Beyond English language proficiency: international secondary school students’ diverse practices of belonging

AIEC 2017

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Trang Hoang - Deakin University
The big picture context
The “International Students in Australian Secondary Schools: transnational connectedness” research project

• Funded through Australian Research Council grant DP160103181 (2016-2019)
• Joint between Deakin University and Griffith University
• Chief investigators: Alfred Deakin Professor Jill Blackmore, Prof. Christine Halse, A/Prof. Ly Tran, Prof. Catherine Beavis, and Prof. Leonie Rowan
  Researchers: Dr. Caroline Mahoney, Ms. Trang Hoang, Ms. Manaia Chou-Lee, and Ms. Catherine Moore
• Approach: qualitative longitudinal study, multi methods
In each school, the team heard from:

- 7 to 10 International Students
- 5 to 10 Domestic Students
- 5 Educators
- 1 or 2 ISP professional staff
- Principal and/or Assistant principal
My PhD focus – **International Student Voice**

- Aspirations
- Transnational networks
- Post-school pathways
- Identity-formation

Whether young international students maintain existing and/or forge new **connections** during their secondary schooling in Australia?

And if so, in **what forms, to whom, and to what extent** do their practices of connectedness play out and change across three years (Yr 10 to Yr 12)?

**Supervisor panel:** Associate Professor Ly Tran, Alfred Deakin Professor Jill Blackmore, and Professor Catherine Beavis
### International Student in Secondary Schools

**The three-generational evolution**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Pre-1990s</th>
<th>Mid 1990s - Early 2000s</th>
<th>2010 - Current</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Hsiao Liu Hsu Sheng”</td>
<td>“Parachute kid”</td>
<td>“Globally mobile youth”</td>
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<td>First 100 Chinese to USA 1872</td>
<td>“Chogi Yuhak”</td>
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<td>(Gao 1982)</td>
<td>(Abelmann et. al 2013)</td>
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<td>Early Study Abroad</td>
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- **United States, 73,019**
- **Canada, 40,706**
- **United Kingdom, 25,913**
- **Australia, 16,623**
Challenge
Interactions with Australian Schools and Students

2016 International School Student Survey (DET)

- 1,626 International school students responded;
- 84% want more Australian students as friends

Documented scholarly research

- Low levels of interaction bw local and international students (Arkoudis et al. 2010; Leask&Carroll 2011; Marginson&Sawir 2011)
- Only 14% of teachers felt possible to form close bonds with international students. Reasons: lack English skills 70%; lack specific subject and content specific skills 30% (Arber & Blackmore 2010)

“Degrees of social integration varied across sites and were largely seen as dependent on individual students and their ability to adapt”. (Arber & Blackmore 2010, p.13)
Bourdieu’s conceptual and analytical framework

• The interaction of **habitus**, **cultural capital** and **field** generates the logic of practice (Bourdieu, 1990b);

• **Habitus** operates in two key ways: 1) it is structured by one’s circumstances, and 2) it is structuring in that it shapes one’s present and future practices;

• Using the concept of **habitus** to analyse interview data elucidates the **diverse intercultural, social and interpersonal** connections that contribute to international students’ **sense of belonging** in educational and social settings.

“**Connectedness** is defined as the **multiple avenues of belonging to different communities in the home and host nations** that international students use to create a meaningful existence for themselves while **in transience**”. (Gomes & Tran 2017, p.16)
Adderley College: Institutional Habitus
Pilot study October 2016

- > 700 students; all girls; 23% LBOTE
- ICSEA =1160; 70% upper income quarter
- Approx. 27k p.a. (Domestic Yr 9– 12); AUD 33k p.a. (IS Yr 7 – 12), 2017 fees
- CIS accredited; IB Primary Year; VCE
- Median ATAR 89 (2016); 44% of students in top 10% Australia-wide, ATAR >=90
- Post-school: 96% to University.
- Destinations: Monash, Melbourne, RMIT, Deakin, ACU, William Angliss.
The transnational networks

Japanese childhood friends, on/off-line
Chinese IS friends, in and outside school
Australian classmates

Local community
Online friends
### Individual Habitus as Compilation of individual trajectories

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<tr>
<th>Ariel</th>
<th>Andrea</th>
<th>Addison</th>
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<tr>
<td>Highly mobile, transnational schooling trajectory</td>
<td>Academic-focussed Positional motivation</td>
<td>Music talent Caring and affective</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Has had schooling across 4 countries</td>
<td>• Main goal: English, excellent scores, build academic profile</td>
<td>• Conscious that she does not “quite belong” to the school</td>
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<td>• Connect via Facetime and Facebook</td>
<td>• Form friendships via sharing of Chinese and Japanese cultures</td>
<td>• Connect via WeChat</td>
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<td>• Has strong ties with childhood Japanese friends studying in US</td>
<td>• Value friendship with teachers particularly</td>
<td>• Felt a sense of belonging at homestay when caring for host family’s pets</td>
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<td>• Form close bonds with the Anime online game community</td>
<td>• Connect through interactions with peers in class on subject content knowledge</td>
<td>• Felt included and proud when participating in the school symphony and won First place in a local contest.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Teach Japanese for local kids</td>
<td>• Aspiration: to study Engineering in the US.</td>
<td>• Aspiration: study in Uni Melbourne</td>
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<td>• Aspiration: Actuary, Uni of Tokyo or one in the UK</td>
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Take-away message and Future works

• Facilitation of “belonging” needs to be purposefully shaped, driven, and demonstrated;
• The project is to investigate further the online connectedness component;
• Track the post-school pathway decisions and how international students engage with the selection and application process to universities; and
• Work with the international students in constructing their life-story from their perspectives.
References


8. WU, C.L.S., 2016. Parachute Kids: Their Transnational Educational Experience and Academic Achievement, The Claremont Graduate University
THANK YOU