Transnational Translingual Literacies: Re-thinking Graduate Student Identity and Support

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Transnational graduate students—often referred to as "international students" on U.S. campuses—inhabit contested linguistic identity spaces. They generally enter U.S. academic departments with considerable background in their discipline, having read a wide range of academic texts and engaged in academic practices, often in multiple languages and transnational contexts. They have also developed accomplished identities as writers, readers, speakers and thinkers in multiple languages. We will report on a series of interviews with seven such students on a U.S. state university campus in which we asked them about their language and cultural backgrounds, as well as their academic and professional identities since arriving in the US and their future ambitions. This ethnographic approach turns a translingual lens on how U.S. institutional structures (mis-)identify such students, and provides an opportunity to suggest alternate pedagogical practices and support. These interviews encourage our graduate students to interrogate the liminal space that they occupy by virtue of their transnational status, situating their experiences transnationally and translingually, and illuminating a complex range of language backgrounds and identities.[1]

For many U.S. graduate academic support programs (Grad-ASPs) and for transnational students, careful attention to this multiplicity of identities potentially creates a discursive space necessary for negotiating difference, and, if properly supported, for promoting the aspirations and values of a global university for the 21st century. We articulate an approach to Grad-ASPs—and to the students they serve—that we will call *transnational translingual literacies*. This builds upon an academic literacies approach (Lea & Street, 1996, 2006; Lillis, 2003) but adapts it for translingual re-conceptions across language differences, and for transnational developments in studies of migration and identity. A transnational translingual

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literacies approach necessitates shifts in the ways that we conceive of student language, disciplinary, national, and cultural identities. It also requires a shift in the ways that disciplinary faculty, support staff, and program administrators approach their support for these students.

Reconceiving Graduate Academic Support Programs

Transnational Students, Translingual Literacies

Transnational graduate students on U.S. college campuses are impacted by a daunting array of academic bureaucracy. A global outreach or admissions office may have recruited them originally, often by means of agreements with institutions in the students' country of origin. Even before they leave they may have been in contact with a "testing" office that focuses on the TOEFL or other measure of English proficiency. There will almost certainly be an "international students" office, which usually focuses on securing visas, work permits, housing, etc. A student's academic department has its own academic and procedural requirements, often mediated by a faculty advisor with whom they may have had previous contact.

Our focus here will be on graduate academic support programs (Grad-ASP), sometimes referred to as Graduate Communication Programs. Michelle Cox and Nigel Caplan (2014) surveyed such programs and found that the services available, the institutional location, the approaches to graduate support, and the professional affiliation of directors and staff varied widely from campus to campus. A Grad-ASP may be a free-standing program, or located in a particular academic department, in the international students' office, as part of a writing center, a writing across the curriculum program, an ESL program, a language institute, or, as is the case with the particular program we'll focus on here, housed in the writing program within the English department. There are advantages and disadvantages to all these locations, but wherever they are located institutionally, their mission is to support transnational graduate students as they negotiate the language, academic, social, and cultural challenges that are an integral part of their in-between transient state. A detailed understanding of the transnational graduate student experience is critical to conceptualizing the basic functions of a Grad-ASP:

- How to structure support services for transnational graduate students
- What kinds of pedagogical recommendations to make to graduate faculty through professional development outreach
- What role the Grad-ASP program plays in supporting a transnational translingual mission and vision for the university.

There are a number of possible variables (see Figure 12.1) influencing the language identities of transnational graduate students, and their academic, professional and personal identities as well. We will focus on what our transnational graduate students told us when we asked them about their language practices, and explore tentative conclusions—or better, questions and potential shifts in approach—for effective practices in academic support programs for transnational graduate students. We draw upon a series of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with seven graduate students who agreed to discuss their translingual and transnational literacies. These subjects were compensated for their time (each interview took about an hour).
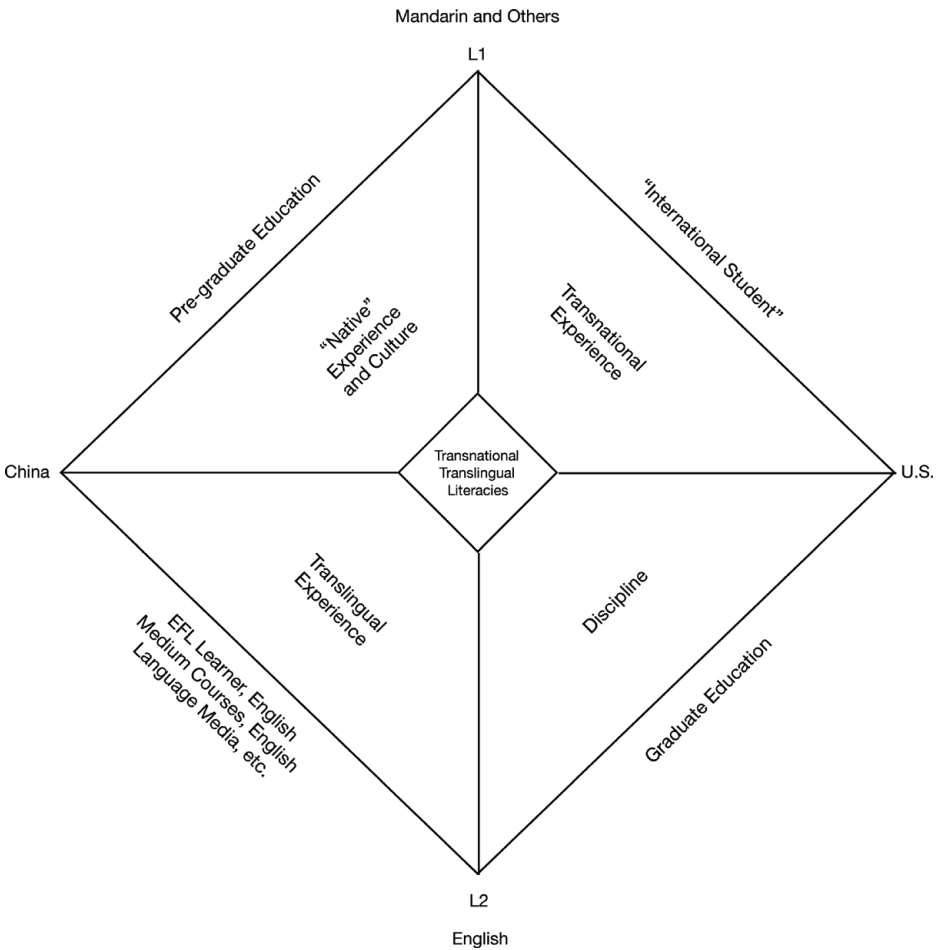
Mandarin and Others

L1

Pre-graduate Education

"International Student"

"Native" Experience and Culture

Transnational Experience

China

Transnational Translingual Literacies

U.S.

Translingual Experience

Discipline

EFL Learner, English Medium Courses, English Language Media, etc.

Graduate Education

L2

English

Figure 12.1. Variables influencing the language identities
of transnational graduate students.

Our transnational graduate students, or, as we call them, emerging scholars, have a great deal to share about elements affecting their language identities, sometimes affirming our hypotheses, sometimes complicating or contesting our initial assumptions. We have reported elsewhere (Robinson, Hall, and Navarro, 2020, Chapter 6) on students' experiences before coming to graduate study in the US In this chapter we will examine their experiences after they arrive on campus, and examine a range of effective interventions on the part of programs for "international" graduate students and on the part of faculty supervising them to support transnational graduate students.

The questions that we asked in our interviews (Robinson, Hall, and Navarro, 2020, Appendix D) attempted to take a 360-degree view of graduate student literacies (Figure 12.1), taking into account their past language affiliations, their present identity as transnational graduate students on a U.S. campus, and their future professional and personal ambitions:

- Their often complex language backgrounds, including relations both to the standardized language affirmed by official language policy in their country of origin context but also to other language(s) and dialects
- Their history of English language learning, beginning in their primary, secondary, and undergraduate education in their country of origin and continuing as they make the transition to an English-medium campus in the United States
- Their relation to disciplinary language(s) in their graduate studies and in their emerging scholarly and/or professional identities
- Their relationship to the U.S. context where they physically live at present, to their "home" culture, and to their identities as global, cosmopolitan citizens, including an articulation of their plans, ambitions, attitudes toward their future as transnational professionals

Transnational translingual literacies reflect not only how our students read and write, but also how we, as instructors, as staff, as administrators, *read them*. How do we conceive of their literacies, their identities, and how do these conceptions correspond–or not–to the students' own experiences of academic and personal transnational translingual literacies?

In order for Grad-ASPs to fulfill this mission, we will argue, it will be necessary to re-conceptualize "international" graduate students as transnational emerging scholars, to listen to their experiences and their concerns, and to develop support structures and interventions that respect their status as emerging transnational professionals. The first step in developing effective support services for a given population is to examine and discuss their goals and aspirations. Especially when students come from a different national and linguistic background than prevails on the target campus, it is important to avoid assuming that we already understand who they

are and what they want. Even brief interviews reveal a possible lack of alignment between U.S. university assumptions and expectations and the actual experiences, aspirations, and expectations of the students themselves.

From Academic Literacies to Transnational Translingual Literacies

When we look at these academic support programs, we should do so through a critical translingual and transnational lens. We need to examine not only the students' interview responses but also the institutional context surrounding them–international students program, language and academic support services, curriculum structure, and pedagogical professional development for faculty—by asking questions that promote linguistic justice and engage with issues of mobility.

Mary Lea and Brian Street (1997; 2006) describe their influential concept of "academic literacies" as both encompassing and going beyond two earlier (and yet continuing) approaches to writing and literacy, and we can apply their model to conceptions of international graduate student literacies and Grad-ASP programs. For Lea and Street (2006), the "study skills" approach sees writing and literacy as primarily an individual and cognitive skill. This approach focuses on the surface features of language form and presumes that students can transfer their knowledge of writing and literacy seamlessly from one context to another.

In Grad-ASP programs, this approach translates to a desire to create parallel courses—sometimes described as English for Academic Purposes (EAP)—for transnational graduate students that contain exercises and materials designed to develop individual skills. An example of such an approach may be found in Liying Cheng et al. (2004), who asked graduate students to rank 31 "study skills" in terms of "most difficult" and "most important." Based on overlaps in these lists, they recommend an EAP "course including *Leading class discussions, Giving presentations, Small group discussion, Writing long or short reports,* and *Understanding a writer's attitude and purpose"* (2004, p. 60). These "skills" are seen as generalizable across disciplines and professions, and the EAP program, as an independent entity, will take responsibility for implementing this course, choosing common examples, and thus for preparing graduate students to deal with their coursework reading and writing, their teaching assistantships, their research, and ultimately their dissertation writing and professional preparedness.

The attraction of the "study skills" model for faculty is obvious: they have some place to *send* the students who are conceived as "problematic," as "other." Cox and Caplan (2014) summarized some faculty attitudes in their survey as "Disciplinary faculty see any type of writing instruction or support as 'inoculation services'—so they assume that students' writing will be 'fixed' if they attend only one writing center consultation."

Going beyond this deficit model, Lea and Street identify a second widespread approach, "academic socialization," as

> concerned with students' acculturation into disciplinary and subject-based discourses and genres. Students acquire the ways of talking, writing, thinking, and using literacy that typified members of a disciplinary or subject area community. The academic socialization model presumes that the disciplinary discourses and genres are relatively stable and, once students have learned and understood the ground rules of a particular academic discourse, they are able to reproduce it unproblematically. (2006 p. 369)

In the Grad-ASP context, such an approach would take students' emerging disciplinary identities as primary, and the program would attempt to defer to disciplinary experts. Based on student surveys and interviews, Swathi Ravichandran, et al. (2007) identified promising strategies as more feedback from faculty, a peer mentor program with mentors from the same discipline, more discipline-based writing center tutors, and department-specific English language support. From a writing center perspective, Tallin Phillips (2013) advocates a "holistic approach" that would "recogniz[e] the role of disciplinarity" in graduate student texts by employing discipline-specific graduate tutors (as opposed to generalist undergraduates), by considering "research methodology" as "in essence an act of pre-writing for many graduate writing projects."

One of the ways in which graduate students differ from undergraduates is in their more nuanced, sophisticated, and deeper commitment to their disciplinary identities. For transnational emerging scholars, closer cooperation and collaboration between Grad-ASP programs and academic departments form an indispensable element in better support. But acknowledging and incorporating disciplinarity will not be enough if disciplinarity itself and student disciplinary identities are conceived as standardizable or stable. Lea and Street's (2006) academic literacies approach

> is concerned with meaning making, identity, power, and authority, and foregrounds the institutional nature of what counts as knowledge in any particular academic context. It is similar in many ways to the academic socialization model, except that it views the processes involved in acquiring appropriate and effective uses of literacy as more complex, dynamic, nuanced, situated, and involving both epistemological issues and social processes, including power relations among people, institutions, and social identities. (p. 369)

Applying the academic literacies approach to Grad-ASP programs would entail a critical scrutiny of all aspects of the transnational graduate student experience:

recruitment in their country of origin, qualification through testing and other means, the assumptions underlying language support initiatives, the pedagogy of graduate courses, the process of developing and approving dissertation topics, the structure and procedures of writing center and other support programs, and a critical approach to disciplinary discourses, seeing them as ongoing negotiations rather than fixed templates, among other possibilities. An academic literacies approach focuses on the institution, situating particular interactions of students with instructors, administrative offices, admissions and testing standards, visa status, language proficiency support, and disciplinary discourses in a context of "power relations." But as Lillis (2003) noted,

> Whilst powerful as an oppositional frame, that is as a critique of current conceptualizations and practices surrounding student writing, academic literacies has yet to be developed as a design frame . . . which can actively contribute to student writing pedagogy as both theory and practice. (p. 192)

That is, an academic literacies approach is good at describing, analyzing, and critiquing current practices in terms of power relations, but does not always clearly point towards enhancing the student experience.

In the most comprehensive study of Grad-ASP programs to date, Shyam Sharma (2018) suggests two key shifts that potentially go beyond critique and an oppositional frame: "fostering student agency" (Chapter 4) and "support driven by advocacy" (Chapter 5). Sharma argues that support for international graduate students needs to undergo a shift beyond its traditional focus on language issues and toward "issues of politics and power, policy and ideology, local and global political economies, diversity and intersectionality of the student identities" (2018, p. 191). Such approaches are starting to emerge, for example in a recent intersectional study of African students on U.S. campuses (Mwangi et al., 2019) or in studies exploring the intersection of transnationalism and gender (Eldaba & Isbell, 2018; Le, 2016).

English language development is one of the most challenging aspect of transnational student success—it is certainly the most visible—but Sharma suggests that we need to approach it in a different, more translingual manner, arguing that

> We must ask new questions. What writing cultures do international students bring with them? How do they build on prior knowledge and why do they discard or repurpose their past skills as they transition and adapt to the new academe and its disciplines and the professions? (p. 191)

Building on Sharma's emphases on student agency and Grad-ASP advocacy as the keys to moving beyond the current quagmire in international graduate student support, we suggest the next logical development in the hierarchical series of

encompassing approaches: from study skills, to academic socialization, to academic literacies—then on to what we are calling here, drawing on recent developments in writing and language studies, transnational translingual literacies. That is, not only disciplinary discourses and institutional structures need to be analyzed, as academic literacies would argue, but languages themselves, in the translingual conception, are neither stable nor independent entities. Dynamic student identities, always in flux, are influenced transnationally by complex interactions between ideologies about language and knowledge internalized (or resisted) during experience and education prior to the United States, and students' more recent academic, linguistic, and personal explorations once they arrive.

What do we mean by using a translingual lens when discussing transnational emerging scholars? What do we mean by translingual transnational literacies? What kinds of questions might we ask about a course, a syllabus, a classroom, a curriculum, a support program, a professional development workshop? Or about transnational student experiences, as expressed in the interviews, in any of the above? Here are a few:

- How are language hierarchies constructed, deconstructed, reaffirmed, reconstituted in this particular institutional context? What models of language(s) and language difference are implicitly assumed in the existing policies and procedures of the program? How do students' previous language experiences, affiliations, and cultural conceptions of language and language difference impact their academic progress and their personal interaction with the surrounding campus and societal context?

- What assumptions are implicitly made by the program about students' language identity (including language background, expertise, and affiliation), disciplinary and professional identity, national/cultural identity, and personal identity? How do these correspond (or not) with students' own articulations of identity?

- Do the pedagogical choices, processes and practices in the local courses and classrooms reinforce, resist, or silently acquiesce to the continuing influence of monolingual ideologies? What kinds of professional development approaches may lead to a more reflective practice? What forms of academic support do the graduate students themselves see as most helpful?

- Do our evaluation and assessment practices include our graduate students as active metacognitive participants and reflective agents of their own linguistic and intellectual development? That is, is assessment something that is done to the students by us or (even worse) by outside testing agencies, or is it a process that students themselves participate in and, as emerging professionals, ultimately control?

The common thread in all these questions is the issue of student agency. Traditionally, programs for transnational students, chronically underfunded and often overwhelmed by sudden unexpected bursts of enrollment, have resorted to a one-size-fits-all model, based on hasty and unexamined assumptions about what "international students" are thought to "need" and want in terms of support. A more inclusive approach that we have had time and opportunity to pursue is to ask the students about their experiences: what has happened, what they wanted and whether they got it, what campus programs might have done to make things easier, or at least more transparent, for them.

Experiences of Transnational Emerging Scholars

Even more than undergraduate "international" students, graduate students inhabit a conflicted linguistic territory. While 18-year-old first-year students face considerable challenges in adapting to U.S. academic conventions and assumptions, they also, in common with their U.S.-born classmates, usually come to the classroom with little previous disciplinary knowledge or expertise in writing. Graduate students arrive on U.S. campuses with considerable disciplinary knowledge; with more experiences reading complex texts, often in multiple languages; and with a more developed identity as a writer in one or more languages.

Functioning in a new cultural context often brings previously unconscious assumptions from one's native culture into focus, while at the same time the new local culture also makes multiple assumptions about "international students" in general, as well as more specific stereotypes about particular nationalities or ethnic groups. With experiences from the past taking on new significance in a U.S. milieu, and facing new categorizations in the present from the U.S. academic institution and from U.S. culture in general, some kind of response on the part of transnational emerging scholars to these attributed identities cannot be avoided, though that response can encompass a wide, complex continuum ranging from passive acceptance to ambivalent questioning to active resistance.

The result, for many transnational students, is a sustained liminality. Students with transnational identities (Levitt & Jaworsky 2007) continue to build and sustain networks of connective meaning across physical distances, language interactions, and cultural contexts. Rather than imagining a linguistic identity—whether professional or personal—exclusively in English, translingual approaches (Canagarajah, 2013; Horner et. al 2011) invite us to attend to the continuing interplay of multiple languages during the course of varied communicative activities. Liminality can be acutely uncomfortable, a condition of being neither fish nor fowl, but it can also be the opener of doors to the future, if one can (re)create and sustain an identity as, for example, still Chinese but envisioning a future life lived largely in the US or a third country.

Student Experience: Academics

The academic adjustment of transnational graduate students has been approached usually as an issue of "study-related stress" (Brown, 2007) or "academic stress" (Wan, et al., 1992). More recently Shi Pu and Michael Evans (2018) explored critical thinking through positioning theory, while Shakil Rabbi and Suresh Canagarajah (2017) have turned a critical lens on "socialization in the neoliberal academy" as an important factor in transnational student identity and adjustment.

The transition to U.S. academic culture, and the stresses and often pain of that transition, began before our interviewees even left China or Taiwan: the first hurdle was the dreaded Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). What those of us who have never taken it might not understand is that it is not a pure language exam, but instead assumes a rather broad academic background. Student #7, an aspiring professional musician, described the sacrifices necessary to pass the exam

> And how I prepare it I actually I finally passed my TOEFL exam.
> . . . I prepare for it like a four-month. I didn't even play cello for
> four months and I only study and surprisingly my speaking part
> scores super high when I took that my last TOEFL exam. So
> yeah, that's how I prepare it.

Students who grew up in the Chinese educational system are often used to high-stakes tests, but they would discover that in some cases these did not stop coming once they reached the US The music students faced a particularly difficult exam, made more perplexing for transnational students because of the way that it was written and structured. The music exam was developed by a team of senior faculty members who expressed concern about the graduate students' alleged inability to "perform" successfully in their written assignments. They did not explain to the students which "assignments" they did not complete successfully, what the exam was assessing, or how it related to their specific academic program concentration. The exam consisted of several pages of a western-centric reading, written by a scholar decades ago. The question was written in a way that seemed to invite summary rather than analysis and, after discussions with the senior faculty members, they decided that the students would be "better" off simply summarizing, although, by the end of the semester, the students had analyzed the readings, incorporated readings from scholars from the East, made nuanced transdisciplinary connections with arts, literature, and intellectual history, and engaged with the more complex ideas of the texts in ways that "surprised" some of their professors. As student #5 noted,

> I think they forgot, we have read these texts before, in our own languages, we understand our field and we are committed to going outside of our language, our country, our discipline, and our 'comfort zone' to pursue our academic ideas and dreams. We are not "nobodies."

An accomplished musician who had no problem performing in front of large audiences, Student #5 found speaking to small groups of English speakers to be extremely anxiety-provoking. It was Student #5, who, punning on a frequent grammatical barrier, articulated "we're not regular students. We're the Irregulars." This student pointed out that her entire trajectory, experience, and identity was othered from the moment she began the application process. She noted that the very fact that there were so many different types of evaluation tools employed to "assess" her skills, and to ultimately accept her, her talents, her contributions, and her money were still "not enough." Student #5 noted that "it seems we international students were never intended to be 'regular' and if being regular means having one language, one identity, one way of being professional, then I am happy being 'irregular.'" She shared this during an office hour and then expressly recounted her thoughts to her fellow classmates, who later decided to subvert the term and call themselves the "Irregulars."

Enrolled in a joint MSW/ Ph.D. program in social work, Student #4 faced a double whammy of improving her English while also learning a new disciplinary language:

> Because I'm in the Ph.D. program. So there for me statistics, advanced statistic itself, is a new language because I have to learn the software and then for the Ph.D. readings or the assignment. I think the reading are challenging and difficult because they are more conceptual that that is challenging for me. And then also, you know, more sophisticated I think those writing and the concepts.

WAC/WID advocates have often compared learning a discipline to learning a language—though this tendency has been criticized as leaving out the issue of language per se (Matsuda & Jablonski, 2000)–and Student #4 suggests something similar here.

Student Experience: Social Stress and Socialization

In a survey by Jenny Hyun, et al. (2007), 44% of the international graduate students reported emotional or stress-related issues, but they made use of counseling

services at a much lower rate than U.S. students. Raquel Chapdelaine and Louise Alexitch (2004) examined the social skills of international graduate students in the context of a culture shock and cultural learning model, arguing that social interaction with hosts was a key determinant of adjustment. Similarly, Andrea Trice (2004) found that students who interacted most often with U.S. students faced less social stress—though this just seems to say that students who were successful at socializing were less stressed than those who found it more difficult or impossible. Yu-Wen Ying (2005) found that academic adjustment was the most challenging stressor, and that issues of emotional and social life tended to emerge after the first stress of academic immersion had passed.

Our interviewees reported a wide range of experiences of life outside the classroom as an international student, ranging from isolation to a select network of friends to a deep immersion in American life. Student #1, for example, came to the university with a network of friends already in place,

> I will because most of my friends are in the US. How? Oh, that's my high school kind of they have like separate program for the for high school students, like preparing [for international study] and so they choose they pay more money to choose that road. So for me, it's like "oh, you're here."

In China, Student #1 had been prepared academically for international education from an early age by participating in special academies, and found that alumni of that school lived all over the United States on various campuses or were already employed. Student #2, by contrast, had attended two years of college in China before coming to the US, and while he remains in touch on social media with his friends from that time, he also feels that their present experiences are more different than similar:

> I don't have any friends [in the U.S.] that I know like before I was coming to America. Yes it's just a surprise for me because like if you are going to go into the social network of your like your University friends—I mean the Chinese one. I mean those friends you will see that they are like they're hanging out here and there in China and you will feel that Oh we are in a different country and we are in different place. We're doing different things.

On this university campus, Student #2 states that his social contacts are mostly with other international students, specifically Chinese ones, partly owing to his continuing lack of confidence in his English—despite his fluency and even volubility throughout our interview. Similarly, Student #5, a violinist, blamed her intensive practice and performance schedule for living a somewhat isolated life on the campus:.

> Outside the classroom my social life here is pretty small. But I
> mean I have to make regular contact with one of my American
> friend here. This one Chinese friend, one Korean friends, but
> mostly I will hang out with my church friends. They're all Tai-
> wanese. Okay.

Another musician, Student #8, asked "do you feel like you're living in two places?" replied:

> No, but something interesting happens to me when I am here
> I think I should be there (China) and when I am there, I really
> want to be back here. Is that strange do you think? It is cool that
> I am sometimes in two places but I think this is interesting to
> me, I see my experience as bigger now maybe even more interest-
> ing, I get this feeling when the other language pops in my mind.
> Does this sound OK? I mean is what I say now clear?

After first dismissing the idea, Student #8 seems to later embrace the quintessential translingual and transnational experience noting that "the other language pops in my mind," Mandarin, when in the US or English when in China.

While Student #8 feels his "experience as bigger" because of his complex transnational translingual identity, Student #3 experiences her extensive time in the US and impressive English skills as part of a zero-sum tradeoff:

> I tried to like create a resume in Chinese version. I had a really
> hard time. I had no idea about how to create a resume in Chi-
> nese, but I know how to create a resume in English. And now I
> after I took that us to deal with the present and the future and I
> feel that also now, I'm bad at don't like Chinese academic words
> writing really now.

Her comfort in English and in American culture has come, in her mind, at the cost of skills and comfort in her native language and country.

Student #3 feels that her American experience has changed her, while Student #7 situates the source of change elsewhere, specifically back in China. Unlike Student #3, he doesn't feel that his Mandarin skills have deteriorated, noting that he uses his first language for "an hour while I talk to my cousin every day. So yeah, okay once a day." The rapid pace of change in China can be disorienting for those who live there through it, but for expatriates only occasionally returning, like Student #7, the experience is even more disconcerting:

> If you stay U.S. for four years and you go back to China after
> that you feel so strange, everything new and you know, Yeah,
> and my dad told me like it's four years ago that the lines of the

subway only have two. Right now, like they almost have 20 lines so, I'm like . . . all that in just four years! In China nobody uses their wallet everything they pay by phone. You know, I don't even have a credit card in China or bank account in China! So, I don't I don't know. How can I deal with that? But I'll try.

Of course, the change is not only on the Chinese side: everything there may have changed, but the person has changed as well as a result of the American experience. Student #4 was the interviewee most deeply immersed in American life, and fully intending to stay in the United States permanently.

> In the first year, I didn't . . . make a lot of phone call because I am not just here by myself. So right have to take care of that because the second year my children came to stay with me. Oh, yeah, so I need to negotiate with their school in the Intermediate School and Middle School. Another time. I need to take them to see the doctors. So . . . I remember it. You have to schedule appointment on the phone. Yeah, and then I didn't know what is called because when they ask me, what's your insurance?

> It was really challenging because my kids they started learn English from elementary school. And they and so they had some English back home, but it must have been quite difficult for them when they first got here. Yeah, really challenging for them.

> I remember my younger son told me that he wished he was an American because he thought if he was if he were American he couldn't have problem with this homework and I told him that you won't unfortunately, you won't be American in your life because you won't be born here. I mean you did you didn't have the chance but I mean, I told him that in the future you will be bilingual have both advantages. You have the best of both worlds.

> So for my kids they catch up quickly then then I do so now they are teaching me so they make fun of my pronunciation. yes, I would say my life is kind of different from single students because I have family responsibilities. I have to expose to other like I'll get it more involved in the community life.

Student #4's story takes us all the way from the confusion of first arrival, through anxiety about English language proficiency, to moments of clarity and comprehension, and, at least for Student #4, to a more profound connection to and immersion in American life. Because she was not, like all the other interviewees, operating as a single individual, but rather as mother of a family, she could not limit herself

to academic English or choose the safety of an enclave of international students. Rather she is "more involved in the community life."

Student #8 wants to "make it here" in the United States, but also envisions a future that might include performing and teaching in multiple countries: he wants to be "in the world," rejecting the idea that he has to be limited geographically. Similarly, Student #3 rejected the dichotomy in the question of returning to China or staying in the US:

> Because my major is engineering I need to know what's going on in the real world so that I can keep myself in the state of art stage and never lose the track. I don't know. I pray I think I hope because I'm not a person like have to stay in one place. I always loved moving. Yeah, and so you may want be one of these people where there's a project here and next year there's a project somewhere else. Look, they're working you ask or come back to China or another that different countries to work. I don't know what it's like now. I don't have a clear plan about that. You just feel like I think I just want to pick a place where I feel comfortable right now.

Like Student #8, Student #3 expresses a desire to encounter "the real world" and to "never look back." She envisions a future of working project to project, with perhaps multiple home ports. Perhaps the most telling phrase here is "I always loved moving"—and she plans to keep it moving.

Student #7 also expresses his willingness to follow his profession wherever it may take him:

> Well, I guess well, as a musician there are two ways for us after we finish the DMA to doctoral degree. The first one is go to teaching in the University or conservatory. And the second one is played in the professional Orchestra. So my well, you know, I'm preparing my Orchestra audition. So I guess for me like wherever accept me as a musician in a university or in you know, orchestra, I will go it doesn't matter where you know, my father favorite country is New Zealand. I don't know why I don't ask me why but so she's so weird. He loved their he asked me like, oh you want to go that far? Well, if they accept me as a musician the orchestra, I'm there.

Basically Student #7 will go wherever he can obtain a position either at a university or as a performer in a professional orchestra. The only country he mentions specifically is New Zealand, for some reason a favorite of his father's. He doesn't mention China at all.

Discussion: Four Programmatic Shifts for Grad-ASP Programs

Programmatic Shift #1: From Imposing Institutional Identities on Students to Supporting Students' Dynamic Identity Processes

The questions that we asked get at notions of identity: the institution's, the instructor's, and most importantly the students'. How is identity constructed and what role does language play in this process?

Traditionally we—as an institution, as a profession—have *given* students identities, sorted them into predetermined institutional categories. But what was revealed in these interviews is that there is a richness, a complexity, to how transnational emerging scholars construct and come to those identities. They were given imposed identities before they came to us, and they chose multiple aspects of their identity in their culture of origin as well. But one of the key things that emerged during the interviewees is that identity is conceived by these students—and, more importantly embodied by them through their actions and through their self-constructions at many levels—as a dynamic and emerging process, rather than a fixed label or a permanent social role. These students, in different ways, resisted the idea of a monolithic or static identity. They came to the US in order to change, in order to let themselves explore multiple layers and levels of identity formation. They are not going to return to China unchanged, if they return there at all. When identity is changed, the notion of "home" is challenged as well.

Programmatic Shift #2: From Asking What Teachers Should Do to Focusing on What They Should and Must Support and Empower Their Students to Do

If we conceive identity of various kinds—language, national, professional, personal—as malleable and dynamic, we need to reflect this shift in thinking in our administrative structures and in our approaches to questions of pedagogy, including what we present in our professional development workshops for our faculty. Faced with graduate students who might struggle with aspects of English—especially listening—in their seminars, faculty in fields that are not focused on language may feel frustrated or just puzzled: How can they intervene to help these students? What can they do?

We propose a shift in approaches to professional development work which traditionally have suggested that faculty "intervene" and address "issues" in other

words, that faculty must do something. Perhaps most importantly, a translingual and transnational approach to pedagogy invites faculty to focus on what they can, should, and must empower their students to do by creating learning environments in which students feel safe, encouraged, and heard.

Instructors are often in search of quick fixes, looking for tips or prescriptions. But if we accommodate that approach, we risk having instructors engage in the discourse and practices of the deficit model, and they can easily become trapped in their own desires to fix "deficiencies" or to "solve problems." And this is among people of immense good will, who genuinely want to help the students, but who instead end up inadvertently embracing the very logic that they claim to be dismantling. They put students in the same kinds of categories and spaces that they claim to want to free the students from. But nobody can free anybody else: what we can do is to create a context that is supportive of experimentation and innovation, and that offers not pedagogical tools for instructors but rather metacognitive tools for students.

When we asked the students about their academic journeys in graduate school, we noted that agency was the key. The students articulated ways in which they transform challenges and difficulties into opportunities. They were happily challenged by those difficult moments. They have deployed skills across languages that allow them to construct meaning in complicated situations and contexts where meaning perhaps was lost, where meaning-making or the language exchange was breaking down. They had intervention techniques to address these kinds of situations, to resolve them favorably.

Programmatic Shift #3: From Diagnosis and Proficiency Testing to Assisted Self-Placement and Discipline-specific Language Development

For graduate directors and administrators of international student programs, probably the most important change they can make is to move away from a diagnosis and testing model. Many graduate programs are fixated on "proficiency," an approach that does not acknowledge students' linguistic and cultural competencies. Our interviews underlined the need to recognize how the students were capable of reflecting and evaluating themselves as readers and writers, and especially as professionals in their discipline. Our interviews led us to stories and narratives that showed that students were already engaged in the process of developing unique ways to think about ideas of self-reflection and assessment—like the work of faculty who use literacy narratives in their classrooms. When they realize the power of language, of their languages, they understand themselves to be empowered by language.

Programmatic Shift #4: From International Graduate Students to Transnational Emerging Scholars

Transnational graduate students constitute a class of students on U.S. university campuses who are usually not considered full members of the student body, not fully present, or only temporarily or provisionally present, or who will at some deferred time in the future be present, once they have been "fixed," once they have been acculturated to "our" campus, once their difference from our "regular" students has been defeated, solved, overcome. This process of identifying a deficit and looking for fixes is familiar to anyone who has looked at students enrolled in "basic writing" or other remedial courses, but in this case the students under study are more accurately described as emerging transnational professionals.

Those who U.S. universities, and the U.S. government, categorize as "international students" carry a particular legal status. They must navigate a complex bureaucratic system of testing and (sometimes) support, and are subjected to numerous assumptions on the part of U.S. staff, faculty, and fellow students about their language background, their cultural structures, their teaching abilities, and even their intelligence.

"International" is an obsolete term. As Ruby (2005) points out, higher education is a "good" under global trade negotiations such as GATS, and "international students" are covered by agreements between governments, with an economic impact of international students on the U.S. economy on the order of $30.8 billion in 2014–2015 (Institute of International Education, 2016). In business, an "international" company is basically an import/export entity, with its principal operations only in one country. This would contrast with a multinational company, which has agreements with a network of companies in multiple countries, or with a global company (think McDonalds) that attempts to reproduce itself in multiple countries with as little adjustment as possible to the local context (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1988; Harzing, 2000; Kordos & Vojtovic, 2016). These models have analogues in the ways that U.S. universities have adopted a global model (e.g., the university described by Pi-Yun Chen, 2015), where, in the example Amy Hodges describes (this volume), the curriculum in the Middle East must be the same as in Texas, right down to American civics courses, or a multinational model (many "study-abroad" or "sister campuses" programs). All of these (international, multinational, or global) may be contrasted with a truly transnational model, where there is no recourse to a central administrative site but rather the network *is* the company, or, in this case, the university.

Grad-ASP programs cannot alter the business model of their institutions, but working within these structures, they can look for opportunities to re-direct the resources of faculty and staff away from a deficit model and toward recognizing emerging transnational scholars as important full members of the university.

Conclusion

Re-thinking "international" graduate students as transnational emerging scholars can lead to Grad-ASPs re-thinking their visions, missions, policies, and programs. U.S. institutions must begin from where students are in terms of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds and recognize the critical role they can play in a truly global university.

We have focused on a few elements that U.S. campuses directly impact: initial placement and evaluation, continuing academic assessment, and support for graduate communication and other academic issues. Improving our support for transnational students requires thoughtful listening to what translingual transnational emerging scholars say about the ways they develop disciplinary and professional identity. It is our responsibility as U.S. faculty and Grad-ASP program administrators to understand and to consider the effects of U.S. academic practices through a translingual lens, and to develop transnational perspectives and practices that illuminate the ways that our assumptions and our actions significantly impact the structuring of the "international student" experience, and what it will take to design effective support for transnational emerging scholars.

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