



Title of Project:

Ecology of English as a Lingua Franca, Plurilingualism, and Social Relationships: A Longitudinal Investigation of an English-medium International Program in Thailand

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Project Summary:

This study explores how students learn to interact with each other by orchestrating English, other languages, and non-linguistic resources in an English-medium academic program in Thailand. While English undoubtedly plays a key role in globalization of education, recent research demonstrates that the usage of English as a lingua franca (ELF) is pragmatically motivated and situated within plurilingualism, such that it cannot be pinned down to a unified language system. From this perspective, competence in ELF encompasses the ability and openness to accept linguistic differences, adjust his/her style of communication, and even incorporate other linguistic and multimodal resources for local purposes. These skills are important for all users of English who shuttle between global contact zones in today's world, regardless of the first language background. Though microanalytic research on ELF has richly documented numerous local manifestations of such competence, rarely has it adopted longitudinal approaches, which are crucial in tracing evidence of learning. In order to contribute to this under-explored yet important line of research, this study conducts a longitudinal investigation of an English-medium international program in Thailand, involving both first and second language speakers of English. Methodologically, this multi-method study primarily employs interview, observation, and finegrained analysis of interaction to holistically understand the participants' communication practices and changes over time inside and outside the university setting. Findings will inform various stakeholders, including administrators of English-medium programs, language educators, and policymakers, who are interested in designing programs that provide participants with opportunities to cultivate competence as plurilingual speakers of English.