning in transnational EMI classrooms.

Due to my positionality as an instructor and former administrative staff member for this transnational partnership, which I discuss in greater depth later in this chapter, I was uniquely positioned to conduct a longitudinal case study with ethnographic principles as case studies are embedded within a particular context in which the researcher has an in-depth understanding. Case studies, as a research approach, are further characterized by "an approach in which the object of inquiry is set in a natural context, is unique (in the sense of singular) and bounded" (Casanave, 2015, p. 119). Importantly, the in-depth, embedded, and singular nature of case studies aims to enhance the "understanding of a phenomenon, process, person, or group, not to experiment and generalize to other populations" (Casanave, 2015, p. 120). While case studies may not be generalizable, their depth offers valuable insight that policymakers, researchers, and others may use to inform their own contexts.

By adopting ethnographic principles as a guide for my case study, I approached the research context without expectations of the types of data I would collect from observing different disciplines' EMI courses and interviewing faculty on their agentic decisions within the classroom. My research context - a transnational partnership based in China between both a Chinese and U.S. higher education institution - is unique, bounded, and a natural classroom context. After years of work experience in this field, I ultimately hope that my research can provide valuable insight into the teaching and learning experience in these contexts with implications for continuous instructional reflection and improvement.

An ethnographically-oriented case study is especially well-suited given that "ethnography privileges the direct observation of human behaviour within particular 'cultures' and settings and seeks to understand a social reality from the perspectives of those involved in the observed interactions" (Starfield, 2015, p. 137). While I entered my study without clear expectations for what I might observe (typical of ethnographic work), I do hope that my study design, findings, and the ensuing discussion and implication yield positive change for both instructor teaching and student learning in transnational, EMI contexts. Both ethnography and case studies require an in-depth knowledge of a context and participants that is best collected over a longer time; thus, I selected a longitudinal research design that spanned an academic year and was preceded by 4 years of professional work experience in the field working alongside this and other transnational higher education partnerships.

Through my longitudinal case study design, I focused on instructor agency, discursive positioning, and its ensuing impact on classroom communication in a transnational partnership that employed EMI. In a meta-analysis of positioning literature, Kayi-Aydar and Miller (2018) suggest intercultural communication and multimodal instruction (in-person and online) more frequently focus on learner positioning in the classroom as opposed to teacher positioning. However, the instructor's positioning will often inform learning opportunities and outcomes. For this reason, ethnographic interviewing is also an appropriate choice, as ethnography seeks to understand the perspective of the participants and their unique cultural context. I adopt Spradley's (1979) definition of culture as "the acquired knowledge that people use to interpret experience and generate social behavior" (p. 5). Thus, this project focused on instructor positioning and agency for the value their insights offer instruction and ensuing student learning opportunities in EMI and TNE classrooms. In order to investigate instructor agency and positionality within EMI contexts, classroom discourse data were collected and triangulated with interview data from faculty and students. To explicate the data's purposes in furthering the study, the following subsections describe both the collection process and analysis.

Research Questions

The following questions were adopted to guide the research design, data collection, and analysis of this study:

1. How do instructors discursively position themselves and students as participants in transnational EMI classrooms? How does this impact communicative opportunities in class?
2. How, if at all, do instructors differentiate their instruction for their English-language learner student body?

Research Context

The transnational partnership examined was an approved Chinese Ministry of Education Joint-Sino partnership between a domestic, Chinese institution and a research university in the United States. The Chinese institution, located in Northern China is a Project 985 institution with two campus locations and an undergraduate population of approximately 30,000. The United States institution had approximately 45,000 undergraduates and positioned itself as an institution in the top 1% of world rankings. It boasted an extensive network of international and transnational partnerships. This dual-degree partnership was one of five in China that the United States institution had developed at the time of data collection.

Being a Project 211 institution, the Chinese institution received prioritized governmental funding for increased international partnerships to improve institutional rankings. Because the shared program had at least three majors (dual degrees) available, it was considered a "joint college" within the Chinese campus. Students were able to enroll in the following BS dual degrees: mechanical engineering, applied physics, and material science. On the Chinese campus, the partnership operated out of a dual-branded building that housed offices and classroom spaces. Each major was allowed to recruit up to 100 students each year, so at its maximum capacity, 1200 students would be able to participate in this joint college. At the time of observation, the program was in its third year and had approximately ~250 students per cohort for a closer total of approximately 750 students.

Within this context, I was also employed by the U.S. institution as an English composition instructor, so I worked (and lived) closely with all faculty members who taught in the three majors. Prior to taking on my faculty role, I had worked in an administrative position in support of the United States institution's transnational education partnerships, so I was also familiar with many of the Chinese partner staff and faculty before my arrival and ensuing in-person collaboration. In discussion with my instructor participants, we intentionally chose junior-level courses to observe, as I was teaching sophomores (and in a somewhat supervisory role of the other English instructors teaching sophomores). However, of the junior mechanical engineering cohort observed, I had previously taught approximately 20 of them in the year prior.

Eligibility to participate in the study was determined by whether 1. the faculty member was teaching at the partnership site for one of the three majors, and 2. if the faculty member was employed by the U.S. institution, not the Chinese institution. The second constraint came from my local institutional review board (IRB) process, as including students and faculty outside of my institution became an increasingly complicated process. From the pool of eligible faculty members, I excluded the three composition instructors that I semi-supervised in my role as location coordinator as 1. EMI scholarly literature debates whether English composition courses are truly “EMI” or are language courses, 2. I did not want those working closely with me to feel any undue pressure to participate or that they were being evaluated through their participation in my study. Of the five remaining instructors, two consented to participate in the study. Together, they represent differences in instructional backgrounds with respect to linguistic and cultural background, years of experience teaching (in EMI and other contexts), familiarity with the host country, and academic discipline. I collected this demographic information through a survey that is summarized in greater detail below to further introduce the two participant instructors. I also would like to note that one instructor completed his demographic survey, as intended, via the Qualtrics survey platform. The other did not complete the full survey but was open to answering several of the remaining questions during a semi-structured interview.

Research Participants

Instructor #1: Jai

Jai, a pseudonym I selected for my first instructor participant, was a new instructor to the transnational partnership in the academic year observed. He participated in both the fall and spring semesters of that academic year and within that timespan he taught the same group of 52 students in three separate classes, in all of which he consented to be observed as a participant in the study. The three classes were junior-level courses for students majoring in applied physics.

Jai had taught at the University level for approximately 15 years in multiple countries. His PhD and professional training were completed in the United States. As of the academic year observed, he had newly arrived in China to teach physics in the dual-degree program. When asked during an interview, he reported that he was not aware of any specific training or institutional resources made available for instructors joining this program to teach in China. However, before moving to China, he shared that he was encouraged by the Physics department to spend a semester at the U.S. institution's main campus location. He shared that he considered this time an orientation to the institution more so than preparation or training for the teaching assignment. Jai had learned English throughout his early education and was a multilingual individual[1].

Instructor #2: Roger

Roger, a pseudonym I selected for my second instructor participant, was in his second year of employment with the transnational partnership examined but had worked previously in another transnational dual-degree program based in China. In the spring semester, when he participated in my study, he taught several courses to both physics and mechanical engineering

[1] As shown in Table 2, Jai did not complete the full background demographic survey prior to our first interview. I sensed a discomfort during our first interview when I asked several of the questions again, and thus, stopped asking identifying questions. I have not listed identifying details to provide further anonymity.

students. In his previous employment, he shared that he had received training on active learning within a Chinese context (specifically through participating in a department-endorsed study). However, he reported that he was unaware of any training offered by his new U.S.-based institutional department to support instruction in China.

Roger had taught at the University level for 8 years, 7 of which had been in China in an EMI context. His PhD and professional training were completed in the United States. The first year of his teaching experience was in the United States. He self-described as a monolingual English speaker and described his language learning experience as “limited,” but later elaborated that he had studied Chinese for several years while in college and could understand it conversationally. In the follow-up questions to clarify this demographic survey answer, Roger also shared in their interview that raising a child in China and having been previously married to a Chinese woman had increased his awareness of the Chinese language, culture, and norms.

Student Overview

All student participants were in the junior year of their undergraduate degrees and majoring in either applied physics or mechanical engineering. The students were recruited to the dual-degree partnership using the gaokao, the Chinese national college entrance exam, which because of the eligibility and constraints of the exam helps provide some additional demographic information that was not otherwise solicited from participants. For example, students would have been primarily Han ethnicity from Northeastern China and between the ages of 19-23. As students enrolled at a highly prestigious Chinese university, they would have done very well on the standardized gaokao exam and likely been top students at their secondary schools. Students did not submit formal test scores to the U.S. institution, instead being admitted first as “non-degree seeking” students while they completed their English composition coursework, and later applying as "transfer" students through the use of their completed coursework while in non-degree seeking status. For this reason, there was no available data for students' English proficiency scores using common metrics like the IELTS, TOEFL, etc. In addition, the partnership reported that they used a slightly lower required gaokao score to be admitted into the EMI dual-degree program than regular admission into the Chinese-medium programs (as discussed in Chapter 1 as a structural design in many TNE partnerships), so it can be assumed that for at least some students their motivation to enroll in the program was driven by a desire to attend the prestigious Chinese institution (and not necessarily participate in a transnational, EMI program) as has been found in research on similar contexts (Li et al., 2021). Finally, I did not collect data related to gender, but broadly speaking, it was predominantly males enrolled in the two majors.

Observed Classrooms

Classroom Structure and Appearance

Figure 2

Collaborative Learning Style Classroom

Figure 3

Traditional Lecture Hall with Chalkboard and Retractable Screen

Courses Observed in Fall 2023:

Physics 200-level Lecture

Sample Course Description: Mathematical techniques used in upper-division physics courses. Complex numbers, Taylor series, coordinate systems, elementary probability, Fourier series, Linear algebra, vector operators, partial differential equations.

Physics 300-level Lecture

Sample Course Description: Introduction to numerical techniques for solving physics problems. Introduction to a high-level programming language, numerical integration, finding roots, ordinary differential equations, least squares fitting.

Physics 300-level Lecture

Sample Course Description: A mid-level course in classical mechanics using Newtonian, Lagrangian and Hamiltonian formulations. Motions studied include: simple, damped and forced harmonic oscillators, conservation laws and collisions, central forces, gravitation and planetary orbits, rotation of rigid bodies. Non-inertial reference frames are examined. Vector calculus in curvilinear coordinates and in phase space are used.

Courses Observed in Spring 2024:

Physics 300-level Lecture

Sample Course Description: A mid-level course starts with Schrödinger's equation and waves applied to one particle in one-dimensional potential wells and ends with the hydrogen atom in three dimensions. Topics cover limits of classical physics, wave equations, phase and group velocities, Schroedinger's equation, one dimensional problems - square well, step potentials, operators and matrices, observables and measurements, the uncertainty principle, the harmonic oscillator, raising and lowering operators, two particle problems, Schroedinger's equation in three dimensions, angular momentum and the hydrogen atom. Partial differential equations and linear algebra are basic tools.

Mechanical Engineering - 400 Level Lecture
Sample Course Description: Study of conduction, convection and radiation heat transfer, with applications to engineering problems.

Data Collection

The research project spanned an academic year and collected the following data:

1. Background demographic surveys for instructors (2),
2. Audio and video recorded classroom observations (19),
3. Field notes from classroom observations (3),
4. Semi-structured interviews (4) with instructors,
5. In-person (1) and written interviews (99) with students.

Table 2 depicts the various types of data collected and their frequency. I then describe in greater detail each data collection tool.

Table 2
Types of Data Collected from Each Participating Instructor

Data Type	Jai	Roger
Demographic Survey	Incomplete	1 via Qualtrics
Classroom Audio Recording	10 class meetings	9 class meetings
Classroom Video Recording	6 class meetings	8 class meetings
Observation Field Notes	0 class meetings	3 class meetings
Semi-Structured Interviews	3	1
Student Interview	1 - in-person	109 - via Qualtrics

Background Survey & Demographic Information

The background demographic survey (see Appendix C) was distributed to faculty and served a dual purpose. First, the solicited questions provided insight into the TNE context and institutional support offered to instructors. Secondly, the Qualtrics survey also served as a logistical tool and an electronic medium through which consent forms were collected/stored.

Classroom Observation

Data collection spanned seven months of the 2023-2024 academic year. Classroom observations were used to collect verbal and nonverbal discourse from students and instructors in EMI classrooms for positioning analysis. Doing so offers insight into teacher identity and agency, therefore addressing both research questions #1 and #2 on instructor positioning and agency. Two instructors consented to have multiple (six) sections of (five) distinct courses, which totaled (19) class observations. The two instructors taught in two separate major programs: BS mechanical engineering and BS applied physics, but would have had overlapping student populations in a few of their courses, given the similar STEM degree requirements. For the physics instructor, their observed courses included 200- and 300-level physics courses. These courses had the same student cohort (n~52) of third-year physics majors. The mechanical engineering professor taught both third-year students in the mechanical engineering and applied physics major programs in a shared course of both programs.

At the Chinese institution, classes were scheduled in two back-to-back 45-minute blocks with a five-minute break in between. Both instructors regularly taught through their 5-minute break and might have occasionally ended class early or run slightly over so that most class meetings recorded were approximately one hour and 30 minutes in length. Interestingly, there were strong policies in place to discourage these practices (varying from the set class times) at the Chinese institution, but only one instructor (Roger) explained that he did this in order to meet required "meeting minutes" on behalf of the U.S. institution and that he personally tracked his variable time spent in the classroom. Of the six sections observed, the classroom layout frequently varied. Each instructor used both traditional lecture-style hall classrooms and classrooms that were more technologically enhanced, with seating intended to support collaborative learning. Both student groups had comparable enrollment at approximately 50-70 students, but regular attendance varied depending on the course.

Table 3
Data Collection by Instructor/Course Type

Instructor & Department:	# of Sections/Courses	# Class Observed	# of Students Taught
Jai - Physics	1 section / 4 courses	10	52
Roger - Mechanical Engineering	2 sections / 1 course	9	113

During the observations, I had intended that my role as the researcher would be "observer as participant" so that "the observer interacts with the participants sufficiently to establish a rapport with them but does not become involved in the activities of the group" (Paltridge & Phakiti, 2015, p. 569). However, only one of the two consenting instructors permitted me to join the lesson in person (in addition to video and audio recording). The second instructor and I had overlapping teaching schedules, so I was only able to observe and take field notes in three of their nine (see Table 4) class observations.

In those select courses that I was able to join, observing as a somewhat detached participant allowed for detailed field notes to be taken during the select few observations. In the classes I did observe, my field notes focused on clarifying aspects of the classroom communication that may not be easily caught in the video or audio recording and allowed me to better indicate which students had consented to the study, which had not, and which ones I was unsure about and needed to verify (as described below). It also gave me insight into how, if at all, my recording equipment's presence was interpreted by the students. I was also able to take notes while reviewing the video recordings after the class was held. In both cases, drafting the field notes often allowed me to note questions that were later referenced in the semi-structured interviews for further triangulation and invaluable retrospective data.

Table 4 *Detailed Breakdown of Classroom Observation and Corresponding Data*

Date	Audio	Video	Field Notes	Instructor	Classroom Style	Major Group
Oct. 18th, 2023	X	X	X	Jai	Lecture	AP
Nov 1st, 2023	X	X	-	Jai	Lecture	AP
Nov 14th, 2023	X	-	-	Jai	Lecture	AP
Dec. 4th 2023	X	X	X	Jai	Collaborative	AP
Dec. 4th 2023	X	X	X	Jai	Lecture	AP
Break between Semesters						
March 5th, 2024	X	-	-	Jai	Collaborative	AP
March 8th, 2024	X	X	-	Jai	Collaborative	AP
March 12th, 2024	X	-	-	Jai	Collaborative	AP
March 15th, 2024	X	X	-	Jai	Collaborative	AP
March 29th, 2024	X	X	-	Jai	Collaborative	AP
April 1st, 2024	X	X	-	Roger	Collaborative	AP
April 3rd, 2024	X	X	X	Roger	Lecture	AP
April 10th 2024	X	X	X	Roger	Lecture	AP
April 15th 2024	X	X	-	Roger	Collaborative	AP
April 15th 2024	X	X	-	Roger	Collaborative	ME
April 17th 2024	X	X	X	Roger	Lecture	AP
April 17th 2024	X	X	-	Roger	Lecture	ME
April 22nd, 2024	X	X	-	Roger	Collaborative	AP
April 22nd, 2024	X	-	-	Roger	Collaborative	ME

Audio & Video Recording of the Classrooms

Camera placement was often determined by student foot traffic, electrical outlet locations, and the instructor's preference. I most commonly placed the camera in the back of the room facing forward to the instructor and the primary board. All of the classrooms had either an instructor podium or a computer desk where the audio recorder could be discreetly placed, but the instructor did not always stand near this podium, so I placed the audio recorder as near to the instructor as conveniently and logistically possible. While my use of an audio recorder was intended to help triangulate inconsistent audio in the video recording, there were small, persistent issues. For example, one instructor habitually drummed his fingers on the podium when students asked questions, negating my efforts to capture audio at those points.

There were also discrepancies in the amount of time I was able to record audio versus video (see Tables 3 and 4). This is largely the result of technical and logistical difficulties (e.g., needing to keep my camera charging to capture the full class period, and me often running to record from other teaching and administrative duties). More specifically, I often had time to start an audio recorder, but may not have had time to set up the full camera/tripod. When I came to set up or take apart the equipment, I saw students once tinkering with the camera, tripod, and the on/off switch (which may have been the cause of several corrupted files and/or missing videos as well). But, the few times I was able to sit alongside my equipment for an in-person class observation, I also gained insight into how students viewed the presence of a camera. In those later observations, the camera was largely ignored. Once, I saw students stand to confirm that their in-class behavior of playing video games was not being recorded, but they then resumed playing video games. In another instance, a student moved over to a neighboring seat when they realized their initial seat would have obstructed the camera's view. Otherwise, I sensed a general disregard for the equipment and my presence setting it up and occasionally sitting in the back of the class. Life in China, at least relative to the United States, tends to have more CCTV cameras recording daily actions, so that coupled with the early introduction of the study and explanation that the focus was on the instructor (not students) may have contributed to what I sensed was a general disregard for the recording equipment. That only one student participated in my in-person focus groups (as discussed in greater detail below) is also likely reflective of the regard with which they viewed my study and interest in me as an observer.

By capturing the full classroom through video recording, and not just the audio recording, additional multimodal analysis of paralinguistic/nonverbal features complemented by use of positioning theory and focus on discursive positioning. The findings of this multimodal analysis are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Limitations to Audio & Video Recordings. An unseen challenge to the audio and video recording was an IRB stipulation that all students would need to consent to be included in the recordings or should otherwise be excluded from my data analysis. This is a common feature of IRBs, and my plan originally had been to allow students to consent and then confirm students' names with instructors during interviews and data triangulation if a segment in which they appeared was particularly noteworthy (while not sharing which students had consented.) However, neither instructor knew their students' names, took attendance, or used a seating chart. It was not until I began observing the second instructor late in the spring semester and he handed out students' papers by name, that I was able to determine which students had consented and which had not. Fortunately, he also taught both groups of student groups included in this study, so I was also able to retroactively review Jai's classroom data.

Student and Faculty Interviews

Recording Semi-structured Interviews for Faculty

The semi-structured interviews were scheduled iteratively throughout the study to triangulate findings from the background survey and classroom observations to gain further insight into the macro-, mezo-, and micro-level considerations that guide instructors' actions in the classroom. For ethnographic interviews, I adopted Spradley's (1979) approach of viewing the interview as a "friendly conversation" where my interviewee was treated as an "informant" of their classroom culture and disciplinary practices (p. 59). In addition to the semi-structured interview questions intentionally designed to elicit responses at these varying micro- to macro-levels (see Appendix A), interview questions emerged while I viewed the classroom observation recordings or observed the classes in person. In this way, I was also able to collect retrospective data from my instructor participants. Stimulated recall is a well-known approach for eliciting interview data on thoughts, intentions, and motivations (Sanchez & Grimshaw) but generally involves showing a video recording or other stimulus to interviewees. In contrast, in my semi-structured interviews, I verbally described recent events observed in class recordings to act as a stimulus for retrospective data. By asking follow-up questions soon after the observation had occurred, I aimed to better understand instructors' agentic decisions in these micro-level class moments. This prompt follow-up and use of introspective interviewing techniques "increases the possibility that researchers are getting a record of what subjects actually think" (McKay, 2009, p. 220). Interviews were conducted at mutually agreed-upon locations and times. I met with Jai three times and once with Roger.

Semi-structured & Written Interviews for Students

Students were asked during the consent process whether they would be interested in joining a focus group, and several had answered yes and provided additional contact information for follow-up. Through the course of the fall semester, while observing Jai, I repeated outreach to these students twice individually and twice in class. Before the second outreach, I had also secured additional funding and began offering participants compensation of 50 RMB (approximately 7 USD) which was a reasonable hourly rate for student workers. Individual outreach was made using WeChat, a common social media and communication application widely used throughout China for personal, academic, and business purposes. While several students initially indicated interest, only one student responded to my follow-up outreach and we met individually for an in-person interview.

The second instructor suggested changing from a focus group format to a written interview format hosted in Qualtrics, an online survey tool, which he then distributed to his class through the course's learning management system. This instructor support for student recruitment significantly increased the response rate. There were 55 responses from his mechanical engineering students and 54 responses from his physics students for a total of 99 responses. In the written Qualtrics interview, students were also asked whether they wanted to participate in a follow-up focus group interview. Only a few students volunteered, and no focus group interviews were scheduled after a single failed outreach. Unlike the single interview conducted in-person, where I was able to ask clarifying or follow-up questions, my written interview format did not allow for semi-structured follow-up questions, which is a limitation of this distribution method. However, I suspect students may have felt intimidated by participation in an English-medium interview, so the online distribution, with its much higher participation rate, was a better choice for soliciting student feedback.

Data Analysis

Due to their professional role and ensuing rights and duties, teachers often facilitate or dictate communicative patterns and opportunities within a classroom environment. Sinclair & Coulthard (1975) seminal work on classroom discourse highlighted the initiation-response-feedback patterns led by instructors to guide student thinking and provide feedback. Question-response patterns are further complicated by the type and complexity of questions asked, especially in EMI contexts with an English language learner student body (Lasagabaster & Doiz, 2024). Specifically, because instructors may be less familiar with their students' varying strengths in academic and colloquial registers (Cummins, 1979), and/or because their strengths lie in their respective content area of expertise, and not language support, instructors may struggle to differentiate instruction for their students' linguistic needs in order to successfully acquire content knowledge. As such, a discourse analysis of transnational, EMI contexts is especially insightful when paired with retrospective instructor interview data to discuss the classroom culture and pedagogical choices. In the following subsections, I detail positioning theory as an analytic tool and describe my data analysis process for each respective data source.

Positioning Theory as an Analytic Tool

As discussed at great length in the preceding chapter, I adopted positioning theory (Davies & Harre, 1990) as a discourse analysis approach to understanding classroom communication in a transnational, EMI context. Positioning theory acts as both a theoretical framework for my study as well as an analytical tool that strengthened my qualitative analysis of the data collected.

Despite the increasing use of positioning theory in educational and classroom contexts (for meta-analysis, see Kayi-Aydar & Miller, 2018), scholars have argued that the analysis is not always made explicitly clear in these research papers. Thus, Kayi-Aydar (2021) proposed an analytic framework for positioning theory research that guided the analysis of this study's data.

She argues that there are three layers of analysis: 1. storylines and positions, 2. relational positioning categories, and 3. social consequences. As such, I worked to first identify storylines and positions before analyzing them.

Identifying storylines and positions

Kayi-Aydar (2021) contends that there are two types of storylines that are relevant to positioning theory; the first is "broad, culturally and morally constructed, taken-for-granted story lines" (p. 3) and the latter that emerge from and during the conversation. As an example, the teacher-student dynamic is a culturally and morally constructed storyline where the rights and duties of the two individuals suggest that a student can ask questions of a teacher and the teacher is expected to respond. If the two individuals' conversation shifts to a topic outside of the classroom or curricular context (e.g., to the student's mental health struggles), so too does the opportunity arise for their storyline and position to evolve and change within the conversation. Storylines can be identified topically or by positions within them. In Jai's and Roger's classroom observations, I generally noted 4-6 storylines that most commonly aligned topically with the problems being discussed in class.

Each in-person interview and classroom observation was audio-recorded with a handheld recorder, and then the audio was later transcribed using sonix.ai. As I edited each transcription, I did so while listening to the audio recorder's transcription alongside my video recording, as depending on the location of each and the respective speaker, one was often clearer than the other. I used sonix.ai for their transcription service and edited within their platform due to the ease of synced playback while editing. At this part of my coding, I noted “hot spots” and comments to prepare a brief summary of each recording, and for the sessions in which I had been invited to observe in person, I reviewed my field notes, often adding more details or time-stamps of interest. During the process of “cleaning” the transcript, I noted storyline divisions.

Once I had finished “cleaning” my transcripts, ensuring transcription accuracy, noting which (if any) student contributions could be included after receiving their consent form, delineating storyline boundaries, and adding analytic memos for conversational hot spots, I downloaded these transcripts and moved my analysis to MAXQDA, a qualitative data analysis software, for further coding, the first step of which was identifying positions. Kayi-Aydar’s (2021) analytic framework identifies positions using four aspects: a) attributes and biographical dimensions, b) categorical membership, c) storyline structure, and d) emotionality. Important to the analysis is the recognition that these positional aspects “are realized, to a large extent, through lexical choices, narrative/discourse strategies, and paralinguistic cues” (p. 4).

As I coded the transcripts for positions, I considered several elements. For example, attributes and biographical dimensions preposition speakers and guide expectations for their rights and duties in relation to their interlocutors. This positional dimension is closely tied to identity and agency as “prepositioning primarily serves to support identity claims individuals make about themselves in an unfolding storyline” (Kayi-Aydar, 2021, p. 5). Speakers can also self-position by invoking categorical membership. Indeed, we are all members of different communities, and through their mention, speakers guide their ensuing rights and duties in a conversation. Instructors and students alike can be prepositioned in classroom contexts depending on these categorical memberships.

Qualitative Analysis

Within MAXQDA, my coding process was heavily informed by Saldaña's (2009) model of first- and second-cycle coding as codes progress to categories and themes iteratively which I describe in greater detail below and depict in Table 5. As I coded, I continued to reflect on my research questions (below) and how the data collected (interviews and classroom observations) contributed to addressing them. In this subsection, I first describe how they were iteratively developed into themes using Saldaña's (2009) qualitative coding framework and then more background on how some of these codes were selected based on my literature review.

1. How do instructors discursively position themselves and students as participants in transnational EMI classrooms? How does this impact communicative opportunities in class?
2. How, if at all, do instructors differentiate their instruction for their English-language learner student body?

Identifying Codes & Developing Themes

When I began coding the classroom transcripts, I used both a deductive and inductive approach. In the following subsection, I briefly describe each approach and the types of codes that were applied or emerged from each.

Inductive Coding. Inductive coding was useful for noting positions and their relational nature as they emerged organically from the data. In cases where the speaker's position was identified by their own reflexive or interactional positioning, I tried to use *in vivo codes*, or the participant's own words, as much as possible. This was in an effort to honor the participants' voices and perspectives and my ethnographic approach to this study and is shown below in Table 7 by my use of quotation marks.

Within MAXQDA, I iteratively and inductively coded with the research questions in mind. Thus, as I noted potential positions being adopted, resisted, or prepositioned on others, I made note of whether this was also occurring within discourse on the micro-level of classroom management, within the greater mezo-institutional context, or macro-level observations about national or cultural differences and similarities. The following Table 5 shows the way initial codes were further refined into categories and the final emerging themes.

Table 5
Thematic Analysis of Jai's Self-Positioning (Saldaña, 2009)

Initial Codes (15 + in vivo)	**Categories (3)**	**Themes (2)**
Teacher as Formative Assessor Teacher as Tester Teacher as Corrector Teacher as Rule Enforcer -------------------------------------- Teacher as Connector to Real World Teacher as Distributor of Knowledge Teacher as (Task) Facilitator	Teacher sets expectations, students follows them Teacher creates exams, students take them -------------------- Teacher lectures, students listen	1. Teacher as Authority Figure who moderates lesson and assesses student learning ----------------------------------- 2. Teacher as Guide, but students are expected to follow along and correct

---------------------------------- Teacher as Guide Teacher as Collaborator (& In vivo codes) Teacher as Fallible (& In vivo codes)	-------------------- Teachers and students can help each other to solve class problems	

Deductive Coding. A deductive, descriptive coding approach was useful for some of the aspects I was coding, such as a pedagogical approach to differentiating learning or categories of questions posed (as I list below), as these codes were largely predetermined by my literature review. I also coded aspects of the transcriptions that connected to a micro-, mezzo-, or macro-level constraint or consideration as these connected to my research questions. In these instances, my codes were brief, topical descriptions of the content. This facilitated the "development of a basic vocabulary" for my data (Saldaña, 2009, p. 70). However, this also resulted in substantial "simultaneous coding" where different codes overlapped the same or similar portions of any given excerpt, especially as I proceeded to also inductively code. While Saldaña (2009) cautions that simultaneous coding may reflect "indecisiveness" or "no clear or focused research purpose" (p. 62), this approach proved incredibly valuable for me as I looked at multiple aspects of how the discourse unfolded in relation to what was being said.

My deductive coding was further enhanced by multimodal analysis of the video recordings, when available. As previously stated, while refining my transcripts of the classroom discourse, I edited in sonix.ai where my audio recording had been uploaded while also viewing the video recording of the classroom. In several instances, student answers were elicited and provided through the use of physical gestures. As I specifically analyzed Roger's through multimodal positioning analysis, I noted pedagogical practices that could be seen as differentiated instruction for students with varied English language proficiency (e.g., paralinguistic resources like nonverbal gestures). Previous work on STEM instructors' efforts to support students in EMI classrooms (Pun, 2017 cf. Richards & Pun, 2022) provided the following instructor coping mechanisms:

1. Altering the rate of speech,
2. Emphasizing keywords or pre-teaching key vocabulary
3. Translanguaging,
4. Modifying classroom interaction/teacher talk
5. Semiotic resources (i.e., charts, visual aids)
6. Frequent concept checking
7. Collaborating with English subject teachers

Building on this work, Richards and Pun (2022) conducted a literature review of EMI teaching strategies in a variety of disciplines and developed a list of twenty-five issues commonly encountered and seventy-five strategies employed either before, during, or after EMI instruction. The strategies that they commonly found that occurred during instruction were further grouped into affective, pedagogic, and linguistic factors. Drawing on this pre-existing research and my own literature review described in Chapter 2, I specifically noted the following in my transcripts:

1. nonverbal language/paralinguistic features
2. altered rate of speech (specifically when slowed),
3. visual display on the board (when evidence suggested instructional differentiation or language support, e.g., defining key terms),
4. Awareness of L1 interference or cultural difference.

Finally, as the study progressed, I also became increasingly interested in the role questions played, as a differentiation strategy, in facilitating classroom communication, student learning, and guiding the positional relationship between students and their instructors. As such, I also began deductively coding question types according to Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. Bloom's Taxonomy has six levels of increasingly complex educational goals. The first level examines students' knowledge awareness by asking them to do things like label, define, or name concepts. In the next, second level, students may be asked to give examples and illustrate or summarize their comprehension. In the third level, students are tasked with applying knowledge by doing things like solving, doing, and producing. The next, fourth level, is distinguished by the analysis that occurs; students are asked to do things like compare, differentiate, classify, or infer. In the fifth level, students are asked to synthesize their understanding and further challenge themselves to produce, construct, invent, or create. In the final level, students are asked to evaluate through tasks that prompt them to appraise, criticize, judge, or consider (Bloom's Taxonomy).

The types of questions instructors ask of their students facilitate the adoption or rejection of different student positions. In Table 6, I provide some sample questions that align with Bloom's Taxonomy and the codes that I used to initially assign a position. Lower-level questions that test students' knowledge awareness or comprehension facilitate classroom discussion but tend to be instructor-driven and reinforce common positions of the teacher as the authority figure or knowledge disseminator and the students as the learner. Increasingly higher-level questions where students are applying classroom knowledge to solving problems in class, in turn, direct classroom time to active student-engaged work where students become informants to their classmates when they have solved a problem, which may position them more so as co-learners or fellow instructors to their classmates. The final levels, synthesis and evaluation, are critical thinking skills that may further position students as co-learners alongside their instructor.

Table 6
Positioning Learners through Question Categories

Bloom's Taxonomy Level	**Sample Utterance**	**Positional Codes**

Knowledge Awareness	What’s film temperature? (Roger, Class Lecture)	Students as Learners Teacher as Authority Figure
Comprehension	Why is a wave function complex? (Jai, Class Lecture)	Students as Learners Teacher as Authority Figure
Applying	We had two pieces of epoxy right on either end of them. We had a metallic piece, a piece of copper. And we had a heat convective boundary. Okay. Where a t infinity of 25. And on the left side, we had a bounded temperature, a prescribed temperature of 400°C. Um, and this is a 1D steady-state conduction problem. Okay. Now tell me, what direction is the heat rate moving in here? What direction? (Roger, Class Lecture)	Teacher as Guide Students as problem solvers
Analysis	There's two types of boundary layers that we're interested in here which are velocity boundary layer and internal boundaries. As I said last week, those boundary layers, they're not the same length. And they develop together but they're independent of each other. They're not the same thing. So in this problem you're being asked for four different substances okay: air, water, engine oil and mercury. Draw the velocity boundaries with the boundary layer and draw the thermal boundary layer. (Roger, Class Lecture)	Teacher as Guide/Facilitator Students as problem solvers
Synthesize	Okay. Look. Go to the graph now. (Shows software on screen) Okay. You have two hundreds from three sides. Zero from one side. Right? You can see how the temperature is distributed. I'm giving this code so that you can study it carefully and understand the algorithm. Get the code running and then play with the numbers. Play with the numbers so that you can produce different results. (Jai, Class Lecture)	Teacher as Collaborator/Guide Students as co-learners
Evaluate	Your team has been tasked with designing a lightweight yet robust support structure for a new high-speed robotic arm used in a manufacturing environment. You've narrowed down your material options to either: carbon fiber composite or a high-grade aluminum alloy. Given the operational requirements of the robotic arm	Teacher as Collaborator Students as co-learners or educators

	and considering different factors evaluate both material options and justify your choice. (AI generated sample question as model)	

However, Table 6 simplifies a complex process. To expand on my coding process, I offer an extended look at the first type of question I provided in Bloom's Taxonomy "Knowledge Awareness" by including a larger storyline in which this question was initially posed by Roger in the left column of Table 7. On the right side of Table 7, I include my codes to show how I used in vivo codes to capture Roger's expressions alongside my own descriptive text like "frustrated facilitator". This segment only uses questions from level one of Bloom's Taxonomy as they all are asking for "knowledge awareness" or a definition of film temperature. However, the instructor's repeated pauses, repetition, and evident frustration as shown by "Come on, answer me" and "Come on, guys, you have the information" moves from positioning *students as learners* in a traditional teacher-centered classroom with display questions to positioning students as *reluctant or disengaged learners*. His concluding statements of "I'm asking you. Answer me. We're not moving on until you answer this question" serve as powerful reinforcements of a teacher-student dynamic where a teacher is the *authority figure* and controls the communication, pacing, and information flow in a classroom.

Table 7
Further Complicating Question and Position Coding

Sample Storyline	**Codes**
Roger: And you're going to go look them up at a film temperature. All right. Do you guys remember what film temperature is? What's film temperature? (pauses and looks around)	Knowledge Awareness Student as Learner

Roger: What's film temperature? But these problems. I need you to look up the thermophysical properties at a film temperature. What am I talking about? If I say film temperature? What am I talking about? Come on, answer me. What am I talking about? If it's a film temperature. What am I talking about? Roger: Answer me. What am I talking about? If I say film temperature? What am I talking about? (Pauses) Sorry. What am I talking about? (Pauses) Come on. When I say film temperature, what am I talking about? If you don't know the answer to this question, all of you have a device in front of you. Look up my PowerPoint slides. It's on the PowerPoint slides. Please tell me. We're not moving on until you answer this question. What do I mean by a film temperature? Roger: What am I talking about? What am I talking about? If I say building temperature? Come on, guys, you have the information. All right. If you don't know the answer, look it up. (Pauses). All right, I'm asking you. Answer me. We're not moving on until you answer this question. What do I mean by a film temperature? (Roger, Class Observation, Monday, April 22nd, 2024)	"Come on, answer me" Frustration with silence Reluctant learner Disengaged learner "We're not moving on until…" Frustrated facilitator "Come on guys, you have the information… look it up" Learners with resources "I'm asking you. Answer me. We're not moving on until…" Teacher as authority figure

As discussed in my literature review, Bloom's Taxonomy has been used in previous studies with the presumption that English-medium instruction should offer students opportunities to improve their English proficiency by providing an array of questions at varying levels of cognitive difficulty. As I highlighted in the sample passage above (Table 7), this question categorization is further nuanced by how students are positioned by their instructor by the type or category of question asked.

Development of Categories and Themes. As I previously stated, I used extensive simultaneous deductive and inductive coding. For deductive codes, like question categorization and instances of differentiation, this was moreso to highlight their occurrence throughout my data. However, my inductive coding of instructor and student reflexive and interactive positioning did move from initial codes to categories to the ensuing themes I discuss in my findings. This process was essentially done by grouping similar codes to form prominent categories and ensuing themes. While there are some connections as this grouping process moved from codes to themes, one can also see that "...a theme is an *outcome* of coding, categorization, and analytic reflection, not something that is, in itself, coded" (Saldaña, 2009, p. 139, emphasis in original).

Finally, there was a slight variation in the way I analyzed student interviews. For Jai, the single in-person student interview was transcribed in Sonix.ai and moved to MAXQDA for thematic analysis much as the classroom observations and interviews were analyzed (as described above). For Roger's students, I collected the student-written interviews via Qualtrics. In a slightly different approach, I disaggregated and grouped the responses by question, rather than by individual, and then thematically analyzed by question. This thematic analysis was also done iteratively, and inductively, and moved through the states of codes to categories, to themes within MAXQDA coding software as similarly described in greater detail above.

Sonix.AI additional AI services

Worth noting, Sonix.ai does not offer artificial intelligence (AI) analysis services in its general transcription services, despite the "AI" in their name. It does, however, for an additional cost, offer AI services (i.e., sentiment or thematic analysis). While I did not make use of sentiment or thematic analysis, I did submit classroom observation data through the AI services with the following custom prompt:

These transcripts are of classroom lectures where the instructor is the primary speaker.
Please:

1. Highlight instances where the instructor has posed a question to the class and code or categorize the question by the question types used in Bloom's Taxonomy (Level 1 -

Knowledge Awareness, Level 2 - Comprehension, Level 3 - Applying, Level 4 - Analysis, Level 5 - Synthesis, Level 6 - Evaluate)

2. Add the number of seconds of silence in parentheses after each question has been asked and note when the instructor has answered the question themselves,
3. Create a separate table for the questions where each has also the following noted:
   a. Number of words,
   b. Number of clauses,
   c. technical vocabulary or concept

Finally, 4. Calculate the total percentage of time that is spent in the class for the teacher talking as compared to time allotted for students to discuss problems in groups or individually with the instructor.

I first verified the provided responses for accuracy and cross-checked the question categorization against my coding. In nearly all cases, I found significant inaccuracies using Sonix.AI's AI tools, so I used my own judgment and initial decision. However, I have included some of the calculations, (e.g., teacher-talk time) to provide a high-level overview of classroom communication patterns and trends.

Table 8
Transcription Conventions

( )	description of physical actions occurring simultaneously
[ ]	time elapsed between utterances
-	overlapping talk, or interjections
ital	emphasis in original speech
(( ))	Omitted information, added to transcript for clarity

Limitations to Data Collection & Analysis

While I viewed classroom recordings and drafted field notes during several in-person class observations and this in turn guided my semi-structured interviews, the majority of my data analysis began in the fall of 2024 after data collection ended in the summer of 2024. This was largely due to my own time constraints working full-time and navigating my family's move abroad and life in a new country. The ensuing data analysis largely occurred in the 2024-2025 academic year as I simultaneously began drafting this manuscript.

In conclusion, an ethnographic, longitudinal case study, afforded me the opportunity over the 2023-2024 academic year to learn from my colleagues in their transnational, STEM, EMI classrooms. The research design was intentional and well-suited given my insider positionality in the partnership which I discuss below.

Researcher Positionality

In the fall of 2019, I began working at my institution's international education office on a small team of, at the time, only women, who were tasked with building an extensive network of partnerships with higher education institutions around the world. The institution's branch campus initiative had been around for several years at this point but was still fairly new and heralded as an innovative way to further internationalize our University. The dean at the time took pride in describing the work as "building the plane while flying it".

I was hired for the role because I had worked both as an academic advisor in the University's Honors College and thus was familiar with degree requirements across campus, but also because I had a background in language instruction and had worked abroad teaching English language learners. From my position on the curriculum team, I articulated courses to build dual-degree partnerships. More often than not, our partner institutions were asked to redesign course syllabi and full curricula to mirror some of our requirements like meeting time minutes, specific lab content, and to mirror our institution's general education structure. Course syllabi were then shared and evaluated one by one by multiple individuals in the discipline and Registrar's Office until, piece by piece, a full degree could be shared between the two institutions. It was like building a complex puzzle where pieces were trimmed to fit into one another.

The branch campus initiative had instruction in multiple modalities, from co-taught courses with faculty from each respective institution to fully online courses delivered directly by my institution's faculty to students dotted around the world. I was the contact point for many of our partners' faculty who would co-teach our courses as they were onboarded to our institution through a brief training. In this capacity, I regularly heard and troubleshooted the challenges of teaching and learning in these complex classroom contexts. I struggled with many of the prevailing, but often false, assumptions that my U.S.-based campus colleagues had about the partnership, e.g., that our own institution's courses must be superior in quality or rigor, that the new students may not be as strong academically, or that this was an easy, minimal effort way to increase revenue. However, I was also surrounded by colleagues who were passionate about the value and virtues of international education and collaboration.

That same fall, I took a non-degree-seeking class on *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*. It was the first course where I was asked to develop a research proposal entirely on a topic of my choosing, and I was introduced to the growing body of research on English-medium instruction (EMI). I felt passionate about the topic, and later that semester, I applied to my institution's PhD program in *Second Language Acquisition and Teaching,* through which I have continued to research these dynamic classroom environments in numerous modalities.

In 2022, I transitioned to a faculty role in the same transnational education network and began teaching writing program courses to dual-degree students in Northern China. Alongside these professional roles, I had begun my PhD in Second Language Acquisition and Teaching and focused my research efforts on EMI instruction, language teacher agency and identity, linguistically and culturally responsive instruction, international education, and their many overlapping areas of research. I found myself especially motivated by the quality of education that students were receiving and the ways in which instruction could, but was not consistently, being improved. I completed my data collection for this dissertation alongside my teaching duties in China. While none of my current students or supervisees were participants in the study, they were important motivators for this work. I wanted to learn more to improve instruction and their learning experience. This multiplicity in my role was also reflected in my relationship with my participants: I was an interviewer, observer, neighbor, friend, and colleague.

Being an insider to the partnership allowed me to develop the rapport necessary to undertake a longitudinal case study, though it also required me to continually remind myself in my research design, data collection, and analysis of the importance of reducing my own bias and practitioner lens through which I viewed these partnerships. For example, this reflectivity manifested in my semi-structured interview questions where I focused on the discipline and instructors' classroom practices as a *STEM instructor,* given my outsider relationship to STEM. I was transparent with my participant instructors and students that while my observations were not intended to be evaluative, I hoped my findings would ultimately contribute to insight into what might improve teaching and learning in these classroom contexts.

Those early colleagues in the international education office and my latter colleagues in China were all passionate about international education and the benefits it could provide to students' lives and futures. Despite the numerous ethical challenges I faced in these roles, I became passionate about improving the experience of all involved. Ultimately, the students for whom we worked and taught are the motivation for this study.

Chapter 4: Discursive Positioning of Students through In-class Q&A

This chapter, the first of two, dedicated to the findings of this study, features Jai, a pseudonym I selected, for my first instructor participant and the classroom-based discourse recorded during his physics lectures. In highlighting both the prominent and shifting positions adopted through his interviews and teaching, the findings presented in this chapter address the following research question:

1. How do instructors discursively position themselves and students as participants in transnational EMI classrooms? How does this impact communicative opportunities in class?

Transnational education (TNE) is defined by the movement of academic providers, rather than students, so in these classroom contexts, students are often learning from instructors and with curriculum from a foreign institution, often in their additional language of English. Thus, instructors in these contexts may or may not share a linguistic or cultural background with their students and commonly have not been trained to instruct students with varying language proficiencies. An abundance of EMI literature has centered on the linguistic challenges of both instructors and students, with a smaller but growing discussion of intercultural contexts, where instructors may or may not share a linguistic or cultural background with their students (e.g., Shea et al., 2024). Within intercultural classroom contexts, positioning theory offers valuable insight into where (mis)communication might occur. By examining classroom discourse in an intercultural, transnational context, this longitudinal study aims to fill the pre-existing gap in the EMI literature by centering topics of instructor agency and positioning through an in-depth analysis of classroom discourse. The findings described within this chapter extend the field of EMI literature to spotlight transnational, intercultural EMI classroom contexts.

This qualitative case study collected audio and video recordings of classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with faculty participants over an academic year with a specific focus on discursive positioning. As previously discussed, *a position* is a dynamic view of how an individual may choose to place themselves in relation to others for different communicative purposes. The same individuals can, in turn, be *prepositioned* by others, and interlocutors can continue to navigate, challenge, or assert positions throughout any given conversation.

Through positioning analysis, many first-round codes and ensuing themes arose during the inductive coding of the interview transcripts, including: self-positioning as an engaged scholar, classroom researcher, and an instructor with pedagogical training. These, in turn, explained his pedagogical rationale of solving problem sets through each course. Jai explained the rationale for solve-as-you-go problems that repeat core concepts (Excerpt 2), though this positioned him as a, at times, *fallible instructor* who made mistakes. By adopting this approach, he largely self-positioned himself as a *guide, facilitator, and authority figure* in a traditional teacher-centered classroom. This adopted self-positioning, in turn, interactively positioned students largely as *present but silent learners*. However, Jai believed that students had the agency and, indeed, onus to self-position as *correctors or co-learners* by speaking up uninvited to correct mistakes.

Jai taught the same cohort of 52 students in four different upper-division physics lectures over the course of the 2023-2024 academic year. The students were in their third year of a transnational dual-degree program whereby they would earn two degrees: one from their Chinese institution (where they lived) and a second from the partnering U.S. institution. Approximately ⅓ of their courses were taught in English by faculty hired by the U.S. institution using curricula also provided by the U.S. institution. The remaining ⅔ of their courses were taught by the Chinese institution, primarily, but not always, in Chinese. As described in the first chapter, these courses were shared or transferred between the two institutions so that students earned two degrees but generally completed much less coursework than would have been required had they enrolled in their programs separately. Nonetheless, the students had intensive academic schedules and were generally in class from Monday through Friday for full days. A standard class period included two back-to-back forty-five-minute blocks with a five-minute break in between. In all four classes observed, classroom lectures consisted of "workbook" problems drafted and curated by the instructor. As previously detailed, I observed this instructor teaching a single cohort of upper-division physics majors in four different courses over two semesters for a total of 10 classroom observations that totaled 15 hours of instruction.

This chapter first introduces some high-level analyses of the classroom context (e.g., teacher-talk time and question categorization, as described in Chapter 3). As classroom management is often guided discursively by the instructor, the first section of the chapter is intended to provide valuable context for later excerpts and selected storylines. Next, I discuss two prominent themes: 1. How Jai positioned himself as a *pedagogically developed educator* in our interviews, and 2. How Jai positioned himself and the students in the few moments of limited classroom interaction where students spoke up about an error observed. I conclude with a summary of my findings.

An Overview of the Classroom Context

To answer the research question, *How do instructors discursively position themselves and students as participants in transnational EMI classrooms? How does this impact communicative opportunities in class?* I conducted interviews and analyzed recorded class meetings. To understand the types of discursive positioning and the impact on learning, I deductively coded the category of in-class questions using Bloom's Taxonomy and inductively coded the reflexive and interactive positioning of the instructor and students throughout the classroom observations.

In Chapter 3, I argued that the different levels of Bloom's Taxonomy position students as different types of learners. For example, display questions that ask for knowledge awareness and comprehension (levels 1 and 2) maintain an instructor's self-positioning as an expert or authority figure in the class and position students as traditionally receptive or passive learners. As the categorical level increases the cognitive complexity, students are positioned as problem solvers and intellectual contributors, decreasing the traditional power dynamic between student-instructors that can be maintained through discursive positioning.

However, to further contextualize my class observations, nearly all of the questions posed to students were rhetorical and answered by Jai immediately preceding the question. If students are not allowed ample time or opportunities to respond to questions, then these questions are not truly positioning students as co-participants in the classroom. Due to the lack of pauses after questions, there were very few instances of instructor-response-feedback patterns in the 16+ hours of classroom lectures that I observed. As a result, nearly all of the interactions were student-initiated because of an error on the board (which I have included in this chapter's selected excerpts). As described in Chapter 3, I also used sonix.AI to measure the percentage of teacher-talk-time to student-talk-time. In the 10 lessons observed, the software recorded that the teacher spoke for 85-90% of the time. For these reasons, my positioning analysis was also decreased, as I coded Jai's limited reflexive positioning of himself and interactive positioning of students. Verbal participation in class can be used for ongoing formative assessment, but Jai reported that he estimated only 20-30% of the students comprehended his lectures (Interview

#3). When I asked about how he identified comprehension concerns or how English proficiency factored into his assessment of students, Jai responded, “Oh, no, I don't have any place to put [English] in here. It's too much all at once. Because you're operating under the fundamental premise that they have been trained because this is the third year, right? Third year, fourth year, they have been trained to fit to this level. I mean, how true that assumption is, I don't know. That is not really something that I have control of.” (Interview #1). I was not able to confirm whether the limited teacher-student classroom communication I observed was a result of his observations about students’ English proficiency or simply the way he would have always managed his classrooms. However, as I show below, the four physics classrooms observed were traditional, teacher-centered classrooms where Jai facilitated solving physics problems while providing limited opportunities for students to participate verbally.

Instructor Self-Positioning as “Pedagogically Developed”

In our interviews, Jai went to great lengths to explain his intentional choices in crafting the workbook problems used in class, pedagogical developments in the field of physics, and his underlying teaching philosophy. In addition to his PhD in physics earned in the United States, Jai had concurrently completed an MA in education and identified as a scholar of education and an action researcher of his own classroom practices. He was a multilingual, multicultural scholar who had taught in numerous countries prior to joining this transnational partnership. His reflexive positioning as a pedagogical scholar and dedicated instructor was reiterated in our continued conversations and is shown in the interview transcripts below.

In our first interview, many of my questions related to teaching experiences and training for transnational, intercultural instruction. In the following excerpt, I asked the instructor whether their U.S. institution required a specific pedagogical approach (as I knew several other departments required flipped teaching or an active learning environment). In response, he provides some perspective on physics education more broadly, saying the following:

Excerpt 1

Excerpt taken from Interview #1 - Jai - October 31st, 2023

1. Kate: Are there different pedagogical approaches to teaching physics, or do you have
2. fairly standardized curriculum or [
3. Jai:]I don't know, I think the pedagogy is quite like. It's quite new because back in the
4. days we didn't I mean, the people who knew the content, they just went in front of
5. the classroom and they put it on the blackboard. That is how it has been done
6. most of the time. I mean, to the most part, even today.
7. Jai: But people who have some pedagogical training, like myself, I mean, we try to
8. kind of think about it and why we do things this way. It's kind of like not everyone
9. does it that way.
10. Kate: I partly ask that because I'm curious whether it was [
11. Jai:] I think in the discipline of education, physics probably is the most advanced
12. because physics, I mean many others come to learn physics. Physics is not taught
13. only for physics majors. It is widely considered as a hard subject, and therefore
14. more work is done about teaching physics than any other subject. The
15. mathematics and physics. Basically, more research has been done about teaching
16. physics, so pedagogical approaches are quite developed.

I realized in hindsight much of his responses are negotiating what he likely viewed as my, albeit unintentional, prepositioning of him as unaware or untrained given that immediately preceding this question I had asked about what training the U.S. institution offered him in advance of his arrival in China. His responses, while I often viewed them as a bit tangential or off-topic, were opportunities for the instructor to reject my prepositioning and reflexively position himself as not only a trained physicist but as an education scholar and active classroom researcher. In line 7, Jai positions himself with “people who have some pedagogical training, like myself” and distances himself from other (physics) professors (in lines 8-9) when he explains that “not everyone does it this way”. This he attributes to his discipline, physics, being especially pedagogically developed (lines 11-16).

Jai reported that his efforts to provide a more pedagogically developed learning experience were evident in lesson plans where students solved problems. The following is an excerpt from our first interview, where he elaborated on the use of his self-created “workbook” and its pedagogical function. He especially felt that the workbook activities needed to be intentionally repeated for ideal comprehension and described facilitating a growth mindset where students learn to be comfortable “with the struggle” rather than mastery through memorization of formulas.

Excerpt 2

Excerpt taken from Interview #1 - - October 31st, 2023

Kate: So you had mentioned in a previous conversation that you don't like to script the class too much because you want them to go along with you, and that way they can point out errors or be solving it themselves. Can you describe how the workbook functions into your class at large? Like how is it weighted? How do you grade it?

Jai: Well, look it’s basically an activity. That encouraged them to be with me so that they know what I did in the class and what they did in the class. So they are graded. They are part of their grade, but something like 10%. So every week they submit their completed workbook. I just scan through them and there is every chapter has a summary also, so they have to complete that summary…. One of the fundamental principles of learning that I'm following is called. Oh, boy, I forgot the name. On. A neurocognitive neuroscience term that is called. I mean, that's a technical name for that, but I forgot that name. But what it means is that we are creating neural networks when we learn something and if the new knowledge is repeated - regular intervals - Then the network neighborhood is becoming strong and strong because the same neurons are being fired. So I'm trying to create that opportunity, kind of like create the repetition. So when I'm teaching the course, I mean, I try to line up the content so that I will be recalling all concepts repeatedly… But because most of the time the problems in physics, they don't really …they have not grasped strongly the basic concepts and they are not that easy to actually grasp. They are very difficult. I mean, even I sometimes. That's. Yeah, that's another challenge in physics because, I mean, you are not really getting good at it, you are becoming comfortable with the struggle. That is what happens. But the people who don't do physics, they don't think that way. They think, oh, they have become so good at it. No, it is about like, I mean, you don't solve enough challenging problems anymore. That is why you think that you have become good at it. Okay? And most of the time our exam-oriented system, they train for the exam and the students think, oh, they have become really good because I could because they are practicing problems. That's what they do as study okay. They get like all the exam support materials and they kind of like do them by heart. And that is not learning. That is actually memorizing most of the time. Our students are doing memorizing.

In this excerpt, Jai adopts several positions of himself as an instructor. His crafted activity positions him as a *guide* so that students know "what I did in the class and what they did in the class" (lines 6-7). By describing that his approach is backed by advances in neuroscience, Jai continues to self-positions as a *pedagogical expert or scholar* (lines 11-19). In line 21, Jai begins to interactively position himself alongside his students as *co-learners* because they both will encounter troubles with solving complex problems, although his use of "even I sometimes" (line 21) suggests an awareness that as an instructor, positioned as more of an *expert*, this is less likely. This passage also offers insight into how Jai positions students as participants in the greater macro-level context of education within society. He stresses that learning is more than memorizing (lines 31-32) and should be a struggle (line 23). This positions students as *developing learners*. I offer these two excerpts to showcase 1. Jai's repeated self-positioning as a dedicated instructor and pedagogical scholar 2. The ways in which he felt he was working against an educational system through his intentional curriculum design.

During each class meeting observed, the students and instructor would often synchronously move through about 3-5 distinct workbook problems. The workbook was not fully populated, so students needed to be present in class to receive the values. The instructor would narrate his process throughout, so much so that nearly all 15 hours of recorded class observations' transcripts read like a mathematical formula. Airey (2011), in his description of disciplinary literacy and hierarchical knowledge, argues that physics is one of the disciplines with the most advanced hierarchical knowledge structures. That is, to be able to truly comprehend one of these lectures would require substantive training and background knowledge in addition to the comprehension of the linguistic input. As I listened again and again to these lectures, I realized that indeed, English language learners may find the linguistic complexity of such lectures to be quite minimal, as it is a series of numbers and mathematical formulas. However, the students were still navigating complex content in a new language as they read their chapter summaries and background information. This is also a limitation of my study given that I do not have this advanced physics knowledge, so while I could understand the linguistic input and the contextual clues (e.g., starting, concluding a problem, etc..), I would not have been able to identify if, for example, an error had been made mid-problem as the instructor expected students to be able to do.

As mentioned before, the vast majority of class time was spent with students following along or listening to teacher-guided talk. Indeed, the few times that there are student-to-instructor exchanges in the classroom nearly all surrounded an instance of confusion because of an error of sorts (i.e., a mathematical variable dropped, or a typo in the original workbook problem, etc…) It was in these micro-moments that instructor and student positioning were most interesting as the following classroom excerpts help to illustrate.

Students as Problem-Solvers and Correctors & Instructor as Guide and Authority Figure

Jai spent the majority of class time across his four different courses providing step-by-step solutions to self-created workbook problems. In doing so, he stood facing a board, looking at the developing solution, rarely turning to face students. Yet, he consistently used language that positioned students as *silent but present collaborators.* For example, using “we” instead of “I” to regularly describe his actions as though they were collective process decisions and his most featured form of questioning, the tagline, “right?” and confirmation checks, “is this correct?” were frequently used to suggest that students were following along and agreeing with the problem’s solution as it was being solved.

As Jai had only permitted me to view the course through video recording and not as an in-person observer, my observation of students was also solely through this lens. In each class, I observed a small number of engaged students, often seated at the front of the classroom closest to the board, who appeared to be closely following along as each problem was solved. It was these students who would raise their hands to ask questions or interject if they saw a calculation error. Other students would sit spread through the classroom, often sitting in the furthest seats from the front, where it would have been very difficult to follow calculations on the board. While I did not watch from within the classroom, I did enter to set up and take apart the recording equipment, and with my own corrected vision, I could not make out the white or yellow chalk on the distant, dusty board. The student questions in the following excerpts came exclusively from the group of 5-6 students who sat in the first row of tables. The remaining students in the class were, in my opinion, to varying degrees engaged in the classroom lecture as evidenced by them looking at their phones or other materials on their laptops.

Early in our series of interviews, after observing one such student-prompted correction in class, I asked the instructor about his positioning of students as collaborators and his desire that they actively correct him. The following interview excerpt helps explain the intentionality of this instructor’s positioning of students.

Excerpt 3

Excerpt taken from Interview # 1 - October 31st, 2023

Kate: As you might remember, my research uses positioning theory, which a main tenet of it is that yes, we might go into a class, and you might be assigned the role of instructor and your students are the students, but that kind of fluctuates over the course of the class, right? Like at one point in the class, you were like, oh, students told me this was wrong. So this would be the correction, right? In that instance, you might say the student is positioned as the teacher in a way as they're explaining something.

Jai: Yeah. That is why we kind of phrase it as teaching and learning. Yeah, you can't separate one from the other.

Kate: But I guess my question is, is do you feel like that kind of approach where you're co-learning or doing an activity together, do you feel like students are used to that approach for teaching, or is it an adjustment for them?

Jai: I don't know… I don't know about the students' experience that much to say. I don't think they are not used to it. But since we are coming from the US and we are projecting a different experience. They are a recipient to what we do because it is something new to them, so they are ready to absorb it. If a Chinese I mean, I think if they - if this is going to happen in Chinese language in their program, probably. They probably will not be able to kind of understand what is going on in there. They might say.. (pauses)

Kate: They're almost like primed to expect something different because the program partnership?

Jai: Right. That's also an advantage, you know.

Within the interview excerpt above, the instructor recognizes that his positioning of students as *correctors* and positioning himself as a *guide or facilitator* as they move through problems might not be familiar to students, given his limited knowledge about Chinese pedagogical approaches or students' other learning environments (lines 14-20). However, he importantly acknowledges that what he perceives as his students' prepositioning of himself as a foreign instructor hired by the U.S. partner institution might allow him to introduce different pedagogical approaches more easily in a transnational classroom context where students are already told to expect different pedagogical practices (lines 15 and 16). Jai explained to me that he explicitly told students that their role in class was to follow along and actively participate through questions and corrections, so they should have been aware of his positioning of them as *co-learners* or *collaborators*. Thus, the following classroom excerpts were selected because these excerpts feature examples of student-instructor discourse where the positioning of students has shifted from *silent but present collaborator* to an engaged *corrector* because a student has chosen not to remain silent. Instead, a student or group of students has spoken up because of confusion caused by an error at some point in the solution's problem, in turn challenging the instructor's position as the subject matter expert and positioning themselves as a co-learner and co-instructor to their peers. A limitation of my observations is that, as a non-expert of the class subject observed, applied physics, I am not able to discern how many, or if ever, similar mistakes occurred and students chose to remain silent.

Excerpts 4 and 5 are taken from a physics lecture in the fall semester that was recorded in a traditional-style lecture hall, where students' chairs and desks would have been facing a chalkboard, projector, and an instructor podium. Consider the first example below in Excerpt 4. The larger storyline from which this has been drawn is a specific problem set that the instructor has displayed on the screen and is solving on a chalkboard. The instructor commands the communication in each class by narrating the steps to solve these pre-selected problems in the front of the classroom. Student-teacher talk time is heavily teacher-focused, but the instructor has, in conversation with me, presented these problems as a collaborative venture and shared that he wants students to complete them along with him. In multiple instances, the instructor thanks the student and acknowledges their error, but it becomes more common in the latter excerpts that the instructor explicitly explains the importance of correcting him and how he views students' position in the classroom.

Excerpt 4
Excerpt from Classroom Observation #1 - Jai - Oct. 18th, 2023

1. Jai: (Continuing lecture….) And this is a parametric equation. One variable is
2. free. So the other variable is going to follow the free variable. And it can have
3. infinitely many solutions. Infinitely many solutions. Yeah? (Turns to student)
4. Student: Uh... X equals minus two plus five D.

5. Jai: D equals to ...Z is equal to t minus. Right? X equals two.
6. Student: About like the...
7. Jai: Yeah right, it's wrong here? (gesturing at board)
8. Student: It's the minus five. So the quotient it should be the x minus five z.
9. Jai: Which one?
10. Student: Right here. It's minus five. So it should be...
11. Jai: Oh there. Okay. Thank you. Okay x minus five. X minus five. Minus two. Thank
12. you. And then did I write the next one correct? Y minus four minus four z equals
13. to minus three. That's correct? AZ3. So what we get is x equals two minus two
14. plus. Five t minus two plus five t. And y equals 24T minus three. That is correct
15. okay. All right.

This excerpt begins with Jai explaining features of the parametric equation before recognizing that an error has occurred in his calculation due to a student calling attention to it. While this might also be a common, intentional, instructional strategy, Jai had reported to me that he did not script his lessons, so I knew that it was possible that he could make mistakes and expected students to follow along and point out errors if/as they occurred.

The discussion shifts from being directed to the whole class to communicating directly with the singular student as their back-and-forth identifies where the error has occurred. Jai shows confusion and clarification-seeking behaviors at multiple points, asking things like, "It's wrong here?" (line 7) "Did I write the next one correct?", (line 12) and "That's correct?" (line 13), seeking confirmation from the student before continuing. In this way, the instructor has shifted to positioning himself as the *learner* and the student as the *guide*. The excerpt concludes with the instructor reverting back to classroom-wide discussion and concluding, "So what we get is…. All right". Jai's reversion back to the use of "we" to describe the process of finding a solution signals a collaborative position as he redirects his conversation back to all of the students in the classroom.

Excerpt 5 similarly shows rhetorical features like the use of "we" to describe the process of finding a solution. However, Excerpt 5 is noticeably different from Excerpt 4 because of the face-saving explanation provided by the instructor. Indeed, "*Instructor as fallible*" was a common early position code that I used to identify instances where Jai acknowledged a mistake on the board (see Table 5). Excerpt 5 was taken during a course observation towards the end of the fall semester and begins as Jai is nearing the end of solving a workbook problem on the chalkboard and is being asked by a student to clarify an aspect of the question. Shortly before this excerpt, Jai had asked students to remove a variable from the problem as he erroneously believed it was a mistake. In lines 2-4, a student has corrected him, and Jai realizes his initially provided problem was correct and that students didn't need to erase anything. The use of the term "sides" (lines 12, 14) refers to the fact that mathematical equations can often be approached and solved starting at different points or sides of an equal sign.

Excerpt 5

Excerpt from: Classroom Observation #2 - Jai - November 1st, 2023

1. Student: (Indistinguishable…) This function?
2. Jai: Yes, yes. Actually, yeah, I actually I was confused because I thought that I wrote
3. the things incorrectly…. Yes, I think you are right. It was correct in the same way
4. that we….(audio drops off as instructor moves near student)
5. Student: (Indistinguishable)
6. Jai: Got it right. Yeah, yeah. I mean, yeah, the way that we discussed is correct. It is
7. just you don't need to erase it. You don't need to erase it. Leave it. Yes, it is
8. correct. Yes. You can leave it.
9. Student: We can leave it. Yes.
10. Jai: That also.
11. Student: (Indistinguishable)
12. Jai: But it is difficult and therefore we will do the other side to the other side.
13. Student: From this side…? (indistinguishable)
14. Jai: In this one. You don't have to do both sides, you just do one side. But
15. if that you understand, right? Yes. And your question is why?
16. Student: And do this?
17. Jai: No no, no. It was like you don't have to..
18. Jai: Yeah, you don't have it. Oh. So. Yes. Okay. So you actually I was because I
19. thought I wrote the problem incorrectly. Okay, so I asked to delete this one. You
20. don't actually leave it because I thought, I thought just if I could quickly looking
21. at it whereas I'm writing, you know, you got the notes at around 8 p.m. yesterday,
22. right. Yesterday evening late. So I wrote it in a rush. So I was a little concerned if

I had written it. Because what I do mostly when I'm writing quickly I copy and paste, right? You know, these two exercises are same looking. So I'm looking at it. I thought I copied wrong and that is why I asked to delete it. But it is correct. It is correct. Leave it the way it was at the beginning. So it is the Stokes theorem. Correct? …. Okay. So you don't have to change it because I thought that I made a mistake, but apparently I did not. So it was correct. And this is also correct. You don't have to change anything. Leave it like that. Okay. Just leave it like that.

In this excerpt, he is correcting himself, acknowledging confusion (thought it was a copy-and-paste error), and explaining the cause (writing in a rush late at night) which positions himself as a *fallible educator*. When saying things such as, "I actually I was confused because I thought that I wrote the things incorrectly…. yes, I think you are right" (lines 2-3) he, in turn, positions students as *correctors* of his work. In this way, excerpts 4 and 5 both highlight similar positioning of students by the instructor as *correctors* of his work, but feature a different self-positioning as an *instructor that could be fallible*, but required face-saving explanation (Excerpt 5) due to life circumstances like a late rush to prepare notes and another as a *collaborator or guide* (Excerpt 4) where students are thanked for their corrections. Ultimately, these early codes led to a dominant theme of instructor as a *teaching authority*, as we see more clearly in the following excerpts.

My classroom-based observations continued into the Spring semester as Jai continued teaching the same cohort of students as they progressed in their physics major coursework. However, two seemingly small pedagogical choices were made for a different classroom dynamic in these latter observations. In the new semester, the instructor was able to secure a new classroom space in a different teaching building that provided better opportunities for collaboration and technology-enhanced learning. While the instructor solved problems on a smart board, still often facing away from the students, the display of the solution was presented on screens around the room, and students were now seated in mobile desks and chairs that were grouped in pods. In addition to the potential for more clearly following his problem-solving and more group work, the instructor also implemented name tags and asked that students have them displayed during each class.

The next Excerpt 6 was observed in the spring, where again, the instructor is solving a problem in front of/alongside students in the course. Note that in this specific passage, I was not able to identify which students were speaking and could thus not confirm whether they were individuals who had consented to be in the study, so rather than report snippets of what they were saying, I have used "indistinguishable" or "group chatter" to reflect that this was indeed a moment where more students were involved in providing feedback to the problem in question.

Excerpt 6
Excerpt from: Classroom Observation #6 - Jai - March 8th, 2024
Students: (Simultaneous chatter)

1. Jai: Because this part can't do anything because it doesn't have y. This part, this wave function does not have y, Right? So it will be plus zero, right?
2. Ss: (Indistinguishable)
3. Jai: Oh, I didn't do that part right. I think this is okay. Okay. Yeah. So this is going to
4. be, uh, ten. Psi 5 with a minus sign. Is that correct now? Cos psi derivative is cos.
5. And the two came out right. And then the first derivative is minus psi and the five
6. came out. And therefore we have ten. (Pauses). What is the problem?
7. Ss: (Student chatter - indistinguishable)
8. Jai: I mean, he's correct. I mean, I'm just doing the derivative. Why is it difficult?
9. Ss: (Indistinguishable)
10. Jai: Ah. Thank you, thank you. Okay. Thank you, thank you. Okay. Yes yes. Yes.
11. So, uh. Yeah. Very good, very good, very good. Okay, so so you take a, um, so
12. this part. Uh, two's, uh, cos two x uh, cos five x plus. Um. Sine two x sine two x.
13. Um. Sine five x. We are - we are going to have two here. Right. Um. So that is
14. going to be thank you very much. Five uh. Sine pi of x. And this is going to be
15. minus right. Correct. Oh, I missed the sign.
16. Jai: So I mean, yes. So that is going to be sine to X. Okay, now let's simplify and
17. see if we can get this. Again, then simplify.
18. Jai: We get a psi 1XY equals to what can we get out either anything common other
19. than a. Uh a. Um. 2 cos 2x 2 plus 2X cos 5X plus 5sine 2x sine 5x. Okay. Okay.
20. Is that correct now? The two parts? The derivative of the product, right derivative
21. of product. I completely forgot that minus sign. Correct? Okay.
22. Jai: And this is so I'm actually. No, I was not focusing on this part, but you're right.

23. I mean, these are these are very basic thing, uh, forgetting is not an option. Um, so
24. because if you forget, I will cut points. And if I forget, you get to correct because,
25. you know.

Excerpt 6 is similar to that of Excerpt 4 and Excerpt 5 for its use of the instructors' plural personal pronouns "we" to indicate a collaborative solving process, and his gratitude statements of "thank you, thank you" and "very good, very good" to reaffirm students' adopted interactive positioning of *co-learner* and *co-collaborator.* However, excerpt 6 differs from the former excerpts in its conclusion, where the instructor highlights that the students and instructor are held to different standards for small errors due to their respective roles, saying that "if you forget, I will cut points, and if I forget, you get to correct" (lines 23-25). They are not truly co-learners in the same sense then as students are penalized for similarly made errors, so mentioning this subverts the positioning of students as *co-learners* and reaffirms instead the positioning of students and instructors in more traditional positions of teacher as an *authority figure* and learner as a *passive information consumer*. However, in the same concluding remarks, the instructor also simultaneously reiterates the classroom positioning of students as correctors of his work. In this way, the instructor is also clarifying his expectations for classroom behavior and positioning and stating they differ from other related contexts, e.g., grading homework or tests. The classroom could then be understood as a lower-stakes, collaborative environment that differs from the students' position in the course's assessment.

The following two excerpts (7 and 8) are taken from the same classroom environment as Excerpt 6, where again, the instructor is solving a problem alongside students in a classroom that is markedly different for its seating arrangement and technology-enhanced capabilities. Note that in this first passage, I was not able to identify which students were speaking and could thus not confirm whether they were individuals who had consented to be in the study, so rather than report snippets of what they were saying, I have used “indistinguishable” or “group chatter” to reflect that this was indeed a moment where more students were involved in providing feedback to the problem in question. Excerpt 7 begins with Jai moving away from the board to address some students murmuring that suggests there is a point of confusion. It then leads to another instance of students being positioned as *correctors or collaborators* alongside Jai as the instructor.

Excerpt 7
Excerpt from: Classroom Observation #8 - Jai - March 12th, 2024

1. Jai: And do you have any questions? (Moving to student desks nearby) You're doing
2. great. You have a question? Any question? What is the question?
3. Student: (Indistinguishable)
4. Jai: What is 2m? Oh, did I forget that? Okay, now you tell me what happened.
5. Jai: Yeah, I mean, what should have happened?
6. Student: (Indistinguishable)
7. Jai: Okay, that 2m cannot disappear, right?
8. Jai: I mean, what is the reasonable assumption? It is something like. I mean, what do
9. you think happened? (Pauses)
10. Students: (Indistinguishable murmuring throughout class)
11. Jai: I forgot. I mean, come on.
12. Students:(Laughter)
13. Jai: I mean, if you… if it is there.. I mean, it can't just disappear, right? This is
14. just math. Algebra.
15. Student: (Loud student chatter and laughter)
16. Jai: Well, you know, I mean, what else can happen? (Smiling) Right? And then this
17. x squared, right? So this is like all the equations are equal sign. Right. Equal equal
18. equal. So I mean if something is missing. Uh, you have to understand that it's
19. missing because it was a mistake. And, uh, you have to like you should be able to
20. tell me. Not asking. Okay. “*What happened to that*?” You should be able to
21. tell me. Oh, you forgot that. Because there is no other explanation. Okay. Is that
22. okay?
23. Jai: They can't disappear. They can't disappear if I just when I'm writing, if I'm
24. making. That is why all the steps are there. That's why all the steps are there. You
25. can tell me directly if I have to make a mistake, because you can follow, uh, from
26. the top to the bottom.

Excerpts 7 and 8 further highlight the theme of positioning students as agentic correctors, but now showcase Jai’s explicit explanations of those communicative expectations. Unlike previous excerpts, in Excerpt 8 it seems as though Jai has identified his own error early enough to re-direct communication for this as a "teaching moment" because while he still asks "Oh, did I forget that?" (line 4) he follows it with a level 3 applying question (Bloom's Taxonomy) that positions students as problem-solvers by asking "Okay, now you tell me what happened. Yeah, I mean, what should have happened?" (lines 4-5). When there is some continued discussion among students indicating confusion, Jai probes further, asking level four questions that prompt students to infer, such as "What is the reasonable assumption?" (line 8), which encourages students to solve the problem themselves and identify his error. In line 11, Jai positions himself as a fallible instructor while saying "I forgot. I mean, come on" and continues "It can't just disappear, right? This is just math. (lines 13-14). Jai is smiling and students are laughing at this "confession", although it was unclear to me while watching the recording whether perhaps students are laughing at themselves for missing the obvious mistake, laughing at Jai's admission of forgetting (line 11) or simply laughing because this was the single instance of humor I observed Jai using in the 10 course observations. As this excerpt concludes, Jai positions students as *agentic correctors* by stating his communicative expectations for them in class, saying, "You have to understand that it's missing because it was a mistake…. You should be able to tell me. Not asking. Okay, "*What happened to that*?" You should be able to tell me." (lines 19-21).

His concluding statement that "[y]ou can tell me directly if I have to make a mistake, because you can follow, uh, from the top to the bottom" (lines 24-26) also reiterates his pedagogical stance I previously highlighted in Excerpts 1-3 where Jai describes wanting unscripted practice problems to make students more comfortable with the "struggle" of novel problems, and not simply memorizing steps for common solutions. Excerpt 3 specifically highlighted that Jai believed teaching and learning were inseparable and that his expectation for students to be positioned as correctors would be adopted, given that he was already prepositioned as a foreign instructor with a different pedagogical approach.

In the very next class period, in a somewhat tangential explanation, Jai explicitly states his communicative expectations in class and positions students as *agentic correctors.* Jai begins telling students a meta-logical rationale for their purpose in being in the classroom together, as shown in the next excerpt.

Excerpt 8

Excerpt from Classroom Observation #9 - Jai - March 15th, 2024

1. Jai: Any questions about this? You agree? Now, something about this. Okay.
2. Something about anything we do is that I am here to show. Okay, I am here to
3. show, not to tell. You are here to see. Not to just learn from me. Okay. Anything.
4. Because this is physics and this is not magic. Right. So anything that I show you,
5. I am showing you how it happens. And that is why when I am making a mistake,
6. if you have been following, you can tell me there is a mistake. Because I am not
7. just telling. Okay? This is how it is happening. Okay? You are not going to be, uh,
8. penalized for my mistakes because I am showing the process so you can see along
9. with me. So that is why it is important for you to understand, okay? This is correct
10. because you can see, not because I am telling you.

In the final excerpt of this section, Jai further positions himself as a *guide* or *facilitator*, whose purpose in the classroom is to show how problems can be solved, but with the caveat that he is fallible and can make mistakes (line 6) and that students should follow along (lines 8-9).

Taken together, these excerpts emphasize that the instructor positioned students as largely passive learners as he controlled the limited opportunities for verbal participation by talking for the majority of the class and not posing many questions to students. However, he believed students had the agency to self-position themselves as co-learners and correctors of his work and explicitly stated (as shown in several excerpts) that this was how students should communicate in class. That is, he believed their position in the classroom, to show they were engaged and learning, was to correct his work, as needed. Overall, this positioning suggests that the instructor felt that students were capable of keeping up with content and language. However, this was not the classroom situation as he described it to me in our interviews (as described above). I further summarize these findings below and discuss their implications in Chapter 6.

Summary of Findings

Throughout this chapter, I have highlighted the prominent self-positions Jai adopted during our interviews and classroom conversations. In our interviews, Jai identified and self-positioned himself as an *engaged scholar*, *classroom researcher*, and *an instructor with pedagogical training*. This, in turn, guided his teaching philosophy, pedagogy, and classroom structure, where students largely watched as Jai completed his self-curated "workbook problems" aloud. During each class meeting observed, the students and instructor would often synchronously move through about 3-5 distinct workbook problems. The workbook was not fully populated, so students needed to be present in class to receive the values. Jai would narrate his process throughout, so much so that nearly all 15 hours of recorded class observations' transcripts read like a mathematical formula. Jai explicitly told students (Excerpts 6-8) that his communicative expectation was for them to follow along to help identify errors and find solutions. Some EMI instructors have reported adopting highly scripted lessons as a coping strategy for EMI teaching in a new context (Richards & Pun, 2022). In contrast, Jai explained the rationale for solve-as-you-go problems that repeat core concepts (Excerpt 2), though this positioned him as an, at times, *fallible instructor* who made mistakes. By adopting this approach, he largely self-positioned as a *guide, facilitator, and authority figure* in a traditional teacher-centered classroom. This adopted self-positioning, in turn, interactively positioned students largely as *present but silent learners*. When students took the action of speaking up to point out an error, positional shifts occurred where students were sometimes positioned as *correctors or collaborators* (Excerpts 6), and other times, Jai reiterated his self-position as *authority figure* by highlighting the power differential in who could make errors without point deductions (Excerpt 6).

Airey (2011; 2012; 2020), in his description of disciplinary literacy and hierarchical knowledge, argues that physics is one of the disciplines with the most advanced hierarchical knowledge structures. That is, to be able to truly comprehend one of these lectures would require substantive training and background knowledge in addition to the comprehension of the linguistic input. As I listened again and again to these lectures, I realized that indeed, English language learners may find the linguistic complexity of such lectures to be quite minimal, as it was a series of numbers and mathematical formulas. However, the students were still navigating complex content in a new language as they read their chapter summaries and background information. This is also a limitation of my study given that I do not have even rudimentary physics knowledge, so while I could understand the linguistic input and the contextual clues (e.g., starting, concluding a problem, etc..), I would not have been able to identify if, for example, an error had been made mid-problem as the instructor expected students to be able to do.

Jai is a passionate educator who spent a great deal of time elaborating on his pedagogical choices and rationale over our multiple interviews. His workbook problems required students to have advanced knowledge and skills in their discipline. Yet, the ways in which his limited verbal questions positioned students did not elicit linguistically cognitively-challenging responses, if they elicited responses at all. This case study challenges major assumptions underlying EMI provision and implementation, namely that students will simultaneously achieve linguistic and content matter expertise through mere exposure in EMI classrooms (Macaro et al., 2018). Rather, in this classroom, students would have had to have advanced content knowledge of physics, but did not require verbal engagement in class, nor were students posed questions that positioned them as active participants or allowed for linguistic development.

Chapter 5: Positioning Students when Differentiating Curriculum

This chapter, the second of two dedicated to the findings of this case study, highlights the second instructor participant and the verbal and nonverbal communication captured via video and audio recording during his mechanical engineering lectures. In highlighting both the verbal and nonverbal communication used through his teaching, this chapter's presented findings seek to address the second research question of this longitudinal study:

> *How, if at all, do instructors differentiate their instruction for their English-language learner student body?*

Transnational education (TNE) is defined by the movement of academic providers, rather than students, so in these classroom contexts, students often learn from instructors and curriculum from a foreign institution in their second/additional language of English. Thus, instructors in these contexts may or may not share a linguistic or cultural background with their students and commonly have not been trained to instruct students with varying language proficiencies. In this specific TNE partnership, students are also not admitted with traditional entrance exams like IELTS or TOEFL to ensure a proficiency level that would support future success in an English-medium learning environment. Thus, given students' varied proficiency levels, additional linguistic scaffolding would certainly benefit many students. In an intercultural and multilingual environment with English language learners, differentiating instruction means also considering potential linguistic or cultural differences that could impede comprehension (e.g., unclear translations, use of idioms, or pop culture references) in the development and delivery of the curriculum.

An instructor's communication (e.g., the teacher-talk patterns, questioning styles, etc) may be a reflection of how the instructor is differentiating curriculum and/or indicative of the way an instructor is discursively positioning students. For example, as previously discussed, a *position* is a dynamic theoretical conception of how an individual may choose to place themselves in relation to others for different communicative purposes (Davies and Harré, 1990). The same individuals can, in turn, be prepositioned by others, and interlocutors can continue to navigate, challenge, or assert positions throughout any given conversation. For example, if an instructor dramatically slows their rate of speech in recognition that comprehension may be aided by this strategy, they are also, in turn, positioning their students as language learners, which some students may accept or reject depending on their own linguistic proficiency.

In the previous chapter, I focused on discursive positioning as Jai spoke about his pedagogical practices and addressed student questions during micro-moments of shifting positions. In this chapter, I focus on the instances of instructional differentiation offered by Roger and how these pedagogical, communicative choices position students. I excluded Jai from the discussion in this chapter because, in all of the physics classes observed, I only coded one instance where the instructor acknowledged that students were English language learners and that his lesson may require differentiation. In that instance, the instructor slowed his pace of speech and told students that if they could not understand his lecture, they should read his written notes provided as supplemental material. In contrast, I identified many examples of (un)intentional differentiation when observing Roger's courses. Ultimately, this chapter's findings further complement this longitudinal study's overall goal to provide insight into how instructors position their students and (sub)consciously differentiate their curriculum as they teach in a new transnational partnership where their students adjust to a new language of instruction.

As I began organizing and analyzing Roger's data, I was struck by a desire to capture more than the verbal discourse occurring in the classroom. Firstly, the instructor made extensive use of nonverbal gestures in addition to verbal repetition and explicit discussions about potential cultural or linguistic differences, as I show in this chapter's excerpts. Multimodal positioning analysis with ELAN computer software then became a supplemental methodological approach to positioning theory in addressing my research question. ELAN, a free software created by the Language Archive, allows users to annotate video and audio recordings and then overlay potentially multiple annotations of various elements for moment-to-moment analysis (ELAN, 2024). As the instructor had also provided consent for his image to be used in ensuing research discussions, this chapter also provides still frames and more detailed transcription to highlight the nonverbal communication occurring in the classroom.

This chapter begins with a condensed summary of the classroom context and the instructor's background before moving into classroom-based excerpts that feature the instructor's (un)conscious attempts to differentiate the curriculum in recognition of his multilingual and multicultural student body. In each excerpt, I also discuss the positioning of students through features like question complexity and communicative practices. I then discuss these classroom practices as they were juxtaposed to my interview questions to the instructor to shed insight into his own agentic decisions behind the observed linguistic and cultural differentiation before offering a brief conclusion and discussion.

An Overview of the Classroom Context

In this section, I reiterate contextual details introduced in Chapters 1 and 3 about the transnational partnership and classroom arrangement. It is briefly summarized here again to better contextualize the chapter's findings.

Roger taught multiple majors and cohorts over the 2023-2024 academic year. However, only his *Temperature Movement* course was observed for two groups of students: junior-level mechanical engineering (n=61) and applied physics (n=52) majors. The students were in their third year of a transnational dual-degree program whereby they would earn two degrees: one from their Chinese institution (where students lived) and a second from a U.S. institution. Approximately ⅓ of their courses were taught in English by faculty, including this focal participant, who were hired by the U.S. institution using curricula also provided by the U.S. institution. The remaining ⅔ of their courses were taught by the Chinese institution, primarily, but not always, in Chinese. As described in the first chapter, these courses were shared or transferred between the two institutions so that students earned two degrees but generally completed much less coursework than would have been required had they enrolled in their programs separately. Despite this course overlap, both groups of students had very full academic schedules and were generally in class from Monday through Friday for full days. The course observed met a degree requirement in both majors' required coursework.

A standard class period included two back-to-back forty-five-minute blocks with a five-minute break in between. Roger selected the classroom layout based on the type of material students covered in the course session, so students would sit in a traditional lecture-style classroom for courses primarily introducing new material via instructor lecture and would attend class in a collaborative classroom setting (e.g., moveable tables and chairs, greater technology affordances, etc..) for classes that included problem sets where students were able to work independently or with their seated group members to solve problems (see Images 2 and 3). Roger also taught in lab-like classroom environments where students independently conducted guided experiments, but these courses were not observed. Yet, this diversity of classroom arrangements reflects that Roger was very intentional in choosing the type of classroom layout, asking for accommodations when needed, to match his intended instructional plan. While this was Roger's second year teaching in this specific partnership, he had taught for several years in another Chinese-based dual-degree, transnational partnership with a different U.S. institution. In addition to raising his child in the Chinese school system, he had also previously been married to a Chinese woman, had studied Chinese himself, and had lived in China for 7 years. This familiarity with the culture and potential language differences was observed in the short time that I viewed his instruction. For example, while observing his classes, I saw examples of pedagogical choices that differentiated instruction for language learners and several instances of acknowledging and catering to linguistic or cultural differences.

As discussed in Chapter 3, my analysis was multi-layered, where I deductively coded question complexity and instances of instructional differentiation while inductively coding interactive and reflexive positions and agentic choices. I've organized this findings chapter into sections by the type of deductively coded instances of instructional differentiation, and then discuss within each excerpt how students were positioned through question patterns and classroom communication. I hope that in documenting instructors' agentic, pedagogical choices implemented in the classroom, these findings will be able to support further instructor professional development in support of students' varied proficiency levels in these complex teaching contexts.

Observed Differentiation in the EMI Classroom

For the remainder of this chapter, I focus on excerpts from classroom observations that showcase some of the examples of instructional differentiation (use of nonverbal language, multimodal resources, and L1 awareness) which I observed over the course of the Spring 2024 semester observing Roger's courses. I follow each excerpt with interview data and student survey responses to triangulate findings and discuss the positioning and agency analysis that informed my understanding of Roger's pedagogical choices.

Nonverbal Language

In the following excerpt, Roger is reviewing answers from a recent exam. This was a course I observed in-person and from my field notes, I noted that students around the room were generally more involved in this class session than in other lectures which I attributed to the weighted grade the exam carried as compared to homework assignments or in-class activities and it was also the first time that they were receiving answers to the exam's problems. The following excerpt also stood out, in contrast to the many other problems solved in class, for how the instructor leveraged paralinguistic communication and encouraged students to do the same to solicit answers from more students. Excerpt 9 highlights how the use of nonverbal language was not the instructor's preferred form of communication, but by Excerpt 11 (only shortly later in the same class session), the instructor is leveraging the use of his nonverbal gestures to increase active engagement among more students. Note that due to my IRB and consent process, the still images selected show only the instructor (although blurred) as it was not possible for me to include only consenting students' nonverbal responses in a classwide still frame.

Excerpt 9

Excerpt from Classroom Observation #13 - Roger - April 10th, 2024

1. Roger: (*Drawing on board*) Um, on the far left, our temperature is 400. That's our highest
2. temperature value. You should have recognized that. And then on the far right,
3. um, T2, it's about 100. And then we have our t infinity, which is much lower way
4. out here, which I didn't ask you to include in the picture. So if you don't have t
5. infinity, that's okay. All right. We'll talk about that today. Um. (Turns to class)
6. Now what's what's happening through the system here with our temperature
7. distribution? What's the temperature distribution going to look like?
8. Students: (*Hand gestures responses)*
9. Roger: All right. You could use your words, right? Don't just show me with your

10. fingers. What's the temperature distribution going to look like?
11. Students: (*A few continue to gesture, one unknown student provides a verbal answer*)
12. Roger: Right? Almost like a line? [*Repeating student*] Okay. So, through the
13. epoxy thesis. Right. Our heat rate is constant. So our slope should be a line, right?
14. (*Drawing on board*)

Within this first Excerpt 1, we see evidence of the instructor's repetition (e.g., "What's the temperature distribution?" in lines 6, 7, and 10). This was the only type of instructional differentiation he believed he offered to students, given their language learning background (Interview #1). Roger's questioning (lines 1-9) positions students as *capable problem-solvers* by asking a third-level Bloom's Taxonomy question that has students applying key concepts to solve a given problem. However, students' *nonverbal* responses, although correctly relaying their comprehension, are rejected by Roger (lines 9-10), thus subverting their adopted interactive positioning as *capable problem-solvers*. When students answer his question with hand gestures to show the direction of heat movement, he responds by asking them to "use could use your words, right? Don't just show me with your fingers" (lines 9-10) before repeating his question until a verbal response is given (line 11).

A few minutes later in the same April 10th class, Roger continues to review questions from a recent exam, so students already have attempted to answer it in the previous course, and as a result, are fairly engaged throughout the classroom in offering answers, although students continue to show their comprehension primarily through nonverbal gestures as noted in the excerpt below.

Excerpt 10

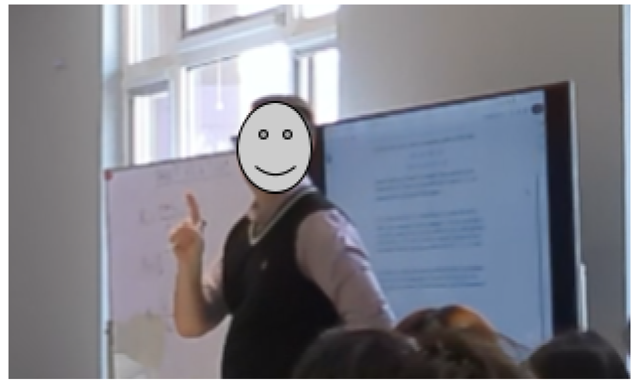
Excerpt from Classroom Observation #13 - Roger - April 10th, 2024

15. Roger: Now, part B for this problem wanted you to consider the heat rate that's going to
16. occur across the plate. All right. And the heat rate that was going to be out right
17. out of the system. What am I talking about here? Where is heat rate out of the
18. system going to occur? Where's heat rate out of the system going to occur?
19. Student: (Indistinguishable)

20. Roger: Where?
21. Student: (Indistinguishable)
22. Roger: Oh. All right. So this right side and this top side are perfectly insulated, Right?
23. (*pointing at image drawn on board*) No heat's coming in or leaving from there.
24. This temperature is 300. This temperature is 500. *(moving fingers to point at*
25. *board at respective areas)* What direction is it going to move?
26. Students: *(Multiple students in the class move their hands to show*
27. *direction of movement some also voice indistinguishable answers.)*
28. Roger: It's going to, what? It's going to move that way and that way. *(waves hands across*
29. *the chalkboard)* Well, it can't move that way. It's insulated. What direction is it
30. going to move?
31. Student: Move this way (*simultaneously gestures with hands*)
32. Roger: Right. Hot to cold. All right. It's moving this way. So which way is in and which
33. way is out, right? This is Q in. *(points at board)* This is Q out. *(points at board)*,
34. right? Heat moves from Hot to cold. And so the problem is asking you to
35. calculate the heat out. And so all you need to do is look at these four nodal
36. locations, okay? And calculate the heat at each of those four points.

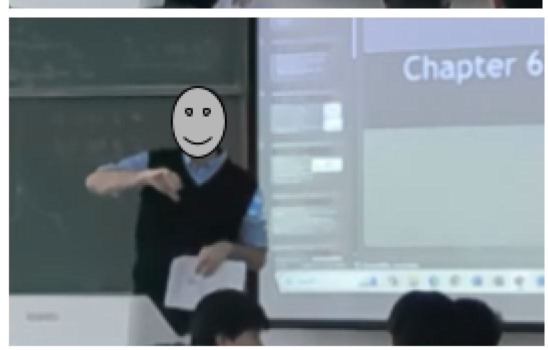
Roger has continued to use repetition (lines 17-18) while positioning students as *capable problem-solver*s by asking them to apply class concepts to solve a problem on heat rate transfer (lines 15-18). Despite being asked to “use their words” in Excerpt 9 immediately preceding this excerpt, students continue to prove comprehension through hand gestures. In working to solicit student answers by asking additional questions (line 20) and offering clarifying explanations (lines 22-23), Roger also begins using nonverbal gestures to clarify the image on the board (lines 23-25, 28-29, 33). A student offers both a verbal and nonverbal response in line 31 that Roger accepts, but due to its simplicity (e.g., incomplete sentence, hand gesture requires clarification) has to further clarify by saying “All right. It’s moving this way. So which was is in and which way is out?” (lines 32-33). In doing so, Roger continues to position the student(s) as *capable problem solvers*, even while working to assess their comprehension through these additional follow-up questions and nonverbal gestures. He provides a clarifying response through his own verbal and nonverbal gestures (lines 32-33) by saying and doing, “This is Q in. *(points at board)* This is Q out. *(points at board)*, right? Heat moves from Hot to cold.”

Of course, not all paralinguistic communication clarifies speech. Many nonverbal behaviours are culture-specific. For example, the instructor wagging his index finger back and forth to indicate “no” while telling students “This value of TS, this should not be in your solution. Okay. Based on the temperature profile, you know what TS equals. All right. Don't put TS” is not a universally understood way to indicate “no”.



(Photo taken from Class Observation #14 - April 15th class lecture).

A few minutes later, in the same April 10th class, Roger began adopting more frequent nonverbal gestures to complement his explanation of the same problem, thus initiating this form of communication rather than just responding to it.

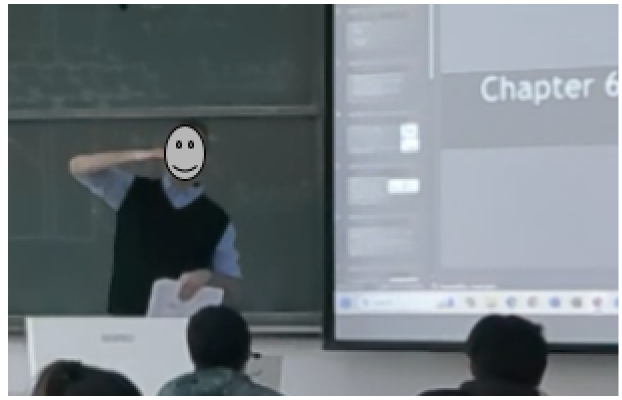


Excerpt 11

Excerpt from: Classroom Observation #13 - Roger - April 10th, 2024

37. Roger: Now if we have contact resistance
38. occurring at that point, what happens
39. with temperature?
40. Student:(*Unclear answer*)
41. Roger: Right, It decreases. All right.
42. And I'm going to exaggerate this -this
43. is more of a drop than actually happens
44. (*drawing on board*). All right. So when
45. we get to this point there's going to be a
46. drop in the temperature. And then we're
47. going to go through the copper. And you
48. could have looked at the thermal
49. conductivity and seen that the copper's

thermal conductivity is higher. (*Points upward with thumb*) Okay. If the thermal conductivity is higher (*holding thumb upwards*) that means its resistance, right… Its resistance is lower. (*Thumb points downwards*) So the slope through here is going to be - what is it going to be - flatter or more steep than this one? (*Moves arm up and down to signal alternate planes.*) So they're going to go like that? (*uses arm to show plane of steepness*) Or, are they going to go like that? (*exaggerates arm position into new steep plane*) It's going to go flatter right?



Within Excerpts 9-11, we see several important discursive features that showcase instructional differentiation. Firstly, the instructor repeats his questions throughout, which he described as one way in which his instruction might be tailored in an EMI classroom context. Secondly, by asking students to "use your words and not your fingers," he's explicitly stating a communicative preference from students. Interestingly, he then adopts this nonverbal communicative approach and engages more students in providing gestured responses as a result.

I was able to ask the instructor about his use of nonverbal communication during our interview as shown in the following excerpt. This portion of the interview followed Excerpts 9-11 as I was prodding further about my observations of differentiated instruction, which countered the instructor's narrative that he did not do much differentiation and did not see a need for it.

Excerpt 12

Excerpt taken from Interview #4 - Roger - April 12th, 2024

1. Kate: Another thing I observed was non-verbal [[communication]], like you would use
2. your hands to make a sphere (*gesturing with hands*), slopes[
3. Roger: Because that's what that's what they do to me, right? I'll be like, what's the
4. temperature distribution like? And I'll see them go like - like that (*moves hands*)
5. That’s how they answer. You can't say “straight line?” Yeah. Straight line. So.
6. Kate: No, I was just curious if that was, you know, intentional scaffolding that you
7. were doing, but[
8. Instructor:]Maybe it's their behavior. Maybe both. Maybe it's both unintentional. But I do
9. it on purpose also because that's how they communicate to me.

In Excerpt 12, Roger has again shown a preference for verbal communication as he poses the rhetorical question “You can’t say ‘straight line?’” (line 5) to me as though frustrated and speaking to the students directly, which positions students as at least somewhat *linguistically deficient.* Yet, as an observer watching the students in the lecture, it seemed clear to me that engaging in nonverbal behavior, whether student-led or not, ultimately encouraged more students to participate and provide answers to his questions in class. In his choice to also adopt nonverbal, paralinguistic communication, Roger shows alignment with his students when (lines 8-9) he states, “But I do it on purpose also because that’s how they communicate to me”.

Interestingly, both remarks to the students “Use your words” (Excerpt 9) and the rhetorical question posed to me as though speaking to the student “You can’t say “straight line?” (line 5) suggests that linguistic proficiency was not satisfactory, at least in the communicative terms the instructor outlined as his preference for the classroom. Yet, Roger reiterated throughout our interview that cultural differences or logistics (i.e., class size) were behind communicative concerns (i.e., not participating in class) rather than linguistic proficiency, even going so far as to state that no alterations were needed earlier in the interview (as shown in the excerpt below).

Excerpt 13

Excerpt taken from Interview #4 -- April 12, 2024

10. Kate: How, if at all, do you adjust instruction when you're teaching students for whom
11. English is an additional language?
12. Roger: I guess I mean, the simple thing is, I repeat myself on purpose over and over
13. again […] One teaching strategy that's common, especially when I was a student,
14. was for instructors to withhold information from you so that you would have to
15. ask them, or maybe they would, like, make a mistake on the board on purpose and
16. you had to find it. Um, that's not something that I'm going to do with these guys
17. and kind of like to further the point where I underline things on the board and am
18. like look at this, you know, I need you to remember this. And that's not something
19. that I would do with an English-speaking student.
20. Kate: How about in your development of course materials?
21. Roger: Um, yeah, I don't think I've made any alterations with that. And I don't
22. know why I would. Um, yeah. Their proficiency with English, I think is fine. You
23. know, they have good, you know, like, textbook level, you know, ability in terms
24. of reading and writing. Um. I think their issue is more of like, the live use of it,
25. you know, using it in the environment that it needs to be actually applied to. So
26. like anything I give them, you know, PowerPoints, reading material assignments.
27. Um, I think they understand it.

In Excerpt 13, my questions about adjusting course materials or instruction provide an assumption that teachers should or could do so for their student body. This can, in turn, be a line of questioning that positions instructors as either *those instructors who differentiate* and *those instructors who do not*. While Roger provides examples of differentiation, i.e., repetition (lines 12-13), which initially accepts my interactive positioning as an instructor who does differentiate for language learners. However, when asked about differentiation in course materials, Roger responds that “I don't think I've made any alterations with that. And I don't know why I would” (lines 21-22), thus rejecting that positioning and in stating “I don’t know why I would” also rejecting an implied message in my line of questioning that differentiation could be helpful for the students, by dismissing the need entirely.

Later in the interview, when I probed further about classroom communication, which I highlighted would be the “live use of it” (line 24) as the instructor had described above (Excerpt 13), the instructor acknowledged a small (estimated 10-20%) currently actively engage in class and mused that “ maybe I would have more communication with the students if we didn't have a language barrier and more students would be active in the room, or at least I would perceive them to be more active if, if there wasn't a language barrier, it's possible” (Interview #1). Ultimately, though, Roger felt that lower participation was a cultural difference, not a linguistic deficiency, and that in a class of nearly 100 students, it was inevitable to have low participation, saying later in the interview that “[y]ou're never going to get full engagement no matter what. It is always like anyone who sits in the back of the room, you know, they're back there for a reason and they don't want to engage. So, like a third of the class - no matter the environment - they're not going to engage with you no matter what” (Interview #1).

This is where the data from student surveys was especially enlightening. As aforementioned, Roger had suggested that a written survey may yield more participation than my calls for focus group interviews, so I distributed my questions (Appendix B) via Qualtrics. 99 students (54 physics and 55 mechanical engineering majors) completed the survey. Two questions were asked about students’ experience learning in an EMI context and their study strategies to complement the English instruction. As students frequently mentioned a need for supplemental study materials to engage with their English textbook in their survey responses, it was also interesting to see Roger’s response to my interview questions about the course materials I observed during lectures.

Multimodal Resources

In observing Roger's classrooms, I was also able to view many of the student-facing materials he provided to reinforce class concepts while they were displayed on classroom projectors. While the instructor did not share additional materials with me for analysis, I did discuss some of their observed multimodal features (e.g., use of colors, visuals, and charts to enhance text) in our interviews. The following interview Excerpt (14) continues immediately after interview Excerpt 13, where the instructor has just said that he doesn't feel the need to modify course materials because students' reading and writing comprehension skills are proficient enough to understand the course materials he shares, for example, in PowerPoints.

Excerpt 14

Excerpt taken from Interview #4 -- April 12, 2024

28. Kate: I noticed in your PowerPoints you did do things like color code key
29. terms in some cases, provide full sentences more explanatory than maybe
30. bullet points or things like that.[
31. Roger:]Okay yeah
32. Kate: I wondered whether that was an intentional effort to provide scaffolding.[
33. Roger:]It is um, kind of like letting them know, but I see I do that regardless
34. of the student though, letting them know, like what I would want them to
35. remember as opposed to just read this, um, but, you know, use it as a reference.

In this excerpt, I am providing additional examples of differentiation (lines 28-30) as I ask Roger about agentic choices and his pedagogical practices. The additional observed practices somewhat countered Roger's previous statement that he only uses repetition and clarifies key details (Excerpt 13) by providing additional examples of classroom practices. In framing my question in this way, I positioned Roger as *an adept instructor who differentiates instruction for language learners.* However, Roger again rejects this interactive positioning, stating, "I do that regardless of the student, though" (lines 33-34). Roger's new position, I initially coded as *a universal design instructor*, recognizing that many pedagogical practices that benefit language learners actually benefit all learners. But, this rejection of my interactive positioning as an instructor who differentiates continued throughout our interview and increasingly became paired with Roger's interactively positioning the students as *linguistically competent and not in need of differentiation*, and reflexively positioning himself *as not an English teacher*, but more so *a content expert*. These rejected positions are especially prominent in the final section on observed differentiation, where Roger uses his knowledge of Chinese to infer some potential confusion students may encounter in his exam questions.

L1 Awareness

While Roger self-defined his own language learning experience as “limited”, he did have 4 years of formal Chinese language study during graduate school in the United States and 7 years of experience living as an expatriate in China teaching in similar dual-degree programs, therefore he was aware of some L1 transference his students might encounter in an EMI classroom. One such example was how discount or percentage reduction is phrased the same but understood differently in Chinese and English. For example, if a $10 item in a store is 80% discounted, this would imply a $2 cost in the United States and an $8 cost in China. In Chinese, the advertised sale number represents the percentage that you will pay, not the discount itself. This percentage deduction was a point of confusion on one exam question, as detailed in the class excerpt below. The following is a continuation of the previous Excerpts 9-12, where Roger is continuing to review questions from a recent exam.

Excerpt 15

Excerpt from: Classroom Observation # 13 - Roger - April 10th, 2024

Roger: All right. Last thing to go over before we get to convection is the problem for dealing with transient, time-dependent temperature distribution…. I said we have some 10 millimetre diameter rods that have been heated to 400 degrees C. Okay. So they have an initial temperature T of 400 degrees C. Uh, and then they're going to be cooled in air. Right. The air temperature T infinity is 25°C. And I want to

60. consider, which I stated in the problem, a temperature that would be equal to a
61. decrease from our initial temperature of 80%. All right. So if our temperature has
62. decreased by 80% what's our temperature now? Our temperature has decreased by
63. 80%. What's our current temperature?
64. Student: 80.
65. Roger: 80? All right.... So we've come down 80%, right? (*Laughs*) So it's not 80% of the
66. temperature is our final temperature. Our temperature has decreased by 80%. All
67. right. Now I know in Chinese there's some confusion because when you guys say
68. things like 80% off, you don't really say 80% off, you say you pay 20%, right? So
69. I get that. But I tried to explain to you during the test, maybe some of you missed
70. it. We'll see. I don't think you'll lose too much credit for solving a different time. I
71. may not take off any points at all for that, all right.

The student's incorrect response "80" regarding the temperature reduction (line 64) shows there was still some confusion about the test question's meaning and how to calculate a solution. Roger's response is also noteworthy: "80? Alright…." and his ensuing laughter (line 65) suggests that the answer is incorrect, and his continued explanation of what he means by "decreased by 80%" shows awareness that there is student confusion. He both acknowledges students' first language and positions the students as *capable problem solvers, albeit with the potential for confusion* when saying things like "when you guys say…" and "I know in Chinese" before explaining what might be a linguistic or cultural difference that could impede comprehension (lines 65-71). Ultimately, his assurance that "I don't think you'll lose too much credit for solving a different time. I may not take any points at all for that…" (lines 70-71) suggests an awareness and accommodation of this challenge for students.

In our interview, the instructor could not think of other examples where he had provided instructional differentiation for students (aside from repetition), so within the same interview, I later provided this specific classroom excerpt as an example I had observed. The following interview transcript provides some insight into how the instructor viewed differentiation in exam questions for language learners. More specifically, the instructor states that this agentic choice to accept multiple answers is *not* differentiation or cultural awareness, but rather a focus on the academic concepts being tested, and in stating such, positions himself *as not an English teacher*.

Excerpt 16

Excerpt taken from Interview #4 -- April 12, 2024

10. Kate: [This test question] I think is a good example of you being like, well, I'll take both
11. answers on the quiz, because you might have - if you translate this, it has a
12. different meaning here. [...] Can you think of other examples where because of
13. your background familiarity with Chinese culture/ Chinese language you're taking
14. that into account with students?
15. Roger: I mean, I could come up with maybe something, but my reason for doing that
16. has nothing to do with, uh, the language barrier. Like a normal student, if you tell
17. me what you're doing and you get to the result, I'm generally going to accept it,
18. right? If you made an assumption and that assumption was wrong, I can grade
19. that. I can say, okay, I'll take two points off. Are you making the wrong
20. assumption? But everything else I'll accept. So if they wanted to say that instead
21. of the temperature decreasing by 70%, that it was 70% of the temperature, you
22. know, I'm not grading you on your English ability, so I'll accept it as long as
23. you've made it clear in your work that that's what you did. Um. So I mean, I
24. don't… and like what it was during the test itself they kept asking me, does this
25. mean this or this? Like they would actually show me the multiplication of either
26. point three times the number or point seven times the number and so then I had to
27. stop and be like okay stop asking me this question guys, you know it means this,
28. all right.

In the above interview excerpt, I have positioned Roger as *culturally knowledgeable* and as an *adaptable instructor,* with my question highlighting his flexible grading policy given the potential for L1 interference on comprehension. Yet, Roger rejects this interactive positioning, stating, “my reason for doing that has nothing to do with the language barrier” (lines 15-16). His interview response noted that students asked questions about this question during the exam, which likely prompted his awareness of the linguistic and cultural nuance as well.

Instead of adopting my positioning as a culturally knowledgeable or adaptable instructor, he counters that this is normal grading practice for him because it is more important to him that the work is clearly shown saying, “If you made an assumption and that assumption is wrong, I can grade that. I can say, okay, I’ll take two points off… you know, I am not grading you on your English ability” (lines 18-22). Here, Roger self-positions as an *instructor focused on academic content* and *not as an English teacher*. Interestingly, “taking two points off” is still a grading penalty. This sentiment, “I am not grading you on your English ability,” is frequently documented in the literature on content lecturers in EMI contexts (e.g., Airey, 2012). Yet, conversely, so are the grading penalties associated with language comprehension or linguistic errors (Block & Mancho-Barés, 2020). In further support of these findings, later in the same interview, Roger also critiqued students’ writing in lab reports without recognizing that language *is* then something that he grades.

His concluding remarks in this excerpt about students’ persistent questions during the exam may also be connected to cultural perceptions of appropriate times to interrupt instruction. For example, despite repeatedly hearing Roger ask students to attend office hours during class lectures, Roger told me they were never attended, instead, students would ask questions between instances of lectures during class or after class. Roger reiterated students' communicative preference as I asked about typical patterns of interaction in class participation (excerpt below), which connects broadly to instructional intercultural competence, which I discuss below.

Intercultural competence

Intercultural communication can be understood as referring to “interpersonal communication between individuals or groups who affiliated with different cultural groups and/or have been socialized in different cultural (and in most cases, linguistic) environments” (Jackson, 2014, p. 3) Intercultural competence can then be understood as exhibiting an awareness of these potential divergences and navigating them in a culturally appropriate way. As instructors, this may take the form of recognizing classrooms as unique (inter)cultural contexts and adapting instruction to suit students' expectations for communication to increase instructor-student interactions. In the following interview excerpt, I have broadly asked about interaction patterns in class, and Roger has focused his response on students' questioning patterns.

Excerpt 17
Excerpt taken from Interview # 4 -- April 12, 2024

29. Kate: What are typical patterns of interaction in class participation?
30. Roger: I think one aspect that happens a lot is I'll give them an assignment where they
31. have to work together. And I say, you know, as you work on it, if you do have any
32. issue or question, you know, raise your hand or get my attention, I'll come over or
33. come to me. Um, but before I break them off, I'll say, is there any anything you
34. want to ask me now before you guys start? And there'll be no response. And the
35. same thing kind of happens, like when class is ending, I'll say, before class is over
36. "Do you guys have anything you want to ask me about today's lecture? Anything
37. that was unclear." And I won't get any response. But the second I end class or the
38. second, I say, okay, start working on the assignment, multiple students will get up
39. and come to me and ask me questions like, not even any time has gone by. And so
40. it's unclear to me why didn't they ask that question, you know, 30 seconds ago and
41. I said, "was there any questions?" They would rather come up and ask me one-on-
42. one, you know, then ask amongst everyone.

As previously mentioned, some of the classes I observed Roger teaching were intentionally held in classrooms that facilitated student collaboration through the inclusion of movable chairs, whiteboards, etc. However, in all classrooms, I regularly observed Roger repeatedly asking for questions, only to be approached after that request. But, I also observed that during these instances of group work in the collaborative classrooms, Roger was afforded near-constant opportunities to engage with students individually as he moved about the room answering questions and checking on group progress.

When reflecting on these types of student questions, Roger states (line 40) that "it's unclear to me why" students behaved in this manner, but does not share any agentic pedagogical choice made to negotiate this point of divergence. Although he muses at other points in the interview about the role of classrooms as cultural contexts that have shaped his son's education (as a child who attended Chinese primary school), he does not work to accommodate what may be a cultural difference in students' communicative expectations. For example, soliciting questions in different formats, providing more time for responses, or encouraging this type of question by allowing more time for after-lecture individual questions and answers.

In Chapter 3's Table 7, I use the example of the following classroom-based excerpt to highlight the complexity and nonlinear relationship between positioning analysis and question complexity. This specific passage took place about halfway through a lecture that Roger held in a collaborative learning space. In these classroom environments, Roger interspersed time for lecture with dedicated time for group work, so here, he has just begun explaining the next problem to students and would shortly after break for students' independent or group work.

Excerpt 18
Excerpt from: Classroom Observation # 18 - Roger - April 22nd, 2024

1. Roger: And you're going to go look them up at a film temperature. All right. Do you guys
2. remember what film temperature is? What's film temperature? *(pauses and looks*
3. *around)*
4. Roger: What's film temperature? But these problems. I need you to look up the
5. thermophysical properties at a film temperature. What am I talking about? If I say
6. film temperature? What am I talking about? Come on, answer me. What am I
7. talking about? If it's a film temperature. What am I talking about?
8. Roger: Answer me. What am I talking about? If I say film temperature? What am I
9. talking about? (Pauses) Sorry. What am I talking about? (Pauses) Come on. When
10. I say film temperature, what am I talking about? If you don't know the answer to
11. this question all of you have a device in front of you. Look up my PowerPoint
12. slides. It's on the PowerPoint slides. Please tell me. We're not moving on until you
13. answer this question. What do I mean by a film temperature?
14. Roger: What am I talking about? What am I talking about? If I say is building
15. temperature? Come on, guys, you have the information. All right. If you don't
16. know the answer, look it up. (Pauses). All right, I'm asking you. Answer me.
17. We're not moving on until you answer this question. What do I mean by a film
18. temperature?

My early positional coding of this segment included positions *Student as Learner* being asked questions with a Bloom's Taxonomy of level one Knowledge Awareness complexity. I used in vivo codes such as "Come on, answer me" that positioned Roger as a *frustrated facilitator* and students as *reluctant learners, disengaged learners, or later as* Learners with resources when Roger states variations of "Come on guys, you have the information… look it up" (lines 15-16, lines 10-11) *When the passage continues with Roger stating* "I'm asking you. Answer me. We're not moving on until…" (lines 16-17), he positions himself in a more traditional teacher-centered classroom where the teacher is the *authority figure.* Reluctant Learner and Frustrated Facilitator became prominent themes in my positional analysis of Roger's lectures (although not discussed in great detail in this chapter given its focus on RQ #2). While Roger believes repetition was one example of instructional differentiation, in this excerpt, he is asking one of the least cognitively complex questions repeatedly, but is unable to receive a verbal response for several minutes. While Roger also asked more cognitively complex questions these were generally responded to in written calculations or responses, rather than verbally. In contrast, Excerpt 18 showcases a lower-cognitive question type that students struggled to answer. In the concluding section, I discuss some of the key discussion points that emerged from the analysis of Roger's data to address my second research question. In the next and final chapter, I further discuss some of the implications of these findings.

Discussion & Conclusion

To answer my second research question on how instructors differentiated their instruction for students in their EMI classroom context, I organized this chapter to reflect coded instances of instructional differentiation noted during class observations. I observed classroom practices like the use of nonverbal language, L1 awareness, distribution of multimodal materials, and burgeoning intercultural competencies (as described above), but, surprisingly to me, Roger did not appear to be aware of or consider some of these pedagogical practices as differentiation for English language learners. While the instructor used techniques that are advantageous ways to engage students of varied proficiency levels, he noted that none of the practices were intentional or specific to the student, but were general teaching practices. To his credit, many teaching practices that are considered linguistically or culturally responsive pedagogical practices overlap with tenets in universal design and advantageous teaching practices more broadly. However, some useful practices that I observed him employing (e.g., offering opportunities for summative assessment in multiple formats like nonverbal responses) were discouraged (e.g., "use your words, not fingers") despite being a useful way to engage learners with varied proficiency levels, as featured in the interview excerpts above.

In our interview, by asking clarifying, retrospective questions about these observed practices, I positioned Roger as *an adept instructor who differentiated instruction* for his students. However, that interactive positioning was repeatedly rejected by Roger as he explained that his agentic choices were not determined by students' identities as English language learners, but rather by his general approach to teaching, grading, etc… In several instances, Roger rejected my positioning of him in this way and then adopted a reflexive self-positioning *as a content expert* and *not an English teacher*. This position as *not an English teacher* was despite him also noting grading issues with written lab reports and potential point deductions for confusion caused by L1 interference.

My line of questioning, with its focus on English as the medium of instruction and instructional choices, also, albeit unintentionally, positioned students as *linguistically deficient* or *requiring more instructional differentiation*. This interactive positioning too, Roger rejected, instead positioning students as *linguistically competent*, but perhaps *unengaged, reluctant,* or *culturally predisposed to be less engaged*.

While Roger felt that students' academic proficiency in English was sufficient, he did clarify the different domains in which he observed the strengths (reading, writing) and weaknesses (listening and speaking). When I questioned further the challenge that weakness in listening and speaking could pose during our in-person lecture, Roger dismissed my concerns, perhaps unaware of common discrepancies between BICS and CALP registers (Cummins, 1979; 1999) and their varied proficiency levels, saying that lack of engagement was inevitable in a large lecture regardless. In student surveys, however, many noted the need for translators and extensive out-of-class remedial work to supplement poor in-class comprehension.

That there was an inconsistency between what I observed and the instructor's agentic, pedagogical reasoning for those classroom practices was surprising. Roger repeatedly rejected my positioning of him as *an instructor who differentiated instruction to benefit his students*, instead more strongly self-positioning himself as *a content expert*, and *not an English teacher*, and his students as *linguistically competent* and not needing *differentiated instruction*. When further analyzed alongside the instructors use of cognitively complex questions (as measured by the Bloom's Taxonomy) it was clear that students were able to answer more cognitively challenging questions when they responded to them via written calculations or responses and visual graphs/charts/drawings or had already completed the problem (e.g., Excerpts 9-11 where the class is reviewing a past exam). When students were expected to verbally respond to a question (e.g., Excerpt 18), it was often of a lower cognitive complexity, and even after repetition and pauses, solicited silence.

These discrepancies between what I observed as strengths and what the instructor had intended with these pedagogical choices were not in line with many best practices in supporting language learners in content classrooms. For example, the opportunity to engage more students in nonverbal question-and-answer sessions would have been a valuable formative assessment tool, but was discouraged in the moment, and somewhat disparaged when Roger reflected upon those moments retroactively in our interview (e.g., Excerpts 12 and 16).

These discrepancies between classroom observations and pedagogical intentions are mirrored in the oft-reported coping strategies of EMI instructors (Richards & Pun, 2022). For example, EMI instructors may adopt strategies like preparing and reading from carefully scripted lessons that remove the ability to negotiate more linguistically complex discussions.

However, if EMI programs are to continue marketing language acquisition as a benefit of enrollment, they must ensure that instructors are providing linguistically rich opportunities for questions and discussion that support students' content acquisition as well. This major implication of this chapter's findings is further discussed in the next and final chapter.

Chapter 6: Discussion, Implications, and Conclusion

Study Design

This research project was a longitudinal, case study, informed by ethnographic principles, of two English-medium instruction (EMI) professors, Roger and Jai, who taught in a transnational education (TNE) partnership between a U.S. and Chinese institution in Northern China. The study used positioning theory (Davies and Harré, 1990) as a guiding theoretical and analytic tool for an in-depth understanding of classroom communication. Both ethnography and case studies require an in-depth knowledge of a context and participants, which is best collected over a longer period. Due to my positionality as an instructor in the partnership and former administrative staff member, I was uniquely positioned to conduct a longitudinal case study as case studies are embedded within a particular context in which the researcher has an in-depth understanding. Importantly, the in-depth, embedded, and singular nature of case studies aims to enhance the "understanding of a phenomenon, process, person, or group, not to experiment and generalize to other populations" (Casanave, 2015, p. 120). While case studies may not be generalizable, their depth offers valuable insight that policymakers, researchers, and others may use to inform their own contexts. While I entered my study without clear expectations for what I might observe (typical of ethnographic work), I do hope that my study design, findings, and the ensuing discussion and implications yield positive change for both instructor teaching and student learning in transnational, EMI contexts.

Positioning theory, as both a theoretical framework and analytical tool, was insightful in understanding power dynamics, affordances, and constraints of teacher-guided communication in an EMI context. Positioning theory recognizes that discourse is heavily impacted by the social context and expectations of interlocutors and that each utterance can shape the following outcome. Dafouz and Smit's sociocultural and ecological-oriented ROAD-MAPPING conceptual framework (2020) provides a way to analyze the myriad of ways EMI classrooms can be impacted by macro-to-micro level variables and are situated within larger sociocultural, historical, and political arenas. Their framework focuses on the Roles of English, Academic Discipline (language) Management, Agents, Practices and Processes, Internationalization, and Glocalization.

The transnational partnership examined was influenced by transnational language policies such as the TNE marketization or "Englishization" of higher education (De Costa et al., 2020) and Chinese higher education requirements, i.e., the gaokao structure and role as an admissions test (Li et al., 2021). English's role within China and the U.S. marketization for transnational education led to an environment where students were admitted into a transnational dual-degree, EMI program with varied language proficiency and little institutional or departmental support. I adopted an ecological view of teacher agency (Priestley et al., 2015; 2016) and used semi-structured interviews to understand how instructors' agentic choices in the classroom were impacted by micro- to macro-level affordances and constraints within a transnational, EMI classroom environment. At these competing intersections, my participant instructors both acknowledged that students' enrollment in the program by their institutions *should have* guaranteed a certain English proficiency level conducive to learning in an EMI environment. When asked how they navigated students' varying proficiency levels, the instructors positioned themselves *as not English instructors* either due to a lack of time to address linguistic deficiencies or a belief that differentiation was not necessary. These views informed how instructors positioned their students and agentically chose not to differentiate their instruction for a language learner student body.

Position theory's term *position,* as opposed to the more static "role," is intended to highlight the dynamicity and discursive shifts in any given interaction. For example, while a "teacher" can be understood as a "role" the person embodies in the classroom that imbues them with certain rights and moral obligations (e.g., to educate their students), they may adopt different positions (e.g., caretaker, rule-enforcer, subject matter expert) throughout a single lesson. A position can thus also be understood as *interactive* and *reflexive*, where positions are assigned to others and oneself. For example, when an instructor adopts a student-centered approach with group work, they are, in turn, interactively positioning students as conveyors of knowledge and valuable informants to their classmates.

Positioning theory provides a valuable analytic tool to observe how instructors may preposition students based on their communicative behaviors or previous histories. For example, in the classrooms observed, the instructors noted reluctant or disengaged communication patterns but attributed them to different variables (i.e., linguistic proficiency, lack of interest, cultural background, etc).

Chinese international students have long been stereotyped as "quiet" in Western classrooms. While Noman and Xu (2023) contend that students in joint-Sino EMI may remain silent due to psychological factors (e.g., fear of making a mistake, peer pressure, etc) or the influence of Chinese culture and education system, other scholars, (e.g., Cheng, 2000) dispute the generalization that Asian students are culturally trained to be passive learners in classrooms. Cheng (2000) argues that new/Western teaching methodologies and foreign language proficiency will commonly cause reticence to participate in classes like those found in transnational, EMI partnerships. To better understand communicative practices, instructor agency, and their interplay in EMI classrooms, the following research questions were adopted to guide the research design, data collection, and analysis of this study:

Research Questions

1. How do instructors discursively position themselves and students as participants in transnational EMI classrooms? How does this impact communicative opportunities in class?
2. How, if at all, do instructors differentiate their instruction for their English-language learner student body?

Research Methods

In order to address the research questions above, I collected the following data:

1. Background demographic surveys for instructors (2),
2. Audio and video recorded classroom observations (19),
3. Field notes from classroom observations (3),
4. Semi-structured interviews (4) with instructors,
5. In-person (1) and written interviews (99) with students.

Two instructors consented to have multiple (six) sections of (five) distinct courses, which totaled (19) class observations. Each class observation was approximately 1.5 hours, and I was able to observe three of these class sessions in-person and draft field notes. The two instructors taught in two separate major programs, BS mechanical engineering and BS applied physics, but would have had overlapping student populations in a few of their courses given the similar STEM degree requirements. All student participants were in the junior year of their undergraduate degrees and majoring in either applied physics or mechanical engineering. I conducted four interviews: three with Jai and one with Roger. Just under 100 students completed my written survey for Roger’s course, and one student participated in an in-person interview for Jai’s courses. While I haven’t discussed the student data at great length in this discussion, given my research question's focus on instructors, it has been woven in briefly into each of the two findings chapters.

Positionality of Researcher & Researcher-Participant Relationship

I completed my data collection for this dissertation alongside my teaching duties in China. While none of my current students or supervisees were participants in the study, they were important motivators for this work. This duality in my roles was also reflected in my relationship with my participants: I was simultaneously an interviewer, observer, neighbor, friend, and colleague. Being an insider to the partnership allowed me to develop the rapport necessary to undertake a longitudinal case study, though it also required me to continually remind myself in my research design, data collection, and analysis of the importance of reducing my own bias and practitioner lens through which I viewed these classrooms and transnational partnerships. I also recognize that I have a number of intersecting privileged identities (i.e., White, U.S. citizenship, heterosexual, cisgender, and able-bodied) that allowed me the opportunity to travel internationally and gain access to this study site.

Limitations of the Study

Ethnographic Case Study by Design: Collected Data versus Study Design

As a teacher in the same context, I incorrectly assumed that the courses I would observe might have similar classroom management, teaching styles, and potential for intercultural (mis-) communication as I had in my classroom. Similar findings (Shea et al., 2024) had been found in my dissertation's pilot study, and I went in expecting much more nuanced discursive positioning. I very quickly became struck by the (what I viewed as limited) student-instructor interaction, the discursive prepositioning through question and response patterns, and the physical positioning of the instructor and their use of nonverbal language (among other approaches to differentiating instruction). While I was aware that recruiting at this specific site would limit my participants to only instructors with STEM backgrounds, given the dual degrees offered, in hindsight, I wish I had also pursued another location/participant in a social sciences or humanities discipline for the insight it could have offered into disciplinary differences in EMI courses in transnational education partnership. Because of scheduling constraints and only one instructor granting permission, only 3 of the 19 classroom observations included in-person field notes, which is atypical for an ethnographic-principled study. While I did make notes while watching the recordings, it was not the same as being immersed in the environment, and this is a limitation of this study.

In using the ROAD-MAPPING conceptual framework, I originally planned to collect student-facing recruitment materials alongside institutional and national policy documents to help contextualize the study within a larger meso- and macro-level context. This part was not realized in part due to a lack of funds to support the necessary translation of many of these documents from Mandarin Chinese to English for further analysis. As a faculty member on-site, I was also requested to participate in the creation of student-facing marketing material, which challenged my intended positioning as a participant observer of the data to be collected.

Discussion of Findings

Addressing RQ #1: Positioning of students and presumed prepositions of instructors

I addressed the first research question: *How do instructors discursively position themselves and students as participants in transnational EMI classrooms? How does this impact communicative opportunities in class?* through a detailed analysis of Jai's ten recorded classroom observations, three semi-structured interviews, and the in-person interview with a single student participant. I inductively coded reflexive and interactive positions of students and self-positioning the instructor adopted during interviews and through his instruction. These codes were then grouped to identify the prominent themes. I then deductively coded the questions posed using Bloom's Taxonomy and the instructional differentiation I observed Jai making for his English language learner student body.

The types of questions instructors ask of their students facilitate the adoption or rejection of different student positions. In Table 6, I provided some sample questions that align with Bloom's Taxonomy and the codes that I used to note positioning. Lower-level questions that test students' knowledge awareness or comprehension facilitate classroom discussion but tend to be instructor-driven and reinforce common positions of the teacher as the authority figure or knowledge disseminator and the students as passive learners. Increasingly higher-level questions where students are applying classroom knowledge to solving problems in class, in turn, direct classroom time to active student-engaged work where students become informants to their classmates when they have solved a problem which may position them more so as co-learners or fellow instructors to their classmates.

Jai's course design, where students followed along as he solved several of his own self-designed workbook problems, was intended to encourage attendance (as students had to be there to receive the populated values) and reinforce key course concepts through repetition (Excerpt 2). By adopting this pedagogical approach, he largely self-positioned as a *guide, facilitator, and authority figure* in a traditional teacher-centered classroom. This adopted self-positioning, in turn, interactively positioned students largely as *present but silent learners*. Jai explicitly told students (Excerpts 6-8) that his communicative expectation was for them to follow along to help identify errors and find solutions, though they were not invited to solve problems in front of their peers either independently or in groups. When students took the action of speaking up to point out an error, positional shifts occurred where students were sometimes positioned as *correctors or collaborators* (Excerpt 6), and other times, Jai reiterated his self-position as an *authority figure* by highlighting, for example, the power differential in who could make errors without point deductions (Excerpt 6).

Jai's written workbook problems are cognitively challenging and required students to have advanced knowledge and skills in their discipline (physics). Yet, the ways in which his limited verbal questions positioned students did not elicit linguistically or cognitively challenging responses, if they elicited responses at all. This case study challenges major assumptions underlying EMI provision and implementation, namely that students will simultaneously achieve linguistic and content matter expertise through mere exposure in EMI classrooms (e.g., Macaro et al., 2018). Rather, in this classroom, students would have had to have advanced content knowledge of physics, but did not require verbal engagement in class, nor were students posed questions that positioned them as active participants or allowed for linguistic development. Only one of Jai's students participated in my in-person interview. He used an auto-translator throughout our interview, we regularly code-switched in Chinese and English, and he reported that classroom comprehension was a challenge. However, it can be assumed that the same physics students who indicated comprehension challenges in Roger's written student surveys would have encountered similar challenges in Jai's course.

Jai reported he expected that only 20-30% of students could verbally follow his lectures and that only after the first high-stakes exam did he observe students failing. Taken together, this indicates a need for more summative assessment and instructional differentiation earlier in the course rather than as a result of failing grades. However, I only observed one instance of an instructional practice that could be considered differentiation (a moment of slowed speech and explicit mention of limited comprehension). Jai reported that he felt addressing linguistic deficiencies was outside of his purview (in that it would be too much to address in addition to the course content) and that it was the responsibility of the institution to ensure students were at an adequate proficiency level. His awareness of these issues increased over the course of our three interviews, so that by our third interview he was sharing instances of failed classroom interactions that were far below his expectations for students' communicative competence (e.g., that a student could not understand his question, "Did you send me an email?"). Upon the conclusion of my study, Jai showed interest in our continued conversations about better addressing these issues in future courses that he taught.

Addressing RQ #2: Examples of linguistic and cultural differentiation

I addressed the second research question, *How, if at all, do instructors differentiate their instruction for their English-language learner student body?,* through a detailed analysis of Roger's nine recorded classroom observations, our single semi-structured interviews, and 99 written interviews with students. I inductively coded the reflexive and interactive positions of students and the self-positioning the instructor adopted during interviews and through his instruction. I then deductively coded the types of instructional differentiation I observed Roger making for his English language learner student body. Chapter 5, which focuses on Roger's instruction, was organized by the coded category of instructional differentiation observed.

I observed Roger's classroom practices like the use of nonverbal language, L1 awareness, distribution of multimodal materials, and burgeoning intercultural competencies but surprisingly to me, Roger did not appear to be aware of or consider some of these pedagogical practices as differentiation for English language learners. While Roger used techniques that are advantageous ways to engage students of varied proficiency levels, he noted that none of the practices were intentional or specific to the student, but were general teaching practices. In addition, some useful practices that I observed him employing (e.g., offering opportunities for summative assessment in multiple formats like nonverbal responses) were discouraged (e.g., “use your words, not fingers”) despite being a useful way to engage learners with varied proficiency levels. These discrepancies between classroom observations and SLA best practices are mirrored in the oft-reported coping strategies of EMI instructors (Richards & Pun, 2022). For example, EMI instructors may adopt strategies like preparing and reading from carefully scripted lessons that remove the ability to negotiate more linguistically complex discussions.

My line of questioning, with its focus on English as the medium of instruction and instructional choices, also, albeit unintentionally, positioned students as *linguistically deficient* or *requiring more instructional differentiation*. This interactive positioning too, Roger rejected, instead positioning students as *linguistically competent*, but perhaps *unengaged, reluctant,* or *culturally predispositioned to be less engaged*. While Roger felt that students’ academic proficiency in English was sufficient, he did clarify the different domains in which he observed the strengths (reading, writing) and weaknesses (listening and speaking). When I questioned further the challenge that weakness in listening and speaking could pose during an in-person lecture, Roger dismissed my concerns, saying that lack of engagement was inevitable in a large lecture regardless, estimating 10-20% of students were engaged in lectures and that perhaps this would be higher without a language barrier. In the nearly 100 student surveys, however, many students noted the need for translators and extensive out-of-class remedial work to supplement poor in-class comprehension. This extra out-of-class labor is reflected in other research detailing students’ EMI experience and detracts from students’ in-class learning (e.g., Zhou & Thomas 2025).

In our interview, by asking clarifying, retrospective questions about these observed practices, I positioned Roger as *an adept instructor who differentiated instruction* for his students. However, that interactive positioning was repeatedly rejected by Roger as he explained that his agentic choices were not determined by students' identities as English language learners, but rather by his general approach to teaching, grading, etc… In several instances, Roger rejected my positioning of him in this way and then adopted a reflexive self-positioning *as a content expert* and *not an English teacher*. This position as *not an English teacher* was despite him also noting grading issues with written lab reports and potential point deductions for confusion caused by L1 interference. This, too, is a common finding in EMI literature, where EMI content instructors distance themselves from addressing linguistic deficiencies and self-positioning as *not* an English instructor (Airey, 2012; Block & Moncada-Comas, 2019) while also, perhaps, still assessing language in other ways (Block & Mancho-Barés, 2020).

In my introduction to this study (Chapter 1), I discuss the misalignment in institutional discourses surrounding language and multilingualism. For example, a critical discourse analysis of higher education's internationalization efforts highlights the contradictory focus on joining a multilingual world, and at least within the United States, a simultaneous lack of institutional support for foreign language learning (Tardy, 2015; Warner, 2011). Conversely, Matsuda (2006) highlights how language is "invisible" and English monolingualism prevails even in fields like writing and composition. It seems as though multilingualism is an asset when English is one of the languages mastered, and given its mastery, a de facto assumption in higher education curriculum design is that of English monolingualism. Shohamy (2012) summarizes this contradiction succinctly, saying: "[i]t is becoming clear that more languages are needed for functioning in global societies…. The main belief nowadays is in multilingualism, and the use of

EMI at HEIs in fact defies this goal. The use of a number of languages may be a more effective policy at HEIs" (p. 209). Indeed, a growing body of work suggests that translanguaging in EMI contexts is especially advantageous (see Kayi-Aydar & Mahalingappa, 2024), but this is not always supported by institutional policies (e.g., English-only instruction, native speaker hiring practices, etc.)

Implications of the Study & Areas for Future Research

This case study challenges major assumptions underlying EMI provision and implementation, namely that participation in an EMI classroom will yield opportunities for linguistic development and practice. If EMI programs are to continue marketing language acquisition as a benefit of enrollment, they must ensure that instructors are providing linguistically rich opportunities for questions and discussion that support students' content and language acquisition. When programs have admitted students with varied English proficiency levels, it becomes even more critical that instructors differentiate learning and additional student support is offered. Below, I offer some targeted suggestions as implications for this study and areas for future research.

Suggestions for Programmatic and Instructional Support

EMI programs have two prevailing options for programmatic structure: they can admit more students with varied proficiency but offer increased language support, often in the form of focused EAP courses before EMI major coursework, or they can require evidence of language proficiency during the admissions process and admit more selectively.

The type and structure of language support varied greatly between surveyed Chinese institutions (McKinley et al., 2021). There are two prevailing arguments regarding benchmark admission requirements for language proficiency. Proponents of admission standards argue that they ensure that students are prepared to participate and learn from English-medium courses. Opponents cite admission requirements as a form of gatekeeping that may further societal inequality where access to English education at primary and secondary levels is closely tied to socioeconomic status (e.g., Chang, 2017; McKinley et al, 2021). Again, in the specific context examined in this study, students were admitted using the gaokao (rather than IELTS, TOEFL or other widely accepted proficiency exam), so likely had varied proficiency levels and ability to succeed in EMI courses and were likely very motivated to participate in the dual-degree EMI program due to the Chinese institution's status as a 211 institution.

I would advise this specific program (and others like it) to invest in additional language support for students in the form of discipline-specific EAP courses, and earlier offerings of remedial coursework, while also working to create an admissions benchmark that measures linguistic proficiency in all domains (rather than just using the gaokao). My discipline-specific EAP suggestion specifically arises from the growing body of work arguing that EMI research should be informed by developments in EAP and ESP scholarship as well as student preferences (Hakim, 2023; Hakim & Wingate, 2022; Wingate, 2022). Conversely, this might also take the form of an adjunct model, or CLIL-like course offerings, where content faculty collaborate with language specialists to offer targeted, remedial disciplinary literacy support.

In addition to student support, transnational instructors would also benefit from increased support and institutional parameters for teaching students in their transnational partnerships. Instructors participating in a TNE program may or may not find themselves changing their language of instruction. Thus, the institutions and instructors must also consider the curricular, cultural, and pedagogical implications of providing their curriculum to a new student body for whom English is an additional language and with whom the instructor may not share a linguistic or cultural background. While a number of institutions have developed training courses for their instructors who are changing the language of instruction, the content of these types of support courses or professional development opportunities (i.e., second language acquisition and discourse analysis concepts) are also critical for L1 English-speaking instructors to become more linguistically responsive to teaching students for whom English is an additional language. Ideally, this training is a prerequisite for the hiring process to facilitate completion in advance of instruction.

In an ideal instructional situation, students would benefit from more collaboration between language and content experts for CLIL-ized instruction (Airey, 2016; Barto, 2025; Zappa-Hollman, 2018) and institutional policies that support translanguaging and multilingualism. While these initiatives often come at an increased instructional cost, they provide invaluable cross-fertilization between disciplines (e.g., Shea & Rajapaksha, 2025) in support of student learning. In lieu of these collaborations, there can also be improved instructional training. My own doctoral institution, the University of Arizona, offers the Content Area Teacher Training (CATT) to groups of instructors or individuals, although their courses have generally been offered to EMI instructors who are changing the language of their instruction, and not to the University of Arizona's own transnational educators, all instructors would benefit from the course material as it discusses principles of second language acquisition, alongside intercultural communication competencies, and language development broadly (K. Barto, personal communication, March 5, 2025). Other training ideas include the retooling of ELT programs, where TESOL practitioners are trained and better equipped to support discipline-specific ESP or EMI courses (Barto, 2025). Ultimately, institutions and EMI content experts would benefit from recognizing that they have a role to play in developing students' disciplinary literacy and that this inherently involves some meta-linguistic awareness and intentional instruction (Airey, 2011).

Encouraging student questions and verbal engagement

Of particular interest in this study was the ways in which instructors' questions guided or inhibited student learning. As long as EMI is marketed as a way for students to gain linguistic competence alongside content knowledge, EMI instruction needs to include appropriate linguistic input and student-led opportunities to communicate knowledge with others. The underlying assumption here is that instructor-student communication is necessary for the exchange of knowledge and formative assessment of in-class learning.

Below, I reiterate an excerpt from my findings chapter where Roger is discussing a classroom management struggle of soliciting student questions. I then offer tangible suggestions for course modifications below it.

Excerpt 17
Excerpt taken from Interview #4 - Roger - April 12th, 2024

Kate: What are typical patterns of interaction in class participation?

Roger: I think one aspect that happens a lot is I'll give them an assignment where they have to work together. And I say, you know, as you work on it, if you do have any issue or question, you know, raise your hand or get my attention, I'll come over or come to me. Um, but before I break them off, I'll say, is there any anything you want to ask me now before you guys start? And there'll be no response. And the same thing kind of happens, like when class is ending, I'll say, before class is over "Do you guys have anything you want to ask me about today's lecture? Anything that was unclear." And I won't get any response. But the second I end class or the second, I say, okay, start working on the assignment, multiple students will get up and come to me and ask me questions like, not even any time has gone by. And so it's unclear to me why didn't they ask that question, you know, 30 seconds ago and I said, "was there any questions?" They would rather come up and ask me one-on-one, you know, then ask amongst everyone.

As previously described, Roger taught in both classrooms that facilitated student collaboration through the inclusion of movable chairs, whiteboards, etc, and traditional lecture hall style rooms where all tables and chairs were drilled to the ground and faced forward to an instructor podium and boards. In both types of classrooms, I regularly observed Roger repeatedly asking for questions in front of the class, pausing with no responses, only to be approached by students one by one shortly afterwards. But, I also observed that during these instances of group work in the collaborative classrooms, Roger was afforded near-constant opportunities to engage with students individually as he moved about the room answering questions and checking on group progress.

When reflecting on these types of student questions, Roger states (line 40) that "it's unclear to me why" students behaved in this manner, but does not share any agentic pedagogical choice made to negotiate this point of divergence. Although he muses at other points in the interview about the role of classrooms as cultural contexts that have shaped his son's education (as a child who attended Chinese primary school), he does not work to accommodate what may be a cultural difference in students' communicative expectations. For example, soliciting questions in different formats, providing more time for responses, or encouraging this type of question by allowing more time for after-lecture individual questions and answers.

In contrast, I would suggest that Roger adopt classroom practices that leverage students' preferred communicative format and offer a variety of options for student input and feedback. Additionally, with any type of instructional practice, expectations should be clearly provided to students in advance of their implementation (i.e., if they are graded, rationale for including them, desired positioning, etc). Some examples include:

1. Encourage lower-stakes question opportunities:

- ➢ Set aside time during in-class group work, or before or after class,
- ➢ Provide students opportunities to ask questions in their homework, quizzes, etc…,
- ➢ Encourage multimodal submissions, e.g., using software that allows students to write questions anonymously but that can be displayed on the board.

2. Encourage lower-stakes classroom communicative practices:
    - ➢ Direct questions to groups of students to collaborate on before selecting a "spokesperson",
    - ➢ Offer extra time for questions or provide them in advance so that students can prepare responses, if desired.
    - ➢ Support verbal questions with visual support to ensure comprehension.

Conclusion

This research study, as a single case study of a transnational partnership between a U.S. and Chinese institution, is not intended to be generalized across transnational EMI programs whose rapid growth frequently is noted as outpacing research efforts to understand the phenomenon. Transnational EMI, as a third wave of EMI, is defined by rushed implementation and "surging' growth (Galloway et al., 2024), and a focus on revenue (De Costa et al., 2022) as institutions seek to be more competitive in a globalized higher education environment. As a result of this surge, in many regions of the world, EMI is increasingly being implemented without clear language policies, institutional support, and/or student/faculty preparation (Galloway et al, 2020; Macaro et al., 2018).

When higher education institutions pursue transnational partnerships for the focus on revenue, prestige, and internal rankings (Huisman & Wilkins, 2012), many institutions are similarly "cutting costs" by admitting and advancing students without the proficiency to learn in

English-medium environments (e.g., Soruc & Griffiths, 2018) and not investing in the necessary language support or instruction (e.g., McKinley et al., 2018) so that students must struggle to "survive' rather than 'thrive" (Zhou & Thomas, 2025). In doing so, "English becomes both the driver and vehicle through which neoliberal impulses are realized" (De Costa et al., 2022, p. 81) and exacerbates societal inequality and access to higher education. Students in these transnational EMI classroom contexts deserve instruction that is linguistically and culturally responsive to their needs and allows them to master their discipline's academic content.

As an ethnographic-principled case study, I strove to provide an in-depth analysis of classroom communicative norms that might enhance researchers' understanding of EMI classrooms and the learning opportunities they offer (or overlook).

I was fortunate that my two instructor participants were eager, helpful participants who enjoyed discussing their pedagogy, experiences, and thoughts. Both had received training on differing aspects of teacher training and pedagogy and had varying degrees of experience within transnational classrooms and with Chinese students, which made them enlightening to speak with. However, their perception of students' comprehension (10-30% of the class) is a major red flag for instruction and student learning that can be addressed through improved instructional support, student services, and admission practices. Ultimately, I hope these findings can inspire positive change for institutions contemplating implementing EMI and debating the type of instructional or linguistic support they can offer to improve their instructors' and students' learning experience.

Appendices

Appendix A: Faculty Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviewee Alias:	Date:

Interviewer Protocol

Interviewer: Thank you again for your time and participation in this study. As a reminder, my research is focused on instructors' experience working in transnational English medium instruction classrooms. These are classroom contexts where two institutions have partnered to deliver degrees for students for whom English is an additional language. We'll start with a few questions I have prepared about this classroom context, but if you have other thoughts or questions for me, we can talk about those as well. To ensure I remember everything, is it okay if I record this session? **If yes….** Great, thank you. (Begin recording).

1. In my written questionnaire, you shared that you have taught for ___ years, ____ of which ___ was using English as the medium of instruction. (Where were the other _ years?) Can you describe for me what that transition was like for you?
    a. How, if at all, has the change in the student body affected your teaching?
    b. What types of institutional, departmental, or personal training have been made available to you or have supported you in this transition?
    c. How, if at all, does working for two institutions impact your teaching?
2. How do you describe your teaching style?
    a. Are there different pedagogical approaches to teaching (subject)? Does your institution require/suggest that you adopt a certain approach?
    b. How, if at all, do you adjust instruction when teaching students for whom English is an additional language?
        i. Interviewer to comment on observed behaviors, if not mentioned.
3. What is your students' experience with English medium instruction?
    a. How do you perceive your students' English proficiency? Is it sufficient for learning in your class?
    b. What percentage of your students do you feel are prepared to engage in a lecture conducted in English?
    c. Do you observe any student behaviors to help with comprehension? (For example using voice-to-text translators?)
4. What do you see as the strengths of your class (including students, interactions, instructional approach, etc…)
    a. What are the typical patterns of interaction and class participation?
    b. How do you interact with students in class? Out of class?
    c. As you plan for the day, what factors do you consider? How do you make important decisions for your class?

Interviewer: Present video recordings and pose additional questions.
Note: The recordings will vary by instructor/classroom context. The ensuing questions will be focused on the interaction and the instructors' actions in the recorded segment using questions such as *"Can you describe this interaction for me? Why did you decide to… What were you thinking at this time? Why did you (repeat the instructor's words)?*

Additional Questions Asked of Instructor 1

1. Are there different pedagogical approaches to teaching (subject) - did your institution require that you adopt a certain approach?

2. How would you describe your teaching pedagogy and philosophy?

3. You mention that you "don't like to police, but set up your activities in a certain way to solicit participation." Can you give me an example of that?

4. Regarding attendance - You mentioned that "students could be "home helpless" - how do you gauge whether that is the situation?

5. Regarding classroom materials - You mentioned in a previous conversation your creation of a workbook, not a scripted lesson plan, because you want students to go along with you and point out errors and also be solving problems themselves. Can you describe how the workbook functions in your class at large? How is it weighted? How do you grade it?

6. How are students primarily assessed?
    a. So we're thinking about the concern of students that could be helpless, that maybe are struggling with the English. Where do you see that in the assessment of those different areas?

7. You mentioned wanting to modify or contextualize your curriculum for the students the longer you teach here. What changes do you think you'd make as you learn more about your students?

8. How do students seem to receive your pedagogical approach? Do you sense resistance, familiarity or anything else?
    a. Do you feel like that kind of approach where you're like co-learning or doing an activity together, do you feel like students are used to that approach for teaching, or is it an adjustment for them?
9. What percentage of your students do you feel are prepared to engage in a lecture conducted in English?

10. Do you observe any student behaviors to help with comprehension? For example using voice-to-text translators?

11. Does working for two institutions impact your teaching?

Additional Questions Asked of Instructor 2

1. Are there different pedagogical approaches to teaching (subject)? Does your institution require/suggest that you adopt a certain approach?

2. How would you describe your teaching pedagogy and philosophy?

3. What percentage of your students do you feel are prepared to engage in a lecture conducted in English?

4. Do you observe any student behaviors to help with comprehension? (For example using voice-to-text translators?)

5. How, if at all, does working for two institutions impact your teaching?

6. You mentioned in my third observed class that a prerequisite (fluid mechanics?) was not taught in sequence. Is this because of course transfer/articulation challenges? How does this logistical complexity impact course sequence?

Appendix B: Student Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

The following interview protocols are conducted in-person as either an individual written interview or a focus group (dependent on participant preference), or written survey delivered via Qualtrics.

Interviewee Alias:	Date:

Interviewer Protocol

Interviewer: Thank you again for your time and participation in this study. I have a few questions for you today and to ensure I remember everything, is it okay if I record this session? **If yes….** Great, thank you. (Begin recording). We'll start with a few questions I have prepared, but if you have other thoughts or questions for me, we can talk about those as well.

1. Why did you select your current major?
2. What were the primary reasons you chose to participate in this dual-degree program?
3. How, if at all, is your learning impacted by being a student simultaneously enrolled at two institutions?
4. How do your HEBUT courses taught in Chinese and UA courses taught in English differ? How are they similar?
5. What do you see as the strengths of (observed class)? What are some of the challenges?
6. How do you address the challenges of learning your major coursework in English? (For example, study tools or strategies, etc.)
7. How is your comprehension of class lectures and materials when conducted/provided in English?
8. As you prepare for class with (instructor), what do you do? How do you interact with (him/her) inside and outside of the classroom?
9. If you don't understand something, do you first search for it yourself, ask your classmates or ask the professor?
10. How do you interact with your classmates inside of the classroom?
11. You meet for class in different styles of classrooms. How, if at all, does the classroom layout influence interaction between classmates and your instructor?

Appendix C: Faculty Background Demographic & Consent Form

Delivered Via Qualtrics

Question:	**Question Type:**
What is your academic rank/position title?	Open-ended
What is your academic area of expertise?	Open-ended
How many years have you taught at the University level?	Numerals only
How many years have you taught courses in English at the University level?	Numerals only
How many years have you taught in China?	Numerals only
Can you describe your language learning experiences?	Open-ended
Can you describe your racial or ethnic background?	Open-ended
Does your institution offer training program(s) to support instructors if they are teaching courses in a new cultural context?	Open-ended
Does your institution offer a training program to support your instruction when you are teaching students for whom English is an additional language?	Open-ended
In your department, is there any additional compensation for teaching in the transnational partnership (monetary, a course load reduction, etc..?)	Open-ended
Are you aware of Chinese national efforts to increase similar dual-degree programs?	Open-ended
Are you aware of (Institution Name) 's institutional efforts to increase similar dual-degree programs?	Open-ended
Are you aware of (Institution Name)'s departmental efforts to increase similar dual-degree programs?	Open-ended

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