

The roles and positioning of non-English speaking background overseas-trained teachers in the Australian public school system

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the degree of

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under the supervision of Dr Jacqueline Widin
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Certificate of original authorship

I, Germana Eckert, declare that this thesis, is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy (Education) in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Technology Sydney. This thesis is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis. This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution. This research is supported by the Australian Government Research Training Program.

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I commenced my PhD research project five years ago with a slight sense of trepidation for what it would be and what I would make it become. The process has, of course, fundamentally changed me and the experience has afforded to me the opportunity to develop. As Bourdieu would say, I was afforded entry to the field, and I brought to the field my habitus and capital. Through my navigation of and experiences in the field I have accrued capital and my habitus has been broadened. It is an enormous privilege to have been given.

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Statement indicating the format of thesis

This is a conventionally formatted thesis structured as a series of chapters. These chapter titles can be found in the table of contents from page ix.

Publications and presentations

- Eckert, G. (2020). Strategies used by plurilingual international educators in the Australian education field. In P. Iida, T. Reagan, J. W. Schwieter, C. T. McGivern, & J. Man-Bo Ho (Eds.), *Readings in language studies Volume 8: Critical perspectives on teaching, learning, and society* (pp. 152–171). International Society for Language Studies.
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- Eckert, G. (2019, June 20–22). *Language use in linguistically diverse classrooms in Australia: Monolingualism versus plurilinguals' language rights* [Paper presentation]. International Society for Language Studies Annual Conference, Hong Kong.
- Eckert, G. (2018, September 8). *New trends in approaches to language in Australian schools: What kind of lingualism is this, anyway?* [Paper presentation]. New Trends in English Language Teaching Conference, Istanbul, Turkey.
- Eckert, G. (2018, June 27–30). When heterogeneity meets homogeneity: Non-English-speaking-background overseas-trained teachers' language use and cultural awareness within the Australian public school system [Paper presentation]. SS22 Sociolinguistics Symposium, Auckland, New Zealand.

Abstract

This thesis focuses on bilingual/plurilingual school teachers who are working in the Australian education field. The research investigates the ways in which these teachers are differentially denied or allowed access to the Australian education field, and ways in which these teachers, rich in plurilingual and pluricultural experience, are legitimated once they are employed in the public school system.

Bourdieu's key concepts of fields of power, capital and habitus provide the primary analytical lens for this research; Fairclough's critical discourse analysis is a complementary tool for an investigation into how the teachers are positioned in the field. This qualitative research draws on analyses of institutional documents pertaining to Australian education as well as case study interviews with teachers.

Much has been documented concerning the challenges and hurdles facing non-English-speaking-background (NESB) overseas-trained teachers in Australian schools. This research explores where these teachers are located in the field; the habitus of these teachers; the strategies these teachers have demonstrated to accumulate capital, and; how, or indeed whether, these strategies have changed the logic of practice in the field. The study investigates various forms of cultural capital, for example, language awareness and ability, and cultural awareness or understanding, and how these are accumulated and valued in the field. The research maps the linguistic markets within the schools and across communities.

The study found that the hegemonic practices of the field, such as the use of English as the solely legitimated language and the ways in which languages other than English are subjugated, are successful in maintaining their dominance over the field and thus delegitimate dominated languages and cultures in the field. The study's findings and analysis illuminate the impediments facing bilingual/plurilingual teachers in Australia. The thesis provides great insight into the teachers' dispositions and how their habitus continually shapes and is shaped by the field; it shows how the power relations in the field are established through the interpretations made by dominant agents in the sites

of practice. The research uncovers how the logic of practice and doxa of the field are open to interpretations due to the unclear and at times contradictory messages around language practices at the policy/political level. Ultimately, the thesis also shows the ways in which the IEs themselves uphold the hegemonic practices of the field through their misrecognition of the logic of practice of the field.

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Glossary

ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills
BOSTES	Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards. The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) replaced BOSTES on 1 January 2017.
CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse
CALP	Cognitive academic language proficiency
Capital	Bourdieuian concept. The values and resources a person possesses. See Chapter Two for further details.
Casual relief teacher	A teacher accredited to teach in NSW public schools, but who does not have a permanent position in a school. A casual relief teacher is called in by the school or a teacher to relieve a permanent classroom teacher when they are away from their class.
Casual teacher	See Casual Relief teacher
Community Languages Program	This program is managed by the NSW Department of Education and offers tuition in approximately 60 languages to NSW school students from Kindergarten to the final year of schooling in NSW, Year 12. Classes are offered to students outside of school hours. However, if there is a sufficiently large community group in one school, that school can apply for additional funding through the Community Languages Program and the classes are offered to students of that community background during school hours.
EAL/D	English as an additional language or dialect. The acronym is used in NSW schools to identify students who are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and who speak, or whose carers speak, a LOTE at home.

EAL/D learning progression	Describes the progression of English language learning typical of students learning English as an additional language or dialect. It is designed to be used by all teachers to understand the diverse phases of English language learning. It is thus also used to ascertain and monitor students' location and progression through the phases.
ELICOS	English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students. Under Australian legislation, international students in Australia who are studying English must study ELICOS-registered courses in ELICOS registered colleges.
ESL	English as a Second Language
Field	Bourdieuian concept. The setting in which agents are located. See Chapter Two for further details.
Game	Bourdieuian concept. The practices which occur in fields. See Chapter Two for further details.
Habitus	Bourdieuian concept. A person's dispositions and values. See Chapter Two for further details.
HSC	Higher School Certificate matriculation exams
IEs	International Educators
L1	First language
Leave	Holiday, maternity, carer's, etc.
Linguistic capital	Bourdieuian concept. A person's knowledge of language/s. See Chapter Two for further details.
Linguistic market	Bourdieuian concept. A symbolic marketplace where different languages have different values. See Chapter Two for further details.
LGBTQI	Acronym used to identify people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, or asexual
Logic of practice	Bourdieuian concept. The ways in which people are predisposed to act in different fields. See Chapter Two for further details.
LOTE	Languages of the Earth; Languages Other Than English

NESB	Non-English-speaking background
NESA	NSW Education Standards Authority
Newcomers	Bourdiesian concept. See Chapter Two for further details.
NSW	New South Wales. Australia's oldest and most populous state.
NSW DoE	New South Wales Department of Education (State level)
Players	Bourdiesian concept. The agents/people who play the game in the field. See Chapter Two for further details.
Regular classroom teacher	A teacher who teaches mainstream Kindergarten to 6th grade classes
RFF	Release from face-to-face teaching
SAE	Standard Australian English
Site of practice	Bourdiesian concept. The specific sites within a field. See Chapter Two for further details.
Special needs students	Students who have learning and support needs, including students with intellectual disability, mental health issues, autism, physical disability, sensory impairment, and students with learning difficulties or behaviour disorder.
Teacher accreditation	Before teachers are able to teach in NSW public schools, they must go through an accreditation process, where they need to show evidence of their qualifications, ongoing teaching experience, and ongoing professional development and professional learning.
Teaching in blocks	When casual teachers (see Casual teachers in this glossary) are called in to teach a class or work at a school for more than a few days. The 'block' period can be anything from several weeks to a year.
TESOL	Teaching English as a Second or Other Language
Withdrawal groups	EAL/D students are withdrawn from class in groups to do intensive English learning. These groups are informally called withdrawal groups.

