

TRANSLANGUAGING IN EMI

Lecturers' perspectives and practices

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ABSTRACT • The use of English to teach academic subjects at university level has been on the increase in the past years, attracting considerable research attention. Among the most pressing issues is that of the language competences required to teach and learn through English. Accordingly, EMI studies have investigated, among other topics, language use in the classroom, focusing on the features of lecturers' spoken production in English. Although the use of English is assumed in EMI, insights into classroom practices indicate that lecturers and students engage in translanguaging between English and other languages. The goal of this paper is to investigate whether lecturers pursue a language policy in class, why they confine themselves to English and when they exploit their multilingual resources, allowing or even prompting students to do the same. Drawing data from interviews with thirty EMI lecturers from five European countries (Croatia, Denmark, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands), the lecturers' implicit or explicit language policies will be investigated, inquiring into the motives for the adoption of an English-only approach or the flexible use of other languages. Subsequently, classroom discourse practices will be examined focusing on translanguaging in order to verify whether reported language policies and practices correspond to observable behaviour. The data for the study of language use in class is taken from the *TAEC Corpus*, consisting of thirty transcribed EMI lectures collected within the five countries under study. We will discuss the complexity of the rationale behind English-only language choices and pluralistic language use, arguing that multilingual-oriented EMI policies should not be normed top-down but emerge from communication needs in the classroom.

KEYWORDS • EMI; translanguaging; English-only approach; language policies; language practices.

1. Introduzione¹

The growing internationalisation of universities has been accompanied by an increase in English-medium instruction (EMI), that is, the use of English “to teach academic subjects (other than English itself) in countries or jurisdictions where the first language of the majority of the population is not English” (Macaro et al. 2018: 37). The two are closely intertwined as English paves the way for lecturers' and students' mobility, which at the same time promotes English as an international *lingua franca*.

¹ Both authors have equally contributed to the conceptualisation of this study, the analysis of data and the overall drafting of the paper. Branka Drljača Margić is responsible for Sections 1, 3.2, 4 and 5, while Alessandra Molino for Sections 2, 3.1 and 3.3.

The field of EMI has been attracting considerable scholarly attention in recent years, and different aspects of this complex educational approach have been analysed and discussed (see Molino et al. 2022 for an overview of the evolution of EMI research in Europe). Studies have primarily focused on the benefits and negative implications of EMI, as well as the measures that should be taken to respond to challenges (e.g. Campagna and Pulcini 2014; Drljača Margić and Vodopija-Krstanović 2017; Macaro et al. 2018). More specifically, what has been enquired into are students' language gains through EMI (e.g. Lei and Hu, 2014; Vidal and Jarvis, 2018), perceived as one of the key EMI advantages, and lecturer language support (Drljača Margić and Vodopija-Krstanović 2018; Guarda and Helm 2017), as an important measure taken to address their insufficient language command. However, certain topics are still underexplored. One such topic is language use in the EMI classroom, that is, whether and why students and lecturers opt for English-only policy or draw on their multilingual resources.

This paper aims to address this research gap, thus contributing to our understanding of language practices in EMI educational settings. Specifically, it focuses on the reasons that stimulate the exclusive use of English, as well as the motives that prompt translanguaging between English and other languages in EMI. Although in degree courses marketed and accredited as English-medium programmes the use of English in class is taken for granted, the insights into practice indicate that both lecturers and students shift between English and other languages (Lasagabaster 2015). This paper provides empirical evidence of the extent to which this occurs, and to the best of our knowledge, this is the first study on translanguaging that draws its data from several European EMI contexts.

Williams (1996), who coined the term translanguaging (originally *trawsieithu* in Welsh), describes it as a teaching strategy, whose aims are to further the development of the languages used and to support content acquisition. García and Leiva (2014) emphasise that in the process of (trans)languaging, meaning-making takes a central position. Similarly, Canagarajah (2011) underlines the importance of the co-construction of meaning through effective translanguaging practices. The author holds that opposing the use of other languages might restrict students' learning potential. The languages students and lecturers use are not discrete entities, but constitute an integrated linguistic repertoire that lecturers and, particularly, students constantly draw upon. In other words, they creatively use the entirety of their linguistic resources to teach, learn and perform identity (Li Wei 2018). Along the same lines, Creese and Blackledge (2010) perceive translanguaging as a pedagogical approach which aims at advancing the teaching-learning process. García (2014: 112) interprets translanguaging as "the ways in which bilingual students and teachers engage in complex and fluid discursive practices that include, at times, the home language practices of students in order to 'make sense' of teaching and learning, to communicate and appropriate subject knowledge, and to develop academic language practices".

In the studies primarily focused on translanguaging in EMI, a heteroglossic classroom is largely advocated for, questioning monolingual ideologies and developing multilingual identities (see Mazak and Carroll 2017; Paulsrud, Tian and Toth 2021). Van der Walt (2013) argues that using local languages in an EMI classroom enhances content comprehension, advances the quality of education, prompts classroom interaction and raises students' employment opportunities. It serves as scaffolding for insufficiently proficient students, as well as a means for reinforcing knowledge among more proficient ones (Adamson and Fujimoto-Adamson 2021). Finally, it boosts academic literacy in different languages, not only English (Boun and Wright 2021). Translanguaging is perceived as natural and expected, as it faithfully depicts and promotes multicultural higher education contexts, and respects the stakeholders' entire linguistic repertoires. Lasagabaster (2015) corroborates this by pointing out that everyday practice challenges monolingual language policy in EMI. In other words, English dominates, but lecturers and students also utilise other languages

in an integrated and dynamic way. Byun et al. (2011) confirm that only half of EMI lecturers included in their study follow an English-only policy. Consequently, in the contexts where the English-only policy is pursued, other languages are often used regardless (Barnard and McLellan 2014), or there is a clash between institutional policies and students' strong beliefs that occasional shifting to their L1 would help them successfully master the content (Carroll and van den Hoven 2017). In fact, in some higher education contexts, translanguaging goes beyond standard practice and implicit policy, and is established as an explicit language-in-education policy. For example, Holmen (2020) describes the policy of parallel language use, which initially aimed at a balance between English and the national language for teaching, and then, through a strategic project, has expanded its scope by directing attention to other languages as well. Conversely, however, Doiz and Lasagabaster (2017) and Ackerley (2017) show that even if arguments for translanguaging in EMI feature in the majority of the contexts, some higher education milieus show different tendencies. In their studies, the authors note that students expect only English to be used in class because they find this the best way to improve their language knowledge.

2. The present study

In this study, we examine EMI classroom language policies by investigating lecturer perceptions and practices, that is, their observable behaviours, focusing on what language(s) they actually select for classroom interaction. Specifically, the aims of the study are: a) to examine whether the lecturers pursue a particular language policy in class, b) whether and why languages other than English are employed for lecturer-student interaction, and c) whether any mismatches between implicit or explicit language policies and classroom practices can be observed.

The present study was conducted within the Erasmus+ project *Transnational Alignment of English Competences for University Lecturers* (TAEC) (2017-2020), involving five European universities: the University of Copenhagen (Denmark), the University of Turin (Italy), the University of Lleida (Spain), Maastricht University (the Netherlands) and the University of Rijeka (Croatia). Rather than looking at EMI as an institutional experience, as often done in this field of research, TAEC offers a new perspective, approaching EMI as a European phenomenon. Thanks to the project's strategic partnership, coherent, systematic and comparable data collection procedures were established across contexts, which allow for the creation of a common framework for EMI quality assurance and support to be used transnationally beyond the five partner universities.

2.1. Participants

Thirty EMI lecturers, six from each partner university, took part in the study. They were selected from three broad disciplinary fields, namely Social Sciences and Humanities (SH), Life and Medical Sciences (LS), and Physical Sciences and Engineering (PE). All the participants are experienced lecturers, with a minimum of seven to a maximum of 28 years of teaching experience (for more details, see Kling, Dimova and Molino 2022). The majority of them has taught in English for at least seven years, although one lecturer declared to have just one year of EMI experience and a participant has had 30 years of teaching experience through English. The lecturers' English language proficiency ranges between B2 (Intermediate) and C2 (Advanced) according to the CEFR scale for speaking (Council of Europe, 2020) (Table 1).

CEFR levels	B2	B2+	C1-	C1	C1+	C2-	C2
No. of participants	4	2	3	12	3	2	4

Table 1: Distribution of CEFR levels

2.2. Data collection and analytical procedures

A total of thirty 90- to 120-minute classes in English, each held by a distinct lecturer, were observed and video-recorded (six in each university context)². The observation was accompanied by field notes, and the video-recordings were transcribed, thus creating the *TAEC Corpus* of EMI lectures (for more details, see the *TAEC Corpus Report*, 2019). Semi-structured 20- to 60-minute interviews were subsequently conducted with each lecturer using either English or the teacher's L1, that is, Danish, Italian, Spanish/Catalan, Dutch and Croatian. The L1 responses were translated into English, and all the answers were transcribed.

The interviews comprise three parts. The first collects information about the lecturers' background, with a particular focus on the language of their education and teaching, stays abroad, as well as participation in pedagogy and EMI training courses. The lecturers were also asked to self-assess their language skills and share perceptions of students' language adequacy. The second part includes reflections on the classes observed. The lecturers also compared their teaching experience in English and their L1 (see Kling, Dimova and Molino 2022 for a discussion of the results of the first and second parts). The third part investigates the lecturers' language policy in class, focusing in particular on whether and why lecturers and students use languages other than English in EMI settings. This study reports the results gleaned via the third part of the interviews.

The analysis of the interviews consisted of three steps. First, the responses were manually coded by the authors of this paper independently, identifying recurring categories (e.g. use of English in class) and themes (e.g. English is used because it is a lingua franca) emerging from the data (see Saldaña 2016). Second, the outcomes of the coding process were compared, and possible disagreements were resolved. Third, the frequency of categories and themes across respondents was calculated. The topics brought up by only one lecturer were also taken into consideration.

In addition to the analysis of the interviews, this paper also investigates actual classroom interaction in order to verify to what extent policies and perceptions correspond to practices. The data for this part of the study come from the *TAEC Corpus*. Uses of languages other than English were retrieved through a concordance programme searching for the tag "FOREIGN", which was added to non-English segments in the process of corpus annotation. Each tag also includes information about the specific language employed (e.g. <S1> smuggling is yeah like yeah eh it's <FOREIGN_ES> contrabando </FOREIGN_ES> more or less </S1> (L18)³). Tags were placed at the beginning and at the end of non-English passages, which may consist of single words or longer strings, up to full sentences. For the quantitative data reported in section 3.3, each non-English segment was counted as one, independently of the length of the passage. Because non-English strings feature a tag at the beginning and at the end, only one tag was counted not to inflate the results. Only the turns in which the lecturer is speaking were factored in, but when needed for the functional interpretation of uses, student turns were considered. The concordance lines were grouped according to the lecture in which they occur and analysed in terms of the languages employed and the presence of pedagogically-induced uses of multilingual resources. Considering these goals, a systematic analysis of code-switching forms and functions (see Gotti 2015) and their quantification is beyond the scope of this study.

² Informed consent was obtained from all the participants.

³ The label L18 is the identification code assigned to the lecture from which the example was taken. Codes go from L1 to L30.

3. Results

In the following sections, we analyse the reasons for using different languages in EMI contexts as emerging from the interviews with lecturers. Although the use of English is implied in an English-taught programme, the analysis of findings suggests that the underlying rationale for employing this language is more complex (section 3.1). The data also reveal the plurality of motives that, according to the participants, prompt the use of languages other than English, mostly the L1 that the lecturer shares with home students (section 3.2). Finally, classroom practices are described drawing upon the *TAEC Corpus* and focusing on the use of multilingual resources during the delivery of contents, with special attention to instances that have clear pedagogical goals (section 3.3).

3.1. The use of English

When asked whether they have any specific language policy for classroom interaction, most lecturers answer that they do not feel the need to implement a rigid policy on a personal level; however, more than half of them (73%) recognise the existence of a mandate to employ English during lessons although it is often implicit or taken for granted.

(1) I haven't felt the need for a language policy [...] [but] they have to write their exam in English and the discussions in class are in English. (T10)⁴

(2) I haven't specified the language they must use in class, but they know the subject is in English. (T13)

(3) English is the first language in the classroom; all the materials we use are in English. (T16)

(4) In general, both in class and out of class, everyone has always assumed that this is an English course; therefore, everyone speaks English. (T30)

In some cases (13%), lecturers report that the use of English is explicitly imposed top-down although some participants, especially from the Danish context, do not find English-only policies appropriate in certain circumstances, especially when all the students and the lecturer share the same L1.

(5) We have opted for a rigid approach since the entry test: it is a course in English, and we speak in English. I strongly believe in that and I follow this indication. [...] I will never allow the use of Italian for teaching, even if there are only Italian students in the classroom [...] because this is a degree course in English. (T25)⁵

(6) The first year I taught in English, it was harder for me, and when students answered in Catalan, I would switch to Catalan. I was then told after the course that I was not meant to do that [...] so the following year, not a single word in Catalan. (T14)

⁴ The code T10 identifies the lecturer interviewed. In this paper, we use T (i.e. teacher) to distinguish interview excerpts from corpus ones, for which L (i.e. lecture) is employed. There is a correspondence between the two sets of data, hence the lecturer identified as T10 is the same who delivered the lecture tagged as L10.

⁵ The interviewee was Head of Department at the time of the interview.

(7) In the curriculum and for this specific course, it says it has to be in English. Everything has to be in English, which at times feels a little bit ridiculous, for example, at the exam when you have a Danish student with a Danish examiner and a Danish external examiner. (T9)

(8) It's never discussed [i.e. the use of English in class] but it's awkward for most of us. There aren't many native speakers of English, so the international students are also non-native speakers. (T8)

In other cases (20%), especially gleaned from the interviews with lecturers from Croatia, Spain and Italy, the participants declare that they uphold an English-only policy in class and beyond with the implied goal of enhancing the students' language competences in English.

(9) It's natural for me to use English, so I use it all the time, sometimes even in the corridors. This helps them to use English with me. (T13)

(10) I tell students I will use English 99% of the time. The materials are going to be in English (there are a couple of videos that are not in English, but that's it). I tell them to try and use English as much as they can. (T15)

(11) I talk to them in English even if they talk in Catalan; or I tell them 'in English, that would be?'; or I use examples that do not encourage the use of Catalan. (T17)

(12) I tell them most of you are here to learn English and to practice so, come on! (T18)

The goal to reinforce the students' language skills goes hand in hand with the objective of internationalization at home, that is, the development of international and intercultural competences in all students, especially non-mobile ones (see Beleen and Jones 2014). Even when the use of the common L1 would be more natural, an effort is made to practice interaction in English because this opportunity is regarded as a springboard for the students' future.

(13) The students are very careful to intervene in English because they realise that it is a game worth playing all the way through, because it improves their expressive abilities; it is like being abroad at least for these three hours. There is a replication of an international environment. The students who attend this school are quite demanding on this point; they demand this kind of performance from professors; they want to experience this international dimension. (T26)

(14) If students do not understand a particular word, I never translate, but explain in English. [...] Through EMI we equip domestic students with competences that are necessary to be globally competitive. (T3)

Another argument that motivates the use of English is that it is a lingua franca, which makes communication possible among people from different L1 backgrounds. This point was raised by several lecturers (10%) who noted that in circumstances when L1 usage would be more natural, for instance in group work, during breaks or beyond the classroom setting, English is employed to allow international students to participate.

(15) Sometimes they have to work with the international students, and then they stick to English. (T15)

(16) If there is even just one non-Italian person in the classroom, for example, during oral exams, then we speak in English. (T29)

(17) If the person speaking to me is Italian but there is an English-speaking student with us, we speak in English. (T30)

3.2. The use of languages other than English

The most frequently mentioned reason for using other languages in addition to English is to facilitate students' comprehension of the content or make up for students' lack of understanding. This reason was stated by 25% of the lecturers, who switch to other languages for the sake of students' comprehension.

(18) Very rarely do I switch to Croatian, when I see that they really have problems understanding something in English (T1).

(19) I myself am very open to bilingualism, especially now that we do it in English, and two thirds of students are native Danish speakers. If I see them struggle with the word, you know, I say it in Danish and then we translate it. And if somebody comes with another language, speaking French or whatever, I try to help them (T8).

(20) If I use an expression that I think they might not understand, I say it but then I repeat it in Catalan. I keep telling them to ask, interrupt and so on if they get lost [...] Sometimes they don't ask, but I know they can't possibly know that word, so I translate just in case (T13).

(21) I do sometimes translate concepts into Catalan if that helps them get the message (T14).

(22) I will teach the compulsory Business course next semester, and I expect students' level to be low in general, so I will probably have to switch to Catalan/Spanish (T15).

(23) Maybe if it's something very complicated, we switch to Catalan/Spanish, but in general it's English (T18).

An equally frequently mentioned reason is the students' use of other languages for compensation purposes, that is, to clarify something or express themselves better and more precisely. Since lecturers are primarily focused on content and its comprehension, they are tolerant of students' occasional switching to other languages, which is confirmed by the following responses:

(24) Home students switch to Croatian, but very rarely, when asking questions (T2).

(25) Students use English unless they can't express an idea, in which case they use Catalan or Spanish (T14).

(26) In exams, I sometimes encounter whole paragraphs in Catalan/Spanish, and I tolerate that because I focus more on the message they are trying to convey (T15).

(27) In the exams, what I do is not to penalise students if they do a paragraph in Catalan because they cannot develop the content of the question fully, for instance (T17).

(28) These are good students, but sometimes they have difficulties in understanding certain concepts and for me understanding the concept is more important than the language aspect. So, if in certain circumstances they need to use Italian, it's fine by me (T27).

Additionally, 12.5% of the lecturers specifically underline that they prompt students to make use of other languages when necessary.

(29) When I notice that they are having a hard time expressing an idea in English, I tell them it's OK to switch to Catalan [...] In fact, on some occasions, I have told students to use Catalan because their English level was too low (T13).

(30) I can see that many have great difficulties in writing. This sometimes affects my understanding. In that case, I usually ask the student to explain what they have written orally, either in Italian or in English (T28).

The same percentage allows or prompts the use of other languages not for compensation purposes, but because there is no language policy determining or encouraging the exclusive use of English. The use of other languages is seen as more natural or desirable.

(31) Well, when students come and ask me if they should write their bachelor's thesis in Danish or in English, I say: try and challenge yourself and write in Danish because this will be the last time that you will write anything in Danish (T7).

(32) The degree coordinator told EMI lecturers that students should be allowed to take tests and hand in assignments in Catalan or Spanish if they chose to (T13).

(33) I never tell them off if they use Catalan (T17).

The third reason for using other languages, or rather the circumstances where other languages are also used, is student group work, as stated by 20.8% of the lecturers.

(34) Students sometimes use other languages in group work (T3).

(35) If there are three Danish or German students sitting together, they discuss in their native language, and then we switch to our shared language (T8).

(36) In group work, if a group happens to consist only of Danes, they sometimes switch to Danish (T10).

(37) Students often use Catalan in class when they are carrying out tasks (T15).

(38) Students have a tendency to change to Catalan or Spanish when they discuss or work among themselves (T16).

Furthermore, 8.33% of the lecturers switch to other languages to familiarise students with terminology in their L1.

(39) Sometimes I translate scientific terms into Croatian to familiarise primarily domestic students with them (T2).

(40) I make it a point to use a few words in Italian in my applied medicine classes to point out that the same Latin or Greek root is also in use in English, international medical English. I also use several terms or even proverbs in Latin (T25).

Only one lecturer mentioned using other languages to compensate for their own English language insufficiency. In fact, the lecturer accommodated to student-initiated use of L1 because it was less demanding to maintain communication.

(41) The first year I taught in English, it was harder for me, and when students talked in Catalan, I would switch to Catalan (T14).

Finally, a lecturer reported switching to the shared L1 whenever there are no international students.

(42) If there is even just one non-Italian person in the classroom, we speak English. Otherwise, we absolutely speak Italian (T29).

The answers reported above show that despite explicit or implicit policies in favour of English, EMI lecturers often adopt a pragmatic approach to classroom interaction, guided by the overall goals of content comprehension and learning. The choice of flexibility is also evident in the responses (37%) that elaborate on multilingualism beyond lessons or exams: even the lecturers in favour of English-only policies allow students to use their L1 in individual face-to-face or written conversations with them.

(43) Domestic students sometimes use Croatian in one-on-one interaction at my desk. (T1)

(44) If I supervise Danish students one to one we speak Danish. (T11)

(45) During office hours or Q&A sessions at the end of a class, or during a break, Italian students speak Italian and ask for clarification in Italian. (T25)

(46) Obviously during breaks, sometimes during office hours – in short, outside the context of the classroom – there is someone who speaks Italian to me, and I answer in Italian. (T26)

From these answers, it is clear that the use of the shared local language is perceived as an instrument that facilitates overall academic communication and may ultimately foster learning. Allowing students to employ their L1 in such circumstances means supporting their proactive and socio-affective learning practices, which are crucial for academic success in EMI (Guarda 2018; Urquía et al. 2018).

3.3. Evidence from classroom discourse practices

In this section, classroom discourse practices are investigated, focusing on the usage of multilingual resources in EMI. Not all the detected instances of translanguaging are covered here. For instance, proper names of people, institutions or geographical locations have been excluded⁶ because the interest is in the role that languages other than English play in enhancing communication, comprehension and learning.

Figure 1 shows that non-English words or strings are found in 80% of the lectures in the *TAEC Corpus*, confirming Lasagabaster's (2015) findings that actual classroom practices defy monolingual language policies in EMI. However, excluding extreme values,⁷ the mean is 9.4 oc-

⁶ An example is: <S1> i am not in <FOREIGN_DE> Darmstadt </FOREIGN_DE> because it is raining i am in <FOREIGN_IT> Genova </FOREIGN_IT> i am on the beach and i have my polaroid lens </S1> (L29).

⁷ For the calculation of the mean, which is affected by outliers, classes with no occurrences of translanguaging and those with more than 25 instances were excluded (see Figure 1).

currences per class, indicating that translinguaging remains a somewhat marginal phenomenon. Nevertheless, the use of non-English segments varies considerably, ranging from 0 to as many as 96 occurrences per lesson.

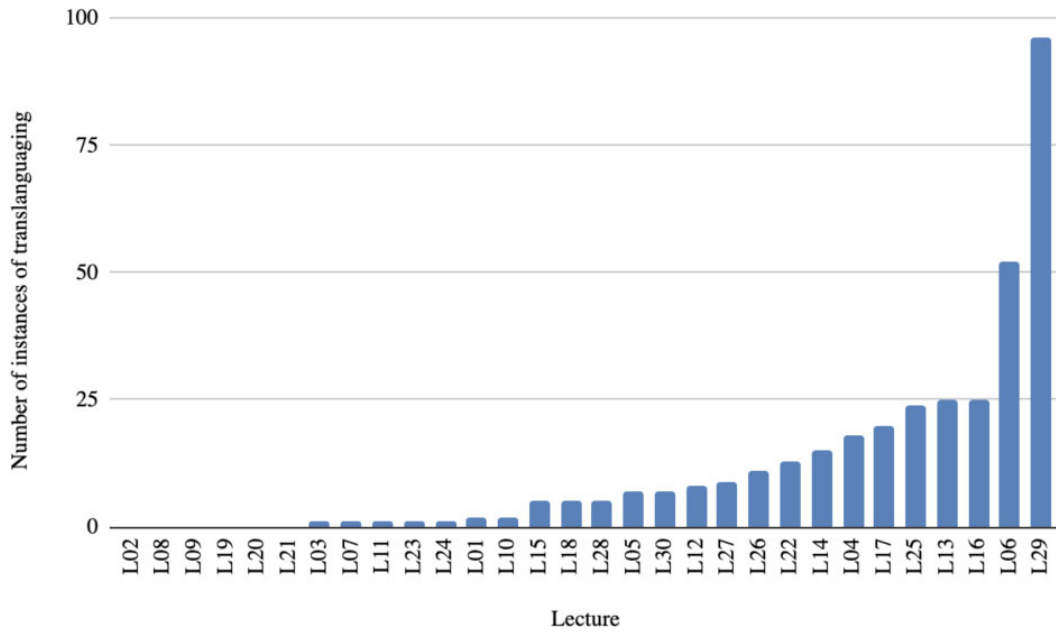


Figure 1: Instances of translinguaging by lecturers per class

Figure 2 displays the distribution of the languages used, only reporting data for the lectures in which translinguaging occurs. In most cases (66.7%), it is just the local language that is utilised in addition to English. The other languages attested are, in decreasing order of frequency, Latin (43 occurrences), French (10), Italian (8) and German (4). Local dialects were also detected (45 occurrences) although this finding is confined to two lectures in the Italian context (L26 and L29).

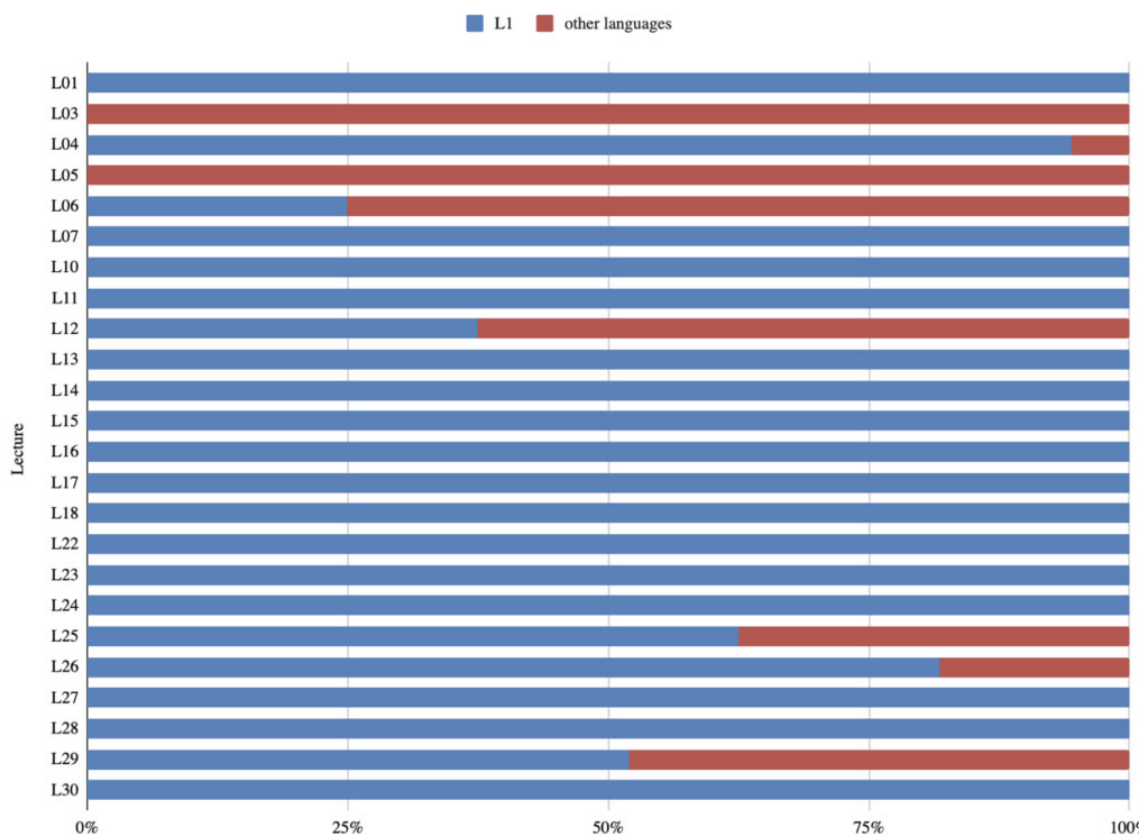


Figure 2: Use of L1 and other languages by lecturers per class

The variability in the use of languages other than English in EMI is due to multiple factors. The lecturers' teaching style plays a role, affecting the degree to which interpersonal episodes are interspersed with the local language. The recourse to discourse markers, forms of address, idioms, short questions and answers in the shared L1 serves relational purposes. Despite not performing direct pedagogical functions, these uses can be regarded as functional to teaching insofar as they build rapport and enhance overall communication.

(47) <S1><FOREIGN_IT> ragazzi </FOREIGN_IT> can we st- can we re-, can we start the lesson? </S1> (L29)⁸

(48) <S1> we will not focus on eh solution-phase peptide synthesis, but on solid-phase peptide synthesis, and how many of you have experience with solid-phase synthesis? yes <POINTING_AT_STUDENTS><FOREIGN_DA> det er godt </FOREIGN_DA> so that was three four? good. </S1> (L7)⁹

The degree of student participation through the L1 is another aspect that may prompt translanguaging by lecturers. In the following extract, the student (<S6>) uses Italian to ask for permission

⁸ Italian: *ragazzi* > English: guys.

⁹ Danish: *det er godt* > English: that's good.

to take the floor; the lecturer naturally switches to Italian to give the turn. A few lines below, the lecturer switches back to English, presumably not to exclude international students, but he concludes his answer with a clarification in Italian. In so doing, he adjusts to the student's recourse to the local language, demonstrating cooperation and reinforcing understanding, which is indeed confirmed by the student.

(49) <S6> <FOREIGN_IT> posso chiedere </FOREIGN_IT> </S6>
 <S1> <FOREIGN_IT> sì puoi </FOREIGN_IT>
 </S1> <S6> <FOREIGN_IT> prima di tutto volevo sapere se questo volesse dire che_
 </FOREIGN_IT> [<S1> no </S1>] </S6>
 <S1> jointly normal </S1>
 <S6> <FOREIGN_IT> quindi </FOREIGN_IT> normal identically distributed? </S6>
 <S1> independently [<S6> independently distributed </S6>] independently. they are not
 identically distributed <FOREIGN_IT> infatti hanno un- hanno una varianza diversa
 </FOREIGN_IT> [<S6> aha okay </S6>] okay? </S1> (L27)¹⁰

The passage above shows that EMI lecturers are tolerant of students' occasional switches to their L1 when needed, demonstrating the meaning-making potential of translanguaging, as underscored by Canagarajah (2011) and García and Leiva (2014). Other similar examples are present in the *TAEC Corpus*, particularly from the Italian and Spanish contexts, where students sometimes use the mother tongue to ask for clarification or compensate for lexical gaps in English (e.g. <S3> smuggling <FOREIGN_ES> es tráfico? </FOREIGN_CA></S3> (L18)). Similarly, when initiated by lecturers, the use of the local language is often motivated by the need to elucidate concepts and terminology.

(50) <S1> Hippocrates later eh, established his own medical school so he started not only to practice medicine but also to teach medicine. eh he was doing it, in_ under eh eh one plane tree, eh <FOREIGN_HR> platan </FOREIGN_HR> eh as w- we call it in Croatian, the tree that is supposed to still exist. </S1> (L6)

(51) <S1> in fact fishes appeared as more or less we know nowadays around five hundred and thirty millions of years ago [...] with a very specific characteristics they were jawless jaw <FOREIGN_CA> mandíbula sense mandíbula </FOREIGN_CA> and they had a bony carcass </S1> (L16)¹¹

These examples can be considered pedagogically driven, showing the desire to prevent misunderstanding and support comprehension. A related usage occurs when lecturers familiarise students with terminology in their L1 in order to expand the students' bilingual repertoire, which they may use or encounter in their future practice.

(52) <S1> this is the topic <POINTING_ON_BOARD> of these paper is migraine do you know the term migraine and the meaning in medical terms?... in Italian the word is very different because is <FOREIGN_IT> emicrania </FOREIGN_IT> okay? </S1> (L30)

¹⁰ Italian: *posso chiedere* > English: may I ask (a question); Italian: *sì puoi* > English: yes, you may; Italian: *prima di tutto volevo sapere se questo volesse dire che* > English: first of all I would like to know if that means that; Italian: *quindi* > English: so; Italian: *infatti hanno un- hanno una varianza diversa* > English: indeed they have a- they have a different variance.

¹¹ Catalan: *mandíbula sense mandíbula* > English: jaw jawless.

(53) <S1> it's very difficult to see because usually it is broken when you cut the liver is the gall bladder. <WRITING_ON_THE_BOARD> in Catalan <FOREIGN_CA> la vesícula biliar </FOREIGN_CA> </S1> (L16)

Languages different from English and the students' L1 are employed for similar pedagogical goals. Terminology in Latin is presented especially in LS lectures to show the etymology of a term or to make students familiar with discipline-specific nomenclature. Technical terms in other languages are employed when they are an integral part of domain-specific vocabulary in English (see the French term *cuvée* in example 56) or when the lecturers need to emphasise commonalities and differences in terminology across languages.

(54) <S1> this particular healing was related to one, eh condition that was called and sometimes still is scrofulosis the the name itself is very, weird because actually it comes from Latin <FOREIGN_LA> scrofa </FOREIGN_LA> which means the pig the sow </S1> (L6)

(55) <S1> the mushroom is this one <POINTING_ON_SLIDE> that is this <FOREIGN_LA> piptoporus betulinus </FOREIGN_LA> was very common eh in wood in in northern Italy at that time </S1> (L25)

(56) <S1> sparkling wine, if you call it Champagne and think of that, it i- it is a certain style which is a <FOREIGN_FR> cuvée </FOREIGN_FR> of cultivars by law, Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay </S1> (L12)

(57) <S1> in Croatian <FOREIGN_HR> kuga </FOREIGN_HR>, in Latin <FOREIGN_LA> pestis </FOREIGN_LA>, in German, <FOREIGN_DE> Pest </FOREIGN_DE> and so on in Italian? what is the Italian name, for the plague?, <FOREIGN_IT> piaga </FOREIGN_IT> </S1> (L6)

Finally, it may be interesting to consider the case of lecture L29, which is distinctive for its large use of dialectal expressions. The lecturer opens his class introducing greeting formulae in the local dialect presenting them in his slides, which works as an ice-breaker and a manifestation of local identity (Li Wei 2018).

(57) <S1> as usual, we start with something which is very international that is <FOREIGN_IT> Piemonte </FOREIGN_IT> you are in in <FOREIGN_IT> Piemonte, </FOREIGN_IT> so we have learned so far good morning <FOREIGN_PDM> cerea </FOREIGN_PDM> (L29)¹²

However, this practice is also related to the fact that the medicine students in his class are required to do their internship in local hospitals, where “you talk to the patient in Italian and sometimes in dialect” (T30). As reported by T30 in the interview, without adequate local language competences, “the usefulness of the internship will be greatly reduced” for international students. The recourse to dialect, therefore, also aims to raise the international students' awareness of the peculiar communicative characteristics of the setting in which their training takes place.

The data reported in this section indicate that the use of languages other than English is not so frequent overall; however, when it occurs, it is deliberate and meant to reinforce communication, understanding and learning. Interestingly, very rarely do lecturers switch to their L1 to fill their lexical gaps in English. Only three such instances were observed in the corpus.

¹² Piedmontese: *cerea* > English: good morning (and other greetings).

(58) <S1> what's the name? of that organ <FOREIGN_HR> želudac </FOREIGN_HR> what's the name? </S1> (L4)¹³

(59) <S1> it was a bit eh <FOREIGN_ES> soso </FOREIGN_ES> i don't know the word in English </S1> (L14)¹⁴

(60) <S1> i don't know the_ <FOREIGN_IT> come si chiama lo sci alpinismo in in inglese? come si chiama lo sci alpinismo in inglese? </FOREIGN_IT> </S1> (L29)¹⁵

Crossing corpus data and interview results, a degree of consistency emerges between practices and declared, or perceived, policy. Four of the six participants who exclusively resort to English in the *TAEC Corpus* (one from Croatia, L02, and three from the Netherlands, L19, L20, L21) are among the lecturers who, in the interviews, asserted that they only use this language in their classes. In particular, taking a closer look at the profile of the three participants from the Netherlands, it emerges that these lecturers have distinct L1s (L19: Italian; L20: Afrikaans; L21: German). The exclusive use of English is thus motivated by the international environment in which they operate, where lecturers and students do not share the same mother tongue. Other lecturers upholding an English-only policy (e.g. L1, L5, L6, L25) in reality used a range of other languages in their video recorded lessons, mostly Latin. However, this choice was due to the specific nature of the contents (e.g. history of medicine in L25), thus the lecturers were acting consistently with their declared language policy, almost never resorting to their L1. On the other hand, these lecturers (and others, i.e. 37% of the total), admitted to allowing the local language outside the class, especially in face-to-face interaction, granting students the use of compensation and scaffolding strategies beyond lecture time.

Overall, it may be affirmed that although variability exists in the frequency of L1 usage, translanguaging is mainly initiated by lecturers for pedagogical purposes, to assist comprehension and respond to the need for terminological knowledge in the home students' L1. These are precisely the reasons mentioned in the interviews across settings, making the results here obtained valid transnationally. The lecturers' level of English (see Section 2.2., Table 1) does not seem to have an impact on their policies and practices. On the other hand, some context-specific patterns were observed in relation to L1 usage in dialogic episodes with students. Translanguaging in such circumstances is mostly attested in the Spanish lectures and, to a minor extent, in the Italian ones. By contrast, it is noticeable that the Danish lecturers, who declared to be open to bilingualism or not to follow any specific language policy, almost never implemented translanguaging in their classes. The greater use of the L1 by students and, as a response, by lecturers, may be related to the students' level of English. The lecturers who elaborated on this topic generally believe that the students have adequate competences to attend EMI lectures, but they acknowledge that some may have difficulties with more complex concepts or tasks.

(61) I think in general their level is sufficient to follow the lessons. [...] On some occasions, I have told students to use Catalan because their English level was too low. (T13)

¹³ Croatian: *želudac* > English: stomach.

¹⁴ Spanish: *soso* > English: bland.

¹⁵ Italian: *come si chiama lo sci alpinismo in inglese?* > English: what is the word for ski mountaineering in English?

(62) They normally have the right level of English to participate in class, but if the topic becomes complex, some may struggle. (T27)

(63) The level is acceptable on average, but there is a lot of variability: there are some who are really good and others who have great difficulty. (T28)

Another plausible explanation may be the limited number of foreign students in class, which would make the need to use a lingua franca somewhat less pressing. For instance, in L13, L16, and L17, where L1 usage is quite frequent, there were two (L13) and no international students present (L16 and L17). Lastly, it is also possible that the lectures featuring more translanguaging in dialogic episodes are those in which the degree of student participation is higher, an aspect that needs to be verified through further analysis.

4. Discussion

The above instances of translanguaging, the majority of which are intentional, show tolerance towards multilingual language use in the EMI classroom, a tendency to incorporate languages other than English to respond to different needs and contexts, and the primacy of content comprehension and message transfer over language exclusiveness.

Our findings indicate that the majority of the lecturers (66.7%) show certain flexibility with regard to the use of languages other than English in the EMI classroom, or even prompt it. Other languages are primarily used for compensation purposes. The lecturers report their own and their students' use of other languages when they believe that this could help students (better) understand the topics covered in class or better express themselves. As confirmed by the interviews and the corpus results, the lecturers opt for translanguaging either because they see that the students do not understand the message or as a precaution. In other words, they exploit translanguaging as a scaffolding technique or support that the lecturer provides to their students to assist them construct mental models (Király 2014). Along the same lines, Canagarajah (2011) points out that translanguaging, or the use of multilingual speakers' repertoire, is employed to render disciplinary knowledge accessible and thus facilitate the construction of knowledge.

Although the findings of other studies indicate that lecturers also resort to the use of other languages to compensate for their own language-related challenges (see, for example, Drljača Margić and Vodopija-Krstanović 2017), in the present study only one lecturer mentions that translanguaging is motivated by their own impossibility to express themselves precisely in the English language, and corpus data confirm this finding, with only three instances of such usage detected.

The lecturers also report switching to other languages to familiarise students with terminology in their L1. There are two most frequently stated reasons for this: prepare students for the local market, and maintain the use of the national language in an academic discourse (see also Drljača Margić 2018). Our corpus findings confirm this use and seem to corroborate these motivations.

Although translanguaging or taking advantage of lecturers' and students' multilingual repertoire for various purposes is positive and desirable because it shifts the focus from monolingual ideology and provides necessary scaffolding in teaching and learning (see also Holmen 2020), we need to critically reflect on some challenges related to its application in practice. First, as already mentioned, translanguaging in EMI is contextualised, meaning that in certain contexts it does not actually address students' needs, as they expect to be solely educated through English in order to improve their language proficiency (see, for example, Costa and Mariotti 2017; Doiz and Lasagabaster 2017). Furthermore, translanguaging in EMI is frequently confined to the use of En-

glish and the lecturers and home students' shared L1, a language which international students, coming from different linguacultural backgrounds, often do not speak or understand. In other words, international students may not have equal opportunities to make up for the lack of content comprehension, express themselves more precisely or elaborate on a particular topic because they can only resort to the English language. Similarly, they often do not get the same opportunity as home students to be familiarised with terminology in their L1s.

The participants in this study seem aware of some of these critical issues. Several EMI lecturers stated in the interviews that they use English and encourage students to do the same for the sake of their language improvement. Lecturers also underscored that English functions as a *lingua franca* and that the local language is avoided when international students are present. Thus, the use of translanguaging is in general carefully dosed and pedagogically motivated across most lectures in the *TAEC Corpus*. Classroom data provide evidence of reformulations or translations into English for the sake of international students' comprehension when translanguaging into the L1 occurs in relation to disciplinary concepts.

Translanguaging in the EMI classroom, as Dafouz and Smit (2022) also point out, cannot and should not be observed exclusively through the prism of inadequate proficiency in English. In fact, translanguaging with students' L1s is in line with Barker and Brown's (2007) observation that keeping languages apart is unnatural, and it is impossible to completely deactivate one language in a situation where the use of another language prevails. Other languages are also employed as a means of identification with a group and are related to (collective) identity (Auer 2005; Spolsky 2009). Speakers create multiple identities in communication, including international, national and local, and their identification with a group guides their language use (Baker 2018). Mauranen (2018: 12) also adds that "ELF identity is not as binding or strong as the national communities". In the present study, such use is described in the interviews when lecturers report that students predominantly communicate in English in whole-class discussion, but in groups they switch to their L1 if the circumstances allow (see Kiil 2011). Although switching to other languages, as already stated, usually means switching to the language spoken in the host country or the L1 shared by the lecturer and home students, in group work it depends on the L1 of the students involved. In this study, we did not have access to the students' language use in groups, but this aspect would require empirical investigation in future research.

Finally, it is worth noting that in the majority of contexts there is no explicit language policy that would stipulate language use in EMI (Doiz and Lasagabaster 2017), lecturers' and students' language levels (Drljača Margić and Vodopija-Krstanović 2018) and language outcomes upon the completion of an EMI programme (Wilkinson 2014). Specifically, students and lecturers' language command for EMI is often taken for granted (see also Pecorari and Malmström 2018). The reality, which is also indicated by the results of this study, particularly the interviews, is that not all the stakeholders have the necessary language proficiency to effectively deal with the academic requirements in EMI. In other words, neither all lecturers nor students are fully prepared for the exclusive use of English as a medium of education (see also Macaro et al. 2018; Van Parijs 2021). Hence, they may benefit from the flexibility of language use in the EMI classroom and occasional shifting to a language they feel more confident in (Guarda and Helm 2017).

5. Conclusion

The findings of the present study indicate that lecturers do not use English only because it is prescribed, expected or taken for granted. They also hold that English contributes to an international experience and provides students with opportunities to practise and ultimately improve their language skills. This explains why English is employed even in the contexts where its use is not

explicitly required or where the lecturer and students speak the same L1. Languages other than English are employed for compensation and pedagogical purposes, as well as for the purposes of accommodation and the expression of identity. Predominantly, the language used apart from English is the L1 that the lecturer shares with home students. The results indicate that there is substantial coherence between the implicit or explicit language policies described in the interviews and the classroom practices observed through corpus analysis.

Drawing data from five European university contexts, the present study is a valuable contribution to discussions on multilingualism in EMI as it critically reflects on the multifacetedness of pluralistic language use, which should be well thought out and constantly reexamined. Although “empirical research on how to establish multilingual-oriented EMI policies is still rare” (Ou, Hult and Gu 2022: 15), what we know is that their establishment should be neither hasty nor normed top-down. Translanguaging in EMI emerges from communication in the classroom and largely depends on lecturers and students’ immediate choices and needs, thus escaping norming. However, care should be taken that flexibility of language use in the EMI classroom does not interfere with international students’ comprehension and participation, and that the expectations to study in a context that primarily favours the acquisition of English language skills are fulfilled.

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