

BAAL/Routledge Applied Linguistics Workshop Programme 2016

Expectations *of* and *on* international students in UK HE: investigating mismatching language ontologies and destabilising encounters

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Manchester Metropolitan University, Business School Building, Room BS 3.28

Keynote Speakers and Discussants

Prof. Adrian Holliday, Canterbury Christ University

Dr Rachel Wicaksono, York St. John University

Mr. Vincenzo Raimo, University of Reading

Miss Emma Bentley, Manchester Metropolitan University

Workshop Details

Venue:

Manchester Metropolitan University Business School (**Room BS 3.28**)

All Saints Campus

Oxford Road

Manchester, M15 6BH

United Kingdom

For travel information: <http://www2.mmu.ac.uk/travel/manchester/>

Registration:

Due to limited funding, this event is not free. Full price tickets are £35. Places are limited. To book a place, please register at our Eventbrite page:

<http://www.eventbrite.com/e/expectations-of-and-on-international-students-in-uk-higher-education-tickets-26053826697>

Workshop Programme

0900	Registration and tea/coffee
0920	Welcome and introduction by the workshop co-ordinators
0935	BAAL Representative introduction
	THEME (1) International students negotiating intercultural discourses
0945	Cultural and linguistic contribution: diverse Englishes, de-centred criticality, and cultural belief <i>Prof. Adrian Holliday, Canterbury Christ Church University</i>
1015	Contesting discourses and creatively reframing the category of 'International Student' <i>Dr Haynes Collins, University of Leeds</i>
1030	Expectations of and on international students in UK HE: investigating global citizenship identity <i>Alison Leslie, University of Leeds</i>
1045	International students in the super-diverse university classroom <i>Dr Réka Jablonkai and Xiangping Du, University of Hertfordshire</i>
1100	Enhancing language skills and employability for virtual and mobile world: The European Project CoMoViWo <i>Dr Carmen Herrero, Manchester Metropolitan University</i>
1115	Group discussion
1135	Discussant Contribution: <i>Dr. Rachel Wicaksono, York St. John University</i>
1200	Lunch
	THEME (2) Language assessment and International Student Recruitment
1245	'It is conceivable that the consequences of the test to the test-taker will be more important than any consideration of test methods or test content' (Alderson 2000: 29): the need to enlighten students and academics <i>Miss Emma Bentley, Manchester Metropolitan University</i>
1315	Predictive validity of IELTS scores on academic achievement scores in a TESOL masters course <i>Andrew Drybrough, University of Edinburgh</i>
1330	PG Entry requirements to HE: What should we be testing? <i>Dr Karen Ottewell, University of Cambridge</i>
1345	Masters level TESOL student expectations for language needs at the start of their course and what they felt they should have had the end: Findings from an ongoing national survey of student expectations <i>Dr Edward Moran, University of Stirling</i>
1400	Group discussion
1420	Discussant Contribution: <i>Mr. Vincenzo Raimo, University of Reading</i>
1445	Coffee/tea break
	THEME (3) International Student Experience
1500	Internationalisation in UK higher education: Experiences of international PhD students <i>Duygu Candarli and Nahielly Beatriz Palacios Gonzalez, University of Manchester</i>
1520	Russian SA sojourners' voice trajectories through the lens of ideologies <i>Alena Ryazanova, University of Leeds</i>
1535	Understanding Arab students' challenges, strategy use and future vision at a UK university: A socio-dynamic perspective <i>Dr Anas Hajar, Canterbury Christ Church University</i>
1550	Student teachers' expectations of and experiences in TESOL programme: a small-scale case study at a UK University <i>Ming Ni, University of Stirling</i>
1605	Smiles and Challenges: Multi-dimensional perspectives of Thai post-graduate students in the UK <i>Angela Cleary, University of Birmingham</i>
1620	Group discussion
1635	Closing remarks: implications for practice and issues to take forward
1645	Workshop ends

Contributor's Abstracts¹

Cultural and linguistic contribution: diverse Englishes, de-centred criticality, and cultural belief

Prof. Adrian Holliday, Canterbury Christ Church University

As cultural travellers, international students have much to contribute. They bring experience that can enrich and even improve the academic scene at the university where they study. They can bring an alternative and perhaps de-centred criticality and a more cautious use of English that enables deeper thought and reflexivity.

There are however misconceptions and prejudices that obstruct this contribution. The West as steward discourse is powerful and pervasive because it pretends to be well-wishing; but it reduces international students by imagining that they can only 'think', 'critique' and be 'independent' if they 'learn it here, from us'. The students' temporary struggle for information about a new university system is mistaken for a systemic deficiency of the entire 'culture' that they come from. Within English language education, this discourse feeds the rampant ideology of native-speakerism and its cultural deficiency label of 'non-native speaker'. This cultural Othering plays a negative role in an already complex mix of narratives that all parties draw upon at different times for different reasons, strung between the quantifying neoliberal university and struggles for personal, group and professional identities. There is therefore much to destabilise the trajectory of the international student, at the core of which are misperceptions of English.

A way through this is for all parties to learn to believe that the cultural and linguistic experience of international students is a seriously powerful resource. The students themselves need to find and apply this experience. Their teachers and supervisors need to refer to it. Home students need to think of them as equals in the journey of discovery. Essentialist narratives of all types and from all quarters need to be disbelieved and challenged. The specialised English of the very particular small culture of academia needs to be appreciated as strange for everyone, with international students having as much intellectual chance of mastering it as anyone else.

Contesting discourses and creatively reframing the category of 'International Student'

Dr Haynes Collins, University of Leeds

The notion of the international student within UK HE is problematic at best. On one hand, the more legalistic sense of the term suggests a regime that includes marketing and recruitment campaigns and UKVI regulations which students are subject to even before arriving to study within the UK. However, upon arrival, international students encounter a range of discourses and university policies (many concerning English language) which move beyond this legalistic sense and can suggest a homogenous identity. This presentation will draw on data from an ethnographic study of the institutionalisation of the 'intercultural' within a large British university to explore some of the experiences of international students. It explores criticality from social actors (students and University staff) who contest the category of the international student. This criticality helps to illuminate a much more complex university environment, a more nuanced sense of student identity and highlights the specific risks of the international student becoming a category which is permanently locked into imaginations of 'self' and 'other'.

Expectations of and on international students in UK HE: investigating global citizenship identity

Alison Leslie, University of Leeds

This presentation will consider global citizenship identity in a joint HE context of the UK and China. As an EAP practitioner with a pedagogical interest in global citizenship, I am in the early stages of research into the perceptions of Chinese engineering students embarking on a foundation programme in China towards their identities within and beyond the academic community. The research aims to discover how students explore and negotiate their identities as potential global citizens alongside those as undergraduates transitioning to English speaking academic communities in the UK and their home country. This is significant given the growing discourse in HE around global citizenship which is problematized by the focus on employability above a transformative role. The aims of the presentation will be to outline the underpinning theories, discuss issues around doing the research and invite critical contributions.

International students in the super-diverse university classroom

Dr Réka Jablonkai and Xiangping Du, University of Hertfordshire

Previous research into classrooms where students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds are taught and are asked to work together found that there are several factors that influence classroom participation. These factors include, for

¹ arranged according to the order in the workshop programme

example, academic culture, linguistic proficiency and interactional patterns. This paper reports on the preliminary findings of a study that aims to identify the perceived challenges and opportunities this context provides students and lecturers with. In addition, the study explores the strategies students and lecturers adopt to cope with these challenges. Fifteen students and ten lecturers were interviewed at the Business School of a UK university. Findings suggest that challenges are related to language and intercultural aspects of communication and learning. Implications for student support and the development of global awareness as a graduate attribute will be discussed and the term 'international student' will be problematised in light of the findings.

Enhancing language skills and employability for virtual and mobile work: The European Project CoMoViWo

Dr Carmen Herrero, Manchester Metropolitan University

CoMoViWo (Communication in Mobile and Virtual Work) is an ongoing European project that seeks to define skills needed in virtual and mobile work in a multicultural environment. In consultation with enterprises, this project has designed virtual training modules aiming to embed online communication literacy (English and Spanish are the lingua franca in the modules), employability skills and intercultural communicative competence to support the need of workplace communication. The final objective of the CoMoViWo Project is to improve the employability skills of Higher Education students and business representatives. This presentation focuses on the different phases of the project: review of communication literacy, needs analysis and current practices in virtual communication, the design and creation of the modules.

Discussant Contribution by

Dr Rachel Wicaksono, Head of the Department of Languages and Linguistics at York St. John University

'It is conceivable that the consequences of the test to the test-taker will be more important than any consideration of test methods or test content' (Alderson 2000: 29): the need to enlighten students and academics

Miss Emma Bentley, The Director of the Language Centre at Manchester Metropolitan University

At the end of summer pre-sessional season, you invariably have students who have not met the requirements of their pre-sessional assessment and who are deemed not capable of coping with the demands of tertiary study in English. How often do you find yourself suggesting IELTS as an alternative route? Or perhaps the student suggests it themselves, having spent 10-weeks learning about what academic English really is. In doing so, are we undermining what the Pre-sessional is all about? Or does fault perhaps lie with receiving departments who are insistent on particular IELTS (proficiency) score, ignoring what the student can actually do in the language (relevant to academic discourse)? In this talk I will explore both students' and non-language specialists' (subject academics) understanding of the gatekeeping role of IELTS. For both, the IELTS benchmark is guarded by UK HE admission policy, which values an IELTS score so much that they (student and academic) rarely know what the score means.

Predictive validity of IELTS scores on academic achievement scores in a TESOL masters course

Andrew Drybrough, University of Edinburgh

In order to study in a UK higher educational institution (HEI) many international students are required to take the IELTS English language proficiency test. Research relating to the predictive validity of IELTS towards future academic achievement has shown mixed results.

This research assessed the predictive validity of IELTS scores on 52 Chinese students studying a Master's in TESOL at a UK HEI. A Pearson product moment correlation was performed comparing IELTS entry scores with first semester grades. There were no positive statistically significant correlations between the IELTS scores and specific course grades for the whole group, especially with the IELTS Writing scores.

Policy implications relate to the validity of IELTS entry requirements for UK HEIs, possible use of alternative English language entry tests, and the design of pre-sessional and in-sessional support that better reflect the writing requirements of specific masters' courses and compensate for the limitations of the IELTS.

PG Entry requirements to HE: What should we be testing?

Dr Karen Ottewell, University of Cambridge

Tier 4 visa entry requirements has meant that the influence of standardised English language tests such as, in particular, IELTS has never been greater. While such tests are clearly important in confirming whether students have reached a minimal language competence, they 'have little predictive value of students' ability to use language in an academic context' (Wingate,

2015, p. 10). This suggests that there are other skills and competencies beyond language proficiency that need to be tested, especially for PG entry. So, what are these skills? And how can we test them?’

Together with the Admissions Testing Service I am working on a possible solution to this sector-wide issue – the development of a Test of Academic Literacy. In this talk I will provide an introduction as to the rationale behind the construct of the test and an overview as to the results so far of the initial trialling.

U. Wingate, *Academic Literacy and Student Diversity: The Case for Inclusive Practice* (Multilingual Matters, 2015), p.10.

Masters level TESOL student expectations for language needs at the start of their course and what they felt they should have had the end: Findings from an ongoing national survey of student expectations

Dr Edward Moran, University of Stirling

TESOL masters degrees have been a significant attractor of international non-native speaking students to the UK. However, we have little data either for these students’ language and course content related expectations or for whether their expectations were fulfilled. To investigate this, the TESOL unit in Stirling University is conducting a British Council funded national survey of students on TESOL masters degrees in the academic year 2015-6. This project is still ongoing and this presentation will report on findings we have so far.

This study consisted of a national online survey administered in October 2015. This was followed up by another national online survey administered in June and July 2016 coinciding with a series of focus groups administered at UK universities. We hope that the findings of the study will contribute to the development of higher quality courses that satisfy international students’ expectations and also establish realistic expectations of them.

Discussant Contribution by

Mr. Vincenzo Raimo, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement) at University of Reading

Internationalisation in UK higher education: Experiences of international PhD students

Duygu Candarli and Nahielly Beatriz Palacios Gonzalez, University of Manchester

Internationalisation agenda is one of the most crucial issues in higher education across the world. The UK’s higher education approach to internationalisation has adopted both idealistic motives, influenced by values of diversity, equality and interculturality, and economic motives, affected by neoliberalism policies. However, it remains questionable to what extent the balanced approach to internationalisation is reflected in the actual practices in UK higher education. Research on the policies of English language (Jenkins, 2013) and interculturality (Holliday, 2016) suggests that international students expect a more inclusive approach to internationalisation and recognition of difference within both academic language policies and cultural encounters. In a similar line with these previous studies, we will take a reflexive approach to our experiences as international PhD students and graduate teaching and research assistants at a UK university. We will reflect on the academic language policies and other language issues, the processes of our intercultural awareness and understanding, and academic writing by giving examples from our own encounters. We believe that our experiences will resonate with those of other international students and academic staff, and contribute to a greater understanding of the diversity of the student body in UK higher education.

References

Holliday, A. (2016). PhD students, interculturality, reflexivity, community and internationalisation. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1-13.

Jenkins, J. (2013). *English as a lingua franca in the international university: The politics of academic English language policy*. Routledge: London.

Russian SA sojourners’ voice trajectories through the lens of ideologies

Alena Ryazanova, University of Leeds

This presentation reports on a project investigating the study abroad (SA) experiences of Russian academic sojourners in the UK through consideration of identity, voice and ideologies. Springing from the need to holistically investigate situated experiences, this study is aimed to explore how sojourners develop their voices, while negotiating identities, simultaneously experiencing and using two (or more) languages and cultures, and dealing with social inequalities within migrant settings.

In my talk I will discuss the process and outcomes of the preliminary work on the project. I will examine audio and video recordings of narrative and interactional data from Russian SA sojourners from a number of different theoretical perspectives. I will describe how my analyses enable insights into the reciprocal relationships between students' mobility, sociocultural superdiversity, linguistic heterogeneity, and identity construction, self-perception and (language) ideologies.

Understanding Arab students' challenges, strategy use and future vision at a UK university: A socio-dynamic perspective
Dr Anas Hajar, Canterbury Christ Church University

This paper reports on a qualitative inquiry into Arab postgraduate students' situated experiences and their actual and dynamic use of language learning strategies (LLSs) at a UK university. As LLSs do not operate alone, a conceptual framework is proposed in this paper. The framework is based on Dörnyei's (2009) distinction between two types of possible self (i.e. the ideal self and the ought self), Higgins' (2000) distinction between the promotion and prevention aspects of instrumentality and Hajar's (2016) division between compulsory and voluntary strategies. Semi-structured interviews with each participant were used to collect data. The data suggest that most participants in the first two months of their stay in the UK seemed to have 'aschematic' future selves by articulating relatively far-reaching goals without using the LLSs needed. In response to the changes in assessment mode and the practice of some influential actors, however, the participants gradually began to identify proximal goals until they visualised their ideal L2 self, together with embracing appropriate LLSs. Pedagogical implications, as well as areas for ongoing research, are suggested.

Student teachers' expectations of and experiences in TESOL programme: a small-scale case study at a UK University
Ming Ni, University of Stirling

Understanding student teachers' expectations and experiences may help to improve the quality of teacher education (Eryılmaz & Aypay 2016). However, despite the large number (around 150) of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) programmes in the UK, and the increasing number of universities offering such courses, research conducted on these student teachers' opinions is limited.

In this presentation, I will report on a pilot study conducted as part of a PhD research project, which has two main aims: to arrive at preliminary findings regarding students' expectations and experiences; and to investigate the advantages and disadvantages of using different languages to conduct the interviews (English and Chinese). Four one-to-one interviews were conducted with Chinese MSc TESOL students at a UK university. Using data from the interviews, I will report responses to both research questions.

Reference

Eryılmaz, A. & Aypay, A. (2016) Motivational Factors for School-Based Teacher Learning: Turkish Pre-Service Teachers' Experiences and Expectations. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, 16(2): 357-373.

Smiles and Challenges: Multi-dimensional perspectives of Thai post-graduate students in the UK
Angela Cleary, University of Birmingham

The stereotypic image of smiling, passive Thai students, masks hidden depths of cultural conflict and academic challenges encountered while studying in the West. Academically gifted Thai scholarship students reported various problems while studying in the UK which raised serious concerns and initiated this research project.

There is a sparsity of research into the experiences of Thai students. Investigating the research of others into experiences of international students, interviewing Thai students and their teachers, employing questionnaires, classroom observations, student reflective journals and group discussions provided a wealth of data which challenged Hofstede's simplistic portrayal of Thai nationals. A picture emerged of complex individuals from a diverse nation never colonised by a Western power. Pedagogical and cultural background influenced the academic and social adaptation of the participants to the challenges and pressures of studying for a one-year Master's degree in the UK.

International students provide major financial income for UK universities and with this benefit comes responsibility to provide the highest quality education. This study challenges pre-conceptions of stereotypic generalities. It highlights the individuality of international students and assumptions of national identities. It augments existing research providing a source of valuable pedagogic and cultural information for teachers and their Thai students.