

## English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) Policies and the Construction of Academic Identity: A Longitudinal Narrative Inquiry Among Non-Anglophone Doctoral Students

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سياسات التعليم بوساطة اللغة الإنجليزية وبناء الهوية الأكاديمية: بحث سردي تتبعي في تجارب طلاب الدكتوراه من غير الناطقين بالإنجليزية

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### Abstract:

This research proposal outlines a longitudinal narrative inquiry investigating how English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) policies shape the construction and negotiation of academic identities among non-Anglophone doctoral students. As higher education institutions worldwide increasingly adopt EMI policies, questions arise about their impact on students' sense of self, disciplinary belonging, and scholarly voice. Drawing on Norton's investment theory [1], Canagarajah's translanguaging frameworks [2,3], and Block's sociocultural perspectives on identity [4], this study will follow 20-25 non-Anglophone doctoral students across three years, collecting narrative data through semi-structured interviews, reflective journals, and literacy artifacts. The research aims to uncover how students navigate linguistic challenges, negotiate multiple identities, and develop agency within EMI contexts. Expected contributions include theoretical advancements in understanding the identity-language policy nexus, methodological innovations in longitudinal narrative research, and practical implications for supporting multilingual doctoral students in EMI settings.

**Keywords:** English as a Medium of Instruction; Academic Identity; Language Policy; Narrative Inquiry; Non-Anglophone Doctoral Students; Longitudinal Study; Multilingualism in Higher Education.

### المخلص

يُقدّم هذا المقترح البحثي دراسة سرديّة طويلة تبحث في كيفية تأثير سياسات اللغة الإنجليزية كوسيلة للتدريس على بناء الهويات الأكاديمية لدى طلاب الدكتوراه غير الناطقين بالإنجليزية وتشكيلها. ومع تزايد اعتماد مؤسسات التعليم العالي حول العالم لسياسات اللغة الإنجليزية كوسيلة للتدريس، تبرز تساؤلات حول تأثيرها على شعور الطلاب بذواتهم، وانتمائهم التخصصي، وقدرتهم على التعبير عن آرائهم الأكاديمية. وبلاستناد إلى نظرية الاستثمار لنورتون [1]، وأطر التعدد اللغوي لكاناغاراغا [2، 3]، وجهات نظر بلوك الاجتماعية والثقافية حول الهوية [4]، ستتابع هذه الدراسة ما بين 20 و25 طالب دكتوراه غير ناطقين بالإنجليزية على مدى ثلاث سنوات، من خلال جمع بيانات سرديّة عبر مقابلات شبه منظمة، ومذكرات تأملية، ومواد تعليمية. ويهدف البحث إلى الكشف عن كيفية تعامل الطلاب مع التحديات اللغوية، وكيفية موازنة هوياتهم المتعددة، وكيفية تنمية قدراتهم الفاعلة في سياقات اللغة الإنجليزية كوسيلة للتدريس. تشمل المساهمات المتوقعة التطورات النظرية في فهم العلاقة بين الهوية وسياسة اللغة، والابتكارات المنهجية في البحث السردي الطولي، والآثار العملية لدعم طلاب الدكتوراه متعددي اللغات في بيئات التدريس باللغة الإنجليزية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** التعليم بوساطة اللغة الإنجليزية، الهوية الأكاديمية، السياسة اللغوية، البحث السردي، طلاب الدكتوراه غير الناطقين بالإنجليزية، الدراسة التتبعية، التعددية اللغوية في التعليم العالي.

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### 1.1 The Global Rise of EMI in Higher Education

The past two decades have witnessed a dramatic expansion of English as a Medium of Instruction across higher education institutions worldwide. From European universities implementing Bologna Process reforms [5] to Asian universities pursuing internationalization agendas [6,7], EMI has become a defining feature of contemporary academic landscapes. Dearden's comprehensive British Council report identified EMI programs in 55 countries, with particularly rapid growth in non-Anglophone contexts [8]. This shift reflects broader trends of globalization, academic mobility, and the positioning of English as the dominant language of scholarly communication [9,10]. However, the implementation of EMI policies has generated considerable debate. Proponents argue that EMI enhances international competitiveness, facilitates knowledge exchange, and prepares students for global academic careers [11,12]. Critics, conversely, highlight concerns about linguistic imperialism [13,14], epistemological narrowing [15], and the potential marginalization of students and faculty who lack high English proficiency

[16,17]. Particularly underexamined is how EMI policies affect doctoral students—a population facing unique pressures to establish themselves as legitimate knowledge producers while navigating complex linguistic demands.

### 1.2 Identity Construction in Multilingual Academic Contexts

Identity has emerged as a central construct in applied linguistics, particularly in understanding second language learning and use [1,4,18]. Moving beyond static notions of identity, contemporary scholarship conceptualizes identity as fluid, multiple, and socially constructed through language practices [19,20]. For doctoral students, the process of becoming a scholar involves not merely acquiring disciplinary knowledge but developing an academic identity—a sense of oneself as a legitimate participant in scholarly communities [21,22].

Non-Anglophone doctoral students in EMI contexts face particular identity challenges. They must negotiate potentially competing identities: as scholars in their disciplines, as second language users, as members of their home linguistic communities, and as participants in English-dominant academic spaces [23,24]. Research suggests these negotiations can be fraught, involving feelings of linguistic insecurity, impostor syndrome, and questions about authentic voice [25,26]. Yet students also demonstrate remarkable agency, employing translanguaging practices, building multilingual networks, and developing hybrid scholarly identities [2,27].

### 1.3 Research Gap and Significance

Despite growing research on EMI in higher education and academic identity among multilingual students, significant gaps remain. First, most EMI research focuses on undergraduate programs or faculty perspectives, with doctoral students receiving comparatively less attention [28,29]. Second, existing studies predominantly employ cross-sectional designs, capturing identity at single moments rather than tracking its evolution over time [30]. Third, while narrative approaches have proven valuable for understanding identity construction [31,32], few studies have applied longitudinal narrative inquiry specifically to non-Anglophone doctoral students in EMI contexts.

This research addresses these gaps by conducting a three-year longitudinal narrative inquiry with non-Anglophone doctoral students in EMI programs. By foregrounding students' own stories and tracking identity negotiations across the doctoral journey, this study will generate nuanced understandings of how language policies shape—and are shaped by—individual experiences, aspirations, and resistances.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical Frameworks for Language and Identity

#### 2.1.1 Norton's Investment Theory

Norton's seminal work revolutionized applied linguistics by introducing the concept of investment, offering a sociological complement to psychological notions of motivation [1,33]. Norton argues that language learners invest in second language learning because they understand that acquisition will increase their cultural capital and access to previously unattainable resources [33]. Critically, Norton demonstrates that investment is socially and historically constructed, shaped by relations of power that privilege certain identities while marginalizing others. In her 2013 reformulation, Norton elaborates on 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" [1, p.45]. This definition proves particularly salient for understanding doctoral students, whose investments in academic English must be understood within larger life trajectories and imagined futures as scholars. Norton's framework has been productively applied to academic contexts [34,35], though less frequently to doctoral education specifically.

#### 2.1.2 Block's Sociocultural Identity Theory

Block's work provides a complementary sociocultural lens, emphasizing identity as emerging from participation in discourse communities [4,36]. Drawing on poststructuralist theory and communities of practice frameworks [37], Block argues that identity in second language contexts involves ongoing negotiations between individual agency and social structures. His distinction between transportable and situated identities—those that move across contexts versus those tied to specific settings—offers analytical purchase for understanding how doctoral students navigate multiple identity positions [4].

Block's research also highlights the affective dimensions of identity work, particularly experiences of ambivalence, discomfort, and linguistic anxiety among second language users in academic settings [36]. These insights prove crucial for understanding the emotional labor involved in constructing academic identities under EMI policies.

#### 2.1.3 Canagarajah's Translanguaging and Plurilingual Identities

Canagarajah's scholarship on translanguaging and code-meshing challenges monolingual orientations that often underpin EMI policies [2,3,38]. Translanguaging refers to the fluid deployment of multilingual repertoires, treating languages not as separate systems but as integrated resources for meaning-making [39,40]. Canagarajah

demonstrates how multilingual scholars strategically employ translanguaging in academic writing and knowledge construction, resisting pressures toward English-only norms [38,41].

His work on geopolitics of academic writing reveals how center-periphery dynamics shape publishing opportunities, citation practices, and recognition for scholars from non-Western contexts [41,42]. For doctoral students, these geopolitical realities profoundly influence identity construction—determining whose knowledge counts, what forms of English are valued, and which scholarly identities are deemed legitimate. Canagarajah's frameworks enable analysis of how students navigate these power dynamics through strategic language practices and identity performances.

#### **2.1.4 Barkhuizen's Narrative Inquiry Framework**

Barkhuizen has been instrumental in developing narrative inquiry as both theory and method in applied linguistics [31,43,44]. His work demonstrates that narratives are not simply retrospective accounts but constitutive of identity itself—people construct who they are through the stories they tell [31]. Barkhuizen's framework attends to both the content and structure of narratives, as well as their production contexts, offering rich analytical possibilities [43].

Particularly relevant is Barkhuizen's attention to "small stories"—fleeting, fragmentary narrative moments in everyday talk that reveal identity work in progress [44,45]. This contrasts with traditional life-history approaches, capturing the ongoing, processual nature of identity construction. His methodological guidance on collecting, analyzing, and representing narrative data provides valuable scaffolding for longitudinal narrative research [43,46].

## **2.2 EMI Policies in Higher Education: Global Trends and Local Implementations**

### **2.2.1 Drivers and Rationales for EMI Adoption**

The proliferation of EMI in higher education reflects intersecting economic, political, and ideological forces. Macaro and colleagues identify three primary rationales driving EMI adoption: internationalization (attracting international students and faculty), employability (preparing graduates for global job markets), and improved English proficiency [11]. Dearden's British Council study found these rationales consistently invoked across diverse contexts, though their relative prominence varied by region [8].

In Europe, EMI expansion has been closely tied to Bologna Process goals of student mobility and European integration [5,47]. Nordic countries were early adopters, with Sweden, Denmark, and the Netherlands offering numerous English-taught programs [48,49]. In Asia, EMI policies have been framed as essential for economic competitiveness and regional hub ambitions, particularly in countries like South Korea, Taiwan, and Malaysia [6,50,51].

However, scholars note that these official rationales often mask underlying linguistic ideologies and neoliberal logics [52,53]. Kuteeva and Airey argue that EMI policies frequently reflect assumptions about English as a neutral, transparent medium—overlooking how English-medium education perpetuates particular epistemologies and power relations [54]. Hultgren et al. demonstrate how EMI in European universities operates within broader discourses of excellence that privilege Anglo-American academic models [55].

### **2.2.2 Challenges and Critiques of EMI Implementation**

A substantial body of research documents challenges associated with EMI implementation. Content learning difficulties have been widely reported, with students struggling to grasp complex concepts in a second language [56,57]. Faculty face parallel challenges, often lacking training in teaching through English and experiencing increased workload [16,58].

Linguistic concerns extend beyond individual proficiency. Scholars point to homogenization effects, whereby the push toward English marginalizes other languages and delegitimizes local knowledge systems [15,59]. Phillipson's concept of linguistic imperialism remains salient, describing how English dominance in higher education perpetuates colonial power structures [13,60]. Kubota extends this analysis through a critical race lens, revealing how EMI policies can reinforce racial hierarchies by positioning native English speakers as inherently superior [61].

Research also reveals inadequate institutional support for EMI programs. Many universities implement EMI without corresponding investments in language support services, teaching training, or curriculum adaptation [62,63]. This particularly disadvantages students from under-resourced educational backgrounds who lack prior English-medium schooling.

### **2.2.3 EMI and Doctoral Education**

While EMI research has burgeoned, doctoral education remains relatively underexamined. The few existing studies suggest doctoral students face distinct EMI challenges, including writing dissertations in English [64], presenting at international conferences [65], publishing in English-medium journals [66], and engaging in disciplinary socialization processes conducted primarily in English [67].

Curry and Lillis's longitudinal research on multilingual scholars' writing for publication reveals the "literacy brokers"—editors, reviewers, translators—who gatekeep access to English-medium journals [68]. Their work illuminates the often invisible labor multilingual scholars perform to meet Anglo-American textual conventions, and the identity tensions arising when feedback positions their writing as deficient [24,68]. Doctoral students, as emerging scholars, navigate these dynamics while simultaneously establishing their scholarly identities—a dual challenge warranting deeper investigation.

Li and Flowerdew's study of Chinese doctoral students in Hong Kong EMI programs found that language difficulties intensified imposter syndrome and delayed completion [69]. Students reported feeling less capable than peers despite equivalent disciplinary knowledge. Conversely, Jenkins and Mauranen's research on English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in academic settings suggests more optimistic possibilities, demonstrating how multilingual scholars develop functional lingua franca varieties that challenge native-speaker norms [70,71].

### 2.3 Academic Identity Among Doctoral Students

#### 2.3.1 *The Doctoral Journey and Identity Transitions*

Doctoral education involves a profound identity transition—from student to independent scholar [21,72]. This transformation encompasses multiple dimensions: developing disciplinary expertise, learning research methodologies, establishing scholarly networks, and cultivating a scholarly voice [73,74]. Identity socialization theories emphasize how doctoral students are inducted into academic communities through apprenticeship relationships, conference participation, and publishing experiences [75,76].

However, critical scholars note that socialization frameworks can downplay power dynamics and assume universal pathways to scholarly identity [77,78]. Individuals do not simply adopt existing scholarly identities but actively negotiate what kind of scholar they wish to become, sometimes resisting dominant norms [79]. For women, minorities, and other marginalized groups, developing an academic identity can involve navigating exclusionary practices and stereotype threats [80,81].

#### 2.3.2 *Language, Voice, and Scholarly Identity*

Language is fundamental to academic identity construction. As Ivanic argues, academic writing is not merely a skill but an identity practice—writers enact particular selves through textual choices [82]. For multilingual doctoral students, questions of voice become particularly acute. What constitutes an authentic scholarly voice when writing in a second language? How do students negotiate between disciplinary conventions and their own linguistic backgrounds?

Research reveals diverse responses to these questions. Some students embrace English-medium academic writing as a gateway to international scholarly communities [83]. Others experience tension between their multilingual identities and pressures toward English-only production [23,84]. Tardy's research on multilingual graduate students' genre learning demonstrates how students gradually develop flexible genre knowledge, learning to adapt conventions across contexts [85].

Castelló et al.'s research on doctoral students' identity development through writing highlights the role of supervisory feedback in shaping emerging scholarly identities [86]. Feedback positioning students' writing as deficient can undermine confidence, while feedback recognizing students' developing expertise can foster positive identity growth. For non-Anglophone students, language-focused criticism may be particularly identity-threatening [87].

#### 2.3.3 *Positioning, Power, and Academic Belonging*

Positioning theory, derived from Harré and van Langenhove, offers valuable tools for analyzing identity negotiations [88]. Positioning refers to the discursive processes through which people are located as particular kinds of persons within conversations and texts. In academic contexts, students can be positioned—and position themselves—as competent or struggling, insiders or outsiders, legitimate scholars or imposters [89].

Research on international doctoral students reveals how linguistic difference can trigger positioning as perpetual foreigners or less capable scholars [90,91]. Park's study of Korean doctoral students in U.S. universities documented how students' accents and written "errors" led faculty to question their intellectual capabilities [92]. Such positioning can profoundly affect students' sense of academic belonging—their feeling of being valued members of scholarly communities [93].

Conversely, some research highlights how multilingual students resist deficit positioning, asserting alternative identities as valuable cultural-linguistic bridges [94]. Students may reframe their multilingualism as an asset, enabling unique scholarly perspectives and contributions [95,96]. These agentic identity performances demonstrate that even within constraining power structures, individuals exercise creativity and resistance.

## 2.4 Language Policy and Identity

### 2.4.1 Language Policy as Identity Work

Contemporary language policy scholarship recognizes that policies do not simply regulate language use but shape who people can become [97,98]. Adopting EMI policies transforms students into particular kinds of subjects—ideally, globally mobile, English-proficient knowledge workers [99]. Johnson’s ethnographic approach to language policy reveals how policies are created, interpreted, and appropriated across multiple levels, from official texts to classroom interactions [100].

For doctoral students, EMI policies operate as powerful identity texts [101], conveying messages about whose languages, knowledge, and identities are valued. When universities mandate English-only dissertations, they position students’ home languages as inappropriate for scholarly knowledge production. When English proficiency exams gate doctoral admissions, they construct English ability as prerequisite for scholarly identity.

### 2.4.2 Agency and Resistance in Policy Contexts

While policies constrain, they do not determine identity. Scholarship on language policy and planning increasingly attends to agency, examining how individuals navigate, resist, and transform policies [102,103]. García and Wei’s work on translanguaging as transformative practice demonstrates how multilingual students challenge monolingual policies through everyday language practices [40].

Research on doctoral students’ agency in language policy contexts remains limited but suggestive. Canagarajah’s work shows how multilingual scholars employ “shuttling” strategies, moving between languages and discourses to construct hybrid texts [38]. Such practices resist EMI policies’ implicit English-only mandates, asserting the legitimacy of plurilingual scholarly identities.

## 2.5 Methodological Considerations: Narrative Inquiry in Applied Linguistics

### 2.5.1 Narrative as Identity Construction

Narrative inquiry has become prominent in applied linguistics, grounded in recognition that people make sense of their lives through storytelling [31,104]. Pavlenko’s narrative study of multilingual selves demonstrates how language learning stories construct identities, positioning narrators as particular kinds of language users with specific trajectories [105]. Narratives are not transparent windows into experience but constitutive performances—people construct who they are through how they narrate [106].

For identity research, narratives offer privileged access to how individuals understand their experiences, negotiate contradictions, and imagine futures [107]. Barkhuizen argues that narrative inquiry is particularly suited to studying language teacher identity, given teaching’s inherently biographical nature [31]; parallel arguments apply to doctoral students, whose academic identities emerge from extended biographical trajectories.

### 2.5.2 Longitudinal Approaches

While cross-sectional narrative studies provide valuable snapshots, longitudinal designs enable examination of identity as process [108]. Following participants over time reveals how narratives shift, how identity claims evolve, and how individuals reinterpret past experiences from new positions [109].

Duff’s longitudinal ethnography of international students in Canadian universities demonstrates the value of extended engagement, revealing gradual identity transformations missed by shorter studies [110]. Casanave’s long-term narrative inquiry with academic writers similarly shows how scholarly identities develop unevenly over time, with periods of confidence alternating with uncertainty [22].

However, longitudinal narrative research presents methodological challenges: maintaining participant engagement, managing evolving researcher-participant relationships, handling attrition, and analyzing cumulative narrative data [111]. These challenges require careful methodological planning and reflexive practice.

## 3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

### 3.1 Primary Research Aim

This study aims to investigate how EMI policies in doctoral education shape the construction, negotiation, and transformation of academic identities among non-Anglophone doctoral students through a three-year longitudinal narrative inquiry.

### 3.2 Specific Research Objectives

1. To examine how non-Anglophone doctoral students narrate their academic identity trajectories within EMI institutional contexts
2. To identify key moments, events, and experiences that shape identity negotiations related to language and scholarly belonging
3. To analyze how students position themselves and are positioned by others in relation to EMI policies and English-medium scholarly practices
4. To explore the role of translanguaging and multilingual practices in students’ identity construction processes

5. To investigate how students exercise agency in navigating EMI policy constraints and developing scholarly identities
6. To track longitudinal changes in identity narratives across the three-year doctoral journey
7. To generate theoretical insights into the relationship between language policy and identity in higher education.

### 3.3 Research Questions

**Primary Research Question:** How do EMI policies shape the academic identity construction of non-Anglophone doctoral students over time?

**Secondary Research Questions:**

1. What identity positions do non-Anglophone doctoral students adopt in relation to EMI policies, and how do these positions evolve throughout their doctoral programs?
2. How do students narrate critical incidents involving language, belonging, and scholarly legitimacy, and what do these narratives reveal about identity negotiations?
3. What role do multilingual practices and translanguaging play in students' academic identity construction within EMI contexts?
4. How do institutional structures, supervisory relationships, and peer interactions mediate the impact of EMI policies on students' developing scholarly identities?
5. What forms of agency and resistance do students employ in response to EMI policy constraints, and how do these strategies shape their identity trajectories?
6. How do students' identity narratives shift over the three-year period, and what factors catalyze narrative transformations?

## 4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research draws on an integrated theoretical framework combining Norton's investment theory [1,33], Canagarajah's translanguaging perspectives [2,3], Block's sociocultural identity theory [4], and Barkhuizen's narrative inquiry framework [31,43]. This multi-theoretical approach enables comprehensive analysis across individual, social, and institutional levels.

**Norton's investment theory** provides the foundational concept that language learning involves not merely acquisition but investment in identity possibilities. Non-Anglophone doctoral students' engagement with English-medium scholarship will be understood as strategic investment shaped by their imagined futures as scholars, their access to symbolic and material resources, and power relations within their academic communities.

**Canagarajah's translanguaging frameworks** offer critical tools for understanding how students draw on their full linguistic repertoires in constructing academic identities. Rather than viewing multilingualism as deficit, this lens positions students' diverse language practices as creative resources for scholarly identity work. Canagarajah's attention to geopolitics of knowledge production will inform analysis of how global power structures constrain and enable particular identity positions.

**Block's sociocultural perspective** emphasizes identity as emerging from participation in discourse communities. This framework will guide analysis of how students are inducted into—and resist—disciplinary communities, and how they negotiate transportable and situated identities across contexts. Block's attention to affective dimensions will sensitize the research to emotional experiences of identity work.

**Barkhuizen's narrative inquiry framework** provides methodological and analytical scaffolding. His conceptualization of narratives as identity performances, attention to small stories, and guidance on narrative analysis will structure data collection and interpretation. This framework recognizes that identity is constructed through storytelling itself, making narrative inquiry both theoretically and methodologically appropriate.

Together, these frameworks enable examination of identity as simultaneously individual and social, linguistic and political, stable and fluid—capturing the complexity of academic identity construction in EMI contexts.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

### 5.1 Research Design

This study employs a **longitudinal qualitative narrative inquiry design**, following 20-25 non-Anglophone doctoral students across three years. Narrative inquiry is chosen for its capacity to illuminate identity processes, honor participant agency, and capture temporal dimensions of experience [31,104]. The longitudinal design enables tracking identity transformations often invisible in cross-sectional research [108,110].

### 5.2 Research Context and Participant Selection

#### 5.2.1 Context

The research will be conducted across 3-4 universities in different geographical regions (tentatively: one Northern European institution, one East Asian institution, one Southeast Asian institution, and potentially one Middle Eastern institution). These sites represent diverse EMI implementation models, allowing examination of how different policy contexts shape identity construction.

Selection criteria for institutional sites:

- Doctoral programs conducted primarily or entirely in English
- Enrollment of significant numbers of non-Anglophone students
- Institutional willingness to grant research access
- Variation in EMI policy histories and rationales.

### 5.2.2 Participant Selection

Participants will be non-Anglophone doctoral students in the first six months of their programs at recruitment. Selection will employ purposive sampling seeking maximum variation across:

- Linguistic backgrounds (targeting 8-10 different first languages)
- Disciplinary fields (sciences, social sciences, humanities)
- Gender identity
- Prior English-medium educational experience
- Geographical origin

#### Inclusion criteria:

- Enrolled in doctoral program where English is primary medium of instruction
- First language other than English
- Completed at least bachelor's degree in non-English-medium institution
- Willing to participate in 3-year study

**Anticipated sample:** 20-25 participants to allow for 15-20% attrition while maintaining sufficient diversity and depth.

### 5.3 Data Collection Methods

Multiple data collection methods will generate rich, layered narrative data:

#### 5.3.1 Semi-Structured Narrative Interviews (Primary Data Source)

**Frequency:** Four times per year (every 3 months), totaling 12 interviews per participant over three years

**Duration:** 60-90 minutes each

**Format:** Video-recorded (with participant permission) or audio-recorded

**Interview Protocol:** Interviews will employ narrative elicitation techniques [112], inviting participants to tell stories about their experiences rather than simply answering questions. Sample prompts:

- "Tell me about a recent experience in your doctoral work where language mattered..."
- "Can you describe a moment when you felt like—or didn't feel like—a legitimate member of your academic community?"
- "Walk me through your process of writing [specific text]. What was that experience like for you?"

Later interviews will invite participants to reflect on earlier narratives, enabling examination of how they re-story their experiences over time.

#### 5.3.2 Participant Reflective Journals

Participants will be invited (but not required) to maintain reflective journals documenting language-related experiences, identity moments, and critical incidents. Journals may be written in English or participants' first languages (with translation support provided). These will supplement interview data with more spontaneous, contemporaneous reflections.

#### 5.3.3 Literacy Artifacts and Documents

With participant permission, the study will collect literacy artifacts including:

- Writing samples (dissertation chapters, conference papers, journal submissions)
- Feedback from supervisors and reviewers
- Conference presentations
- Email correspondence with supervisors (where relevant to identity negotiations)

These artifacts will be analyzed for textual identity performances and provide contextual grounding for interview narratives [82,113].

#### 5.3.4 Researcher Field Notes

Following constructivist principles that recognize researcher co-construction of data [114], I will maintain detailed field notes documenting:

- Interview dynamics and relational aspects
- Observations during site visits
- My own reactions, assumptions, and evolving interpretations
- Memo-writing for emergent analytical insights

#### 5.4 Data Analysis

Analysis will proceed iteratively alongside data collection, employing both thematic and structural narrative analysis approaches [115].

##### 5.4.1 Narrative Analysis Framework

Following Barkhuizen [43] and Riessman [115], analysis will attend to:

**Content:** What stories do participants tell? What identity claims appear in narratives?

**Structure:** How are stories organized? What narrative genres do participants employ (e.g., success stories, struggle narratives, transformation plots)?

**Performance:** How do participants position themselves and others in storytelling? What identities do they enact through narrative performance?

**Context:** How do power relations, EMI policies, and institutional contexts shape what can be narrated and how?

##### 5.4.2 Analytical Procedures

**Phase 1: Holistic-Content Reading** Initial readings of complete narratives to grasp overall meaning and identify provisional themes

**Phase 2: Structural-Categorical Coding** Systematic coding of narrative segments for:

- Identity positions (e.g., competent scholar, struggling L2 user, cultural bridge)
- Positioning moves (self-positioning, positioning by others)
- Investment and agency expressions
- Translanguaging practices
- Emotional experiences
- Policy references and critiques

**Phase 3: Longitudinal Analysis** Tracing individual trajectories across time, examining narrative shifts and reinterpretations

**Phase 4: Cross-Case Thematic Analysis** Identifying patterns and variations across participants, exploring how contextual factors (discipline, gender, linguistic background, institutional site) relate to identity trajectories

**Phase 5: Theoretical Dialogue** Bringing findings into dialogue with theoretical frameworks, generating theoretical insights and elaborations.

##### 5.4.3 Analytical Tools

- NVivo or Atlas.ti for data management and coding
- Narrative mapping for visualizing identity trajectories [116]
- Positioning analysis charts [117]

#### 5.5 Validity and Trustworthiness

Following Lincoln and Guba's criteria for qualitative research quality [118], this study will employ multiple strategies to enhance trustworthiness:

##### Credibility:

- Prolonged engagement (3 years with participants)
- Member checking (sharing interpretations with participants)
- Peer debriefing with fellow researchers
- Triangulation across data sources

##### Transferability:

- Thick description of contexts, participants, and phenomena
- Clear documentation of analytical procedures

##### Dependability:

- Audit trail documenting research decisions
- Systematic data management protocols

##### Confirmability:

- Reflexive journaling about researcher positionality
- Transparent presentation of disconfirming evidence.

#### 5.6 Ethical Considerations

##### 5.6.1 Ethical Approval

The study will receive ethics approval from relevant institutional review boards before data collection commences.

##### 5.6.2 Informed Consent

Participants will provide written informed consent, with ongoing opportunities to renegotiate consent parameters. Given the longitudinal design, consent will be revisited annually.

### 5.6.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

All participants and institutions will be pseudonymized. However, given the longitudinal, narrative nature of the study, complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed; participants will be informed of this limitation. Measures will include:

- Secure data storage with password protection
- Limited access to identifiable data
- Careful writing to minimize identifiability in publications.

### 5.6.4 Power Relations

As a researcher investigating identity, I recognize the power inherent in interpreting participants' narratives. Strategies to address this include:

- Collaborative interpretation sessions where participants engage with my analyses
- Reflexive examination of my own identity and assumptions
- Commitment to representing participant voices respectfully and complexly.

### 5.6.5 Potential Benefits and Risks

**Benefits:** Participants may benefit from reflective opportunities, feeling heard, and contributing to research that could improve experiences for future doctoral students.

**Risks:** Discussing difficult experiences could be emotionally taxing. Participants will be informed of counseling resources and can skip questions or withdraw without penalty.

### 5.7 Limitations

- **Sample:** While seeking diversity, the sample cannot represent all non-Anglophone doctoral students globally
- **Language:** Conducting interviews primarily in English may itself shape what participants can narrate; offering interviews in participants' first languages (with interpretation) will be explored where feasible
- **Attrition:** Longitudinal research inevitably faces participant attrition; maintaining engagement through regular communication and showing respect for participants' time will be priorities
- **Researcher positionality:** My own linguistic background and academic status will shape data collection and interpretation; ongoing reflexivity is essential

## 6. EXPECTED CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FIELD

### 6.1 Theoretical Contributions

**Advancing Identity Theory in Applied Linguistics:** This research will extend Norton's investment theory, Canagarajah's translanguaging frameworks, and Block's sociocultural perspectives by examining their interplay in the specific context of doctoral education under EMI policies. The study will generate theoretical refinements regarding how language policy contexts shape investment, how translanguaging functions in identity construction (not just language use), and how academic identity specifically develops over extended timeframes.

**Bridging Language Policy and Identity Research:** While language policy and identity are both robust research areas, their intersection remains underexplored. This study will theorize the identity dimensions of policy, revealing how EMI policies function as identity technologies that shape possibilities for scholarly selfhood.

**Longitudinal Identity Development:** By tracking identity over three years, the research will contribute temporal theorization—understanding not just identity at moments but identity as trajectory. This addresses calls for more processual approaches to identity in applied linguistics [119,120].

### 6.2 Empirical Contributions

**Evidence on EMI Policy Impacts:** The study will provide empirical evidence regarding how EMI policies affect doctoral students—a population crucial to knowledge production yet understudied in EMI research. Findings will reveal both intended and unintended consequences of EMI policies for students' scholarly development and wellbeing.

**Doctoral Student Voice:** By foregrounding students' own narratives, the research centers voices often marginalized in policy discussions. This contributes to more student-centered understandings of doctoral education.

**Comparative Insights:** Data from multiple institutional and geographical contexts will enable comparative analysis, revealing how different EMI implementation models relate to identity outcomes and where challenges appear universal versus context-specific.

### 6.3 Methodological Contributions

**Longitudinal Narrative Methodology:** The study will advance methodological knowledge about conducting longitudinal narrative research, addressing practical and ethical challenges and demonstrating analytical

approaches for tracking narrative change over time. Publications will include methodological papers sharing insights with other researchers.

**Multimodal Data Integration:** The combination of interviews, journals, literacy artifacts, and documents will model how multiple narrative data sources can be integrated analytically, enriching understanding of identity as performed across contexts and genres.

#### 6.4 Practical Contributions

**Recommendations for Doctoral Education:** Findings will inform practical recommendations for supporting non-Anglophone doctoral students in EMI contexts, including:

- Supervisory practices that recognize linguistic diversity as asset
- Institutional language support services tailored to doctoral-level needs
- Policies fostering multilingual scholarly practices
- Professional development for faculty working with multilingual students

**Policy Implications:** The research will generate evidence-based insights for university administrators and policymakers considering or implementing EMI policies, highlighting identity dimensions that policy discussions often overlook.

**Student Resources:** Findings may inform resources for doctoral students themselves, helping them understand and navigate identity challenges in EMI contexts, potentially reducing isolation and normalizing struggles.

#### 6.5 Social Justice Contributions

At a broader level, this research engages social justice concerns about linguistic diversity, equity, and power in global higher education. By revealing how EMI policies can marginalize multilingual students while simultaneously documenting students' agency and resistance, the study contributes to conversations about creating more linguistically just academic spaces. It challenges monolingual ideologies and linguistic imperialism [13,60], supporting movements toward plurilingual scholarship and epistemic justice [121,122].

### 7. RESEARCH TIMELINE

#### Year 1:

- Months 1-3: Ethics approval, site selection, participant recruitment
- Months 4-12: Data collection rounds 1-3 (interviews, journals, initial artifact collection)
- Ongoing: Preliminary analysis, memo-writing

#### Year 2:

- Months 13-24: Data collection rounds 4-7
- Ongoing: Iterative analysis, member checking, conference presentation of preliminary findings

#### Year 3:

- Months 25-33: Data collection rounds 8-11
- Months 34-36: Final data collection round 12, intensive analysis phase

#### Year 4:

- Months 37-42: Completing analysis, member checking of interpretations
- Months 43-48: Dissertation writing, publication preparation

### 8. DISSEMINATION PLAN

Results will be disseminated through:

- **Peer-reviewed journal articles** in leading applied linguistics and higher education journals (targeted journals include *Applied Linguistics*, *Modern Language Journal*, *TESOL Quarterly*, *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *Higher Education*, *Studies in Higher Education*)
- **Conference presentations** at AAAL, BAAL, TESOL International, Academic Identities Conference
- **Book chapters** in edited volumes on EMI and academic identity
- **Practitioner-oriented publications** for doctoral supervisors and university administrators
- **Workshops** at participating institutions sharing findings and recommendations
- **Open-access repository** of research instruments and analytical frameworks to support future research

#### Compliance with ethical standards

*Disclosure of conflict of interest*

The author(s) declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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