

## ENGLISH MEDIUM INSTRUCTION (EMI) AND ITS BI-/MULTILINGUAL UNDERBELLY

**Assoc. Prof. Kathleen Heugh**  
*University of South Australia, Australia*

### ABSTRACT

In this presentation, I argue that EMI presupposes a society in which the linguistic ecology is bilingual (at the very least) or multilingual (more likely). Yet the educational literature on EMI seldom draws attention to the historical, political, and multidimensional nature of the bilingual and multilingual society as being critical foundations of any language education policy or changes to this policy. This is particularly the case when a significant medium of instruction change (for example from Vietnamese to English) is to be made, whether this is at of the system (macro-), school (meso-), or student (micro-) level. I draw attention to longitudinal research findings relevant to the 'the bilingual and multilingual underbelly of EMI' (e.g., Heugh, Li & Song, 2017; Heugh, et al., 2019). The findings concern key features of multilingual pedagogies, including both transknowledging (knowledge exchange, translation and transfer in teaching and learning) and horizontal and vertical translanguaging (Heugh 2021). It is important for educational linguists and decision-makers to ensure that their advice to education authorities is ethically and responsibly defensible. For this reason, I argue that that the bi-/multilingual nature of the society needs to be brought into dialogue with responsible discussions about what EMI can or cannot promise society (see also Phyak, Rawal & De Costa, 2021).



Kathleen Heugh, Centre for Research in Educational and Social Inclusion at the University of South Australia, is a socio-applied linguist specialising in language education policy, planning and implementation in multilingual countries in Africa, Asia, and Australia. She researches the implications of English medium instruction and multilingual education policies and pedagogies. These include transknowledging, translation and translanguaging with bi-/multilingual students. She currently researches the pedagogical use of human language technology with students in EMI universities. Kathleen publishes widely and is Series Editor,

with Christopher Stroud and Piet Van Avermaet, of Bloomsbury's *Multilingualism and Diversities in Education*.