Panel *Language Ideologies and Practices in Scientific Research*

ICS.2

CONVENORS: MARIA HELENA ARAÚJO E SÁ & SUSANA PINTO

DISCUSSANT: GEORGES LÜDI

Researching across languages and cultures: a study with doctoral students and supervisors at a Portuguese University

Maria Helena Araújo e Sá & Susana Pinto, Universidade de Aveiro, Portugal

Issues of multilingualism for scientific knowledge: practices for assessing research projects in terms of linguistic diversity

Anne-Claude Berthoud & Laurent Gajo, Université de Lausanne, Suisse / Université de Genève, Suisse

Communication in scientific research: languages matter!

Manuel Célio Conceição, Universidade do Algarve, Portugal

Is it just "black" or "white"? Multilingual collaborative research seen by an international research team

Sílvia Melo-Pfeifer, Universität Hamburg, Deutschland

Scientific knowledge diversity management and academic language(s)

Patchareerat Yanaprasart, Université de Genève, Suisse

Researching across languages and cultures: a study with doctoral students and supervisors at a Portuguese University

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PORTUGAL

Outline

1. The Euromec project

2. Researching across languages and cultures in doctoral education

3. Aim & questions

4. Context & methodology

5. Findings

6. Discussion and final remarks

7. References

1. The EUROMEC project

Jean Monnet Network *"European Identity, Culture, Exchanges and Multilingualism"*
(Coord: Maria Stoicheva, Sofia University; Erasmus +)

Aims: building knowledge in the themes of European identity, European citizenship, exchanges and multilingualism

RS1 – Identities and democracy. Frameworks of identity constructions in Europe

RS2 – New European young researchers' identities

RS3 – Identities in urban contexts: the European multilingual city

1. The EUROMEC project

RS2 – "New European young researchers' identities"

Aims: explore the experience of doing a doctorate in 5 European universities + 1 Chinese, through the analytical lenses of 'supervision', '**language**' and 'identity'.

Sofia University (Bulgaria, Coord.)
Jagiellonian University (Poland)
Durham University (UK)
University of Luxembourg (Luxembourg)
University of Aveiro (Portugal)
Beijing Language and Culture University (China)

Byram, M., Stoicheva, M., et. al. (forthcoming). *The doctorate as experience in Europe and beyond. Supervision, Languages, Identity.* Routledge.

2. Researching across languages and cultures in doctoral education

an **understudied domain** on doctoral education research

2. Researching across languages and cultures in doctoral education: literature overview

- doctoral students' experiences of :

  - different research/academic cultures (Robinson-Pant, 2009; Deem & Brehony, 2010)

  - supervisor multicultural competence (Soheilian *et al*, 2014)

- intercultural postgraduate supervision (Davcheva *et al*, 2011; Manathunga, 2014)

- impact of doing a PhD in students' (inter) cultural identities (Soong et al, 2015; Holliday, 2016)

- development of cultural competencies in the work within international teams and settings (Nerad, 2012)

- role of languages & cultures in the integration of doctoral students in an "intertextual network" (McAlpine, 2012) /acquisition of the language of a discipline (Green, 2005; Parry, 2007; Paré, 2011)

- influence of language and culture at all stages of research work (Magyar & Robinson-Pant, 2011; Robinson-Pant, 2017)

- thesis writing & viva in a second language (Carter, 2012; Paltridge & Starfield, 2007; Strauss, 2012)

3. Aim & questions

Understand what it means to research across languages and cultures in the context of doctoral education in the perspective of institutional actors (students and supervisors).

Some guiding questions

- How is this context of contact with diversity lived by the actors of the Doctoral Programs (students and supervisors)?

- How do they value it as an opportunity to build a more pluralistic and more dynamic "intertextual networking" (McAlpine, 2012) and, consequently, a more contextualized academic language and knowledge?

- How do they value it as an opportunity for individual and institutional development?

- How do they value it as an opportunity to research development (epistemology, knowledge, social value, …)?

- Which perceptions do they have concerning the value, functions, and possibilities offered by (linguistic and cultural) diversity to ongoing research?

- How are academic discourses understood and used in this context of diversity? How are (shared) "contextual frames" (Gumperz, 1982) achieved?
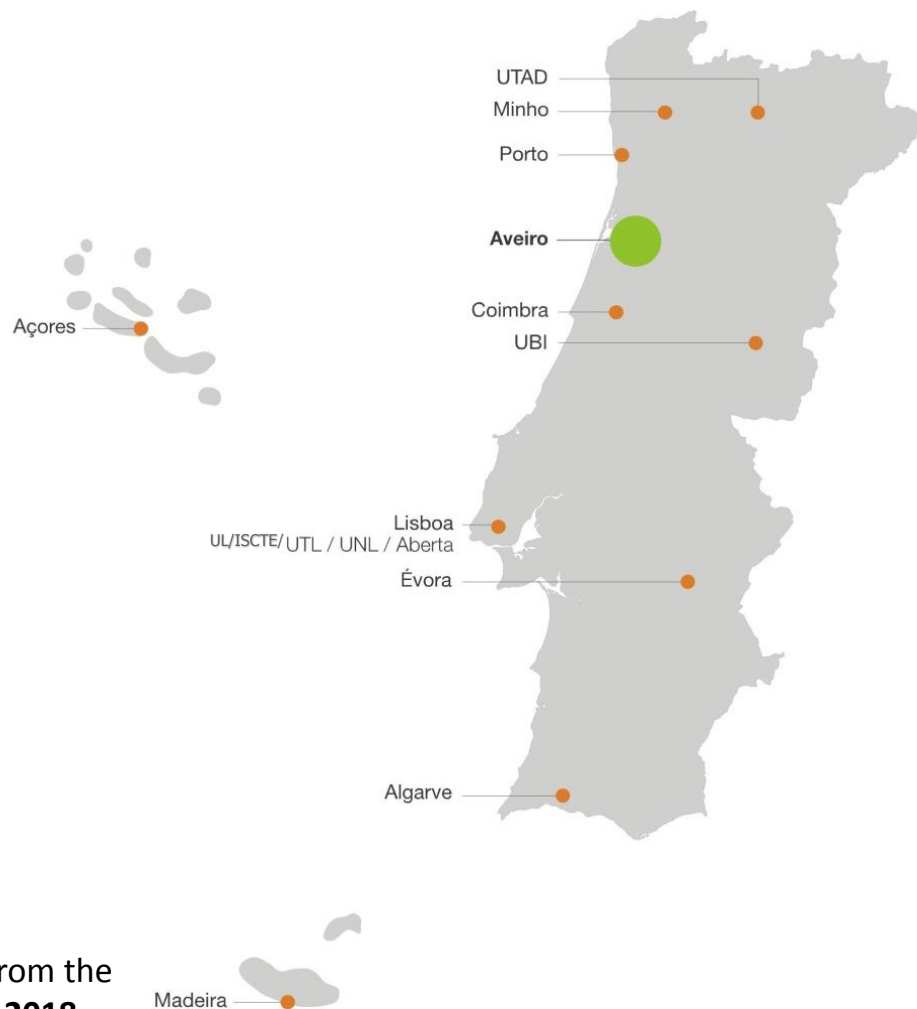
4. Context

University of Aveiro/Portugal
Founded in 1973
16 Departments and 4 Polytechnic Schools
19 Research Units
13 380 students
1132 international students
5080 students in postgraduate education
Doctoral School (EDUA) created in 201

Source: PPT from the
Rectory, **May 2018**

4. Context

- Case study focused on four Doctoral Programs of the Department of Education and Psychology (2016/2017)

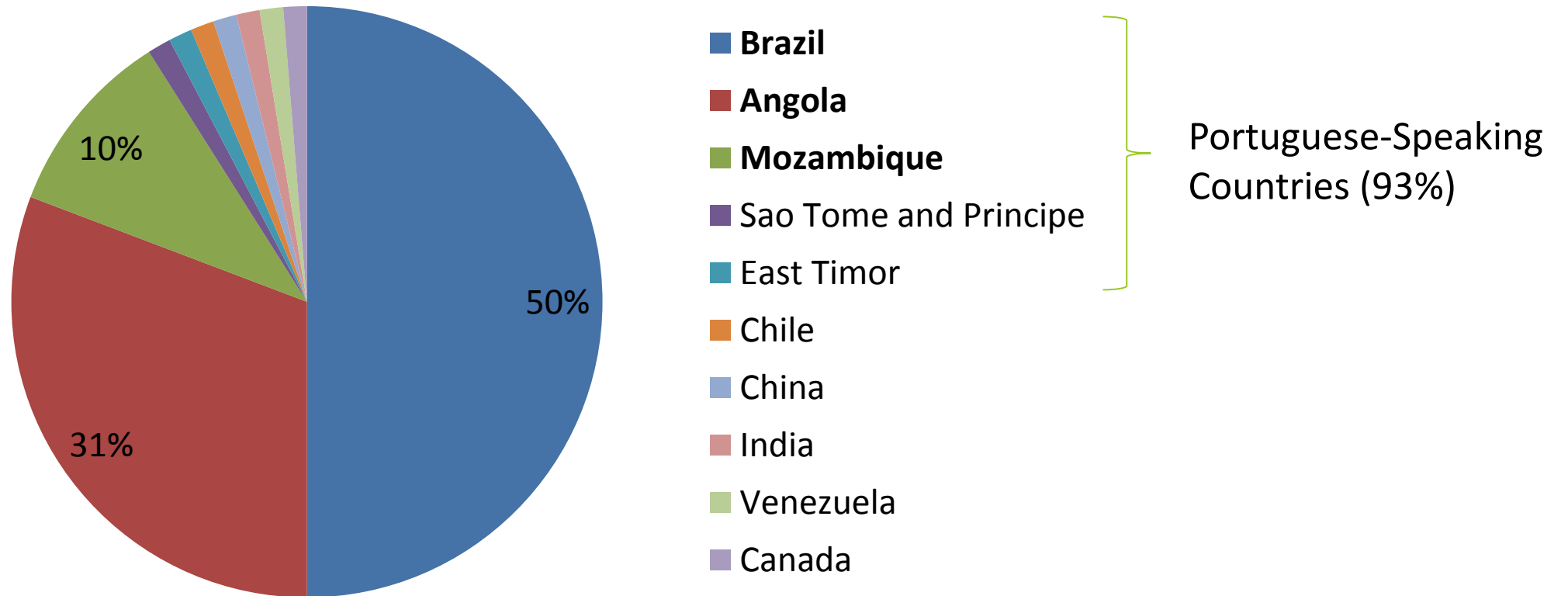| Doctoral Programs	Nº of students	Nº/% of foreign students
Doctoral Program in Education	157	76 (48%)
Doctoral Program in Multimedia in Education	63	18 (28,6%)
Doctoral Program in Psychology	34	4 (11,8%)
Doctoral Program in Gerontology and Geriatrics	27	2 (7,4%)
Total nº of students	281	100 (35,6%)

4. Context

- Foreign students enrolled in the DP of the Department of Education and Psychology: origin

Legend:
- **Brazil**
- **Angola**
- **Mozambique**
- Sao Tome and Principe
- East Timor
- Chile
- China
- India
- Venezuela
- Canada

Portuguese-Speaking Countries (93%)

Pie chart values: 50%, 31%, 10%

4. Context & methodology

- In-depth interviews

Students	
National	7
International	5
Supervisors	5
Directors of Doctoral Programs	3
Coordinator of Doctoral School	1
	21

- individual

- conducted by the researchers (19 in Portuguese, 2 in English)

- 45 to 90 minutes

- interview schedules defined by the EUROMEC group (Strand 2)

- topics: supervision, **language**, identity

- recorded and verbatim transcribed

4. Context & methodology - thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

Meanings of researching across languages and cultures in the context of doctoral education

Supervision process

Researchers' development

Scientific knowledge construction

Scientific knowledge dissemination

5. Findings - Supervision process

- **The supervision process as an intercultural encounter**

I think that just as we come to live here, to socialize, to learn the culture, teachers would also have that opportunity to better understand students' ways of thinking and certain attitudes … people's attitudes are highly influenced by their social context… where one has grown up, where one lives (AS6).

We become more sensitive to other cultures, we know more about what is happening in other places… students from other countries will show us other ways of living and we will show them others (AP6).

5. Findings - <u>Supervision process</u>

- **Construction of a perception of heterogeneity: focus on difference/difference as a problem**

*They come from **different** realities. They have a **different** academic background from what we are used. Their academic pathway is **different**. I think it is important to create opportunities within the doctoral program so that these students may get integrated more easily and share their **problems** with us (AP8).*

*I **tried** to write my thesis with (European) Portuguese orthography and syntax. Actually, I'm **struggling** with that now because I realized that there are **small differences** in the way Portuguese and Brazilian conjugate the verbs (AS8).*

*Some Brazilians do not write the way I do…I do not have **problems** with **different** expressions but I do have **problems** with sentence construction (AP9).*

5. Findings - <u>Supervision process</u>

- **Awareness of supervisors' training needs: focus on cultural differences**

> *I think that it would be good for everybody if at the beginning of the doctoral program there were information sessions for all supervisors, a continuous training for supervisors, addressing some cultural aspects so that they get better acquainted with the students. Having a student from Brazil is completely **different** from having a student from Macau (AP1).*

5. Findings - <u>Supervision process</u>

- **English: the only (limpid) horizon**

Yeah, no problem at all [supervision in a second language]. *I've supervised thesis that were presented in **English** and some of them were from Portuguese students* (AP2).

*Using **English** does not have any effects on my supervision because I'm proficient in **English** both in reading and writing. We must write in English, right? So...* (AP3) .

*I have supervised PhD students in **English-only**. It's very motivating, because it helps me to recall **English** and to update my language skills, it's a very rewarding effort* (AP1).

 [In English] *I have to prepare the classes and the meetings... I must have things more planned in order not to get lost because the terms are very specific... **English is much more synthetic. We use a more flowery language*** (AP1).

5. Findings - <u>Researchers' development</u>

- ***Intercultural understanding and skills*** **(Byram, 1997): new ways of doing, thinking and relating**

The greatest point of the PhD was the possibility of working with so many different people, of knowing different cultures that seems to pull people away but in fact bring us closer (AS2).

It's good to work in a multicultural context... A new way of doing, of thinking, of relating to people (AS6).

Different cultures broaden our perspectives and contribute to our self-education (AS10).

We become more sensitive to other cultures, we know more about what is happening in other places... students from other countries will show us other ways of living and we will show them others (AP6).

5. Findings - <u>Researchers' development</u>

- **Language competences: the two languages of academia**

The thesis obliged me to dedicate days studying Technical English, the specific terminology (AS2).

I enrolled in the English f...

Which possibilities for building a contextualized academic language and knowledge?

I d...

I d... ...iversity.
I re...

I do not have all the vocabulary in English as I do in Portuguese and I cannot engage in an epistemological discussion in English (AS4).

We are advising and encouraging students [from Portuguese-speaking countries] to enroll in Portuguese courses (AP8).

5. Findings - <u>Researchers' development</u>

- **Working modalities: collaboration as (a new) experience**

There is knowledge exchange, information exchange… we take advantage of each other's knowledge (AS2).

Collaboration was a new experience. I did not bring this practice from Asia where there is no room for critical argumentation (AS7).

I observe the way students share things with each other and I think it is interesting, there is indeed sharing… it is not just another colleague, it is a different person who has things to give and things to receive (AP8).

5. Findings - <u>Researchers' development</u>

- **Acquiring the language of the discipline:** *talking the talk of the tribe*

It is a process of learning a specific language, the thinking mode of that specific 'tribe'. When I say that I would like to bring Mozambique to the research community … it is through the use of the specific language of that tribe… and I think that it is happening… I am learning to think and gather information in alignment with what is done in that specific community (AS6).

When I met with my supervisor I did not understand and it is very frustrating when someone talks to you and you do not understand (AS12).

5. Findings - <u>Scientific knowledge construction</u>

- **Accessing scientific knowledge: epistemological hegemony**

If you want to read what other people are doing, you have at least to master English; you must have some command of English. The more languages you master, the better for you (AS11).

Our bibliography is mostly in English... students complain a lot but in our research area most of the bibliography is in English (AP7).

Understanding French helped me a lot because much of the literature is ... everything, almost everything is in French (AS12).

I had no such thing as bibliography in Portuguese, this is a recent area and there were no studies in our country (AS3).

5. Findings - <u>Scientific knowledge construction</u>

- **Collecting data (instruments and fieldwork): the (symbolic) weight of norms**

When importing English terminology to my research, namely in the construction of the data collection instruments, there are several aspects that I must think about such as 'maybe people will not understand what I mean'. That is why the validation of those instruments was so important because some people said they did not understand (AS5).

In the first phase of my project, I had to contact people to see if they would be willing to participate in the study and be interviewed. Since that contact was over the phone, I was terribly afraid that they would not take me seriously because of my accent. But it was not a barrier, I managed to do the interviews and the contact with these people was very rich (AS8).

5. Findings - <u>Scientific knowledge dissemination</u>

- **Balance of languages: local and global**

This work is directed at experts who work in the criminal area and … it would be more advantageous to write it in Portuguese so that our experts could consult it (AS2).

The first reason [for writing the thesis in English] *was because I was researching about an international phenomenon, so I wanted to share my findings with the rest of the world, because I believe that they are useful beyond the scope of the University of Aveiro* (AS11).

6. Discussion and final remarks

<u>Central role of context</u>

What is an international student in this context? (students from Portuguese-Speaking Countries)

What is the experience of supervisors in working/supervising across languages and cultures? (little experience and mainly with students from Portuguese-Speaking Countries in recent years)

What is regarded as "acceptable" Portuguese? (European Portuguese language standards)

Which language policies at the University? Which structures, institutional documents, discussions, training opportunities…? (inexistent, Pinto & Araújo e Sá, 2016; 2018)

6. Discussion and final remarks

<u>Discussion axes</u>

- ✓ Language and cultural heterogeneity as an arena of "deficit discourses" (Magyar & Robinson-Pant, 2011)

- ✓ Imposition of language standards (Strauss, 2012); European Portuguese as "default referent" (Seidlhofer, 2001)

- ✓ Reinforcement of epistemological hegemony of the academic space (Kidman, Manathunga & Cornforth, 2017; Winchester Seeto *et al*, 2014; Manathunga, 2009)

- ✓ Reinforcement of inequalities in the way academic knowledge is constructed and legitimized/ "geopolitics of academic writing" (Canagarajah, 2002)

- ✓ Higher education institutions' lack of awareness of language and cultures issues (namely concerning research; Pinto & Araújo, 2018)

6. Discussion and final remarks

A more holistic, critical and collaborative approach to language and culture issues in doctoral education
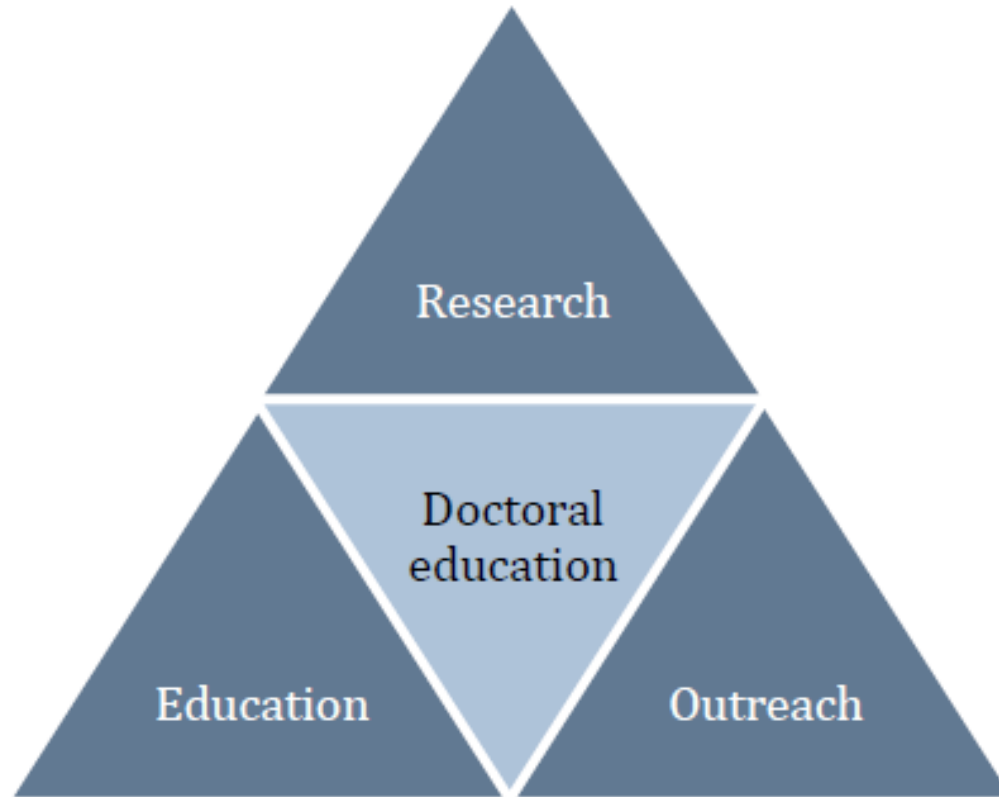
(Elmgren et al, 2016)

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Obrigada
Gracias
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Thank you
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OUTROS SLIDES

5. Results: Document analysis

Code of Practice (EDUA)

- transversal competences to be developed by students: academic writing, foreign languages, intercultural and interpersonal skills, critical thinking, entrepreneurship, the use of technologies and social networks.

Study Regulation of the UA (Bylaw no. 214/2012, updated by Bylaw no. 863/2016)

- course units may be taught in English

- thesis writing and oral examination: the first bylaw refers that the languages to be used may be English, French and Spanish; the second considers only English, even if another language can be used after a positive statement from the Scientific Council of the UA.

5. Results: similarities across the HEI participating in the study

✓ **Added value**
- knowledge sharing, collaborative work, knowledge development
- integration of students in an intertextual networking; joining a research community
- contact with people from different research cultures, intercultural dialogue, sensitiveness to cultural diversity
- improvement of language and intercultural competences

× **Constraints/drawbacks**
- obstacle to students with lack of competences in foreign languages
- issue of terminology and translation
- need for students' language improvement
- supervisors' lack of language competences

5. Results: the role of context

Aveiro	- Language of instruction – Portuguese - Portuguese and English: an obstacle to students from Portuguese-Speaking countries - Portuguese varieties in data collection instruments - Importance of knowing (Portuguese-speaking countries) students' linguistic/cultural contexts and academic pathways - Need for supervisor training to supervise students from Portuguese-Speaking countries - Tension between Portuguese and English in research (local vs global)
Beijing	- Language of instruction- Chinese (language proficiency test for enrolment) - International students – difficulties in writing Chinese (need to invest in language learning; help of *tongmen*) - Importance of "Chinese intellectual tradition" - Relationship between the language of the discipline and Chinese language and culture - PhD students as Chinese cultural ambassadors

5. Results: the role of context

Durham	- Language of instruction – English (language proficiency test for enrolment/language courses for Students found not to meet the required level) - Difficulties of both national and international students in academic writing - L2 students need additional help with finessing their written language (discipline specific terminology) - Supervision taking place in English with students with English as an L2: requires more time and patience
Luxembourg	- Languages of instruction - French, English, and German - Multilingual university (added value for knowledge development and the research process) - Tension between monolingual norms (in monolingual contexts) and a certain tolerance by supervisors in what concerns language correctness - English: may hinder those with English as their first language from developing their own multilingualism; it weakens the multilingual communication culture