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Mapping a way forward: Toward a shared EMI and EAP research agenda

Introduction

In their Counterpoint, Galloway and Rose agree with our call for more cross-fertilisation between EMI and EAP scholarship but remind us that there are already strong connections between the two domains. Providing as an example their own academic and professional background, they point out that many EMI scholars, in previous roles as English language practitioners, have used EAP methods such as genre analysis and genre pedagogy. They therefore refute our critique of mutual 'unawareness', which we suspected on the grounds that EMI and EAP researchers rarely substantively engage with each other's work. Whilst we accept that many EMI scholars may be familiar with EAP methods, it is nevertheless the case that their application to EMI contexts has hardly been considered in the EMI literature. Galloway and Rose explain this by the fact that EMI has a research agenda that stretches far beyond language support and many members of the EMI community focus on topics for which EAP is not informative. However, when it comes to the areas with which our initial paper was concerned, that is student support, collaboration between language specialists and subject lecturers, and teacher education, we maintain that the notion of EMI being in its infancy cannot be justified in relation to instructional practices, as EAP theories and pedagogies can and should be drawn upon. We acknowledge the authors' clarification that it is EMI *research* in these areas that is at its early stages, and we do not at all, as the authors suggest, undervalue, or even want to 'dismiss', research on these topics in EMI contexts. On the contrary, this research is important as it contributes new insights to the EAP knowledge base, as we will discuss next. However, we feel that it is not fruitful to just 'add to a body of knowledge in EAP' without building on the knowledge that already exists.

In the following sections we focus on two issues raised in the Counterpoint, namely the importance of EMI scholarship for EAP research and practice and the warning of an Anglo-centric approach to EMI practices. Considering these issues in more detail will help us to extend our original proposal for a shared EMI and EAP research agenda.

Importance of EMI scholarship for EAP research and practice

Galloway and Rose rightly point out that, if cross-fertilisation rather than a unidirectional relationship is to be achieved, it is important that EAP is informed by EMI scholarship. We fully agree with this argument and want to consider in more detail what the older field of EAP can learn from EMI.

As EMI continues to expand, it may well become the dominant context of education through the English medium. Pecorari and Malmström (2018: 511) have argued that 'For the field of TESOL to maintain its central role in education conducted in English, it will have to claim a rightful space in EMI'. The same can be said of EAP. More and more EAP practitioners will be teaching in new, or what Galloway and Rose call 'emerging' EMI contexts. It will be important for EAP practitioners transitioning to teaching in EMI contexts to learn from EMI scholarship about student and teacher education needs in these contexts. It will also be important that they become familiar with characteristics particular to emerging EMI contexts, some of which may differ from other contexts. Galloway and Rose describe many of these characteristics, such as low admissions benchmarks for students. Some of these characteristics may be problematic for experienced EAP practitioners beginning to work in emerging EMI contexts. Research insights from EMI can alleviate some of the challenges in their transition.

Another area in which EAP can draw on EMI publications is multilingual and translanguaging pedagogies, as these have not featured in the EAP literature much historically. By contrast, there is more recognition in EMI publications of the multilingual realities and translanguaging pedagogies that exist in some EMI contexts (e.g. Paulsrud, Tian and Toth 2021). EAP researchers may find particular interest in EMI research which evidences the affordances of multilingual and translanguaging pedagogies as these may have important implications for academic language and literacy development.

Warning of an Anglo-centric approach to EMI practices

In the Point, we refer to EAP as the domain 'which has traditionally provided English language teaching for L2 students studying in Anglophone countries or post-colonial regions where English has long been the medium of instruction.' Galloway and Rose see our use of the term 'traditional' as indicative of us proposing a 'centre-periphery hierarchy' in which emerging EMI contexts would have to 'uncritically' adopt practices from Anglophone regions. They also warn that '"traditional" EAP contexts may not be entirely functionally comparable to EMI contexts', as there are vast differences between them in areas such as student needs or educational policies. The previous section, we hope, has already made clear that we do not advocate a unidirectional knowledge transfer but acknowledge the relevance of EMI research for EAP. The argument of non-comparability between EMI and Anglophone settings, on the other hand, seems problematic to us, because EMI settings lack comparability among themselves. According to Macaro's definition, EMI includes post-colonial contexts, which, for various reasons, are equally hard to compare with 'emerging' contexts as Anglophone settings would be. In post-colonial contexts, called 'old EMI' in a thought-provoking article by Willans (2022:1), higher education 'has typically only ever been available through the language of the former colonisers' (p. 1), unlike the 'new' settings where 'the scramble for EMI' (ibid) is based on neoliberal policies. A related and crucial difference is the relatively greater wealth and privilege of student populations in some of the emergent settings, which offer them better chances of successfully studying through the medium of English than their counterparts in the Global South. And it is this context, old EMI, from which emergent EMI can perhaps learn more important lessons than from the Anglosphere. Such lessons are outlined by Willans and they are by no means positive. One, for instance, is that studying in an L2 'presents serious challenges for active engagement in learning and scholarship' (p. 4). The lack of commitment by old EMI institutions to support students and teachers adequately makes Willans ask why new EMI institutions think they can create conditions for their students that avoid the same disenfranchisement. In the Point, we discussed the same lack of commitment and the resulting inadequate student support policies in Anglophone universities. We see our call for joined EMI and EAP research enforced by Willan's discussion, which demonstrates not only the need for research that leads to substantial pedagogical improvements, but also that this research would not be driven by an entirely Anglophone perspective.

Extending our proposal for a shared research agenda

The most important area for joined research is, in our view, the support that students need to develop academic literacy. While EAP researchers have carried out work in this area, several questions remain. One of these relates to the processes of EAP practitioner specialization, which includes experiential practice and professional development. The professional development needs of EAP practitioners at various stages of their career require further investigation, as do the professional development needs of

EMI teachers. Another unresolved question relates to effective institution-wide policy and practice that foster collaborative pedagogies. EMI contexts offer a rich field for this type of research.

However, rather than focusing on academic literacy support, which is needed when students are at a stage of language proficiency that they can engage with the communicative practices of their disciplines and face the 'identical challenges' of acquiring academic literacy, EMI researchers may also want to investigate how best to get students to this stage. This would mean taking a critical look at the existing support structures, such as the preparatory year or concurrent support measures, and identify to which extent they achieve the desired results and how they can be improved. Another pertinent research question is what level of proficiency students need to reach to be able to participate in disciplinary communication. These areas have been considered in EAP, but clear-cut answers have not, and perhaps cannot, be found, as they are likely to be to a certain degree context dependent. If these questions were also investigated in emergent EMI contexts, we might come closer to offering more adequate academic language and literacy support to students in Anglophone universities as well as in old and emergent EMI settings.

References

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