English-medium instruction experiences: 'Focus on form' as a strategy to develop subject specific literacy

María Ángeles Velilla Sánchez[1] ·   https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0285-9834

Universidad de Zaragoza

Departamento de Filología Inglesa y Alemana. Facultad de Educación, 50009, Zaragoza, España.

ABSTRACT

This paper examines English-medium instruction lectures at the University of Zaragoza (Spain) and problematises the extent to which English is only the 'medium' or the 'lingua franca' to obtain a teaching-learning purpose as regards content or whether these lectures are also sensitive to language learning. The study analyses metalinguistic comments made by EMI lecturers during their lessons in which they 'focus on form', i.e., shift from the topic they were discussing (course-related content) to English language forms (e.g., vocabulary, pronunciation, etc.) as a pragmatic strategy among others employed by the lecturers to prevent and overcome difficulties of comprehension experienced by their students. The corpus for the study consists of 14 hours of audio-recorded lectures in two different disciplines (Business Administration and Nanoscience). The methodology relies on a discourse-pragmatic analysis of the transcribed lectures as well as on semi-structured interviews with the lecturers, which serve to understand their perception of their own use of this and other pragmatic strategies. The results of the study help to provide evidence of the supportive attitude of EMI lecturers who focus on form to assist their students primarily with disciplinary-related language but who consider themselves as non-language teachers.

Keywords: English as a medium instruction, focus on form, pragmatic strategies, disciplinary language, language support.

RESUMEN

Este artículo tiene por objetivo analizar clases magistrales de inglés como medio de instrucción en la Universidad de Zaragoza (España) para definir hasta qué punto el inglés es sólo el "medio" o la "lengua franca" para obtener un propósito de enseñanza-aprendizaje respecto al contenido de las asignaturas o si estas clases también son sensibles al aprendizaje del idioma. El estudio aborda comentarios metalingüísticos realizados por los profesores durante sus clases en las que se "presta atención a la forma", es decir, pasan del contenido relacionado con las asignaturas a aspectos formales de la lengua (por ejemplo, vocabulario, pronunciación, etc.). Estos comentarios metalingüísticos se analizan como una estrategia pragmática entre otras empleadas por los profesores para prevenir y superar las dificultades de comprensión que experimentan sus alumnos. El corpus del estudio consta de 14 horas de clases magistrales grabadas en dos disciplinas diferentes (Administración de Empresas y Nanociencia). La metodología se basa en un análisis discursivo-pragmático de las transcripciones de las clases, así como en entrevistas semiestructuradas con los profesores para comprender su percepción sobre el propio uso de esta y otras estrategias pragmáticas. Los resultados del estudio contribuyen a evidenciar el apoyo de los docentes de inglés como medio de instrucción a sus estudiantes con el lenguaje disciplinar a pesar de no considerarse a sí mismos como expertos en enseñanza de lengua extranjera.

Palabras clave: Inglés como medio de instrucción, atención a la forma, estrategias pragmáticas, lenguaje disciplinar, apoyo lingüístico.

1. Introduction

A generally agreed defining feature of EMI is that English works as a contact language which is not spoken by the majority of the population outside the formal learning environment (Macaro, 2018), which means that their contact with this language may occur substantially (or only) during such academic events. This defining criterion ties in well with the English as a lingua franca (henceforth ELF) approach defined as "the use of English amongst

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[1]   **Corresponding author** · Email: mavelilla@unizar.es

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multilingual interlocutors whose common language is English and who [usually] communicate in a country or area in which English is not used in daily life" (Smit, 2005: 67). The current research conforms with these definitions as it examines English-medium settings in which multilingual lecturers and students use English for communicative-academic purposes in a country where English is not the local language. Particularly, the study reported in this paper took place at the University of Zaragoza in Spain, where the local language is Spanish. EMI programs at the University of Zaragoza are fairly recent and have become a key aspect of the strategic response for the internationalisation of the institution (Vazquez et al. 2019). Therefore, becoming international implies using English as the vehicle for communication and in tertiary education, in many cases, this takes the shape of 'vehicle for instruction'. EMI, as it is understood in this study, describes "the use of English language to teach academic subjects in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English" (Dearden, 2014: 4). Yet, the term 'English as a medium of instruction' contains an aspect that we problematise in this paper: 'a medium':

- Is it used as a synonym for lingua franca (vehicle) among the participants in these teaching/learning contexts or is it rather part of the learning outcomes?

- To what extent do lecturers focus on English language forms?

Such questions usually lead to the comparison of EMI with other types of instruction. First, EMI is different from English as a foreign language (EFL). EFL is aimed at students with first languages different from English who aim at achieving a native-like competence and performance in the English language –usually either Standard British or Standard American–. EFL programmes are not related to any particular academic subject or career orientation but the aim is that students acquire the competence to communicate in different types of English-speaking environments (British Council/TEPAV, 2015). Secondly, EMI is sometimes used as a synonym of CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning). However, CLIL has a dual educational objective built into its title, the enhancement of both content and language. The integration of both components is achieved through attention to four key elements of CLIL teaching, known as the four Cs of CLIL: content, communication, cognition, and culture (Brown & Bradford, 2017: 330). CLIL approaches, in the specific case of Spain, have been largely implemented at primary and secondary school levels (Dafouz & Sánchez, 2013) in which CLIL instructors share responsibility for subject mastery and for language skills. EMI is also different from ESP (English for Specific Purposes), which refers to the teaching of English for specific needs in academic or professional contexts (e.g. English for Journalism or English for Business), and it also differs from EAP (English for Academic Purposes), which is teaching designed to provide students with the linguistic knowledge and discourse competence that will enable them to operate successfully at a university which delivers its academic subjects through the medium of English. However, recent research has shed light on the implementation of EMI programs as a means to develop students' discipline-specific language skills, a scenario which is leading ESP and EAP subjects to be "overshadowed", if not replaced in new curricula (Arnó-Marcia & Aguilar: 2018: 203), being EMI programs the result of the homogenising progression in global higher education that internationalizations policies have brought.

EMI has been described as "an umbrella term for academic subjects taught through English" because it makes "no direct reference to the aim of improving students' English" (Dearden & Macaro, 2016: 456); in other words, "[it] focuses on content learning only" (Smit & Dafouz, 2012: 4). Brown and Bradford's (2017: 330) examination of some of the ways in which EMI has been defined in the literature shows that the distinguishing attribute of EMI is its focus on subject-content mastery, i.e., by definition EMI "highlight[s] the centrality of academic content and emphasise[s] the lack of explicit language learning aims in EMI courses". We can see the difference between EMI and the aforementioned teaching approaches by considering the focus of the teaching

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and learning objectives as content-driven or language-driven (See Table 1.). To do so, we need a continuum based on the intended learning outcomes of a particular classroom in which the language being used is not the first language of the students and/or the teachers.

EMI	**CLIL**	**EFL** **ESP** **EAP**
Content-driven	**Content & language-driven**	**Language-driven**
• Content is taught in L2 • Content learning is a priority • Language learning is secondary • Contents objectives are determined by course goals or curriculum • Students are evaluated on content mastery	• Content is taught in L2 • Content and language are both prioritised • Dual commitment to language and content-learning • Contents and language objectives are determined by course goals or curriculum • Students are evaluated on content and language mastery/proficiency	• Content is used to learn an L2 • Language learning is a priority • Content learning is incidental • Language objectives are determined by the L2 course goals or curriculum • Students are evaluated on language skills/proficiency

Table 1. A continuum of content and language for instruction. Adapted from Met (1999: 4).

Brown and Bradford (2017) argue that many EMI courses entail a 'sink-or-swim' approach in which students are expected to master the English language. This does not mean, however, that EMI courses cannot focus on the English language at some point. According to these researchers "EMI classes may incorporate elements of language sensitivity and language support" (p. 330). In some cases, they even may include bridge phases with explicit language learning and assessment components for students before they begin taking EMI content classes (Brown, 2014). However, English is, above all, a tool for transmitting subject content, and language learning is an implicit or incidental outcome. In Carrió-Pastor's words in EMI methodology, "language acquisition is not a priority but a consequence of using English as the language of instruction" (Carrió-Pastor, 2021: 22). As exposed in Table 1, the learning outcomes and assessment are both tied directly to subject content. The extent to which content and language learning are included as implicit or incidental aims of EMI courses is context driven, often depending on the personal attitudes of the individual EMI instructor or the discipline taught (Brown & Bradford, 2017), since these courses may have the aim of equipping students with academic skills to operate successfully in international environments, a skill-set of which English is a part (Velilla & Vázquez, 2016). These authors provide, hence, an updated definition of EMI based on the working definition proposed in Dearden's (2015) study of EMI and which the present study subscribes. It is as follows: "EMI entails the use of the English language to teach academic subjects in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English. It may or may not include the implicit aim of increasing students' English language abilities" (Brown & Bradford, 2017: 330).

Recent research has investigated how EMI Tertiary Education lecturers focus on vocabulary and other linguistic aspects so as to help students' overcome difficulties in understanding subject-specific concepts. Low language proficiency of students/teachers and domain-specific vocabulary have been deemed as the primary causes that hinder comprehension during EMI lectures (Querol-Julián & Crawford, 2019). This is not surprising as most often EMI students have not received any previous training to prepare them for those subjects in which specialised content is taught (Álvarez-Gil, 2021). Most research deals with corrective feedback in EMI classes from a 'CLIL-isation' approach (Sancho, 2013: 77), which redefines Tertiary Education pedagogy with lecturers having to plan their lessons didactically and linguistically. Yet, there is also research which approaches focus on form episodes as incidental language-learning opportunities that may arise in teaching in higher education (Pecorari et al., 2011). The latter approach is different from the pedagogical linguistic guidance conventionally considered in ESL and ESP literature since it is not a matter of noticing the difference between the student's interlanguage and their target language as part of their study areas. Rather, these EMI situations have been observed involving content

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lecturers incidentally raising awareness on the appropriate language to use in the specialised context. In this regards, Hynninen sheds light on the question of ownership of English from the perspective of ELF speakers, concluding from her study that content experts to some extent "shared their conceptions of (good) language use with the students and, in this sense, integrated language to the content classes, even if learning English was not an official aim" (Hynninen, 2012: 16). She argues that even when courses are not language courses, "language sometimes becomes the topic of discussion in the form of language correcting and commentary" (p. 13) thus, involving content lecturers taking on the role of language experts. Similarly, Costa (2012) investigated focus on form episodes in English-medium instruction applied science lectures delivered by Italian first-language lecturers. The study revealed that lecturers tended to focus on vocabulary and typographical enhancement, even using code-switching as a way of making language more visible. This kind of translation is expected in monolingual university context, as in the case of some Italian or Spanish universities.

The current paper is also concerned with metalinguistic comments that focus on instances where the English language (specialized terminology in particular) is the topic of discussion, namely fragments in which the participants 'focus on form'. It analyses this strategy as a metadiscoursal reference employed by lecturers to explain specialised terms and technical concepts associated with the specific courses they are teaching and those adopted to overcome the difficulties of comprehension experienced by their students.

2. Setting of research and methods

The study takes place in a Spanish university –The University of Zaragoza (henceforth UZ). This is a traditionally monolingual research and teaching institution, located in Southwest Europe. The UZ describes itself as a leading university in the process of adapting to the European Space of Higher Education. Using Foskett´s (2010) classification, we could state that the University of Zaragoza is currently an "internationally engaged university", meaning that it is "highly engaged on an international scale both at home and abroad, which provides services at home to support international students, it has a global mindset reflected in academic course curriculum and faculties are encouraged to conduct research and teach abroad" (Foskett, 2010: 47). Domestic undergraduate students represent 96% of the student population. Teaching is mainly conducted in the national language, Spanish, with the exception of courses taught in departments of languages and, outside those departments, only few undergraduate and postgraduate courses offer English-mediated instruction. This condition does not differ from the general picture of EMI in the Spanish HE sector in which English-mediated instruction has not yet been widespread, possibly due to the status of Spanish as an international language and a popular foreign language. Yet, English is also considered as having potential to attract international talent, increase competitiveness in the international sphere and enhance cooperation with other world regions (Vazquez et al., 2019). As such, EMI is meant to be one of the main tools for internationalising the University of Zaragoza as it fosters student and staff mobility, exchanging intercultural values and enhancing a multilingual and multicultural approach to a European/global citizenship.

The data for this study were collected in different programs in the Faculty of Business and Economics and in the Faculty of Science because these are the faculties where more EMI programs can be found at the UZ. More precisely, the present research is concerned with the analysis of practices of EMI in the BSc in Business Administration and Management (taught at the Business and Economics Faculty) and in the MSc in Nanostructured Materials for Nanotechnology Applications (taught at the Faculty of Science).

In the Business and Economics Faculty, all its degrees are taught in Spanish, except for the degree in Business Administration and Management (henceforth "degree in BAM"), taught in Spanish and in English to different

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groups. It comprises 240 ECTS credits, as it last four years, and the course contents are the same in both groups—English-taught and Spanish-taught. Most of the times contents are translated into English, since the Spanish-medium program was established before and original materials were developed in Spanish. In the institutional documents available in the webpage of the Degree in BAM, the EMI component is mentioned in relation to the positive effects on the students' future careers in terms of favouring job projection in those professional opportunities in which the international component is key. The main objectives of the English-medium program are to provide students with a solid economic-business training with an international focus; to diversify its offer of studies; to expand and improve its bilateral agreements with other educational and research centres from foreign universities and institutions, promoting the mobility of students, teachers and researchers; and to contribute to a broader and better educational offer in the territory of the Autonomous Community of Aragon. Therefore, this program does not include teaching and learning English as part of the learning objectives.

Focusing on the Faculty of Science, it has got two master's programmes fully taught in English mainly to attract students from abroad: the *MSc in Nanostructured Materials for Nanotechnology Applications* (henceforth *NANOMAT degree*) and the *MSc in Quantitative Biotechnology* (the rest of the programs in this faculty are Spanish-taught). They have a duration of one academic year and comprise 60 ECTS credits. As regards the former, which is the one in which data were collected for the present study, all teaching materials and examination tests are carried out in English as the vehicular language. As is mentioned in the faculty of Science website, the course is suitable for graduates with science, engineering, medicine or related degrees keen to develop careers at the forefront of nanoscience and nanotechnology. The course is multidisciplinary and aims to provide students with fundamental knowledge, practical experience, and skills in the fabrication and characterisation of nanostructured materials and devices with applications in key areas of nano-chemistry, nanophysics, and nano-biomedicine. In this master's degree, learning the English language is neither part of the teaching and learning objectives.

Different profiles of students access these degrees. In the case of the students studying the degree in BAM, most of them are Spanish students who aim at improving their English language skills by means of using this language as the vehicular language. Some students may consider studying through English as a means for practising the language in order to master it. Yet, international students are also present in this degree, since the vehicular language which it offers is an asset for most of the Erasmus students, who usually prefer English-medium courses, given their lack of Spanish language mastery. On the other hand, in the NANOMAT degree the number of Spanish and international students is more balanced. International students take this degree because they are attracted by the specialisation it offers in terms of the subject contents.

As for language requirements to enter these EMI programs at the UZ, in the English-taught group of the degree in BAM, the entry language level is a CEFR English B2 certificate or it requires passing a corresponding language test at the beginning of the first academic year. On the other hand, in the NANOMAT degree, a B1 level is required to access the program, but prior knowledge on certain domain specific concepts and terminology in English are taken for granted as they are already graduate students (besides of the fact that English is frequently used by hard science stakeholders). When it comes to the teachers, there is not a minimum language level required to teach in any of these degrees. Finally, regarding course assessment, the "course descriptions" of the English-taught degree in BAM does not provide information on evaluation of linguistic skills. We can then assume that, although the language of instruction is English, only contents, and not language competence, are assessed. As for the evaluation of the Master in Nanostructured Materials, the course descriptions do not provide much information on whether English will be evaluated and if so, according to which criteria (Vazquez et al., 2019).

The methodology used in the study reported in this paper involves triangulation at two different levels: data triangulation and methodological triangulation. The first data set collected was the corpus of lectures taking place at the University of Zaragoza. These lectures amount to 12 lessons recorded. The speech events are multiparty interactions where the participants represent a variety of lingua-cultural backgrounds, since they involve local lecturers (Spanish speakers) but also local and international students. They were firstly transcribed and then analysed from a discourse-pragmatic approach in order to analyse the use of pragmatic strategies by the lecturers so as to prevent and overcome difficulties of comprehension experienced by their students. A coding frame was developed drawing on previous research on pragmatic strategies that ELF speakers use to prevent misunderstanding and ensure mutual intelligibility (i.e., Björkman, 2014, Cogo, 2009 and Ollinger, 2012 among others). It included different pragmatic strategies, their description, an example of their use, the sources and the perceived interactional functions that they fulfilled. This pre-established list of pragmatic strategies was used for the first stage of coding, i.e., different stretches of language were assigned a code (a pragmatic strategy), establishing a corpus-driven taxonomy of those strategies that had a higher frequency in the transcripts, i.e., that had four or more occurrences. However, inductive coding (Schreier, 2012) was also used in order to identify pragmatic strategies which were not in the pre-defined coding list but were frequent in the data. Thus, evaluating and modifying the coding frame was part of the process. The software Atlast.ti was used to carry out every step. 13 different pragmatic strategies resulted from the analysis of the lectures' transcriptions, among them the 'focus on form' strategy reported in this paper. Table 2 contains the pragmatic strategies used by the lecturers in the aforementioned lectures to accomplish their communicative and teaching goals, their definition and their percentages of use.

Pragmatic strategy	Occurrences	%
Self-repair	Making self-initiated corrections in one's own speech.	30.5%
Reformulation	Using a different string of words to explain something that has been already explained but considered unclear.	20.8%
Defining	Exemplifying, illustrating or describing the properties of the target object or action.	12%
Self-repetition	Repeating a word or a string of words immediately after they were said.	10.1%
Code-switching	Including stretches of discourse ranging from single words to whole chunks and even complete turns in the speakers L1.	8%
Other-repetition	Repeating a word or a string of words that someone else has uttered in conversation immediately after they were said.	4.8%
Comprehension check	Asking questions to check that the interlocutor can follow the speaker's message.	4.1%
Focus on form	Metalinguistic appreciation on something the interlocutor has formerly said in reference to specific terms or the language used in the speech.	2.9%
Literal translation	Translating literally a lexical item, an idiom or a structure from the vehicular language to the L1 and vice versa.	2.7%
Clarification request	Requesting an explanation of an unfamiliar meaning upon nonunderstanding or misunderstanding.	1.6%
Appeal for help	Turning to the interlocutor for assistance by asking an explicit question concerning a gap in one's knowledge/speech.	1.1%
Asking for repetition	Requesting repetition when not hearing or understanding something properly.	0.8%
Other-repair	Correcting something in the interlocutor's speech.	0.8%

Table 2. Pragmatic strategies used by the participants in the lectures.

This first data set was triangulated with data obtained through semi-structured interviews with the lecturers in order to obtain information about the participants' experience with the use of academic EMI discourse; how students and teachers feel about and relate to the pursuit of academic activities using English in a non-English medium culture; and whether there is any change in the lecture format due to the change in the language of

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instruction (e.g. relationships among participants, level of explicitness in the teacher's discourse, etc.). Interviews were also used to support the discourse-pragmatic analysis in terms of the functions of each strategy. Therefore, this part of the investigation helped to understand the factors or motivations involved in these participants' use of a particular set of pragmatic strategies during oral communication in EMI lectures. The semi-structured interviews were carried out once the transcription of the lectures was made and after a preliminary analysis of the lectures was conducted. The interviews carried out in this study combined a 'experience-focused interviewing' perspective (phenomenological positions concentrating on the "what" of communication to try to get as close as possible to precise descriptions of what people have experienced) with a 'language-focused interviewing' approach (discourse-oriented positions focusing on how people express themselves and give accounts occasioned by the situation in which they find themselves) (Brinkmann, 2014: 294).

3. Results

The strategy *'focus on form'* is understood in this study as closely related to what Swain and Lapkin (1998: 326) coined as 'Language related episodes', which have been defined as "any part of a dialogue where interlocutors talk about the language they are producing, question their language use or correct themselves or others". In Basturkmen and Shakleford's words they are "transitory shifts of the topic of the discourse from content to language" (2015: 87). In this study, *'focus on form* episodes' are defined as such specific stretches in which the lecturer clearly shifts from content-related discourse to language-related talk. As can be observed in Table 3, there are 21 occurrences of 'focus on form' in the transcriptions analysed, which account for 2.9 % of the total occurrences of strategies in the corpus. These transitory shifts from content-related topics in the lecturer's discourse to language-related issues are far more frequent in the BAM degree corpus (17) than in the Nanostructured Materials corpus (4).

Pragmatic strategy	Occurrences	%
Focus on form	21	2.9%

Table 3. Focus on form.

'Focus on form' has been found most frequently used in relation to specific terminology to clarify meaning. Yet, as has already been mentioned, other pragmatic strategies are used in this corpus to explain technical concepts (e.g., 'defining' used to exemplify, illustrate or describe the properties of the target object or action). In fact, assigning the code *'focus on form'* as the only and meaningful strategy used by the lecturers in a stretch of discourse in the transcriptions of the lectures was a difficult task. The reason is that clarifying terminology is the aim of many of the strategies used to achieve successful communication in this study and it is not only restricted to commentary alone. A lot of fruitful combinations of pragmatic strategies used to prevent non-understanding or misunderstanding in relation to specialised language have been found. This means that in order to convey meaning more than one strategy is used. Among the combinations of pragmatic strategies frequently coded in a single excerpt the following can be highlighted:

- Focus on form + Literal translation + defining.
- Focus on form + Reformulation.

Most of the *'focus on form'* episodes are initiated by the lecturer aiming to highlight technical vocabulary considered worth noting, to correct students so as to pre-empt possible infelicities, to provide input enhancement or just to make language more visible. Nevertheless, the different lecturers made it clear during the interviews that they are not language teachers and do not aim at becoming such. They stated that they are meant to teach

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contents and that the English language is just the lingua franca (vehicle for communication) in those specific lecturing events. However, particularly the BAM degree lecturers showed more willingness to raise awareness on linguistic aspects than those in the NANOMAT degree. During the interviews, one of the BAM degree lecturers explicitly stated that he/she does not want to teach English because he/she does not feel confident enough to do so. Yet, he/she explained that he/she always tries to 'help' his/her students (rather than 'teach' them) with specific vocabulary that he/she considers essential in the subject matter, as long as he/she is confident enough regarding his/her own knowledge of the specific subject-related terminology. That is, he/she just points out specific language-related aspects or provides linguistic feedback in occasional situations. In the interview, the same lecturer commented on the terms 'purchase' and 'determine', which are two frequent verbs in the Marketing field of study and that he/she believes are difficult for Spanish speakers to pronounce. The lecturer argued that he/she and their colleagues were aware of the importance of pronouncing these verbs correctly and they were willing to raise their students' awareness about the correct pronunciation of these terms.

In line with this, a clear '*focus on form*' episode in the BAM degree lectures is illustrated in Excerpt 1, in which the lecturer is explaining the correct pronunciation of the term 'questionnaire', correcting the former pronunciation mistakes that students had made when pronouncing this word and his/her own pronunciation infelicities. This could be considered a pre-emptive episode initiated by the lecturer, presumably anticipating that some students may not be familiar with the correct pronunciation, and the lecturer seemingly attempts to help students with technical language of marketing, focusing on form pre-emptively.

(1) L2: Two key points before going on, mmm in case you have (.) you are familiarised with phonetics mmm this is the correct way of saying these words, ok? we have 'survey', it is a noun (.) and 'to survey' it is a a verb, but the most important thing its /ˌkwɛstʃəˈnɛə/, ok? It's not /kwɛstʃənaɪre/ it's not /ˌkwɛstʃəˈnarɪ/, it's not /ˌkwɛstʃəˈnɪrɪ/ ok (.) so this is the this is the word, ok? last year I had lots lots of /ˈkwɛstʃənarɪ/ (.)/ˈkwɛstʃənare/ (.) so you have this information, you can look it up in Wordreference or in other platforms, /ˌkwɛstʃəˈnɛə/ ok? (.) I'm sorry, because probably I will say another word I will probably say /ˈkwɛstʃəˌnɛə/ because I am used to say /ˈkwɛstʃəˌnɛə/ but the correct way is /ˌkwɛstʃəˈnɛə/ (.) Ok?

Similarly, in Excerpt 2, the lecturer draws attention to the term 'threatening topics' to distinguish it from 'sensitive topics' arguing that the former is the correct one. In this case, the lecturer makes use of the '*focus on form*' strategy pre-emptively drawing attention to what he/she considers a likely mistake on the part of other non-native speakers of the language. However, both terms are, in fact, used in English to refer to subjects or issues that need to be dealt with carefully because they are likely to cause disagreement or make people angry or upset. The 'focus on form' strategy is used by the lecturer as he/she wants his/her students to use specialised jargon accurately and rigorously (in this case in the field of Marketing). In other words, it is not a matter of taking the role of an English language expert; in fact, the lecturer acknowledges in his/her own discourse that the metalinguistic comment is just "an appreciation" integrated in the course of a content-related explanation. It demonstrates that the lecturer shows empathy with the students as they are all non-native speakers of English and willingness to help them being more linguistically accurate as regards the subject specific literacy. In so doing he/she is negotiating acceptable usage of the language.

(2) L2: I have also this list of topics, threatening topics a:h, in in in English if you look for this kind of literature you will find it as threatening topics rather than sensitive topics, ok? This is just one appreciation.

Lecturers also use *code-switching* to their L1 to draw attention to technical disciplinary terms on the grounds that most students share that repertoire in Spanish (Velilla, 2021). As reflected in Table 2, this strategy amounts to an 8% of the total amount of the strategies coded in the corpus. The code-switching strategy contributes to economy of words as it eases the task of expanding students' disciplinary and subject-related linguistic repertories. In Excerpt 3 the lecturer, teaching in the BAM degree, provides input enhancement by commenting

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on and translating the term 'random' in order to make language more visible. In this excerpt, the lecturer explains the term 'random', which is conventionally and internationally used in the marketing discipline as 'R', regardless of the vehicular language used. The lecturer is reflecting on the languages they mostly share in this EMI group (English and Spanish) and he/she compares the term in English ('random'), for which 'R' stands, and the term in Spanish ('aleatorio'), for which 'A' would stand. This is why the lecturer mentions that "in the other class" he/she explained the term 'random' differently, referring to the Spanish-medium group where he/she also explained the same contents in Spanish.

(3) L1: 'R' (.) In in the other class I had to ask about the meaning of this to explain why is 'R' but here it's very easy because how @@ how do we say random in English? random @@@ random, means random, ok? in Spanish eeh <L1sp> aleatorio </L1sp> so will be an A but we also use R ok? but for you it's much easier when you see this, the units of these groups are selected and assign and assigned sorry randomly.

The aim of this digression is to specify the easiness for these EMI students to remember the meaning of R (R-random), since English is their vehicular language by contrast with the Spanish-medium group which also uses R referring to 'aleatorio'. This lecturer specified during the semi-structured interview that with this particular *focus-on-form* episode he/she wanted to make clear the meaning of "random" in Spanish. He/she pointed out that sometimes during lecturer-students office hours he/she observed that students were only capable of or comfortable with saying certain terms in English, and he/she was concerned with the fact that they might professionally require this terminology in Spanish as well. Therefore, the combination of *focus on form* and *code-switching* is used to provide the students with the correct discipline-specific terminology both in the vehicular language for instruction but also in the L1 of the majority of the students in the class.

In line with this, the BAM degree lecturers noted during the interview that there is some specific terminology that they tend to use in English rather than in Spanish because usually they are English terms that tend to be translated to Spanish. As one of the lecturers explained, they identify some English terms as more accurate than the corresponding translation in Spanish:

L1: Our vocabulary, in many cases, comes from English, that is, it has been translated into Spanish. Sometimes a direct translation, using very rare words, for example "cognitive aspects" in English is "cognitive", because it means "rational" in relation to knowledge. So, we have made the direct translation from English to Spanish with a word that is perhaps accepted but not used, and then, when you return to English we walk on a red carpet, because you have the correct term and it comes more easily.

Precisely, the frequent use of English terminology and of the English language in general for scientific purposes in the NANOMAT degree explains the lack of *focus on form* episodes combined with *code-switching* in these lectures. Lecturers in this master's degree do not consider it useful to enhance terminology providing it in English and in Spanish since the students may not even use the Spanish terms. Besides, fewer Spanish students are present in the NANOMAT degree lectures, if compared to the BAM degree ones, thus, fewer students may profit from having the information translated into Spanish.

The desire to teach terminology in both languages in the BAM degree is also shown in Excerpt 4. In this excerpt, as in the previous one, the lecturer seeks to introduce the correct term in Spanish, which in turn shows the lecturer's awareness of his students' professional diverse contextual linguistic demands, in which discipline-specific terminology in Spanish may also be needed.

(4) L1: Today we're going to continue with these ordinal methods to mmm measure subjective variables analysis, the itemised rating scales, ok? also called 'classification'. If you go to a Spanish manual, they call it <L1sp> clasificación </L1sp> probably because it is a direct translation from English, Ok? So, classification or rating scale.

Finally, another type of focus on form is visible in Excerpt 5, where the lecturer comments on a word in English that may be easily confused, or whose meaning can be misunderstood because its spelling is similar to two different Spanish words. In this case the lecturer refers to the English term 'casual' and how it differs from the Spanish similar terms 'causal' (cause-related) and 'casual' (by chance) in order to emphasise their different meanings. He even reformulates the term 'casual' and establishes the relationship between Spanish terms 'casual' and 'casualidad' (chance).

(5) L2: Is it possible for us to find a relationship between two variables that, with no e:h theoretical support at all. But it's just more than cause causal is, I don't know if the this word is in English, in Spanish aa it is <L1sp> casual </L1sp> I don't know if this is the same meaning <L1sp> casual </L1sp> just by not <L1sp> cau- causal </L1sp> is by chance eeh in Spanish is not. <L1sp> Casual es casual, casualidad </L1sp> (.) So, we need a strong hypothesis that supports this relationship.

The findings regarding the 'focus-on-form' strategy show that, despite the intrinsic relation between focusing on English language forms and teaching English, the lecturers do not aim at teaching English as a foreign language, since this is not the purpose of the courses. In addition, they do not feel comfortable or competent to take on the role of language experts. This is consistent with Dafouz's (2011: 201) reflection on the fact that lecturers in her study "made a strict division between language issues and content [since] FL matters may be considered by content lecturers as falling beyond their responsibility". These excerpts show that lecturers just aim at supporting their students regarding the specialised language that is at hand during the lectures development by means of sharing their conceptions of 'good' language use within the disciplinary context.

Woodward-Kron's research (2008) in the university context suggests that there is a close relationship between students' disciplinary knowledge and their understanding of the disciplinary-related language and that being able to use technical vocabulary demonstrates group belonging. All these excerpts exemplify how well participants in the recording are aware of their membership to a "discourse community", where its members need to acquire some specific lexis, i.e., technical terminology, and they all need to have a suitable degree of relevant content and discoursal expertise (Swales, 1990: 24). In other words, they need to acquire subject specific literacy (Gibbons, 2009), i.e., the language the students need to acquire in order to construct and communicate knowledge appropriately within their specific subject. The special aspect of the excerpts discussed above is that in this EMI context lecturers make linguistic connections between English and Spanish visible in order to help their students acquire the specific terminology in both languages. The attention lecturers devote to terminology in both languages brings to light once again the usefulness of plurilingual resources in the negotiation of meaning and incidental language learning processes. The idea behind it is that it is necessary to understand the information before using it and that ability in both languages will increase when these languages reinforce each other (Williams, 2002).

Previous studies have proved that lecturers focus on form pre-emptively in order to avoid shortcomings in linguistic formulation of the student's contributions (Basturkmen & Shackleford, 2015; Costa, 2012). The present study contributes to providing evidence of it and to emphasising the supportive attitude of most lecturers, who focus on form to assist their students primarily with disciplinary language and academic linguistic repertoires. Therefore, the main functions of the 'focus on form' strategy in this study are: 1) To support students with disciplinary language (mostly regarding semantics and phonology); 2) To provide incidental language-learning opportunities; 3) To specify terminology; 4) To clarify meaning.

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4. Conclusion

Lecturers' recurrent use of pragmatic strategies in this study is to some extent rooted in their search to enable their learners to gain subject specific literacy. This is the case of '*focus on form*', by which lecturers shifted from the topic they were discussing (content) to language (vocabulary, pronunciation, etc.). In those episodes lecturers were engaged in helping their students with the disciplinary language in order to expand their academic linguistic repertoires and so metalingual comments referred mainly to specialized terminology. Nevertheless, what the speakers did when commenting and correcting language was enhancing language in the teaching-learning process and negotiating acceptable/accurate usage and not integrating language and content in their subjects, since that strategic behavior was only used at certain episodes and not as a constant parameter throughout the lectures. This means that lecturers assumed, and students granted them, the role of language experts mainly in terms of subject-related terminology (See also Love, 2010). Therefore, this implies that lecturers were more concerned with the disciplinary terminology their students should acquire than with their students' achieving a "native-oriented" use of the language.

In fact, an aspect in which all the lecturers agreed is their position as non-language teachers but content teachers, which reinforces previous studies' similar arguments (Airey, 2012; Costa, 2012; Dearden & Macaro, 2016; Smit & Dafouz, 2012). The interview results in both programs show that the lecturers' teaching activity is not that of teaching English but 'through the medium of English'. Yet, a distinguishing aspect between the different disciplinary teachers was found. The interview results in the BAM degree revealed that lecturers believed that undergraduate students could improve their language competence as a result of being in contact with the language regularly and thanks to the input they receive from the lecturers' speech. This follows Gibbon's (2009) argument that it is not possible to separate learning subject content from the language the content is embedded in. Thus, that may be a reason to keep the use of the language as accurate as possible –a concern that is clearly reflected in the use of pre-emptive pragmatic strategies that allow them to seek correctness in semantic, phonetic and grammar forms–. The results from the interview in the masters' degree showed a relatively more functional or utilitarian use of the English language, both on the part of the lecturer and the students where almost no 'focus on form' was present. It seems that it was not deemed necessary as the students were postgraduate students with certain disciplinary competence/literacy. This means that while in the NANOMAT degree students were considered widely competent in the use of the language for subject-related purposes, students in the bachelor's degree were considered as less equipped with the linguistic resources needed for the tasks at hand during English-mediated lectures, hence to use them for professional aims.

This study has shown that the strategy '*focus on form*' integrates language sensitivity in EMI teaching practices, when domain-specific terminology is given a prominent role in the lecture, a finding which contrast with previous studies that have revealed that attention to language forms is overtly neglected by university lecturers (Aguilar & Rodriguez, 2012; Airey, 2012; Costa, 2012). Yet, these episodes are understood as incidental language-learning opportunities that may arise at specific moments of the lecture as part of their study areas, which differs from the pedagogical linguistic guidance conventionally considered in ESL, ESP or CLIL literature. Rather, these EMI situations imply individual content lecturers raising awareness of the appropriate language to use in the specific academic context as it is required to understand the content. However, considering the extant ESP teaching tradition in Spanish Higher Education institutions, a greater collaboration between content teachers and ESP teachers seems to be necessary in order to reach more accurate ways of focusing on form (even more if it is an explicit, nor incidental, aim of certain EMI courses) to ensure students' comprehension during lectures and also a rigorous production in their future professional diverse contextual linguistic demands. ESP teachers' task in this collaborative process would be that of raising EMI teachers' awareness of the fact that

teaching specialised content when using English as the medium/lingua franca is not the same as teaching said content using the lecturers' and students' mother tongue, as most content teachers were used before EMI programs were implemented. For such a purpose, real classroom practices, like the ones reported in this paper, can be certainly considered to illustrate materials used in EMI teacher training programs.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

About the author

I am a lecturer at the Department of English and German Studies of the University of Zaragoza (Education Faculty), where I teach courses on English language teaching. My main research interests are the study of English as a lingua franca, internationalization practices and English as medium of instruction in tertiary academic settings. I am a member of the research group CIRES (Intercultural communication and societal challenges), financed by the Government of Aragon (Spain) and the EU.

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