

**York: Reflection on the International Conference on Language, Identity and  
Education in Multilingual Contexts  
February 14-16, 2019  
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The second annual International Conference on Language, Identity and Education in Multilingual Contexts (LIEMC19) was successfully held in York, U.K. from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> of February 2019. Although the conference itself was small-scale, the presenters and attendees were fabulous in terms of research quality. Meanwhile, it provided a great platform for me to establish connections with current PhD candidates and researchers from all over the world. To be honest, I believe this is the conference that I have learned the most so far because the presentation quality and audience response were the best in my experience. I am very glad that, with Prof. Mao and the ELC's generous support, as one of the very few Chinese presenters, I was able to present what scholars from the University of Cambridge called a 'striking finding.' Overall, it was a precious conference trip for me.

From the post-structuralist point of view, it is always believed that, to understand people's perceptions and beliefs, it is better to use qualitative research methods--some conference paper presentations have started to break with this myth and make changes to increase the significance of studies on language identity construction. Some studies conducted by scholars from the University of Cambridge and other colleges and universities based in the U.K. have explored the emotion of language learners in identity construction. To my surprise, the Cambridge scholars applied mixed-method instruments to conduct a longitudinal study, tracking London high school students for two years. By using interviews and questionnaires, they noted the change of learner emotions and identity construction over a long term. It is rare to see such a study that actually explores the changing emotion and identity construction over a long period of time. It reminded me of the meaning of 'contribution to theory and practice' stressed by my supervisor Dr. Nicola Galloway. In the age of academic publication, scholars and researchers are under great stress if they don't publish anything, because it's relevant to their annual appraisal and position in the institution. However, they mainly use one-off research methods to report self-perception or basic quantitative data, which has been criticized for its lack of development of social science. Thus, it taught me a good lesson that there is no need to join the 'publish or perish' team and that good research takes time.

Meanwhile, as I was presenting my paper, I noticed that Macau, unlike Mainland China and Hong Kong, is a context where not much English Language Teaching (ELT) has been researched. Audience members showed their great interest in my research and in the future of Macau's high school education, especially assessment. Dr. Angela Gayton discussed with me about the assessment issue in Macau, and it was not surprising to see that people have a good understanding of Mainland China's education status, yet they knew almost nothing about that of Macau. A PhD candidate from the University of Sussex and I also exchanged our own insights of learner identities in Saudi Arabia and Macau's high schools. She was surprised to know from my research that our students had totally opposite attitudes towards English language learning. Her students are strongly in favor of American English and take it as their target language in learning. She suggests that there is certainly a role model for them in ELT. However, as I explored, Macau high school students did not think it would be necessary to have such a standard or role model in English learning. I was really lucky to have great audience members like these to get engaged in my presentation, and their compliments strengthened my beliefs about conducting research in Macau's context. There is definitely more to investigate in the future.



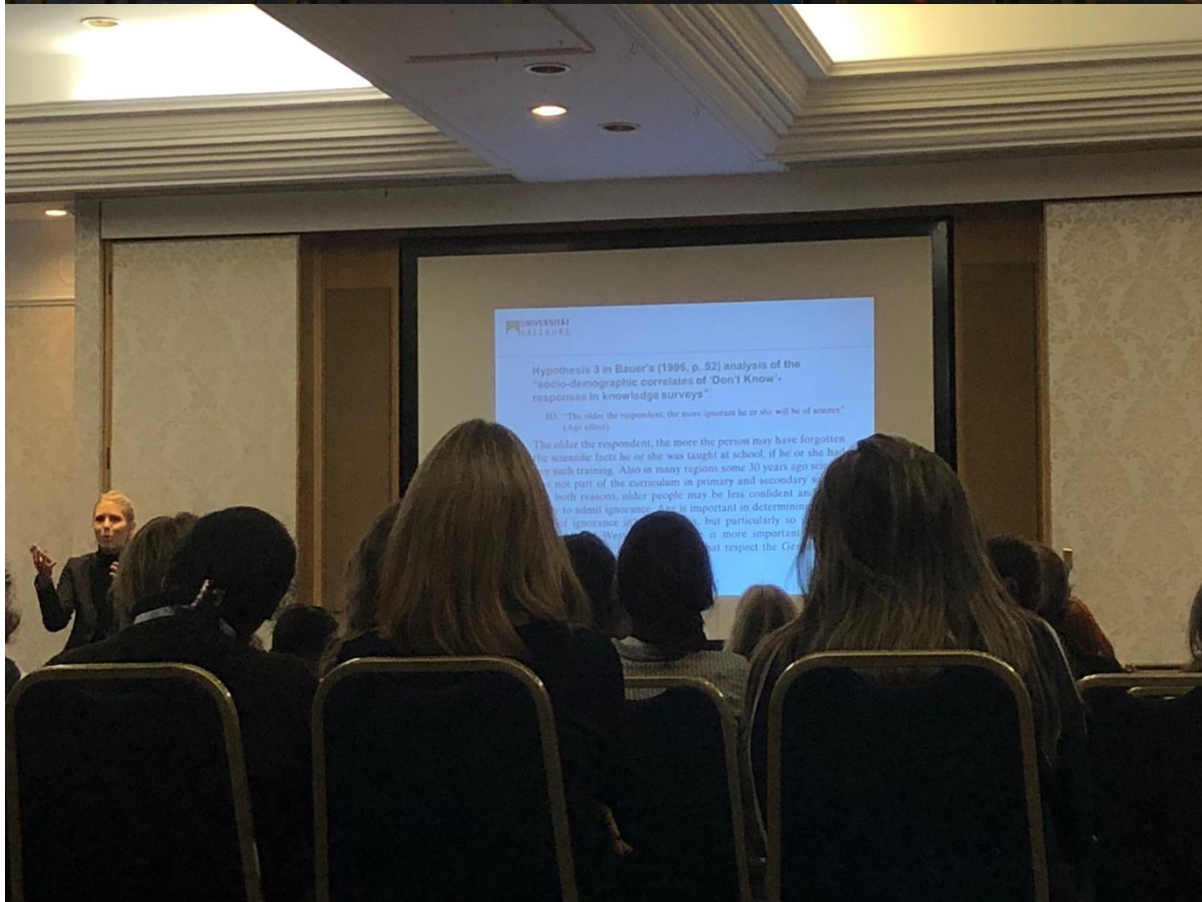














- What is she doing when translanguaging?
- Translanguaging as an inclusive pedagogical tool
  - Linking French to home language
  - Building trust and self-esteem
  - Teaching for connections between & transfer across languages
  - Legitimizing the home language by demonstrating that preschool is not just a French-only zone
  - Valuing plurilingualism: in the eyes of all the children
  - Reversing roles - the teacher becomes a learner
  - Providing a safe space for children to freely express themselves (in language of choice)