



Symposium title:

**Multilingualism across disciplines
in English-medium higher education**

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Symposium format:

- **Symposium Multimodal**

Symposium mode:

- **Hybrid**

Sub-themes (multiple choices - delete the others):

- ☐ **LANGUAGES IN INSTRUCTION: languages as Medium of Instruction, in Higher Education, in CLIL and languages for Internationalization**

Short abstract in English:

The use of English as a medium of instruction is growing exponentially, but local contextual factors contribute to a great deal of variation in its roles in and across academic disciplines. English-medium programmes usually take place in multilingual settings, where a plethora of linguistic and other semiotic resources are used to construct meaning through a dynamic interplay between personal, community, and spatial repertoires. We believe it is an excellent moment to turn to such multilingual constellations in their multimodal complexity, aiming to scrutinize their hierarchical dynamics, disciplinary diversity and educational implications in more detail. We invite contributions which broadly deal with:

- Disciplinary variation and use of multilingual and semiotic repertoires in English-medium higher education;
- Interplay between different repertoires (personal, community, and spatial repertoires) in meaning making and knowledge construction in academic disciplines;
- Pluriliteracies in and across disciplines;
- Hierarchical nature of linguistic and semiotic resources in English-medium education.

Argument:

The use of English as a medium of instruction is growing exponentially (Dafouz and Smit, 2020), but local contextual factors contribute to a great deal of variation in its roles in and across academic disciplines (e.g. Kuteeva & Airey 2014). Moreover, English-medium programmes usually take place in multilingual settings (e.g. Dafouz & Smit 2020; Kuteeva et al. 2020), where a plethora of linguistic and other semiotic resources are used to construct meaning through *semiotic repertoires*, a dynamic interplay between personal, community, and



spatial repertoires (e.g. Canagarajah 2021). English, including its different national or local varieties and registers, is an integral part of such semiotic repertoires in various genres used in academic disciplines and occupies different positions in ‘hierarchical constellations’ of repertoires.

The concept of semiotic repertoires foregrounds the relevance of all multimodal and verbal resources, including the physical environments in which interactions take place. In educational contexts, this trans-semiotizing approach views language as entangled with other semiotic modes (e.g. visuals, gestures, bodily movement) in meaning making (e.g. Lin 2019), thus acknowledging that participants in their diverse roles, e.g. researchers, teachers or students, make use of all their resources, albeit in situated and different constellations, when engaging in knowledge development and construction.

While these processes are inherently complex and require participants to draw on and/or develop relevant literacies, the multilingual realities of 21st century higher education come with the additional challenge of requiring literacies in, or across, more than one language, i.e. in developing and working with *pluriliteracies*. Pluriliteracies enable learners ‘to understand and develop ways in which cultural and linguistic contexts and social relations influence and impact literacy practices’ (Coyle and Meyer, 2021: 37). It goes without saying that such literacies are not only dependent on the respective linguistic resources that are relevant at a particular higher education site, but also the respective disciplinary specifics and expectations. For example, while historians often work with primary and secondary sources in different languages, computer scientists tend to do a great deal of their reading and writing in English (e.g. Hynninen & Kuteeva, 2020).

As recent research in EMEMUS (English Medium Education in Multilingual University Settings) offers valuable information on the roles of English in relation to other languages in higher education (e.g. Kuteeva et al. 2020; Wilkinson & Gabriels 2021), we think it is an excellent moment to turn to the multilingual constellations in their multimodal complexity, aiming to scrutinize their hierarchical dynamics, disciplinary diversity and educational implications in more detail.

Our symposium invites contributions which broadly fall under the following themes:

- Disciplinary variation and use of multilingual and semiotic repertoires in English-medium higher education;
- Interplay between different repertoires (personal, community, and spatial repertoires) in meaning making and knowledge construction in academic disciplines;
- Pluriliteracies in and across disciplines;
- Hierarchical nature of linguistic and other resources in English-medium education.

References:

- Canagarajah, S. (2021) Materialising semiotic repertoires: Challenges in the interactional analysis of multilingual communication, *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 18(2), 206-22.
- Coyle, D., & Meyer, O. (2021). *Beyond CLIL: Pluriliteracies Teaching for Deeper Learning*. Cambridge University Press.
- Dafouz, E., & Smit, U. (2020). *ROAD-MAPPING English medium education in the internationalised university*. Palgrave Macmillan.



- Hynninen, N. & Kuteeva, M. (2020). Researchers' language practices concerning knowledge production and dissemination: Discourses of mono- and multilingualism. In Kuteeva et al. 2020, pp. 323-350.
- Lin, A. (2019). Theories of trans/languageing and trans-semiotizing: implications for content-based education classroom. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 22(1), 5-16.
- Kuteeva, M. and Airey, J. (2014). Disciplinary differences in the use of English in higher education: Reflections on recent language policy developments. *Higher Education*, 67(5), 533-549.
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- Wilkinson, R., & Gabriels, R. (2021). *The Englishization of Higher Education in Europe*. Amsterdam University Press.