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Abstract

This qualitative study investigates the experiences of students in an English as a medium of instruction (EMI) program at a comprehensive university in China and how they construct identity and negotiate legitimacy in the interaction between Western and Eastern traditions and systems in the internationalization of higher education. It finds that this focal EMI program is operated in a combined model of Western systems with local sociocultural and political influences and historical traditions. It also finds that uncertainty and contradiction experienced by both academic staff and students when flexible bilingual teaching are adopted. The findings indicate that internationalization in higher education, despite its ideologically motivated nature, may produce curricular homogeneity but also creates a heterogeneous context of cultures and values and promotes critical understanding of internationalization, globalization, and diversity among students. It is also found that the

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privilege-afforded EMI students may constrain their future options and lead to identity ambivalence. This investigation is of significance to universities in East Asia that have promoted themselves as world-class universities by implementing internationalization and benchmarking themselves in relation to top universities in English-speaking countries. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)