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Article

Participative Multilingual Identity Construction in Higher Education: Challenging Monolingual Ideologies and Practices

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Abstract: This theoretical paper builds on the authors' existing scholarship exploring the value of incorporating multilingual identity-focused pedagogical practice into language learning at the secondary school level, by establishing the rationale for extending such practices to the tertiary level, both in language learning specifically and in tertiary education more generally. We previously reconceptualised multilingualism as an all-encompassing concept that one can lay claim to, regardless of proficiency levels in multiple languages, dialects, and other communicative modes, and outlined a pedagogical framework for "participative construction of multilingual identity in the language classroom". In establishing a rationale for applying this framework and its underpinning conceptualisation of multilingual identity to the (increasingly linguistically diverse) tertiary education sector, this current paper critically examines the literature on attitudes towards multilingualism in higher education; and on evidence for the value of identity-focused pedagogies. We outline approaches to embedding awareness-raising of multilingual identities, and related identity-focused pedagogical approaches. At a time when the English language remains powerful at the tertiary level, these proposals are deemed important for challenging the ongoing dominance of monolingual ideals in higher education, especially in Anglophone contexts, where increasing numbers of international students with varied multilingual identities and repertoires are perceived as deficient when judged against monolingual, native-speaker norms. Finally, the next steps in the research agenda are recommended.

Keywords: multilingual education; tertiary education; multilingual identity

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1. Introduction

In this theoretical paper, we seek to make a case for the feasibility, and crucially the vital importance, of implementing multilingual identities-focused pedagogical approaches in the Anglophone higher education space. Perhaps the most pressing question to be addressed is why a framework developed for the secondary school sector might be relevant for higher education. We contend that our broad pedagogical principles established in Fisher et al. (2020) have applicability for different cohorts of (linguistically and culturally) diverse learners, be they at secondary or at tertiary level. Furthermore, the original framework was developed in the same sociocultural/sociolinguistic context as the one in focus in this paper, namely the Anglophone setting of the UK. Multilingualism is often seen as "problematic" at both educational levels, and both are therefore spaces where monolingual ideals need to be challenged. We acknowledge that the original work was aimed at foreign language teachers specifically, and the step now being taken in this paper is to explore its relevance

for practitioners beyond just language-based subjects. Encouraging non-language specialist academic staff to engage with such matters certainly poses a challenge, but one we believe worth tackling, and this is a central tenet of our argument throughout the paper.

We firstly review current scholarship on multilingualism in higher education, focusing specifically on ideologies which surround it, and exploring conceptualisations of identity-focused pedagogies, both generally and in higher education (Sections 2–5). Based on this existing scholarship, we then briefly introduce in Section 6 our team's previous theoretical and empirical contributions to multilingual identity. All this provides a foundation for our proposal of how multilingual identities-focused pedagogies could manifest in university teaching and learning. We offer suggestions for the form they might take, both to staff involved in English for academic purposes (EAP) education (suggesting pedagogical practices they could implement relating to their students' multilingual identities), and also to university-level teacher trainers (suggesting pedagogical practices they could use with university staff across the curriculum, so that in turn these staff are informed as to how they might better address their own students' multilingual identities).

This paper will therefore be of particular interest to:

- those in the field of EAP
- university-level teacher trainers
- academic staff teaching in universities in a range of curricular areas, with an interest in language- and multilingualism-related issues.

Much of what we suggest is indeed anchored in Anglophone contexts, and shaped by the specific linguistic challenges that arise in such settings, for example, the hyper-dominance of (standardised forms of) English at all educational levels from primary to tertiary; multilingualism often being viewed with suspicion, or it being altogether invisible; and the learning of languages other than English still encountering decline (Lanvers et al., 2021). Nonetheless, we hope there will be resonance for those working in myriad global contexts, regardless of the specifics of their surrounding sociolinguistic landscape, interested in how best we can meet the needs of diverse student cohorts through our pedagogical practices.

In concluding, we offer possibilities for evaluating our suggested approach, as next steps in determining its potential for impact (Section 7).

2. The Ubiquity of Language and Multilingualism in (Higher) Education

As justification for this paper, we must establish why language is a vital consideration for education broadly, and higher education specifically. Ultimately, the argument is that language is fundamental in education, as it is the means through which we access and negotiate subject knowledge. Language is relevant for all subject areas across a curriculum, and not just cognate disciplines such as the explicit study of foreign languages, applied linguistics, or literature, for example. This is as true for subject areas more at the natural sciences end of the curriculum as for those within the humanities. As Gajo and Berthoud (2020, p. 294) have recently pointed out, science subjects (as any others) are conveyed and explored through the medium of interaction, which reinforces the relevance of language (see also Dafouz et al., 2014, p. 233; Kettle, 2011, p. 4).

Accepting, then, that language is ever-present in higher education, means that multilingualism, too, must be ever-present, given higher education's internationalised nature (i.e., the diversity of staff and students from myriad linguistic and cultural backgrounds, in so many tertiary contexts worldwide, with multilingual repertoires). In the way that the above authors have discussed the ubiquity of language throughout the university curriculum, Preece (2020, p. 127) has identified in the UK higher education setting an increase in diverse multilingual repertoires among students. She argues that this is the

result of ever-growing numbers of international students at institutions in this national context, in addition to more varied home student populations (i.e., an increasingly ethnically diverse domestic student cohort, often with home languages other than English). However, as pointed out by Marriott (2013, p. 456) in the Australian context, this linguistic heterogeneity (among both students and staff, as supported by her data) can typically go overlooked, with there being a persistent perception that higher education institutions in Anglophone contexts "remain strongly monolingual". In response, Gajo and Berthoud (2020, p. 304) and Stroud and Kerfoot (2021, p. 21) have pointed out that acknowledging this diversity, and indeed celebrating it, bringing it to the fore so that it becomes ever-more embedded into tertiary-level teaching and learning, is an issue of "fairness" and "epistemic justice", respectively.

Gajo and Berthoud's (2020) Switzerland-based research explores the relationship between linguistic diversity in the scientific space, and diversity of thought—for example, they investigated university staff's views on whether language, in their field of study, could be thought of as just a tool for "communicative" purposes, or whether understanding was actually negotiated through language, i.e., for "mediation" purposes, as well as the link between multiple languages and multiple "truths" (2020, p. 304). In addressing these conflicting viewpoints, they pose the question "Does fairness not involve dealing with heterogeneity?", which aligns with Stroud and Kerfoot's (2021, p. 21) work in South Africa, framed by an epistemic justice perspective. Also against a backdrop of dominant languages in higher education landscapes, they argue that creating meaningful spaces for multilingualism within university settings engenders the negotiation of multiple "knowledges". This is therefore one argument for ensuring that multilingual repertoires are foregrounded in university settings, i.e., not only challenging dominant language forms (often, English), but also challenging dominant patterns of knowledge and understanding within academic domains. Such arguments sit in complement to evidence about the importance of multilingualism for the purposes of educational engagement and attainment. Jang and Brutt-Griffler (2019, p. 332), for example, found that for students in the United States who came from a heritage-language background, continued deployment of their heritage language could predict both the likelihood of finishing secondary education, as well as maintaining attendance during a four-year undergraduate programme.

Nonetheless, the multilingual repertoires of both students and staff are often ignored (Marriott, 2013). In their investigation of bilingual language practices of Chinese graduate students in Australia, Singh and Cui (2011, p. 543) strongly align with Gajo and Berthoud (2020), in their linking of adherence to monolingual-English norms, with adherence to "a stable Western intellectual order", claiming that reinforcing these power structures leads to multilingual and multicultural students' repertoires being seen as inappropriate and indeed lacking. Shin and Sterzuk (2019, p. 151) agree, stating that "universities continue to operate in ways that privilege English monolingualism." Even in non-Anglophone contexts, there is some evidence that English dominates, potentially to the exclusion of other languages. For example, Phillipson (2019) has offered a comprehensive overview of the extent to which English plays a dominant role in higher education across European contexts; furthermore, Chen et al. (2020, p. 329) point out in their textual analysis of documentation relating to language policy in higher education that mention of "foreign languages" is often uncritically understood as "English" in the Chinese context.

Having established previous scholarship on the inevitable presence and relevance of language in tertiary settings, we now consider ideologies surrounding multilingualism in higher education.

3. Ideologies Surrounding Multilingualism in Higher Education

Firstly, what emerges from the literature is multilingualism being understood as positive from an economic and employability perspective, linking multilingual skills to economic benefits (e.g., in language policy documents: see Gao & Zheng, 2019, in the Chinese context; and Krzyżanowski & Wodak, 2011, p. 132, in the EU context). Related to these economic-focused benefits, which are quite clearly aligned with neoliberal agendas and ideologies in higher education (Shin & Sterzuk, 2019, pp. 150–151), is detailed consideration of the existing literature covering attitudes towards multilingualism in tertiary education as a problem to be overcome. In tertiary education contexts with a clear and predominant medium of instruction (often, English), students' multilingual repertoires can be overlooked at best, and considered problematic at worst. Preece (2020, p. 127) reflected on precisely this attitude of the UK university where her research was conducted, to justify the importance of research such as hers which seeks to demonstrate the value of students' multilingual repertoires. Similarly, Migge (2020, p. 3) has summarised the prevailing view of multilingual repertoires as problematic in many Anglophone higher education settings:

> "the near exclusive presence of English in all domains at a typical English-speaking university equates English and monolingualism to professionalism, high status and importance and associates other languages, 'their' cultures, and the use of two or more languages to the opposite values, effectively devaluing their use. This dynamic needs to be disrupted".

Much has been written about viewing university students' multilingual repertoires from a "deficit" perspective, that is to say, viewing individuals' multilingual skills as an obstacle or problem to overcome, rather than something worth valuing or celebrating. Very often, this sits in the context of English being the dominant medium of instruction, which has been widely recognised as reinforcing inequitable structures of power worldwide (Stroud & Kerfoot, 2021, p. 24). Framing his work on how staff at a Canadian university view their students' multilingual repertoires, and the extent to which their pedagogical practices draw on these repertoires, Marshall (2020, p. 146) describes that institutional context:

> "[. . .] plurilingual and EAL students are frequently positioned in terms of deficit [. . .] often seen as a problem to be solved through remedial support rather than as students with linguistic and cultural assets to bring to their learning. Both students and instructors perceive, and in many cases reproduce through their discursively constructed practices, such institutional discourses."

This illuminating excerpt illustrates the pervasiveness of views (held by staff, but often also internalised by students) regarding multilingualism as a hurdle to clear, rather than a resource to meaningfully incorporate into the learning process. Also in a broadly speaking Anglophone context, Kettle's (2011, p. 10) research in Australian higher education echoes this institutional ethos which Marshall puts forward, as she determined that students for whom English is a second language are often found wanting in terms of their "academic practice"; these students are seen as falling short, given that their perceived linguistic deficiencies (i.e., non-native-like English production) are considered a proxy for deficient academic capacity.

Shin and Sterzuk (2019, pp. 150–151) have detailed how a steadfast adherence to native-English speaker norms in Canadian higher education is largely representative of the neoliberal underpinnings of today's internationalised university landscape, where reinforcing the value of standard academic English perpetuates existing power structures, the implication being that greater recognition and valuing, and embedding into policy and pedagogical practices, of students' multilingualism would be akin to challenging these

patterns of dominance. As Haigh (2002, pp. 54–55) pointed out over two decades ago (with enduring relevance today), making meaningful changes to curricular structures to ensure greater inclusivity is based in part on moving away from "inner-circle" (Kachru, 1990) native-speaker norms towards pedagogies and content that are more accessible for a broad range of students with multilingual repertoires; this would contrast with what remains so often the case currently, that students with English as a learned language are seen as "deficient" when they are unable to engage with academic content which is often unproblematically or unthinkingly aimed firmly at "native" speakers.

It is interesting that recent scholarship has even critiqued attempts to incorporate multilingualism into policy and practice, demonstrating that it is possible in fact for such efforts to remain aligned with the overall neoliberal ethos of internationalised higher education. Stroud and Kerfoot (2021) and Shin and Sterzuk (2019) have a shared aim of arguing for the value in reconceptualising understandings of multilingualism; the former scholars propose that current understandings of multilingualism in South African higher education are too intertwined with neocolonial principles and power structures, in that the promotion of English and Afrikaans (i.e., high-status languages in that context) has overlooked the potential role for indigenous African languages.

Shin and Sterzuk (2019) contend that issues relating to the multilingual repertoires of international students who have travelled to Canadian universities for their programme of study are different to the multilingual repertoires of indigenous students in that setting (consistent with Stroud & Kerfoot, 2021). International students, they claim, are likely to face the kinds of deficiency-informed beliefs (outlined above) in reaction to their multilingual repertoires, and within that, their non-native-like English production. For indigenous students, it is vital to understand and therefore meet the learning needs and goals, and existing proficiency levels, of students undertaking the formalised and structured study of indigenous languages (which, they point out, have been in existence in Canadian universities for decades) (Shin & Sterzuk, 2019, pp. 148–149). The complexity in understanding multilingual repertoires of university students who might loosely (albeit problematically, given that such classifications are something of a blunt instrument) be classed as "international" and "home" has been well documented by Preece (2019)—what emerged from her UK-based research is that the multilingual repertoires of "international" and "home" students were indeed viewed differently, although it is interesting that her data indicated that this manifested in a way which contrasts with the notions presented by Shin and Sterzuk (2019, pp. 148–149) above. She found that international students' production of academic English was perceived unproblematically, and their multilingual repertoires generally respected, whereas those of "home" students from a wide range of (heritage and dialectal) linguistic backgrounds were perceived as lesser, which she attributed to perceived socioeconomic status differences between the two cohorts. We have commented elsewhere (A. M. Gayton, 2019, pp. 10–11) on how notable this finding is particularly in relation to the international students in her study, as it counters much of the existing literature which has been largely convergent in terms of a typically "deficit" view of international students and their multilingual repertoires (e.g., Kettle, 2011; Ryan & Viete, 2009). The contrast in findings, then, indicates the need for further exploration of how students' multilingual repertoires, and by extension their sense of multilingual selves, are perceived in university spaces.

In this paper, we acknowledge the issues with "multilingualism" (Shin & Sterzuk, 2019; Stroud & Kerfoot, 2021), and that it is potentially a loaded and problematic term. Here, we define "multilingualism" consistent with our earlier work (Fisher et al., 2020, p. 449), by:

> "[taking] an encompassing view of multilingualism, viewing all learners engaged in the act of additional language learning in classroom contexts as multilinguals, regardless of the number of additional languages or dialects in their repertoires, though they may not identify as such."

It is understood that criticism of the term "multilingualism" partly comes from its capacity for concealing the diversity of how multilingualism may manifest for speakers of different languages, with different multilingual repertoires (Shin & Sterzuk, 2019). In using our above definition, we bear in mind that reality, leaving space for such diversity. Crucially, this definition leaves space to understand that individuals will identify with being multilingual (or not) in different ways. This leads us now to a detailed exploration of the links between multilingualism and identity, and how conceptualisations of multilingual identity(ies) have been explored in existing literature.

4. Multilingual Identity in Higher Education

In earlier work (Fisher et al., 2020, p. 456), we established multilingual identity as a "participative process", understood as being informed by internal and external influences, on the basis of one's participation in meaning-making events and communicative practices. It is predominantly an in-flux action, more than it is rigidly stable; and it is vital that one recognises opportunities for, and the need to, engage "[reflexively with] the multilingual self". Also fundamental is "multilingual identity" being a more holistic way of identifying, compared to disparate, concrete "linguistic identities" that an individual might recognise as relating to specific named languages in their repertoire (Fisher et al., 2020, p. 459). We went on to theorise multilingual identity in greater detail in Forbes et al. (2021, pp. 3–4) and Fisher et al. (2022), conceptualising it as encompassing "3 Es", namely "exposure" to languages (any languages, at any point in one's life, through any kind of contact); "evaluations", broadly summarised as "attitudes and beliefs"; and "emotions", i.e., affective factors that play a role in the construction of one's multilingual identity.

We were interested, in our earlier work, in establishing a precedent for how such an understanding of multilingual identity could inform principles of language-teaching practice at secondary school, arguing that creating space in the classroom for learners to participate in this more reflexive way, being encouraged to think about the relevance for language learning for them personally as multifaceted and complex individuals, could facilitate the extent, and the depth, to which learners engage with (and are motivated to sustain) language learning itself; this was achieved on the basis of extensive mixed-methods data collection with over 2000 secondary pupils and their teachers, including demographic data, surveys, interviews and creative visual methods (Forbes et al., 2021, p. 6). This current paper seeks to widen the applicability of this understanding of multilingual identity, from secondary to tertiary contexts, and from language learning specifically to education more generally. If university learners feel that their multilingual identities are being recognised and valued as a legitimate part of the learning process, can this enhance their engagement and even their outcomes?

The rationale for exploring such questions from this starting point is upheld by Migge (2020, p. 3), who clarified how principles of linguistic variation pertain to (others' perceptions of) one's identity, and how this is relevant for tertiary education contexts. She explains that the inherent variation even within one's own native language, and the variants that a speaker chooses (subconsciously or consciously) to use leads to judgements being made based on the social inferences associated with them: "all aspects of language from sounds, words, including use of different languages, may do this social work" (ibid.). So, manifest variation at all levels, be it within one language (e.g., producing an alveolar nasal n as opposed to velar nasal ŋ at the end of a word like "swimming"), or the choice of which

language itself to use in a given context, is conveying aspects of our identities, in myriad contexts and spaces, not least higher education. As Migge has argued, language choices made in the university setting index certain constructs, or as she specifies, levels of status, which closely echoes points made above about how multilingualism in the university context is so often seen as problematic. Supporting Migge, there is evidence from other higher education-focused research that explicitly building mechanisms into the learning and teaching process for demonstrating how students' multilingual identities can be valued is a meaningful way to challenge these presumptions about multilingualism as problematic in this educational space.

For example, Ryan and Viete's (2009) work in the Australian context concretely establishes the need for facilitating a better sense of (linguistic) belonging in the university setting, based on international students' voices. Their student participants elucidate issues around feelings of legitimacy in this context, based on how they believe their multilingual repertoires, and within this their command of academic English, are perceived by other stakeholders in this setting. Cohering strongly with Migge (2020, p. 3), Ryan and Viete (2009, p. 307) contend that the purpose of language goes beyond its function for conveying information, and that it in fact feeds into (or challenges) hierarchies of power between individuals. In higher education, this can manifest as (often, but not exclusively, international) students' production in academic English being understood as falling short (compared with native speaker benchmarks), which Ryan and Viete (ibid.) argue can culminate in an erosion of students' willingness to find and use their "voice", which in turn can mean "an intense loss of self-esteem and identity". A feeling that students need to adhere as best as possible to the rigid and unchanging (monolingual English) linguistic standards in such an educational context can lead to individuals coping by suppressing their authentic identities (ibid.). However, what impact does this identity suppression have on students? Data indicate that there is a relationship between students' sense of their belonging and legitimacy in an educational context, and their willingness and confidence to make meaningful contributions—this is particularly important in educational contexts which value active class participation, and conceptualise such participation (i.e., interaction with staff and other students) as vital to the learning process (Ryan & Viete, 2009, p. 309). They state: "lecturers need to create the contexts where [international students] feel safe and able to contribute" (ibid.). An important element of this is recognising the multilingual variation among any group of students and creating space for students' multilingual identities to come to the fore. Preece (2020) lends strong support for such an approach, as the aim of this work is to consider the linguistic variation among this group as a worthwhile resource to be explicitly embedded into the (applied linguistics-focused) curriculum. She has conceptualised these students as "plurilingual social actors", arguing that encouraging students to view themselves and their repertoires in this way "offered the participants a dynamic, powerful and affirmative identity position from which to speak and act within the academy" (Preece, 2020, pp. 137–138). Her work indicates the relevance of multilingual identities across the curriculum, in that her interest was in how this pertained not to language teaching specifically, but to the (admittedly not unrelated) area of applied linguistics. The question is whether a framework can be developed to support university staff across the whole breadth of the curriculum in incorporating these principles, to better facilitate students' sense of belonging and legitimacy in the educational space.

5. Identity-Focused Pedagogies

The previous sections have established the relevance of language, broadly, and multilingualism, specifically, within higher education. With this foundation, we move now to a detailed consideration of identity-focused pedagogies: what are they, how might they be

incorporated into higher education teaching and learning practices, and what might be the rationale for doing so?

5.1. What Are Identity-Focused Pedagogies?

A helpful starting point in answering this question is Schachter and Rich (2011, p. 222), who define what they term "identity education" as "the purposeful involvement of educators with students' identity-related processes or contents. Educators' involvement is based on the premise that aspects of identity are instrumental to the realisation of educational goals and thus worthy of engagement". In seeking to bring to the fore identity-relevant aspects in a classroom space, Schachter and Rich (2011, p. 234) acknowledge that there is the potential for negative impact on learners, if handled poorly, and if not carefully thought through how it may best be implemented (we have reflected on this elsewhere: A. Gayton & Fisher, 2022, p. 308; Bond, 2019, pp. 654–655 indicates similar awareness of these issues), but that ultimately, there are gains to be had in terms of students' sense of agency.

Bond (2019, pp. 653–654) outlines a pedagogical intervention with international postgraduate students in the UK context, which sought to give learners the opportunity to put themselves at the centre of their learning, "by using themselves as case studies", to help them better understand their own experiences of university learning through a medium of instruction which is not their first language. Example tasks included "you are asked to review your understanding of the importance of identity and how this identity is 'performed' or communicated" (ibid.). This intervention took place within a pre-sessional EAP programme, meaning it was anchored in the sphere of language education where it could be argued, questions relating to language and identity are going to be the most pertinent. However, the author concludes that this kind of identity-focused work has potential for applicability across the university curriculum, beyond language-focused disciplines, arguing that close interaction with learning, and gaining meaning from learning, comes from learners having a strong sense of themselves within that learning environment (Bond, 2019, p. 663). This sense of empowerment through a heightened awareness of one's identity (and identity shifts) in a new learning environment appears to respond well to a point raised by Ryan and Viete (2009, p. 304), about international students' existing knowledge, understanding and expertise often being dismissed as "lesser" compared to Western academic norms, or even completely overlooked.

The relevance of identity-focused pedagogies across the curriculum is supported by Schachter and Rich (2011, p. 225), who state that "disciplines can be taught in ways that accentuate identity implications, for example, by highlighting the worldviews espoused by the discipline and by engaging students to consider whether to adopt such worldviews as their own". They give some clear examples of how identity-focused reflection and engagement might supplement students' process of content knowledge in a subject area, in this case geography—questions they suggest include "Where is 'home' and where do I belong?" "What places in the world are central and which are peripheral and why? Where am I in relation to them?" "What is 'local,' what are borders, and what does this mean about who 'we' are?". This aligns with current emphasis in higher education on the importance of critical thinking skills (Pagán Castaño et al., 2023). Aston (2024, p. 547) has recently argued that through focused instruction, students' views on critical thinking can shift such that they "see critical thinking as something they *are*, not just something they *have*" (emphasis in original), suggesting a relationship between tailored pedagogical approaches, the development of in-depth capacity for reflection, and one's own identity in the learning environment.

Preece (2020, p. 136) offers a further example of the relevance of pedagogies which foreground identities in Anglophone university classroom spaces (i.e., this relationship

between "the self and the world"), by demonstrating how a student challenges aspects of an existing curriculum which feel misaligned with their identity, by invoking their (in this case, religious) identity, and linked to this their skills and proficiency in a language other than English, to enrich the critical learning experience of herself and her peers, which Preece concludes is something that students rarely get to experience.

5.2. Why Should Pedagogy Foreground Multilingual Identities?

The rationale for emphasising the value of multilingual identity-focused pedagogies rests, first and foremost, on the argument made above about the reality that universities are highly multilingual spaces. Furthermore, the rationale links back to Ryan and Viete's (2009, p. 304) point about students' knowledge, repertoires, skills, languages and cultures often being overlooked in Western academic contexts, when they somehow fail to conform to expected norms and standards; building in an opportunity for students to engage with a sense of self in any learning context gives the chance for the learning to become relevant and meaningful for them (again, as suggested above).

Aligned with this stance, Van Viegen and Zappa-Hollman (2020, p. 182) emphasise the importance of using multiple languages in the university classroom in the Canadian context, by explaining that it has the power to support students in their honing of both language skills, and disciplinary knowledge acquisition. From their findings, they give the example of students being offered the opportunity to engage with academic literature in multiple languages (i.e., moving away from the more typical English-dominance, when it comes to published research). They contend that this offers a chance for students to identify "personal significance", i.e., to connect with the subject matter in a more meaningful way, and also, engaging with a wider pool of academic research offered a learning opportunity for staff. Importantly, they also point out that encouraging the engagement with non-English academic material signifies to students that "languages, cultures and identities as plurilingual speakers are respected, valued, and thus welcomed in class" (ibid).

Preece's (2020, pp. 136–137) research makes an interesting distinction between university teaching, which is delivered exclusively through the medium of English, and students' learning, which she concludes from her data is "plurilingual". That is to say, while content may be delivered monolingually through English, the reality of students' learning processes is that they inevitably draw on their plurilingual repertoires. She concludes that "All [student participants] represented working in one language only as a constraint to their academic potential" (ibid). Therefore, as a monolingual-English teaching perspective is likely to conflict with students' plurilingual identities, a multilingual identity-focused pedagogical approach would address this misalignment.

Darvin and Norton (2023, pp. 36–37) summarise these key issues, claiming that intersecting facets of our identities (they give examples such as race, gender, and class) heavily impact on how we encounter social spaces generally, but also educational spaces specifically. With reference to language education in particular, they argue that "learners can be privileged or marginalised by virtue of their identity". In terms of internationalised, Anglophone, higher education spaces, we have seen from much of the existing literature that marginalisation often happens because of students' identities as "non-native English speakers", and perceived deviations from the use of standard English. The purpose of this paper is to explore the value of multilingual identity-focused pedagogies for challenging these processes of marginalisation. As Paulsrud and Gheitasi (2024, p. 13) have concluded, dismissing learners' multilingual identities in educational settings is "neither ethical nor effective".

6. Incorporating Multilingual Identity into University Classrooms: Adaptation of a Model

In Fisher et al. (2020, p. 460), we set out a framework for a process we termed "participative construction of multilingual identity". In that paper, we focused on the applicability and suitability of this model for secondary school modern languages classrooms; its main tenets were:

- Developing sociolinguistic knowledge and awareness of linguistic identities
- Reflection on and reflexive engagement with knowledge regarding one's own multilingual self.
- Possible change in multilingual identity positioning/self-transformation
- Investment in language learning/change in future self-possibilities (ibid.)

To build on our earlier arguments, we move now to set out the possibility that implementation of a simplified version of this model can also yield tangible impact at the university level, specifically in Anglophone settings such as the UK; this version has three main tenets, namely:

- Knowledge-building and awareness-raising
- Reflection on and reflexive engagement with knowledge
- Investment in adapted practices

We acknowledge, of course, that there are important differences when moving from the secondary to the tertiary sector, and therefore different opportunities for implementation of the model within the curriculum. However, these differences do not necessarily present barriers to its implementation; indeed, in the public dissemination of the original materials entitled We Are Multilingual (https://www.wamcam.org/, last accessed 17 January 2025), we provide suggestions for implementing multilingual identity-focused pedagogies in the primary classroom, as well as the secondary classroom. Similarly, here, we are arguing for applicability at the higher education level, remaining faithful to key aims of those original materials, for example:

- Encouraging teachers and learners to recognise and engage with the extent of multilingual diversity present in any classroom setting.
- Fostering a sense of belonging in a classroom setting
- Recognising the value of learners drawing on their entire multilingual repertoire to facilitate learning

These aims align with the arguments made in the review of literature above, regarding the ubiquity of multilingualism in educational spaces, and why their recognition matters. Our proposed model is also informed by Mezirow's (2008) seminal work on transformative learning in adult education. Transformative learning, as he defines it, has the capacity to challenge oppression and work towards greater social justice (ibid., p. 96), and through "critical self-reflection" (ibid., p. 93) offers individuals the opportunity to reevaluate and reconceptualise previously held attitudes and beliefs towards for example "ideology, religion, politics, class, race, gender" (ibid., p. 103). To this, we would of course add language and multilingualism, another characteristic upon which individuals can be discriminated (Migge, 2020, p. 4), and therefore a worthwhile focus in higher education.

Further rationale comes from our previous empirical work, in which we have established a basis for the impact of these intervention materials. Forbes et al. (2021) reported on pre- and post-questionnaires disseminated among secondary school learners in the UK, evaluating the impact of the identity-focused intervention. At the group level, we demonstrated that the delivery of our identity-focused intervention was found to impact students' multilingual identity, specifically students' "emotions" connected to languages and language learning. As we argued: "[the intervention] influenced students' emotions

towards languages and language learning which, in turn, may have contributed to their increased willingness to identify as multilingual" (Forbes et al., 2021, p. 14). We took the stance (ibid., pp. 14–15) that students having a stronger sense of their multilingual identity could facilitate enriched engagement with the process of language learning at secondary school (motivation for which is recognised as a wider societal issue in Anglophone settings). We followed this up with a qualitative, pre- and post-intervention interview study, which explored individuals' experiences of the pedagogical intervention (Forbes et al., 2024). Here, we were able to identify the differential impact that such a pedagogical approach might have on specific students, with the data indicating evidence for three distinct "profiles", namely "resistant multilingual identity development" (i.e., limited change, and overall limited engagement with the nature of the intervention content); "emergent multilingual identity development" (i.e., some sense of increased understanding and a shift in multilingual identification); and "reflexive multilingual identity development" (i.e., cases where the intervention seemed to effect greatest positive impact on multilingual identifications) (ibid., p. 7). We found that, while students had the potential to exert agency in resisting multilingual identification (which links with Schachter & Rich, 2011), the predominant finding was that the intervention content impacted on how these students grasped multilingualism as a broad construct, and how they applied that understanding to their own identities, which supported the quantitative findings from Forbes et al. (2021).

We set our previous work against the backdrop of the crisis of (de)motivation among Anglophone secondary students regarding foreign language learning (A. Gayton & Fisher, 2022, pp. 318–319). In turn, demotivation for language learning is one underpinning of the largely monolingual ethos (Marriott, 2013, p. 456) in Anglophone higher education; by now seeking to explore the applicability of this model in the university space, we extrapolate that identity-focused pedagogies have the potential for giving international students using English as a medium of instruction greater agency/ownership of their English-medium education, which is also recognised as an issue, in that there has been much written about international students' so-called silence and perceived reticence in the classroom space (Humphries et al., 2023). In considering the logistics of implementing this model in the higher education space, we suggest that there are two possible avenues, both of which focus on international students who are using English as a learned language:

Using the model to frame both pre-service and in-service English for academic purposes (EAP) support for international students, for whom English is a learned language.

- EAP classes are for students who are due to be/are studying subjects from across the curriculum and are designed to offer English-language support tailored to academic work (e.g., a focus on the norms and conventions of academic writing).
- This is, therefore, to some degree analogous to the situation of foreign language learning in secondary schools, for which the model was originally developed.
- Encouraging EAP practitioners to incorporate multilingual identity-focused pedagogical practice into their existing teaching would equip their student cohorts (typically, international students) with requisite knowledge, understanding, and capacity for reflection around such issues, such that their sense of self in the university space may shift.
- In summary: the stage-by-stage suggestions are targeted towards EAP practitioners, so that they may use them with their student cohorts to encourage engagement with the students' sense of multilingual identity in higher education.

Using the model to inform staff continuing professional development (hereafter, CPD) instruction, for example, in structured programmes such as the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP).

- To challenge the still prevalent "deficit" model (Ryan & Viete, 2009), it is vital for academic staff across the university curriculum to engage with awareness-raising around issues of language generally, and multilingualism specifically, pertaining to their student cohorts. A lack of understanding of these issues can manifest as staff making (often ill-informed and ill-placed) judgements and inferences as to students' not only linguistic but also academic capacity (Lam & Gayton, 2024). This in turn can impact negatively on students' overall educational experience, for example, their sense of belonging, legitimacy, confidence and capacity in the university space.
- We are not proposing that university staff are encouraged to reflect on/experience a shift in their own multilingual identities (per se!), rather, that staff CPD entails an opportunity for them to reflect on their own understandings/perceptions/attitudes towards their students' multilingual repertoires and identities. As we have explained in A. Gayton and Fisher (2022, pp. 319–320), there is evidence from literature on multilingualism (e.g., Jessner, 2014) of the importance of such work across the curriculum; as this holds true for secondary schools, we argue it is equally as pertinent at university level.
- The suggestions outlined below could, we propose, be delivered by a language/applied linguistics specialist well-versed in principles of multilingualism and language and identity issues, who can confidently lead such discussions from a basis of their own subject-area expertise (as with the EAP professionals), equipping colleagues across the curriculum in non-language specialist areas to be aware of language-related issues, such that they might build them into their own practice, thus impacting on students (both home students, and international students) across the curriculum, in terms of awareness-raising of issues relating to multilingual identity.
- In summary: the stage-by-stage suggestions are targeted at those involved in academic staff professional development, so that they might use them with their cohorts of staff groups, to encourage their engagement with what these concepts might mean in turn for the students they teach.

We will now consider each of the stages of the model for participative construction of multilingual identity in turn and consider how they might inform practice in these areas.

6.1. Stage 1: Knowledge-Building and Awareness-Raising

The principle established in Fisher et al. (2020, p. 460) is that sociolinguistic awareness-raising is a precursor to any identity work. This might include problematising the concept of "knowing" or "being proficient" in a language and understanding linguistic landscapes both inside and outside a given classroom space.

Implementation by EAP practitioners (in their work with students for whom English is a learned language)

In EAP classes in the university setting, we propose that this preparatory phase manifests as introducing debate and reflection on the notion of "knowing" a language (importantly, challenging the idea that native-like fluency is required to be able to make a legitimate claim to be a speaker of a language). EAP practitioners might encourage their students to consider what they have learned about "knowing" a language (in their current EAP classes; in previous educational experiences; and from their life experiences more generally), and the notion of a sociolinguistic landscape, to start to connect the abstract concepts with what they perceive around them.

Implementation by applied linguistics specialists (in their work with staff across the curriculum in professional development sessions)

Similarly, it is important that staff are encouraged to reflect in CPD sessions, as a first step, on possible interpretations of what it means to "know" a language, and what

variation and diversity exists around them, both inside their own classroom settings, and in wider society. For many staff outside of applied linguistics, and cognate disciplines, it is feasible that this is their first opportunity to explicitly reflect on sociolinguistic issues which surround them, in professional and personal spheres. Staff might be encouraged to think about how new understandings of what it means to "know" a language could challenge their current perceptions of and attitudes towards language proficiency in their everyday lives, be it in their professional lives in the university space, or their personal lives outside it.

6.2. Stage 2: Reflection on and Reflexive Engagement with Knowledge

This stage builds on the first, by facilitating a move towards individualised, personalised reflection, i.e., what does this mean for me? (Fisher et al., 2020, pp. 461–462). Individuals are encouraged to build on their more abstract reflective work achieved above, to now consider and enact identity changes in themselves (Fisher et al., 2020, p. 462).

Implementation by EAP practitioners (in their work with students for whom English is a learned language)

Following Stage 1, international students are supported in making stronger claims to being a legitimate user of English in the Anglophone university setting, which could positively impact self-efficacy in their chosen programme of study. Furthermore, for international students new to their Anglophone setting (again, e.g., the UK), awareness-raising of the realities and complexities of the linguistic landscape in their local area, as well as the country more widely, can also impact their sense of ownership of English, by encouraging reflection on the variation that exists among so-called "native speaker" varieties, as well as drawing attention to the inherent (but often overlooked) multilingualism within the society. Learners could be supported in seeking to identify more strongly as a competent, legitimate, capable user of English in academic settings (and beyond); they might also choose to identify as multilingual individuals, whose entire linguistic repertoire has relevance and meaning in the learning process in the Anglophone university space.

Implementation by applied linguistics specialists (in their work with staff across the curriculum in professional development sessions)

Similarly, it is important that staff are encouraged to reflect on how their beliefs and understandings about language informs their perceptions of, and interactions with, their diverse multilingual cohorts. For example, do university staff harbour expectations of students' native-like production of English, in their oral and written work, and if so, what are the implications if they believe students to "fall short" in this regard? Staff might then be encouraged to consider the impact of their beliefs on students. This might entail a shift in the way that they position/identify students for whom English is a learned language, and indeed, may entail rethinking the role that students' languages other than English might play within successful learning, e.g., accepting students' use of other languages to take notes, or to share content understanding with a peer: such an approach is informed by empirical findings on the value of incorporating learners' multilingual repertoires in language learning specifically (Franck & Papadopoulou, 2024) and in education more generally (Oral & Lund, 2022). This could manifest as a brief introduction to the potential benefits for learners of having space to engage with complex academic content in multiple languages within their repertoire, and not just, e.g., English, for example, activities based around an accessible introduction to Canagarajah's (2011) work on translanguaging in the university classroom, and Lin's (2013) work on plurilingual pedagogical approaches across curricular areas.

6.3. Stage 3: Investment in Adapted Practices

Stage 3 relates to learners considering their future steps, and the extent to which they "invest" (to invoke Norton's, 2000, well-known framework) in adapted practices (Fisher et al., 2020, p. 462), based on the multilingual identities-focused learning they have undertaken.

Implementation by EAP practitioners (in their work with students for whom English is a learned language)

For students, this might mean having a capacity to invest more fully in the process of continuing to develop English-language skills and proficiencies (particularly those which are pertinent to the academic space), and also to invest more fully in their chosen programme of academic study itself. Through developing a strong sense of identifying as a capable and skilled multilingual individual, either prior to or during a programme of study, students may unlock their capacity to better engage in the academic experience, instead of holding back or being reluctant to participate, because of a belief in "lacking" language abilities (e.g., Filipi & Chuang, 2023).

Implementation by applied linguistics specialists (in their work with staff across the curriculum in professional development sessions)

Building on Stage 2, for staff this might mean being given a series of concrete tools for developing a wider array of techniques to ensure all students have opportunities for meaningful and valued participation in the university classroom space, where all (multilingual) identities are respected, and deemed worthy of belonging. Examples could include ways in which students participate in the learning process by drawing on multilingual repertoires, e.g., engaging with source material in different languages, or even considering possibilities for multilingual assessment (e.g., Wang & East, 2024).

7. Concluding Remarks

The recommendations outlined here are a first step in responding to the clear need, as established in the wider body of literature, and in our own previous work, for more of an explicit focus on students' multilingual repertoires and identities in the internationalised higher education space, specifically in Anglophone settings. Our suggestions go some way to redressing the issue of multilingualism and multilingual identities so frequently being rendered invisible in these contexts.

Nonetheless, we appreciate the inherent challenges in implementation. For example, it could be the case that EAP teachers feel insufficiently well-equipped in terms of their own expertise and understanding to embed such content into their existing teaching. Furthermore, there may be resistance from university teaching staff across the curriculum to the importance of multilingual identities, and therefore a disinclination to engage with such principles.

In terms of next steps in the research agenda, we recommend that the approaches outlined here are evaluated and further refined on that basis. There are multiple metrics on which the efficacy and impact of such pedagogy could be evaluated:

- Evaluating whether students are more likely to identify as being multilingual, in line with Rutgers et al. (2021). As we established in that previous work, there is a relationship between students identifying as multilingual, and academic attainment in the secondary school setting (ibid., p. 14), and it would be interesting to see if the same is borne out in the university context. The multilingual visual analogue scale (mVAS), presented in Rutgers et al. (2021, p. 8) would also be an appropriate tool for capturing multilingual identification in the university context.
- Evaluating students' and staff's attitudes towards the approach. This builds on our point above, regarding possible resistance to such an approach. Systematically

exploring such attitudes could help to understand how best to present such content, and support staff to become invested in its value.

- Evaluating changes in staff practice, based on the awareness-raising approach outlined above. Choi's (2023) model of conceptualising changes in teacher practice at cognitive (i.e., beliefs), conative (i.e., the capacity to implement practice based on beliefs), and performative (i.e., actual implementation of changed practice) levels could be applicable here.

We welcome such research which would help further this specific agenda of constructing and supporting multilingual identities in the university space.

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