

ENGLISH MEDIUM INSTRUCTION (EMI) TEACHER TRAINING COURSES IN EUROPE

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ABSTRACT • English Medium Instruction has achieved significant growth over the past 10 years in European non-English speaking countries. This phenomenon is nowadays taken for granted even though many issues are to be taken into account when a university course is delivered through English by non-native speakers. This is why some universities have started providing lecturer training all over Europe. This article aims to give an overview of both linguistic and methodological EMI training in some European countries.

KEYWORDS • English Medium Instruction, English-taught programmes, ICLHE, CLIL

1. Introduction

The focus of this paper stems from the evident proliferation in the number of university courses where English is the medium of instruction (EMI) in non-English-speaking countries. This type of courses arose around the mid-1990s and has kept pace with the increasing international importance of English.

The Bologna process was the main reason for implementing English-taught programmes (ETPs) given the fact that it promotes globalised mobility for both students and academic staff. Europe-wide surveys (Ammon, McConnell 2002; Wächter, Maiworm 2014) reveal an exponential growth in ETPs, typically in large institutions, mainly in Nordic countries and Central Europe, offering a number of degree programmes at Bachelor's, Master's and PhD levels. Such programmes were around 8,089 all over Europe in 2014 (Wächter, Maiworm 2014).

Universities have thus adapted to a phenomenon present for years, whereby knowledge is transmitted mainly through English, particularly in some fields of learning (economics, business and engineering) where scientific publications and conferences are delivered in English (Wilkinson 2004; Wilkinson, Zegers 2008; Alexander 2008; Wächter, Maiworm 2008).

Propensity for EMI mode is reflected in two paradigmatic examples. First the French daily *Libération*¹ had on its front page the phrase *Teaching in English let's do it* meaning that non-English-speaking countries in Europe have definitely recognised EMI as a given. Second, the growing interest in English Medium Instruction even in English-speaking countries is testified to by the new Oxford Centre for Research and Development on EMI², a project undertaken jointly with the British Council.

The EMI phenomenon has raised some important issues which need to be explored. From a strictly utilitarian and economic point of view, EMI could actually exploit better and more effectively its dual intrinsic nature characterised by associating an L2 (in Italy, English in most cases) with content learning. In fact, it is surprising that the linguistic advantages deriving from

¹ 21/3/2013 www.liberation.fr

² <http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/crdemi-oxford/>

studying a subject through English are not fully taken into consideration, especially in a country such as Italy, where linguistic competence in English is still inadequate (Argondizzo, De Bartolo, Ting 2007). In addition, scant attention is paid to pedagogical questions, in particular the ones related to how to teach in a language of instruction that is not the first language of the lecturers. Irrespective of the type of university, outdated methods still exist in terms of teaching style along with a lack of training (Molino, Campagna 2014; Costa 2015).

This is why training is crucial to EMI, even if at present very few universities have implemented courses specifically aimed at developing effective EMI teaching methods, though this number is increasing (Wächter, Maiworm 2014). This article seeks to provide insight first of all into the terminology used for EMI (still a matter of debate) and into the theoretical underpinnings of EMI training, while also outlining the training programmes currently active in European countries in order to determine what features are common to all of them.

2. Terminology

The term EMI is often associated and confused with other terms which do not correspond to EMI, even if they are related to it. These terms are: English as a Lingua Franca, Internationalisation, Content and Language Integrated Learning, Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education and Content-Based Instruction.

The most common term associated with EMI is *English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)*. Some academics have already dealt with the differences between EMI and ELF, viewing the distinction as tied to their contexts of use (Mauranen, Hynninen, Ranta 2010; Mariotti 2013; Campagna, Pulcini 2014). ELF (the use of English as a common means of communication) refers to communication in general, but this concept is not sufficient in educational contexts, since the language for teaching must be precise and targeted to meet students' needs (Mauranen, Hynninen, Ranta 2010).

The term *internationalisation* is often confused and wrongly identified with EMI, though in fact it represents a phenomenon underpinning educational policies in Higher Education, and thus it is more general in nature. As defined by Francomacaro (2011: 13), internationalisation is "people, ideas and events [...] across national borders [creating] new forms of social, economic, educational and discourse community". Räisänen and Fortanet-Gómez (2008) emphasise that there is a paradox in the decisions of universities regarding the internationalisation process. On the one hand, several disciplines now require an advanced knowledge of English, and on the other the Barcelona Council (2002) of the heads of state in the EU mandated that European citizens be competent in at least two foreign languages (not including English). It is clear that in Italy the implementation of internationalisation includes EMI (Coleman, 2006); however, the two are not identical.

Both the terms *Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)* at the tertiary level and *Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education (ICLHE)*, are by now considered synonymous. However, to further clarify the terminology issue, it is worth mentioning that they are not synonymous with the EMI acronym. In fact, whilst English is explicitly represented in the EMI acronym, this is not the case with CLIL and ICLHE, even if in reality most of the projects following these approaches are carried out in English. Precisely for this reason all European universities have adopted the term EMI. Besides, the terms CLIL or ICLHE place the dual aspects of language and content learning on the same level. As a matter of fact, the only difference between EMI and CLIL/ICLHE is the *a priori* choice of the term; in fact, in the actual teaching practice there are no such differences. As Wilkinson (2004) points out, ICLHE is more used with respect to the type of pedagogy adopted and its specific features which see an integration between content and language. He warns that the ICLHE type of teaching is usually

intended as simply teaching a content through a foreign language, while not taking into account that both content and language goals should be considered. He thinks that when language teaching is reduced to a programme which is not integrated in the teaching of the content, there is a risk that the language will be considered as purely instrumental.

Another term used mainly in American universities is *Content-Based Instruction (CBI)*. As Kasper (2000: viii) states: “In a content based course, ESL students use English to expand their existing knowledge bases as they are presented with interdisciplinary material in a meaningful, contextualised form in which the primary focus is on the acquisition of content and information”. Therefore, starting from this definition, CBI falls perfectly within the group of terms linked to EMI, even if the latter always refers explicitly to English. Nevertheless, it must be emphasised that, even when speaking of CBI in the U.S. context, the language of reference is implicitly English.

3. Theoretical underpinnings of EMI training

Many scholars have underlined the need for EMI training for university lecturers in European contexts. In her doctoral thesis Klaassen (2001) provides recommendations for training. On the basis of student feedback, lecturers should work on clarity and should train in pronunciation and vocabulary, while universities should hire native speakers and provide a support system for professional development.

The subject matter requires such a high level of specialisation that the EMI lecturer is necessarily a content lecturer who, as often is the case, knows the language of instruction fairly well. However, these lecturers might be made aware of the fact that translating their lectures into another language is not enough. They should in fact focus on both language and content (Fortanet-Gómez 2010). According to Fortanet-Gómez training courses for such lecturers should be set up and start from a self-reflection on the pedagogic approach. EMI teachers should be trained with regard to aspects that are usually dealt with in language courses, such as metacognitive skills, assessment (which might be a joint evaluation), the use of L1-L2 alternation, vocabulary, and oral presentations. According to Dafouz Milne (2011), since content lecturers are not given any training, they feel inadequately prepared to handle language issues.

English-taught classes are delivered in Europe by subject lecturers and not by language specialists. Despite being subject-matter lecturers and declaring that they are interested in teaching only content (Costa 2013), all the lecturers in some way pay attention to the linguistic form and to its teaching, thus trying to exploit the CLIL approach in the best way possible. However, this attention to language is still occasional. Since it is unthinkable to impose a type of traditional training course from top to down, perhaps training should be rethought as an exercise in self-awareness, self-discovery, and self-reflection. One possibility could be to show subject-matter lecturers evidence of their use of, and attention to, language when a communication problem is somehow sensed (Costa 2012).

4. Training in Europe

Despite the fact that EMI training is still a fairly limited phenomenon in Europe, the number of training courses is increasing not only because there is a felt need to train teachers for this relatively new type of teaching, but also to freshen up old methods of teaching which are still present in many European countries.

In general EMI training addresses two specific goals: 1) training for better English language competences; 2) training for new teaching methodologies.

As the EMI scenario in Europe is extremely diversified and updated information is very difficult to be found³, it was decided from a methodological point of view to send an email to a worldwide email group (the Factworld group) connected to CLIL and related topics. The email was sent at the end of August 2015. As expected, not many people replied, confirming the scarcity of these courses. This is why the present account is not intended to include all local experiences. However, the hope is that it will at least provide one illustrative example for each country involved in this type of training. It should be pointed out that information for this paper has been difficult to collect, on the one hand because each university is an independent institution in its own right, and thus organises courses which are appropriate for its own context, and on the other because at times these courses are not sufficiently publicized or the information is patchy and not exactly accessible. Moreover, not all universities provide an Internet page to explain the details of their training courses. The university site addresses were all available at the time of writing but might change in the future.

Because of the terminological reasons already discussed (see Section 2) some courses are referred to as CLIL and some others as EMI. When there is a link with English competence the words English for academic purposes are sometimes used. The countries are presented in alphabetical order.

4.1. Belgium

In Belgium the Université Libre de Bruxelles organises a course entitled: *CLIL Good Practice in Teaching in a Foreign Language*⁴. This title uses the CLIL acronym, even though the course is aimed at university professors. The course is structured into seminars that aim mainly at developing methodological and pedagogical practices. Participants are expected to have a good level of English. In particular, the course focuses on didactic approaches to communicative activities, along with how to make input comprehensible to students to allow them to understand the content, preparation for written and oral exams in English, presentation skills, intonation and pronunciation, and facilitating students' note-taking. An interesting aspect is the idea of offering roundtable discussions with academics (with a C1/C2 level of English) on the various aspects of teaching in a foreign language.

4.2. Croatia

The University of Rijeka in Croatia organises a course on *English Language Support Programme for EMI*, which is divided into 30 classes over two months, including online sessions. The required entry level of English competence is B1. The course topics are: speaking competences for EMI (fluency and accuracy in teacher talk, enhancing understanding by including signposting and transitions in lectures), English writing skills for teaching in English (materials design, morphosyntax, orthography, paragraph sections, coherence, cohesion, and language functions in written discourse). Unfortunately, no information is available on the university site.

³ It would have meant having a look at the sites of all European universities because this is where these courses are most advertised.

⁴ <http://clil.ulb.ac.be/>

4.3. Denmark

The University of Copenhagen has developed the TOEPAS (Test of Oral English Proficiency of Academic Staff). The main areas tested are oral skills, with simulation techniques for lectures, producing mini-lectures, and participating in a role play pretending to be a student. The organising staff then provide written feedback to the student-lecturers, also by means of self-assessment by the participants. The lecturers receive a videorecording of their performance which can act as a stimulated recall of their achievements. The test consists of a 20-minute mini-lecture with comments on the part of the examiner partly based on an observation protocol⁵. The session lasts about two hours and a half. At the time of writing more than 300 lecturers have been tested.

4.4. Finland

The University of Jyväskylä organises the *TACE* course: *Teaching Academic Content through English*⁶, which focuses on language and communication skills training for university staff. In particular, the focus is on pronunciation in order to communicate clearly in English. This short module for university staff and researchers covers key sounds in English which can be challenging for users of English as a foreign language. Analogously, courses are also provided for Finnish as a medium of instruction for non-native lecturers.

4.5. France

L'Université de Bordeaux offers a course on *Défi International*⁷ (a pedagogical and linguistic support programme on teaching in multicultural contexts). The course aims are clearly stated and refer to both linguistic and pedagogical issues. This course involves the following activities: job shadowing, lunchtime conversations, role play teaching, pronunciation and intonation. Participants receive feedback and suggestions on their EMI teaching. The site which gives details about the course is only available in French.

4.6. Germany

The University of Freiburg⁸ has created a course entitled *Language Support for Teaching in English*, which provides language support for lecturers and lecture feedback, and is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education. The course offer is very diversified with lecture feedback, private consultations and tailored courses which are subdivided in workshops and semester-based courses. The topics dealt with are: vocabulary, register, pronunciation, speaking pace, interaction, and feedback provided to students. Participants receive a certificate at the end of the course provided that they fulfill the requirements (delivering a sample lecture, giving feedback to peers' sample lectures and attending the course). The course also entails a quality management programme which aims at testing lecturers' skills (fluency, articulation, lexical

⁵ http://cip.ku.dk/certificering/CIP_certificering_bed_mmelsesskala.pdf

⁶ <https://kielikeskus.jyu.fi/en/staff-training#section-0>

⁷ <http://idex.u-bordeaux.fr/News/Formations-innovantes/Defi-International/r2333.html>

⁸ <https://www.sli.uni-freiburg.de/contents/files/emiflyer>

accuracy, grammatical accuracy, code-consistency, cohesion, prosody facilitating input and intercultural transparency) and providing an official certificate on EMI competencies.

4.7. Italy

Many universities in Italy are starting to offer EMI training to lecturers regarding both linguistic and methodological aspects. Such courses are generally organised by university language centers. The University of Padua⁹ has planned an extensive course aimed at the needs of Italian universities. The course, entitled *LEAP Learning English for Academic Purposes*, is a forty-hour course on teaching and communicating in English, whose aim is twofold: to develop English language skills, and teaching and methodological skills. These skills are broken down further into academic vocabulary, class management and linguistic abilities, interaction in and out of the class, differences in methodological approaches, student assessment, pronunciation, intonation and accent. The programme also includes week-long International Winter Schools, along with a Lecturer Support Service with lecturers' observations and feedback. Accompanying the course is a workshop on various topics, among which: pronunciation, oral presentation skills, learning styles, interaction, informal teaching (humour), students' assessment, and resources for language learning.

The Language Centre at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia also organises a course on *Lecturing in English for Non-Native Speakers - Language choices, Rhetorical Implications Objectives*. The course is two hours a week for 10-14 weeks and takes up topics such as signposting of the lecture, pronunciation, materials, vocabulary, lecturing styles, assessment, and trying out mini-lectures.

The Language Center at the University of Siena¹⁰ offers a yearly course on *Academic English*, open to students and faculty. The course is divided into two modules: reading and writing and oral presentation.

Finally, the University of Urbino offers a course with linguistic and methodological consulting¹¹ through the CLIL Center of Didactic Consulting. The course focuses on micro-language, classroom management, feedback, CLIL planning, materials preparation and lexis.

4.8. The Netherlands

Expectedly, the Netherlands is among those countries which have developed EMI training courses (see Klaassen at the University of Delft). Utrecht University offers a two-week course in *CLIL Methodology in Higher Education*¹². The course is designed as follows: an initial part on background knowledge of CLIL at the tertiary level of education is followed by presentation skills and lecturing, the use of ICT in higher education, group work on personal projects with feedback and coaching sessions, encouraging students to speak while giving them feedback, supporting students in writing academic papers and giving feedback, assessment (feedback on content and language), and the presentation of personal projects.

⁹ <http://cla.unipd.it/attivita/docenti/leap2/>

¹⁰ http://www.cla.unisi.it/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=105&Itemid=119

¹¹ <http://clilteaching.weebly.com/>

¹² <http://www.utrechtsummerschool.nl/courses/tag/clil>

4.9. Spain

Like the Netherlands, Spain is one of the most active countries in EMI lecturer training (Fortanet-Gomez, 2010 at the Universitat Jaume I). In the Catalan region there are, in fact, many examples of such programmes¹³. Given the strong tradition both in terms of research and CLIL teaching, many of the courses in Spain are aimed at school teachers as well as university teachers (for example, the course at the University of Alcalà de Henares). There thus appears to be an open-minded attitude here, and one characterised by a fruitful link between university and secondary schools. Finally, the University of the Basque Country has developed a performance test for lecturers (TOPTULTE¹⁴, Test of Performance for Teaching at the University Level through the Medium of English).

4.10. The United Kingdom

The two courses included in this section are related to the UK. One of them is provided by the University of Oxford and the other by the British Council (BC). The BC course (developed with Oxford) is called *Academic Teaching Excellence*¹⁵. It is an intensive one-week seminar based in hosting universities. The topics are: introduction to EMI underpinning, speaking practice, teaching practices, micro-teaching, oral and written correction of students, and it is aimed at C1 speakers. A certificate of attendance is given at the end of the course.

The Oxford course is entitled *EMI Oxford Course for Lecturers and Teachers*. It is a one- or two-week summer course based in Oxford dealing with the following topics: developing language skills, sharing teaching practices, and getting to know EMI underpinnings. The requested level is intermediate or above.

5. Conclusion

Several aspects have been found to be common to the various programmes offered in Europe. Above all is the fact that normally it is the Language Centres within the universities that organise such courses. It is not clear, though, who the actual trainers of these courses are. They are definitely language specialists, but it is not always stated whether they are native speakers of English or not. Each university has opted for a course based predominantly either on language or methodological aspects. However, this choice seems only apparent, since the training courses examined have both language and methodological objectives, so that it is nearly impossible to distinguish between the two aspects (Figure 1). The course offer is highly variable (Figure 1), with many flexible and innovative options (e.g., lunchtime conversations/language advisory sessions).

¹³ <http://clil.cat/>

¹⁴ <http://www.ehu.es/es/web/gipuzkoa/toptulte>

¹⁵ <https://www.britishcouncil.org/europe/our-work-in-europe/academic-teaching-excellence>

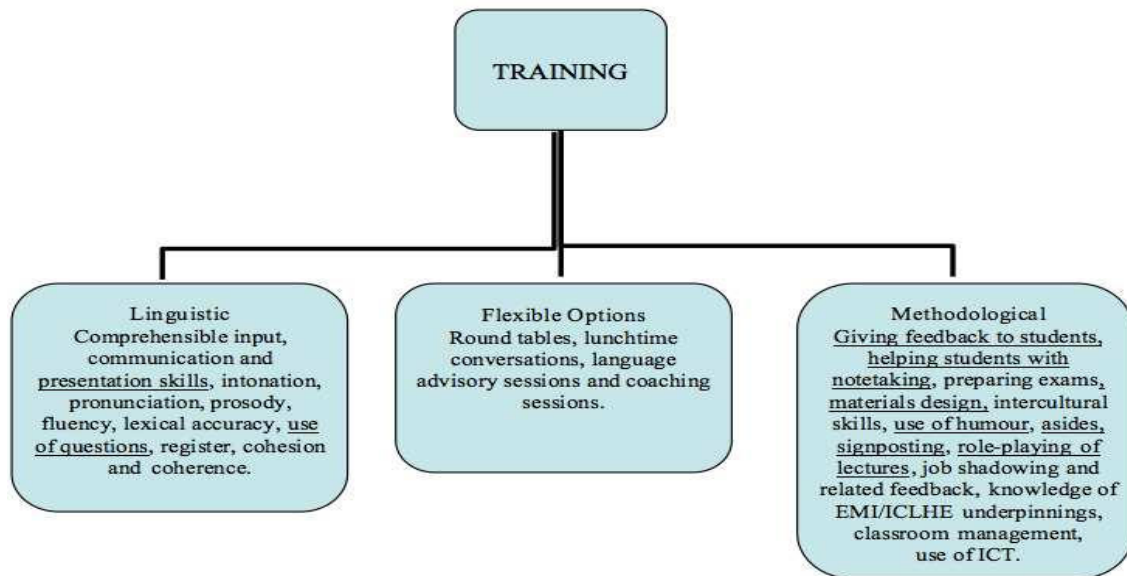


Figure 1. Synoptical map of EMI training in Europe. Underlined features are common to both linguistic and methodological training.

Among the differences in the training programmes is the manner in which the universities choose to refer to them and the labels they adopt (CLIL, ICLHE or EMI), which clearly reflects the terminological confusion in the literature. Another difference is the level of English required for lecturers to take the course. There is either no prerequisite, it can range from B1 to C2, or it is vaguely defined (intermediate/advanced level). This paper has not made any reference to the variety of English used in these training courses because there were no data available and only a close look (by means of observation) at how these courses are carried out could clarify this aspect.

Finally, the subsequent step after several years of training (in countries where this has been going on for years) is the awarding of a lecturing skills certificate for content lecturers. This represents not only progress in terms of EMI but also a true academic revolution in those parts of Europe where lecturer training is non-existent even when lecturers teach in their native language.

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