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# The Role of the L1 in EMI Classroom Practices: Exploring Identity Shifts through Language Choice



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English-medium instruction (EMI) affects lecturers' classroom practices as they face new teaching challenges in which lecturers' identities are implicitly constructed through the use of language(s). Therefore, lecturers' language choice acts indirectly result in the taking up of different identities, which depend on their communicative purposes. Employing Membership-Categorization Analysis (MCA) to examine classroom interaction, this paper examines the practices of one EMI lecturer to explore how the orientation towards one language over the others implies a specific function associated with a particular identity. The alternation between languages reveals to what extent EMI lecturers accept or challenge the English-only policy and how lecturers position themselves as English-only or as translanguaging lecturers. This study documents the lecturer's teaching behavior, particularly how L1-choice acts can be more effective for certain purposes. This paper shows how multilingual practices unfold in EMI by studying how lecturers draw from both their EMI-lecturer identity and their L1-lecturer identity. Overall, it highlights the pedagogical value of the L1, hence advocating that the use of languages other than English has, after all, a particular purpose.

**KEYWORDS:**

EMI, membership-categorization analysis (MCA), translanguaging, identity, classroom practices

La docencia universitaria en inglés (DUI) afecta las prácticas de los profesores, porque afrontan nuevos retos con los que las identidades profesionales se construyen implícitamente a través del uso de una o varias lenguas. Por tanto, los actos de elección de lengua pueden resultar indirectamente en la toma de diferentes identidades, las cuales dependen de los propósitos comunicativos. Usando *Membership-Categorization Analysis* (MCA), este estudio examina las prácticas de una profesora DUI para explorar cómo la orientación hacia una lengua sobre otras implica una función específica asociada con una identidad particular. La alternancia entre lenguas muestra su posicionamiento como profesores que abogan por el uso exclusivo del inglés o por el translingüismo, manifestando así su aceptación o rechazo de la política de "solo inglés" en el aula. El estudio documenta cómo el uso de la L1(s) puede ser más efectivo para ciertos propósitos y revela cómo se desarrollan las prácticas multilingües en DUI, destacando el valor pedagógico del uso de la L1(s) y su finalidad específica.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:**

EMI, membership-categorization analysis (MCA), translingüismo, identidad, prácticas en el aula

## Introduction

The use of English in Higher Education (HE) institutions has increased exponentially in the last decade. As a global language, English is the most commonly used language for research and publishing purposes. Therefore, English is also now widely used for educational purposes as the medium of instruction (Wächter & Maiworm, 2014). In fact, there is now a great offer of English-medium instruction (EMI) subjects, courses and programs in HE across Europe. EMI is deliberately chosen in HE institutions in non-English speaking countries to offer disciplinary content courses in English (Macaro et al, 2018). At the University of Lleida (UdL), where this study is based, EMI courses or programs often fall between the categories ‘student-mobility’ and ‘internationalization at home’ programs established by Baker and Hüttner (2017). The former has the objective to attract international students who will use English as a lingua franca in their daily academic and social activities. English is adopted with a lingua franca role to facilitate exchanges in the multilingual classroom among lecturers and students who come from diverse linguistic backgrounds. In this scenario, English displays certain roles that are not ascribed to the other language: it is the language used for communication (lingua franca role) and the language used to transmit and construct knowledge (academic role) (Dafouz & Smit, 2016). Nevertheless, some EMI courses are comprised exclusively by local students, hence a highly international profile has not been achieved (Block & Khan, 2020). For this reason, EMI also serves the function of an internationalisation at home experience for local students following an EMI course.

In this EMI multilingual scenario, speakers can orient to different facets of their identity through different language choice patterns (Bonacina-Pugh, 2013). When lecturers shift from teaching in their first language (L1) to teaching in English, this switch in language code plays an important function as it can be used to accept and reject group membership. For example, practices such as translanguaging or adherence to the English-only policy reveal lecturers’ social identities; hence language preference becomes a resource in identity negotiation and construction (Cashman, 2005, 2008; Torras & Gafaranga, 2002). Therefore, lecturers’ identities may become apparent through the use of one language over others, enabling the analysis of the emergence, development and construction of shifting professional identities. EMI affects lecturers’ classroom practices as they face new teaching challenges which require them to make decisions about language use, constructing and fashioning their professional identity (Gu, 2011). With their “language choice acts” that is, the act of choosing a language over others, lecturers can take either a professional identity that advocates for the use of English as the legitimate language (Bonacina-Pugh, 2020) for pedagogical purposes, or opt for a different identity that legitimizes the use of multilingual practices. The identities taken up by lectures are expected to have a direct impact on their classroom practices and, in turn, these routines will establish the “interactional norms of

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language choice” (Bonacina-Pugh, 2020, p. 435) adopted by classroom participants.

This study aims to add to the existing body of research regarding EMI lecturer identity construction. To do so, a membership categorization analysis (MCA) of lecturers’ classroom discourse will be carried out to assess how they transfer disciplinary knowledge to their students, by alternating the use of the L1(s) and English. First, a conceptualization of teacher professional identity will be offered, along with a discussion of the roles that language(s) play in the EMI setting. Once the research questions and the context are introduced, the methodology will be specified. Next, the data will be presented and discussed to finally shed light on EMI lecturer identity construction in the classroom.

## Theoretical Framework: Identity and Language Use in EMI

Gray and Morton point out (2018) “that identities are plural and dynamic; that they emerge (or are constructed or performed) in social interaction; that they are sensitive to context; and that they are relational [...] that they are both inhabited and ascribed” (p. 12). Taking into account this description, a definition for teacher professional identity can be derived. First, teacher professional identity occurs and is constructed in social interaction. In fact, teachers can actually be informed and influenced by the circulating educational discourse(s) on how to do education and teach more effectively, thus appropriating these discourses. Secondly, teacher professional identity has a dynamic and fluid nature because it is always under development, constantly being shaped. Therefore, teacher professional identity is a complex phenomenon that consists

of various mutually related sub-identities (Avraamidou, 2016; Block, 2017). Nevertheless, Trent (2015) argues that “consensus about the meaning and scope of teacher identity remains elusive” (p. 44) (see also Beijard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004).

Despite this lack of consensus when providing an exact definition of teacher professional identity, one of its essential characteristics is its dynamic nature as teachers undergo a continuous re-interpretative process of their professional self (Beijard et al., 2004). The teaching environment has an impact on the professional identity adopted, which in turn is reflected through the inclusion and adaptation of (new) teaching practices. According to Andenaes (2017), professional identities emerge in performance, as teachers display and legitimize their professional identity. Therefore, there is a strong connection between teachers’ actions/practices and their professional identity. For this reason, Den Brok et al. (2013) suggest that this implies “a circular process of evolving teaching actions and identity development” (p. 143).

Lecturers who teach STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects have at the center of their identity content-lecturer qualities, which afford a basic source of stability from which to assert their professional purpose, i.e. teaching disciplinary content. However, lecturers undergo a contextual change as they shift the language of instruction from their L1 to a second language (L2) and this can have an impact on their teacher identity because language is intrinsically related to identity (Barkhuizen & de Klerk, 2006). According to Doiz and Lasagabaster (2018), EMI entails a new classroom environment that inevitably affects the development of lecturers’ professional identity and demands for major adaptations (e.g., shift of language of instruction, inclusion of linguistic focus or new pedagogic adjustments).

In this new teaching scenario, the different available languages will be used to reconstruct lecturers’ identities. The choice of one language over others conveys the uptake of different identities (or categories) and communicative functions. While one medium choice can suggest solidarity or signal lack of confidence, another may indicate authority. In EMI classroom contexts, languages can therefore be used for different purposes: to enact a multilingual identity (Kramsch & Whiteside, 2007), to perform activities that are more cognitively challenging (Reyes, 2004) or to clarify ideas for comprehension purposes (Zentella, 1997). Therefore, when EMI lecturers interact with their students, they can orient to different aspects of their identity by producing different language choice patterns. The use of the L1 can display particular identities and functions, suggesting that the shift from one language to another can demarcate discourse (Dailey-O’cain & Liebscher, 2009; Levine, 2009).

In this paper, the term translanguaging will be employed instead of code-switching. This is because codeswitching conceptualizes languages as separate systems (Goodman & Tastanbek, 2020). On the other hand, translanguaging does not focus on languages, “but on the practices of bilinguals that are

readily observable” (García, 2009, p.44). Although the first conceptualization of translanguaging was associated with a carefully planned pedagogical practice (Williams, 1994), the term has evolved towards a more “fluid languaging approach” (Bonacina-Pugh et al., 2021) referring to “the practices of bilingual speakers in their daily life” (p. 444). Therefore, translanguaging is viewed as a meaning-making practice that “transforms the multilingual speaker’s identity and that transforms communicative spaces and social structures” (p.445). Translanguaging, which is understood here as the use of the multiple linguistic systems and resources (multilingual repertoire), allows for knowledge construction (Yuan & Yang, 2020) and reflects a social, interpersonal function.

As Rose and Galloway (2019) pointed out, language use is highly relevant in the EMI setting because of the co-existence (or lack of it) between the shared L1(s) and English. As translanguaging is a natural practice of individuals who have a multilingual repertoire, the aim is not to assign the use of varied linguistic resources a correct or incorrect value, but to reveal and describe the reasons *why* speakers switch between languages for different communicative purposes. Indeed, as Goodman and Tastanbek (2020) put it, “[t]ranslanguaging as a theory and pedagogical approach also adds greater emphasis on *the use of language in classrooms for meaning making and identity formation*” (p. 39, emphasis added). The use of the L1 can then respond to different functions such as: a) “a tool for education” (Rose & Galloway, 2019, p. 217) in an attempt to clarify, emphasize or repeat key disciplinary subject matter, ensuring comprehension and solving language-related gaps; b) an affective act that fosters, builds and solidifies rapport with students; c) a means to classroom management and a source for reprimanding students’ behavior; or even d) a *way out* when the disciplinary language is beyond the lecturer’s current linguistic level.

This paper will draw on and explore the use of the L1(s) by EMI lecturers who face the challenge of teaching and transmitting their disciplinary expertise through English. Therefore, the focus is on studying how and at what point are English and the L1s (Catalan and/or Spanish) used in the classroom context, and if the choice of one language over the other serves a specific function.

## Methodology

Taking into account these theoretical foundations, this paper seeks to investigate the multilingual practices that are part of EMI lecturers’ discourse when teaching disciplinary knowledge in English. In order to do so, this study will attempt to answer the following research questions:

- RQ1. To what extent are multilingual practices present in EMI teaching?
- RQ2. How does language alternation influence identity construction?

The objective with these research questions is to analyze how social identities are linked to practices such as language choice, allowing the exploration of the emergence and construction of the EMI lecturer identity in action.

## Research Context and Participant

The focal participant is a STEM EMI lecturer, Isabel (pseudonym). She taught an engineering course on installations, an engineering subject at the UdL. This multilingual HE institution, where Catalan and Spanish were used as the traditional languages for instruction, has seen the recent introduction of English as the new language for education (Llurda & Cots, 2020). In particular, the Polytechnic School has more than 50 EMI subjects (Universitat de Lleida, 2021). Isabel taught a group of fourth-year students during the second semester of the academic year 2017-18.

Focusing on the study guide of the subject taught by Isabel, it is interesting to note that one of the learning objectives required students “to show good English level in both regular classes and evaluation activities” (Study Guide: Services II, 2017-18). In addition, the study guide asserted that the course aimed to develop students’ competence in the “command of a foreign language”. Nevertheless, this good English level that the study guide refers to remained quite ambiguous because there was no explicit reference to the levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Indeed, these statements in the study guide imply the indirect *CLILisation* of the EMI subject (Block & Moncada-Comas, 2019; Moncada-Comas & Block, 2019). EMI is not just implemented for disciplinary knowledge transmission, but the subject becomes *CLILised* when it includes and integrates, to a certain extent explicitly, language learning objectives to assist students in their disciplinary literacy progress. Therefore, *CLILised* EMI is seen as a means to also develop students’ English competence.

## Data Collection

This study follows a qualitative research framework that is described as the “study [of] things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). The data, which belongs to the ASSEMID<sup>1</sup> project, explored in depth academic identities and the transmission of content knowledge as well as instances and episodes of language teaching and learning (Block & Khan, 2020). The ethnographic nature of the study required the collection of comprehensive and varied data sets:

- a) Semi-structured interviews (pre and post) with Isabel. The pre-interview (1 hour and 9 min) educed a linguistic

biography in which we learned that Isabel was a keen proponent of the internationalization and Englishization of her HE institution, as she regarded as positive the implementation of EMI subjects. In addition, she claimed to have a C1 English language competence and she reported a range of international and mobility experiences. She was predisposed to EMI and, for this reason, her experience as an EMI lecturer started out of personal curiosity: it was not a requirement from the university but an option that she took up herself. The post-interview (1 hour and 17 min), carried out after the shadowing of Isabel’s course, was a chance to discuss with the lecturer issues related to her practices. Both interviews were audio-recorded in Catalan (lecturer’s language choice) and then transcribed. The interview excerpts included in this paper are translations from the author.

- b) Classroom observations were carried out along with audio/video-recording of Isabel’s classes (her natural teaching setting). The student cohort had a total of 12 local students (Catalan and Spanish speakers), with no international students. The placement test indicated that students had an average B1 level of English. A total of 24 classes were observed (15 both audio/video-recorded and 8 only audio-recorded with a wireless recorder connected to a lapel microphone worn by the lecturer). This paper examines primarily this data set, recordings of classroom observation, which were of diverse nature: lectures, laboratory sessions and seminars. The different extracts come from two lecturing sessions: one lecture from the beginning of the course (7 February 2018) and one carried out towards the end of the course (21 May 2018). An analysis of more classroom observation excerpts, particularly extracts from laboratory and seminar sessions, can be found in Moncada-Comas (2020).
- c) The last data set that contributed to the ethnographic knowledge of the author were audio logs (WhatsApp recording tool) or written logs (Word document or WhatsApp text) sent to the author after the end of each class session. Logs required both the lecturer and students to reflect on issues such as multilingual dynamics or English-language teaching/learning episodes, among others. While Isabel sent a total of 24 written-logs, students’ completion of logs was lower than expected due to the voluntary nature of the task, hence only 51 students’ logs were gathered. These logs were considered a self-reflective practice (Farrell, 2020) that allowed EMI participants to reflect on their EMI teaching and learning experience.

This study will focus on classroom excerpts, but it will report on the pre- and post-interview as well as on the lecturer’s logs of the specific classes under analysis, if necessary. This offers a triangulation of data that provides a more accurate picture and meso-level aspects of EMI performance, experience and perspectives. As this paper revolves around the use of different languages and *how*



and *why* multilingual repertoires come to play in EMI classes, the focus will be on speech discourse, leaving aside other meaning-making resources such as multimodal modes of communication. Therefore, classroom excerpts are transcribed verbatim (see Appendix 1 for transcription conventions).

## Membership Categorization Analysis

To answer the research questions posed above, a Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA) perspective has been adopted to analyse classroom discourse interaction as it can reveal identity construction through one's typical activities and behaviours (De Fina, Schiffrin & Bamberg, 2006; Diert-Boté & Martín-Rubió, 2018; Moncada-Comas & Block, 2019).

There are three main concepts that need to be considered when carrying out MCA: 1) membership categorization device (MCD), 2) category, and 3) category-bound activity (CBA) (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2015) that can also include rights, competencies, knowledge and attributes (Hester & Eglin, 1997). The MCD's function is to assemble and arrange categories. In turn, these categories mobilise specific presumed activities or actions (ways of doing). As this analysis arises from classroom discourse, categories will not be explicitly stated by participants (Rapley, 2012), that is, the focus is on how categories are constructed through individuals' practices (CBAs). The objective is to determine how categories are constructed through teaching practices (CBAs) as the lecturer engages in doing education, thereby revealing her professional identity in action. MCA serves as a tool to study the emergence of categories in social interaction hence providing information about "how people in their own local settings construct their worlds of practice" (Gray & Morton, 2018, p. 81). Here, this framework is applied to the analysis of classroom discourse (see also Richards, 2006) in order to show, in this case, how identities are revealed through language use.

Language choice (the use of Catalan, Spanish or English) can be a CBA (Bonacina-Pugh, 2013). These language choice acts reveal the orientation of speakers towards different aspects of their identity, hence exposing identity performance (Gafaranga, 2001, 2005; Torras & Gafaranga, 2002). When interacting, speakers can orient to different aspects of their identity by producing different language choice patterns. The MCD 'language preference' can be used to accept or refuse group membership, since the categories 'Use of Catalan', 'Use of Spanish' and 'Use of English' are linked to specific activities and functions (CBAs). This alternation between languages can be considered a resource to expose social and professional identities. As Cashman (2005) puts it, "language preference is a membership categorization device, it is a resource used by speakers to ascribe and accept or reject membership in groups, or 'collections of things', the negotiation of which constitutes practical social actions" (p. 307). Likewise, by alternating between languages, speakers

display their locally-negotiated linguistic identities, thus realising medium-related activities and assigning themselves a particular language-based category (Gafaranga, 2001).

Language alternation, for example the use (or not) of spontaneous translanguaging (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017), expresses a certain range of identities. With their language choice acts, lecturers may accept a plurilingual approach or a monolingual one, hence different categories of EMI lectures arise. These categories may disclose harmony or dissonance between the L1-lecturer and the English-lecturer identities. Although choosing English in EMI is considered as the language for 'doing education' (Benwell & Stokoe, 2002) and so of enacting 'teacherhood' (Bonacina-Pugh, 2013), other languages can also be used for scaffolding reasons, hence these marked language choice acts can also be ascribed teaching purposes or other specific functions. The use of Catalan and/or Spanish does not necessarily entail a deviation from the norm, but natural, singular non-uses of English (Sabaté-Dalmau, 2020) may occur for effective content transmission, classroom management or even social/affective purposes.

Overall, language alternation is a membership-categorization device that speakers can resort to reconstruct their professional identity. In turn, language choice acts (i.e. the use of Catalan, Spanish or English) activate specific CBAs. The alternation between languages will reveal 1) to what extent multilingual practices are present in EMI teaching, hence whether this particular EMI lecturer accepts/challenges the English-only policy and 2) how this language alternation influences identity development, either adopting an English-only EMI lecturer position or a translanguaging EMI lecturer one.

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## Results and Discussion

As stated above, this study follows Cashman's (2005) assumption that *language preference* is an MCD. Within this MCD, the specific languages chosen for instruction (Catalan, Spanish or English) become a category (Bonacina-Pugh, 2013): Catalan-medium choice category, Spanish-medium choice category and English-medium choice category. Specifically, this paper analyses several classroom discourse excerpts from an EMI lecturer who often shifts from English to Catalan. The focus is on the CBAs that emerge with the Catalan-medium choice in an attempt to examine how this language choice reflects and enacts a particular EMI lecturer identity.

One of the common functions of the use of the L1, Catalan, is for comprehension purposes in Isabel's lessons. In the first excerpt from Lecture 2, Isabel is explaining an equation on the board and starts teaching in a bilingual mode as she translanguages into Catalan in the middle of the explanation and back again to English:

### Excerpt 1

#### Original:

so / the only thing that we are doing here is the energy balance in the condenser (1) / if we look at the condenser (7) / we have (8) / and then we have (1) liquid here (1) / this is at ten kilopascals / ten kilopascals / and then / we have (9) / okay? / so if we lo- look at this what we are doing is / we are transforming a mixture INTO a liquid / so we are changing the phase / so this for sure is the enthalpy of (1) vaporisation or: e: / liquia- the liquids *si vols* / (2) *però bueno li diguem sempre* the vaporisation *val?* / *perquè sabeu que una: seria positiva i l'altra negativa* / *però em gasto la mateixa energia evaporant una cosa que liquant-la si?* / *per tant / normalment li diem la de vaporització* / (1) but if you like this one (1) / okay? (Isabel, Lecture 2)

#### Translation of Catalan:

[...] if you prefer / (2) but well we always call it of vaporisation okay? / because you know that one: would be positive and the other one negative / but I spend the same amount of energy evaporating than liquefying it / yes? / so / normally we call it vaporisation / (1) [...] (Isabel, Lecture 2)

Excerpt 1 shows that Isabel is selectively switching form one language to other during instruction to make content knowledge more intelligible for students. Isabel is addressing the whole class, therefore, she is trying to facilitate students' processing and understanding of disciplinary content. In MCA terms, the category 'use of Catalan' serves two CBAs:

- to loosen the English-only policy
- to explain and ensure understanding of disciplinary content

According to Lewis et al. (2012), Isabel is here resorting to *translation for the whole class* which does not only entail a direct/literal translation but also a paraphrased translation that may secure comprehension of the student cohort. Isabel tends to switch to the shared language (Catalan) with students when she feels that content becomes more difficult to comprehend. When she does so, Isabel voluntarily shifts to the common L1 without being asked by students (i.e., it was not due to a communication breakdown nor did students overtly ask for this language change). However, she may consider that the content is too complex for students to process, and her strategy is to change to the L1 as this language choice may ease students' understanding of the disciplinary content. In fact, she mentions in the written log from this lesson: "I've switched into Catalan during the class to insist on some concepts that were more difficult" (Written-log, 21 May 2018). Therefore, we can say that Isabel tends to teach in a bilingual mode as she uses spontaneous translanguaging to seemingly clarify concepts and ensure content transmission. She switches from English to Catalan selectively during instruction to continue explaining and clarifying subject content in an attempt to guarantee comprehension of content knowledge among all students. Indeed, this could be considered "concept-focused codeswitching" (Gierlinger, 2017) or "cognitive academic translanguaging" (Jones, 2017) because of her long explanation to make the subject matter accessible and clear to students. Here, the use of Catalan (a shared L1 between lecturer and students) would facilitate understanding of the lesson (Lasagabaster & Garcia, 2014), such that Isabel both accepts the use of the L1 and adopts it for her EMI teaching. Therefore, she inhabits a translanguaging EMI lecturer identity that draws on her L1-content identity.

Another typical use of Catalan in Isabel's classroom practices occurs when she has problems with L2 terminology. In the following excerpt, Isabel focuses on her status as a non-native speaker of English, a status that she shares with her students, and highlights certain gaps and difficulties in her language competence:

### Excerpt 2

#### Original:

a very: difficult word for me stoichiometry / so sometimes I will say Stoichkov okay? / you know who Stoichkov was? / so if I say Stoichkov is stoichiometry / okay? / so theoretical or Stoichkov combustion is the one that we can do in the laboratory / [...] what happened when eh: / I / you are using combustion with defect air / when I'm using less air than the one required stoichoitiky- / *ah bueno* / Stoichkow / for: for a combustion reaction? (Isabel, Lecture 1)

#### Translation of Catalan:

[...] / *ah well* / [...]

This instance shows that the word stoichiometry poses a problem for Isabel. In fact, she herself commented the following in the written log received from this class: “I know how to say stoichiometry but the other one is just too long, and I always stammer when I try to say it. So, for some years now, I always tell student that instead of saying stoichiometry or stoichiometrical I will sometimes say Stoichkov (the famous Barça player!)” (Written-log, 7 February 2018). Isabel is aware of her own language issues and focuses on the status that she shares with students, non-native speakers of English. By doing so, she highlights gaps in her linguistic competence and presents herself as not fully proficient, possibly neither comfortable, in English. Indeed, Isabel stated in the previous log received just two days before this class: “I’ve realized you can’t stop speaking a language! It’s been two years without teaching in English and I don’t speak English regularly, so I felt I had major shortcomings” (Written-log, 5 February 2018).

In addition, her comment “very difficult word for me stoichiometry / [...] sometimes I will say Stoichkov okay? / you know who Stoichkov was? / so if I say Stoichkov is stoichiometry” also serves the function of building rapport and engaging with the audience (i.e., the students) thanks to its humorous tone (the video-recording of this class reveals that several students reacted to this comment by smiling or laughing). This excerpt could be referred to as an example of “Basic Interpersonal Translanguaging” (Jones, 2017) because the Catalan-medium choice does not have a learning aim, but it entails social cohesion and classroom management.

Another episode in which the shift to the L1 results from insufficient L2 competence occurs when she tries to utter the word *strictly*:

### Excerpt 3

#### Original:

this one is sensible and the other one is latent / so if we do it eh: / from a strictic point of view / a strict point of view / so strictly / *o com es digui / estrictament* (Isabel, Lecture 2)

#### Translation of Catalan:

[...] *or whatever / strictly* (Isabel, Lecture 2)

This episode reveals how Isabel herself makes reference to English as an object of study. Although she is using English as the medium of education, there is a language shift when Isabel has problems with English terms, either disciplinary specific terminology (*stoichiometry*) or more common words (*strictly*). Isabel uses her L1 as a form of self-effacement to remove the asymmetry of knowledge (Drew, 1991) that may exist between herself and the students by exteriorizing her L2 competence, yet Isabel’s English competence was much higher than the average competence of her students. According to Heritage (2012) and his discussion of territories

of knowledge, Isabel is positioned on the epistemic gradient as more knowledgeable because of her epistemic status; as the teacher she is an expert in her domain. Nevertheless, in this interaction Isabel positions herself (i.e. epistemic stance) as not fully competent in English, dissembling herself as less knowledgeable than she really is. Differences in knowledge and competence influence speakers’ identities, as the more knowledgeable person will stand in a position of authority and power towards the less knowledgeable person (see Drew, 1991). As Gray and Morton (2018) put it, “participants position themselves and others with an eye to roles and identities that cannot be separated from issues of knowledge and competence” (p. 36). While the asymmetries in terms of content knowledge are kept, the interactional resources used by Isabel do not claim the same asymmetry of knowledge in terms of language competence, by means of which Isabel withdraws her authoritative source of linguistic knowledge (i.e., language proficiency). In fact, Isabel stated in the pre-interview that she does not “feel with enough English level / with enough authority / to teach English to anyone” (Pre-interview, 8 January 2018), thereby accepting her linguistic limitations in English.

Although these examples exhibit Isabel’s recognition of a certain lack of English knowledge, the use of Catalan becomes a meaning-making tool: her L1 expertise is used to construct and strengthen her EMI lecturer identity. Isabel does not appear to diminish her professional identity because of this language alternation; instead, she views Catalan as a resource to prevent communication breakdowns and to engage with students, detaching from students when ‘doing education’ in English and approaching them when ‘socialising’ in Catalan. As she explains in the post-interview, Isabel makes use of the shared L1 mainly for two reasons: “because students will better understand the lessons and because I have more resources” (post-interview, 28 June 2018).

By resorting to the L1 and implementing a self-effacing strategy, Isabel may lower tensions associated with the use of English and create a more relaxed classroom environment (Savage et al., 2017). She reveals her weaknesses with English through the Catalan-language choice act, hence she creates an environment of comfort where students do not need to worry about being fully proficient (Deiter, 2000). Isabel demonstrates to students that even when the class is in English, they can resort to their L1(s) if they have problems with specific terminology or with speaking in general, as she herself does. From an MCA perspective, the use of Catalan in these classroom extracts (*Excerpt 2* and *Excerpt 3*) serves several CBAs:

- to show lack of English terminology
- to create a more relaxed classroom environment
- to establish a more equal status between lecturer and students
- to be flexible with, even to mitigate, the English-only policy



Finally, a typical activity also associated with the L1-medium choice in Isabel's classroom practices is to joke and reprimand students as in the following excerpt:

#### Excerpt 4

##### Original:

in the generator? / in the evaporator? / in the condenser? / or in absorber? (1) / HELLO? / if I want to cool down a fluid where am I doing this? [...] *m'estic deprimint eh? / i això que jo venia contenta / que ahir el Barça va fotre una pallissa al Madrid a basquet / [...] a veure anem a veure / @ here good / què que circula per aquí? / feu-me un esquema del evaporador venga / l'evaporador / ha d'haver un fluid que entri i que surti per aquí / i després ha d'haver un que entri i que surti per aquí* (Isabel, Lecture 1)

##### Translation of Catalan:

[...] *I'm getting depressed eh? / and I was happy / because yesterday Barça thrashed Madrid in basketball / [...] let's see let's see / @ [...] what circulates through here? / make a diagram of the evaporator come on / the evaporador / a fluid has to go in and out through here / and then another fluid has to go in and out through here* (Isabel, Lecture 1)

From an MCA perspective, the use of Catalan activates both humorous and disciplinary functions with the following CBAs:

- to reduce tensions associated with the established language
- to joke, fostering social connections with students
- to build social relationships
- to criticize or censure students' behavior
- to discipline students

In this excerpt, we can see how Isabel uses small doses of humour in her EMI classes to get students' attention, a function she usually assigns to the Catalan-language choice. By both shifting to the common L1 and making a cultural reference (basketball match), Isabel is effectively building rapport with her students; she aims to create a more relaxed classroom environment. In fact, this sudden language shift along with her comments (*getting depressed* and *Barça basketball team thrashing Madrid*) may facilitate a bond with her students and also maintain their attention. Therefore, Isabel seems to assign to Catalan the function of building relationships with students as the use of the L1 serves the purpose of fostering a social connection. We can observe how Isabel shifts her position, and tone, from a more professional to a more personal one. There is a brief suspension of teacher-hood correlated with the change of language medium. By shifting from English to Catalan and back to English again, Isabel is orienting towards a different

aspect of her identity, an orientation produced due to the language choice pattern. Similar to one of the participants in Kling (2015), Isabel introduces humour to create a closer relationship with her students. Kim et al. (2017) pointed out that the L1 can be integrated as a teaching strategy to joke and build rapport. As they put it, "L1 can function [...] as an affective reserve for building and solidifying rapport between the instructor and students who share the same L1; and as an effective strategy for classroom management" (Kim et al., 2017, p. 143).

Furthermore, this joking tone is used to mitigate the subsequent reprimand to students. First, Isabel poses a question to students and as she does not get any answer, she increases the volume of her voice when she utters the word "hello" with a rising intonation. Although she rephrases the question, students still do not provide any response. At this moment, the language shift occurs: Isabel chides students with a subtle joke in Catalan (*"I'm getting depressed"*) as they do not seem to follow. From teaching and posing a question in English, Isabel shifts to a more disciplinary mode with Catalan. Therefore, there is a shift to Catalan when criticising students' behaviour. Catalan seems to be a more effective, natural and spontaneous language choice for Isabel when it comes to censoring students' lack of responses with a touch of humour to relieve the disciplinary function as well as explaining the task to students more efficiently.

## Conclusions and Implications

Drawing on classroom observation data, this investigation is concerned with the uses of languages other than English in EMI classroom practices. We have seen how Isabel's teaching practices reflect and construct a translanguaging EMI lecturer identity as she draws from her L1-content lecturer identity to negotiate this new emerging position. Isabel seems to employ Catalan because it grants her a more powerful, knowledgeable position. Isabel is aware of this identity renegotiation as she stated: "I am myself in Catalan / in the other / I'm not so myself" (Pre-interview, 8 January 2018). Isabel seems to feel more comfortable when being a teacher in her L1. When she is in EMI lecturer identity mode and a problem occurs, she regains her authority and competence through the use of L1-based practices that mediate the construction of her EMI lecturer identity.

In the light of RQ1, we can say that multilingual practices are present in the EMI teaching setting examined here. Isabel is an example of a lecturer who is flexible in terms of L1-use in class; her practices do not follow an English-only policy and so she does not regard her classes as L1-free zones (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2017). In fact, her teaching strategies reveal that the shared L1 is a meaning-making resource, an additional tool that she can employ for educational purposes because she utilizes it to ensure understanding of complex subject matter. Therefore, Isabel's language use positions her as a translanguaging lecturer as she adopts an optimal position (Macaro, 2009) where the L1



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has a place in the EMI classroom. By integrating the L1 in her lesson, Isabel scaffolds students' disciplinary learning and socialisation process.

In response to RQ2, the use of languages other than English plays an important role in Isabel's translanguaging lecturer identity, as the Catalan-medium choice arises for specific activities. The L1 in Isabel's EMI classes appears to achieve different functions: a) a pedagogical function, to ensure understanding of difficult subject matter; b) a means of escape, when the target language is beyond her current level of competence; c) an affective purpose, to establish a positive relationship with students and foster a relaxed atmosphere; and d) a classroom management strategy, to maintain a disciplined classroom environment. Moreover, the L1 use is justified in Isabel's case due to her homogenous student cohort (Macaro, 2019), who all understand Catalan and have an average B1 level of English.

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This study contributes to EMI and translanguaging research by focusing on an EMI lecturer's teaching behaviour and how L1-choice acts can be more effective for certain purposes. This paper has allowed us to observe how a particular EMI lecturer's multilingual teaching practices unfold in the classroom and analyse how she deals with teaching disciplinary knowledge in English (and Catalan). In view of the findings, some pedagogical implications can be outlined in line with recent findings (Paulsrud et al., 2021) concerning the role of the 'E' in EMI. The non-uses of English are not seen as inferior teaching practices because they entail new affordances available for teaching and learning, such as renegotiating identity and confronting the monolingual English-only ideology. This study therefore highlights the need to view translanguaging as a pedagogy in which both lecturer and students allow and engage in fluid linguistic practices that incorporate the home language(s) of students (and lecturers) so as to accomplish a successful teaching and learning experience, build disciplinary knowledge effectively and develop disciplinary literacies (García, 2014). Nevertheless, one could question the effectiveness of the experience when the teacher has problems uttering some subject-related terms. Although Isabel uses translanguaging to overcome communication obstacles in English, her main goal (teaching subject-matter and making disciplinary knowledge more accessible) is achieved as a result of language shifts. This study can contribute to the design of EMI professional development programmes by 1) ensuring that all linguistic resources present in EMI in action are considered by both lecturer and students as legitimate for teaching and learning, and 2) planning judiciously translanguaging pedagogies that do not restrict the non-uses of English to inferior, marginalised practices. Therefore, it is postulated that translanguaging should be part of teacher education programmes to prepare lecturers and empower them to employ their multilingual repertoires when engaged in EMI, as a valuable option.

In future research it would be interesting to compare how lecturers' translanguaging pedagogies progress after an EMI professional programme that broadens lecturers' awareness and use of languages other than English. In addition, this study has provided an analysis of a homogenous class of local students who all shared the L1 (Catalan) with the lecturer, but what we do not know is how these occasional shifts to the L1 influence students' English linguistic development or what would happen in a multilingual/multicultural classroom where international students are not familiar with the local L1. The short but valuable excerpts from different classroom observations analysed in this paper have provided evidence of the multilingual essence of EMI lecture discourse, demonstrating how lecturers teaching disciplinary knowledge in English – Isabel for one – tackled the EMI setting: employing their full linguistic repertoire as a meaning-making resource to facilitate comprehension and encourage participation on students' part. On the whole, Isabel's case may serve as a representative example of flexible EMI praxis and it may be employed to further explore multilingual pedagogical practices in the field of EMI teaching. ■

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## Notes

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## Appendix 1. Transcription Conventions

Symbol	Meaning
/	Indicated natural pauses between units of speech.
@	All laughter and laughter-like sounds are transcribed with the @ symbol.
[...]	Omission (for space or confidentiality constraints)
(1)	Pauses are time to the nearest second and marked with the number of second in parentheses, e.g. (1) = 1 second, (2) = 2 second.
CAPITAL LETTERS	If a speaker gives a syllable, word or phrase particular prominence, this is written in capital letters.
:	Lengthened sound (e.g. elongated vowels).
italics	Languages other than English
?	Rising intonation
wo-	With word fragments, a hyphen marks where a part of the word is missing.