

L'ANALISI  
LINGUISTICA E LETTERARIA

FACOLTÀ DI SCIENZE LINGUISTICHE E LETTERATURE STRANIERE  
UNIVERSITÀ CATTOLICA DEL SACRO CUORE

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SUPPLEMENTO

*Critical Issues in English –  
Medium Instruction at University*

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Edited by Jennifer Valcke, Amanda C. Murphy, Francesca Costa

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## TEACHER DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN ENGLISH IN A FRENCH HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT

JOANNE PAGÈZE, DAVID LASAGABASTER

Discussion of the impact of institutional initiatives on the development of EMI in the French context has been minimal due to the particular way in which EMI has emerged in France. The aim of this paper is to explore the impact of a teacher development initiative set up in 2014 at the University of Bordeaux in order to help disciplinary teachers make the transition to teaching their discipline in English. The objective here is to explore how local context is impacting this shift in teaching and learning practices through EMI.

*Keywords:* teacher development / EMI / France / Internationalisation

### *Introduction*

While a number of studies have explored the impact of institutional initiatives on the development of English-medium instruction (EMI)<sup>1</sup> in Southern European settings<sup>2 3 4</sup>, discussion of such initiatives in the French context has been fairly minimal<sup>5</sup>. This has been due in part to the particular way in which EMI has developed in France. Exploring how international and multilingual learning is emerging in local higher education contexts is key if we are to understand the forces of glocalisation<sup>6</sup> at work in the internationalisation of higher education. With this in mind, the aim of this paper is to explore the impact of a teacher development initiative, Défi International, set up in 2014 at the University

<sup>1</sup> For clarity, here the term English-medium Instruction (EMI) is used to refer to disciplinary teaching and learning contexts where there is no explicit language learning objective led by disciplinary teachers. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is used for teaching and learning contexts where the learning objective is explicit and shared between language and discipline.

<sup>2</sup> Doiz et al., *English as L3 at a Bilingual University in the Basque Country, Spain* in *English-Medium Instruction at Universities: Global Challenges*, A. Doiz – D. Lasagabaster – J.M. Sierra ed., Multilingual Matters, Bristol 2012, pp. 84-106.

<sup>3</sup> M. Guarda – F. Helm, 'I have discovered new teaching pathways': the link between language shift and teaching practice, "International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism", 2016, pp. 1-17.

<sup>4</sup> P. Ball – D. Lindsay, *Language Demands and Support for English-Medium Instruction in Tertiary Education. Learning from a Specific Context* in *English-Medium Instruction at Universities: Global Challenges*, A. Doiz – D. Lasagabaster – J.M. Sierra ed., Multilingual Matters, Bristol 2012, pp. 44-65.

<sup>5</sup> For an overview of the situation in France see: G. Taillefer, *CLIL in higher education: the (perfect?) crossroads of ESP and didactic reflection*, "Asp", 63, 2013, pp. 31-53.

<sup>6</sup> E. Dafouz – U. Smit, *Towards a dynamic conceptual framework for English-medium education in multilingual university settings*, "Applied Linguistics", 37, 2016, 3, pp. 397-415.

of Bordeaux in order to help disciplinary teachers make the transition to teaching their discipline in English. The paper will first set out the language policy issues which have had an impact on EMI in French higher education and the inherent challenges for lecturers, before outlining how this specific context determined the set-up of the programme. The impact of the initiative is discussed through the results of a follow-up survey of participants subsequent to training. One of the main objectives of the programme is to stimulate and enable disciplinary teaching in English through adapted support for teachers. It will be argued that the enabling factor in this process is teachers being able to make the shift from seeing EMI teaching as a language problem to viewing it as a specific classroom situation and making pedagogical adjustments which are relevant to their disciplinary context.

## 2. *English-Medium Instruction in European Higher Education*

The growth of EMI across Europe in recent decades is a well-documented if controversial phenomenon<sup>7 8 9</sup> linked to the internationalisation of higher education and increased competition between universities in the context of globalisation<sup>10</sup>. Attitudes towards English-taught programmes vary considerably and tend to take up polarised stances between, on the one hand, a “maximalist” position where English is presented as the unique inevitable tool for the international spread of knowledge<sup>11 12</sup> and, on the other hand, a more nuanced language ecology position where greater attention is given to the way English coexists with national languages in university programmes and settings<sup>13</sup>. The “maximalist” position presents English as “globish”, detached from any cultural and political identity and seen as a vehicle for globalisation. By contrast, and notably in Northern European countries with long experience of EMI and well-established language policies, the use of English in higher education is considered from the angle of disciplinary and academic cultures (and within a certain European idea of multilingualism). Research on EMI in Southern European contexts, where it has emerged more recently, has reinforced the language ecology approach to EMI and highlighted how local language identities, local higher education practices, and local attitudes to multilingualism are determining factors in the

<sup>7</sup> R. Phillipson, *English as threat or an opportunity in European higher education*, in *English-Medium Instruction in European Higher Education: English in Europe*, S. Dimova – J.K. Hultgren – C. Jensen ed., Vol. 3, De Gruyter Mouton, Berlin 2015.

<sup>8</sup> J. A. Coleman, *English-medium teaching in European Higher Education*. “Language teaching”, 39, 1, 2006, pp. 1-14.

<sup>9</sup> C. Truchot, *L'enseignement supérieur en anglais véhiculaire: la qualité en question*, document accessible at <http://www.diploweb.com/spip.php?article686>, (Last accessed: April 12, 2017).

<sup>10</sup> P. Altbach et al., *Trends in Global Higher Education, Tracking and Academic Revolution*, UNESCO, Paris 2009; H. de Wit, *Globalisation and Internationalisation of Higher Education* (introduction to online monograph), “Revista de Universidad y Sociedad del Conocimiento (RUSC)”, 8, 2011, 2, pp. 241-248.

<sup>11</sup> J. A. Coleman, *ibidem*.

<sup>12</sup> A. De Swaan, *Words of the World: The global language system*, Polity Press, Malden (MA) 2001.

<sup>13</sup> P. Harder ed., *English in Denmark: Language Policy, Internationalisation and university teaching*, Museum Tusulanum Press, Copenhagen 2009.

way EMI<sup>14</sup> is implemented. However, this is not to underestimate the tension between the drive for programmes in English and a more multilingual perspective in these contexts<sup>16</sup>. In all these respects, the emergence of EMI in national higher education contexts provides a fertile terrain for exploring glocalisation<sup>17</sup> in education, that is, a negotiation between local identities and practices and a necessary adaptation to the forces of globalisation.

### 3. *The medium of instruction in France – language, identity and legal issues*

French universities are no different from their European counterparts, in that the push for internationalisation as well as the recent restructuring of many French universities has led to an increase in the number of university programmes taught in English<sup>18</sup>. In fact, it would probably be more precise to say that this context has not led so much to an increase in EMI programmes but to a certain tension between the reality of the language “terrain” in French Higher Education and the top-down pressure to implement such programmes<sup>19</sup>.

The Wächter and Maiworm report, for all its limitations<sup>20</sup>, places France with Spain, Portugal and Italy as having a quantitatively low number of English-taught programmes. This relatively late development of EMI in countries whose domestic language is widely spoken worldwide is in marked contrast to the parallel language contexts of Northern Europe. France is the third country in the world for welcoming international students<sup>21</sup> and French is the third language learnt in the world<sup>22</sup>: so, offering programmes in EMI is not imperative for attracting international students. The relatively recent desire to develop EMI in French Higher Education then highlights that this is a push for a particular form of internationalisation, designed to promote the international profile of institutions in a globalised world, to target the recruitment of “excellent” students and staff, and generally to market universities as globally competitive institutions. In this context, it is difficult to hide the development of EMI behind the word “internationalisation”, since the practice is

<sup>14</sup> E. Dafouz – U. Smit, *Towards a dynamic conceptual framework...*

<sup>15</sup> A. Doiz – D. Lasagabaster – J. Sierra, *Globalisation, internationalisation, multilingualism and linguistic strains in higher education*, “Studies in higher education”, 38, 2013, 9, pp. 1407-1421.

<sup>16</sup> D. Lasagabaster, *Language policy and language choice at European Universities: Is there really a choice?*, “European Journal of Applied Linguistics”, 3, 2015, 2, pp. 255-276.

<sup>17</sup> R. Robertson Roland, *Glocalization: Time-space and homogeneity-heterogeneity*, “Global modernities”, 25, 1995; cited in E. Dafouz – U. Smit, *Towards a dynamic conceptual framework...*

<sup>18</sup> B. Wächter – F. Maiworm, *English-Taught Programmes in European Higher Education. The State of Play*, “ACA Papers on International Cooperation in Education”, Lemmens Medien GmbH, Bonn 2014.

<sup>19</sup> F. Héran, *L'anglais hors la loi? Enquête sur les langues de recherche et d'enseignement en France*, “Populations et Sociétés. Bulletin mensuel d'information de l'INED”, 501, 2013.

<sup>20</sup> For example, the survey does not take into account undergraduate programmes and bilingual modalities within degrees and thus surely misses much of what is done in “internationalisation at home” strategies.

<sup>21</sup> Campus France: [http://ressources.campusfrance.org/publi\\_institu/etude\\_prospect/chiffres\\_cles/fr/chiffres\\_cles\\_n10\\_essentiel.pdf](http://ressources.campusfrance.org/publi_institu/etude_prospect/chiffres_cles/fr/chiffres_cles_n10_essentiel.pdf) (last accessed: April 14, 2017).

<sup>22</sup> Francophonie.org: [https://www.francophonie.org/IMG/pdf/oif\\_synthese\\_francais.pdf](https://www.francophonie.org/IMG/pdf/oif_synthese_francais.pdf) (last accessed: April 14, 17).

clearly tied up with the market transformation of higher education and this has contributed to a certain tension around EMI in French HE contexts.

Another specificity highlighted in Wächter and Maiworm's survey is related to language. France (along with Spain and Turkey) is one of the few countries where foreign students' English-language proficiency is rated higher than that of local students. Data from the 2012 First European Survey of Language Competences<sup>23</sup> indicates that just over 20% of French school leavers attain the B1- B2 bands of language competence in English. The wide variability in the level of competence in English among French students is a complicating factor in the integration of French students into programmes taught in English and is also dependent on the type of higher education institution. French universities are widely accessible to all school-leavers who have a baccalauréat and the fees are very low. By contrast, the elite "grandes écoles", mostly specialising in engineering or business studies, and the technical applied sciences institutes (IUT) are able to recruit selectively, with higher fees. In this context, recruiting students on the basis of language competence to EMI programmes can be seen to work against the principles of equality in education which form part of the ethos of French universities<sup>24</sup>. The problem of language proficiency as a criterion for selection thus complicates the development of "internationalisation at home" or wider strategies designed to internationalise the university curriculum and is one of the reasons why EMI has tended to develop in isolated pockets at the level of Master's programmes.

One aspect of this context has meant that EMI programmes are sometimes seen by institutions as a top-down means of improving student language competence. The immersion of students in an English-taught programme is thus framed as a kind of "sink or swim" approach to language learning which has raised legitimate questions related to quality<sup>25</sup> – both in disciplinary learning and in classroom communication. The research literature on EMI in French higher education has thus tended to concentrate on whether

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<sup>23</sup> *First European Survey on Language Competences: Executive Summary*. Document accessible at: [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/repository/languages/policy/strategic-framework/documents/language-survey-final-report\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/languages/policy/strategic-framework/documents/language-survey-final-report_en.pdf) (2012) (last accessed: April 12, 2017).

<sup>24</sup> Linked to the egalitarian ethos of the revolution, French educational culture has always struggled to accept differentiation and particularism in education. For discussion of these issues with regard to European contexts see: J. E. Talbot, *The politics of educational reform in France, 1918-1940*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 2015; M. Maclean, *Britain and a Single Market Europe: Prospects for a Common School Curriculum*, Kogan Page, London 1990.

<sup>25</sup> C. Truchot, *L'enseignement en anglais abaisse le niveau des formations*, "La recherche", 453, 2011.



or not EMI is a good idea<sup>26</sup>, its potential impact on language skills<sup>27</sup> and how it should be implemented<sup>28 29 30</sup>.

As is often the case, discussion and analysis of CLIL in relation to EMI have taken place among language experts, while the implementation of EMI programmes, with either an implicit or explicit CLIL objective, has been driven by disciplinary programmes in a desire to internationalise. In contrast to Spain, very little classroom research has been done on EMI learning contexts in French higher education<sup>31 32</sup>. Studies have usually delved into institutional policy and implementation. This interest in EMI is dependent upon its identification as a form of CLIL (EMILE in French) for which there is a strong research tradition in France, principally related to bilingual and multilingual learning contexts in schools which have the support of the Ministry of Education<sup>33</sup>. In this scheme of things, CLIL takes the role of the “good guy” being associated with European multilingualism and focussed on learning, whereas EMI seems to be the imperialistic “bad guy” focussed on instruction and delivery of content in classroom contexts which lie beyond the grasp of language learning experts.

This situation has been further complicated by historical and legal issues related to the defence of the French language and the use of English in public life. French national identity was constructed through a linguistic unification that began well before the revolution, but which became an explicit governmental strategy from the revolution onwards. Education has played a major role in French nation building – in particular, schooling in French was imposed to the detriment of local languages. Linguistic plurality was seen to be contrary to the principles of state schools built on the principle of secular uniformity and this was linked to post-revolutionary egalitarian discourse. This founding unilingualism in state education was accompanied by an organised normalisation of language through the French Academy. As a consequence, an elitist and purist representation of the French language, subject to threat from other languages and other language uses, took hold and

<sup>26</sup> Dossier : *l'anglicisation des formations dans l'enseignement supérieur*, “Les Langues Modernes”, 1, 2014.

<sup>27</sup> C. Truchot, *L'enseignement supérieur en anglais véhiculaire...*

<sup>28</sup> G. Taillefer, *CLIL in higher education...*

<sup>29</sup> C. Chaplier, *Des cours de sciences en anglais à l'EMILE: état des lieux, réflexion et recommandations. Cas de l'Université Paul Sabatier*, “Recherche et pratiques pédagogiques en langues de spécialité. Cahiers de l'Apliu”, 32, 2013, 3, pp. 57-79.

<sup>30</sup> P. Shaw, *Adjusting practices to aims in integrated language learning and disciplinary learning*, “Recherche et pratiques pédagogiques en langues de spécialité. Cahiers de l'Apliu”, 32, 2013, 3, pp.15-29.

<sup>31</sup> G. Taillefer, *Enseigner une matière disciplinaire en langue étrangère dans le contexte français des sciences sociales: défi, observations et implications*, “Asp”, 45-46, 2004, pp. 111-126.

<sup>32</sup> See for example for the Spanish context: M. Aguilar –C. Muñoz, *The effect of proficiency on CLIL benefits in engineering students in Spain*, “International Journal of Applied Linguistics”, 24, 2014, 1, pp. 1-18; E. Dafouz – M. Camacho – E. Urquia, *'Surely they can't do as well': a comparison of business students' academic performance in English-medium and Spanish-as-first-language-medium programmes*, “Language and Education”, 28, 2014, 3, pp. 223-236.

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.emilanguages.education.fr/> (last accessed : April 17, 2017).

has played a defining role in French national identity<sup>34 35</sup>. The emergence of European multilingualism in recent years has been influential in changing French policy with regard to the coexistence of languages, particularly for the positive acceptance of local languages and language diversity in school education<sup>36</sup>, but as has been noted above, this approach to multilingualism and interculturality in learning has not extended to EMI – seen as another form of unilingualism in competition with French<sup>37</sup>.

In the post-war period, the ideological dimension of the French language was a strong contributing factor in defensive language policies and attempts to legislate to protect the French language. From 1966, language policies were implemented to defend the French language against deterioration under the influence of the USA. In parallel, active policies to support *francophonie* across French-speaking countries and former colonies were put in place – language being considered a strategic means of maintaining French influence in the world. In 1994, the Toubon law imposed restrictions on the use of English in public life and education – at a time when the effects of globalisation were beginning to have an impact, English was seen as a cultural threat. For higher education, the Toubon law stipulated that French was the language for teaching, examinations and thesis defences. Exceptions could be made for language classes and for visiting professors. Research conferences and colloquia were in French or had to provide for translation into French<sup>38</sup>.

These legal restrictions should have made it extremely difficult to implement EMI programmes. The law was however widely ignored and not applied in higher education settings, in particular in the elite *Grandes Ecoles* and in high-profile Masters programmes. Even where programmes were not explicitly international, the international nature of the disciplines – sciences and business studies, for example – led to the widespread informal integration of English into disciplinary learning. The internationalising momentum in higher education after the Bologna process quite simply worked against defensive language policy. In 2013, the Fioraso law adjusted the situation, as it allowed teaching in “languages other than French” in higher education<sup>39</sup> with the provision that French language classes

<sup>34</sup> H. Boyer, *Idéologie sociolinguistique et politiques linguistiques “intérieures” de la France*, in *Les Politiques linguistiques et explicites dans le domaine francophone*, P. Cichon – S. Ehrhart – M. Stegu ed., Synergies, Pays germanophones n. 5, Berlin et al. 2013, pp. 93-105.

<sup>35</sup> P. Bourdieu – L. Boltanski, *Le fétichisme de la langue*, “Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales”, 4, 1975.

<sup>36</sup> J.C. Beacco – K. Cherkaoui Messin, *Les politiques linguistiques européennes et la gestion de la diversité des langues en France*, “Langue française”, 3, 2010, pp. 95-111.

<sup>37</sup> F. Grin, *L’anglais dans l’enseignement académique: le débat s’égare dans les clichés*, “Le Temps”, <https://www.letemps.ch/opinions/2013/06/12/anglais-enseignement-academique-debat-s-egare-cliches> (last accessed: January 20, 2017).

<sup>38</sup> French Government. Loi no 94-665 du 4 août 1994 dite Toubon <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000005616341> (last accessed: April 18, 2017).

<sup>39</sup> “La langue de l’enseignement, des examens et des concours, ainsi que les thèses et mémoires, dans les établissements d’enseignement supérieur, *peut être une autre langue que le français*”, L. 761-1 du code de l’éducation 2013. Our italics.

would be compulsory<sup>40</sup>. This change of policy was part of a wide-ranging programme of university reform encouraging universities to merge and reorganise in order to gain visibility and competitive edge. At the time of this change there were already more than 700 identified programmes taught in English<sup>41</sup>. This adjustment in the law generated a little controversy in the media<sup>42</sup> but was not met with wide resistance, instead generating a mixture of resignation and pragmatism with a clear divide between science and the humanities. The use of English in universities was seen as integral to the modernisation of universities – a necessary evil or an opportunity depending on one’s point of view.

The tension over the use of English in higher education is not unique to France<sup>43</sup> and, in fact, this has been a controversial issue in many contexts; however, what is particular to the French context is that the tension has been played out explicitly and publicly, in policy and legislation, over several decades, with two strong world languages in competition for global influence, with French very much in the defensive position. There is a certain paradox in this, since, as has been pointed out, language has not prevented French higher education from internationalising. In fact, the tension is not so much caused by language as by different world views on higher education and culture in a period of accelerating globalisation – the use of English is framed as cultural loss. This is further complicated by the historical and founding unilingualism of French education. It is difficult to envisage a coexistence of languages, since a multilingual perspective is not available in the same way as it might be in multilingual communities, for example in Spain, where, for various historical and political reasons, universities have explicitly encouraged multilingualism<sup>44</sup> – although the teaching reality may be quite different<sup>45</sup>.

These legal issues may not have been effective in preventing the development of EMI but they have had a clear impact on its development in France. Until this explicit change in the law, EMI could really only emerge in small elite pockets where the international nature of the discipline and the competitive academic willpower (or more simply, power) of highly motivated individuals could implement it. This in itself has had an impact on the way EMI has been implemented, often with a “do now, ask questions later” philosophy to the detriment of quality<sup>46</sup>. Institutional strategies and support systems, teacher training

<sup>40</sup> French government, Loi n. 2013-660 22 juillet 2013 dite loi Fioraso, <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000027735009> (last accessed April 17, 2017).

<sup>41</sup> J.F. Graziani, *De la Loi Toubon à la loi Fioraso : Quel cadre légal pour les formations en anglais dans les universités françaises?*, “European Journal of Language Policy”, 6, 2014, 2, pp. 159-174.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>43</sup> S. Campagna – V. Pulcini, *Controversy in Italian Higher Education in English-Medium Instruction in European Higher Education: English in Europe*, S. Dimova – J.K. Hultgren – C. Jensen ed., vol. 3, De Gruyter Mouton, Berlin 2015, p. 65.

<sup>44</sup> I. Fortanet-Gómez, *Academics’ beliefs about language use and proficiency in Spanish multilingual higher education*, “AILA review”, 25, 2012, pp. 48-63.

<sup>45</sup> Although even in multilingual contexts this coexistence may be more complex: A. Doiz – D. Lasagabaster, *Teachers’ beliefs about translanguaging practices in Translanguaging in higher education: Beyond monolingual ideologies*, Multilingual Matters, Bristol 2016, pp. 155-174.

<sup>46</sup> G. Taillefer, *CLIL in higher education...*, p. 9-10.

and continuous improvement policies for EMI would have been a direct infringement of the law, even though in many institutions there was top-down encouragement of EMI.

#### 4. *The challenges for lecturers with regard to EMI in French universities*

For lecturers, the process of individual adjustment to teaching in English is often a negotiation between disciplinary and national academic identities. There is a tension between disciplinary excellence in highly internationalised disciplines where English is a pre-requisite and local academic contexts where issues of language competence, cultural loss and quality of communication work against the use of English. It can be argued that this is played out in an opposition between research and teaching practice. Lecturers situate their language competence within their academic expertise and their capacity to publish and communicate in English within their disciplinary context. Teaching in English implies a transfer and extension of disciplinary and language skills to the classroom, but how this might be done well remains to be seen.

In French higher education, university lecturers receive no pedagogical training and they are recruited on the basis of disciplinary research expertise. This means that university teaching in France is a relatively poorly defined ‘technology’<sup>47</sup> despite the current impetus and interest in developing university pedagogy across European higher education<sup>48</sup>. Although the form of university teaching is changing, or rather is under pressure to change, it is still seen as a private and individually determined activity authorised by disciplinary knowledge. One consequence of this is that it reinforces the idea that the teaching of one’s discipline in English requires a simple translation of content into the vehicular language – an approach which has been identified as slowing the development of international programmes of quality<sup>49</sup>. This is compounded by the traditional lecture format of teaching which is still the dominant form of university teaching in France. The perceived role of the teaching professor is as a model of disciplinary communication and is not so much focussed on the learning process as on delivery of content.

An idea of linguistic perfection is linked to the posture of university teachers. For many, their English skills are “good enough” for research communication but not for teaching, where a “native speaker” model seems necessary. If students and teachers are using a “weaker” language, then surely conceptualisation will suffer. The close identification of French language mastery with educational quality can mean that using another language

<sup>47</sup> C. Musselin, *Are Universities specific organisations?*, in *Towards a Multiversity? Universities between Global Trends and National traditions*, G. Krucken – A. Kosmützky – M. Tork ed., Transcript Verlag, Bielefeld 2006, pp. 63-84.

<sup>48</sup> European Commission report 2013 – *Improving the quality of teaching and learning in Europe’s Higher Education Institutions* [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/repository/education/library/reports/modernisation\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/library/reports/modernisation_en.pdf) (last accessed April 23, 2017).

<sup>49</sup> G. Taillefer, *CLIL in higher education...*; J. Airey, *Science, language, and literacy: Case studies of learning in Swedish university physics*, Diss. Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 2009; M. Guarda – F. Helm, *I have discovered new teaching pathways?*..., p. 3.

will transform the very nature of the discipline taught and the institution where it is taught. This becomes even more of an issue in a context where a wide variability in English language skills undermines both the students' and the teacher's confidence in quality learning through English. In this scenario, lecturing in English is framed as a deficit – as put bluntly by one of the participants in the study, as “a poorer version of me”.

A lack of characterisation of university teaching is problematic for the development of EMI because a wide body of international research has underlined that teaching methodology plays a determining role in the quality of EMI teaching<sup>50 51 52</sup>. In particular, an actively student-centred approach that compensates for and supports the extra cognitive load that the second language places both on learners and on teachers is required. This means paying attention to timing within the class, scaffolding, and access to and use of learning supports, to name but a few. Attention, listening stamina and note-taking are more fragile and this also needs to be taken into account. Interaction may be less spontaneous and needs to be managed and planned for, and so group dynamics take on a new importance. For communication in English, it is less a question of having perfect command of English than having a good ability to communicate and ‘comfortable intelligibility<sup>53</sup>’ with regard to pronunciation and intonation. While certain language aspects are important (pronunciation and intonation, ability to ask and answer questions, use of classroom English, managing meta-discourse etc.), what emerges from research in this field is that an active learner-centred pedagogy, adapted to the specific classroom context of *lingua academica* is a key factor for success in EMI teaching.

“In short, the teacher can no longer assume (for purely linguistic reasons) that students understand the content of the course<sup>54</sup>.”

These pedagogical aspects are not immediately perceived by teachers, not because they lack interest in learning and teaching, but rather because for them disciplinary teaching is primarily about their capacity to impart knowledge through language, a vehicle for the transmission of knowledge. Teacher development for EMI settings thus needs to help lecturers appreciate EMI as a specific classroom teaching situation which is enabled by an academic and disciplinary expertise in communication, since it is this expertise which enables the teaching of the discipline through English.

<sup>50</sup> R. Klassen – E. De Graaff, *Facing Innovation: Preparing lecturers for English-Medium Instruction in a non-native context*, “European Journal of Engineering Education”, 26, 2001, 3, pp. 281-89.

<sup>51</sup> P. Ball – D. Lindsay, *Language Demands and Support for English-Medium Instruction in Tertiary Education. Learning from a Specific Context in English-Medium Instruction at Universities: Global Challenges*, A. Doiz – D. Lasagabaster – J.M. Sierra ed., Multilingual Matters, Bristol 2012, pp. 44-65.

<sup>52</sup> J.M. Cots, *Introducing English-medium Instruction at the University of Lleida, Spain: Intervention, Beliefs and Practices in English-Medium Instruction at Universities...*, pp. 106-127.

<sup>53</sup> D. Abercrombie, *Teaching Pronunciation*, “English Language teaching”, 3, 1949, pp. 113-122.

<sup>54</sup> P. Ball – D. Lindsay, *Language Demands and Support...*, p. 53.

### 5. *The context of this study - Défi International, University of Bordeaux*

In 2014, the University of Bordeaux, in its current organisation, was created as the result of a merger of three local university institutions. This process was supported by a strategic investment fund, the Initiative of Excellence (IdEx), put in place by the French government to facilitate the development of a small group of large world-class universities from existing higher education structures<sup>55</sup>. At the University of Bordeaux, there are currently 50 complete international programmes at the bachelor's, master's and doctoral level, 12 of which are EU supported programmes. Increasing this number and developing existing programmes has become a key objective for the university. *Défi International*, a cross-campus programme to support the development of EMI, was set up in 2014 with IdEx funding. The programme provides language and pedagogical training for teachers and supports the development of programmes taught in English. This setting thus provides a good example of how the 2013 Fioraso law allowed for strategic planning for EMI development within a wider policy of internationalising higher education.

*Défi International* was developed at the *Département Langues et Cultures* (DLC) by a team of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teachers. Since 2006, this department had been involved in CLIL courses and English teaching in international programmes for the Life Sciences faculty. It has considerable experience of ESP teaching and a close relationship with the specialists in the disciplines and faculties for which it provides English teaching for students. This is a familiar and logical evolution in the development of EMI, as the development of an appropriate pedagogy for a group of learners within specific disciplinary genres has always been at the core of ESP practice<sup>56</sup>. The programme was developed after a wide review of the literature on EMI and CLIL in university settings<sup>57</sup> and a benchmarking visit to the University of Jyväskylä, Finland<sup>58</sup>. What emerged from a study of the context was a consensus on the need to take into account both linguistic and pedagogical aspects of teaching and learning in a second language and to develop a teaching methodology that compensates and supports the extra load that EMI places on learners and teachers. The next step was to put in place a programme adapted to the needs and profile of university lecturers in their local context.

There are eight strands to the programme: (1) support for programme design and development, (2) rereading of materials, (3) individual coaching, (4) lunchtime conversation sessions, (5) classroom pairing of disciplinary teachers with English teachers, (6) evaluation and follow-up of international programmes, (7) an online Moodle resource and (8) a 3-day intensive course, *Teaching Academic Content through English*. This multi-

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.agence-nationale-recherche.fr/IDEX-ISITE-201> (last accessed: August 23, 2015).

<sup>56</sup> G. Taillefer, *CLIL in higher education...*

<sup>57</sup> Klassen, Rasanen, Airey, Dafouz, Wilkinson, Doiz, Lasagabaster, Sierra, etc.

<sup>58</sup> K. Westerholm – A. Räsänen, *Sharing and promoting disciplinary competences for university teaching in English: voices from the University of Jyväskylä language centre's TACE programme*, in *Voices of pedagogical development - Expanding, enhancing and exploring higher education language learning*, J. Jalkanen – E. Jokinen – P. Taalas ed., Research-publishing.net, 2015, <https://doi.org/10.14705/rpnet.2015.9781908416261> (last accessed: August 23, 2015), pp. 131.

faceted approach is aimed at supporting not only those teachers already involved in clearly identified international programmes, but also at widening understanding of the context of international classrooms and extending the circle of lecturers who might feel able to teach in English. As has been discussed above, national policy has meant that the practice of EMI is relatively under-documented and controversial in France. EMI programmes are often seen as niches of excellence, confined to highly internationalised disciplines and have thus had little impact on the wider community of university teaching staff. In this context, it seemed important to enable lecturers to develop an understanding of how teaching in English might work and to measure their ability to use English in the classroom. For example, conversation classes provide teachers with access to language practice and are a first step towards commencing training for EMI teaching. Similarly, classroom pairing of language teachers and disciplinary teachers enables teachers to explore the impact of disciplinary teaching through English in a low-risk environment and with language support. The various strands of the programme contribute towards making EMI a more visible and inclusive university practice and aim at developing a community of practice for EMI across the university.

The 3-day course *Teaching Academic Content Through English* with a triple focus on language, classroom communication and pedagogy is the core activity of the programme. Participants are immersed in an English-speaking international learning context for 3 days in which they alternate between the roles of teacher and student. They work on key language issues which impact on classroom teaching, experience and test out different pedagogical strategies that support teaching and learning in English (flipped classroom, interactive lecturing, jigsaw reading tasks, experimenting with group dynamics, etc.) and test their skills through micro-teaching activities. This rather intensive experiential training course is designed to open up the context of EMI and inspire lecturers to reflect on their disciplinary teaching practice and the impact teaching in English would have on that practice. There are 16 places on each course which is run in four sessions, two in each semester. There is no prescribed language level or test of English prior to registration for the course, since it was felt that this would discourage teachers from applying – applicants are clearly informed that the training is focussed both on language and pedagogy and that this implies being able to interact effectively in English<sup>59</sup>. Groups of participants are of mixed disciplines and levels of experience – some teaching in English already, some planning to teach in English, others simply motivated and curious about the context. This mixed learner profile is an important aspect of the training, as comparing experience and practices with those of others contributes to the reflective process. The objective of the course is to enable lecturers to make the shift from seeing EMI teaching as a language problem centred on teacher performance to a specific classroom situation for which they are able to make pedagogical adjustments which are relevant to their disciplinary context.

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<sup>59</sup> At one point a suggested B2 level was present on the web page for 24 hours – in a short time this generated a flurry of worried emails – *I'm not sure my English is good enough*. A self-limiting lack of confidence in English skills seems thus to complicate language planning for EMI.

### *6. The study: research questions, participants and data collection*

Since its implementation in 2014, 184 lecturers have followed the intensive course. All participants complete a self-evaluation of their English level prior to training. After each session, participants complete a questionnaire and in the months following the course, lecturers are followed up with further questionnaires at various points. Lecturers who are teaching in English are invited to reflect on their teaching experience via email questionnaires. Where possible, classroom observation and teacher interviews are conducted. Follow-up workshops where teachers can share their experiences are also organised.

The participants come from a wide range of disciplines: Biological Sciences (27%), Technology, Engineering and Materials Sciences (22%), Law, Economics, Management (20%), Health Sciences (15%), Social Sciences and Humanities (16%), Literature and Languages (1%). The proportional divide is not surprising – highly internationalised scientific disciplines see English as a disciplinary given and have been the first to move to teaching in English. Academics within those disciplines see the ability to teach in English as a relevant professional skill.

The data presented here is taken from two sources. The first set of data is taken from the pre- and post-training questionnaires which are designed to define the learner profile and track the learner experience of the 3-day intensive course: 167 respondents out of 184 participants completed the self-evaluation questionnaires before training, whereas 169 out of 184 participants completed the post-training questionnaires.

The second set of data, which is the main focus of this paper, is responses from a follow-up questionnaire which was carried out after the first six training courses. The survey was designed to address the following research questions.

- What adjustments to their teaching practice did lecturers make for teaching through English, if any?
  
- What impact did participating in Défi International training have on their conception of teaching through English, if any?

Thirty of the 91 lecturers who had completed the course completed the follow-up questionnaire. All questionnaires were sent via Google forms and were constructed with both closed and open questions.

### *Findings*

In this section, we will focus on the three most notable aspects of the information gathered through the aforementioned questionnaires: lecturer profiles, teaching practices, and use of English. The first aspect (lecturer profiles) was based on the pre- and post-training



questionnaires, whereas the other two (teaching practices and use of English) were analysed through the follow-up questionnaire in the semesters following the training.

### 6.1 Lecturer profiles (pre- and post-training questionnaires)

The self-evaluation questionnaires completed prior to the 12 course sessions give an indication of how the lecturers perceive their language ability and situate it within their university practice. 167 respondents were presented with the ALTE descriptors for language competence and invited to choose the descriptor which best corresponded to their level in English. The strongest competence is unsurprisingly in reading (63.2 %) and listening (62%) with participants rating themselves as B2 or above for comprehension skills. For spoken interaction, the participants' confidence drops to 48.2% and for extended spoken production only 44.1% of participants rate their skills at B2 or above. In contrast, when it comes to writing, 52.9% rated their ability at B2 or above. The self-evaluation therefore indicates a lack of confidence in skills which lecturers perceive to be essential for university teaching.

To gauge their experience of using English, which might contrast with their own perception of their ability to use the language, the participants were also asked to position themselves on a scale of 1-5 with regard to their professional daily use of English, 1 indicating that they never used either written or spoken English in their professional life, and 5 that they used English intensively every day. Less than half of the participants placed themselves at 4 or 5 on the scale (43.7%), 20.6% at 3, while 32.8% indicated that their use of English was only very occasional. 41.2% had spent an extended period in an anglophone working context (not necessarily an anglophone country) but 39.4% had never had an extended experience of this type. Finally, the participants were invited to give an indication of their lack of confidence in their ability to use English (1 = very confident, 5 not confident at all). Only 35.7% placed themselves at 1 or 2, with 19.2% taking the middle ground and 44.8 % at 4 or 5, indicating that they felt ill at ease and lacking in confidence with regard to their ability to use English. These responses show that despite professional exposure to the language, confidence in language ability is fragile among these university lecturers.

Finally, the participants were invited to add comments on their profile as users of English. 31 out of 167 respondents chose to do this and a recurrent theme was a clear distinction between the use of English for research purposes versus for personal communication, namely a lack of confidence in their capacity to use English despite an often intensive professional use of the language.

“My main problem with English is that once I leave my “research” context and have to take part in discussions, I feel quite ill at ease and the words come less easily (whereas I use the same vocabulary easily in conversations on research themes!)<sup>60</sup>.”

<sup>60</sup> “Mon problème majeur avec l'anglais est que lorsque je sors du contexte ‘recherche’, je me sens plutôt mal à l'aise sur une discussion, les mots me venant moins facilement (alors que j'utilise facilement le même vocabulaire pour des conversations en relation avec la recherche!)”

“My level of spoken (American) English is high enough to understand and be understood easily but my vocabulary and my grammatical expressions are quite poor. I regularly call upon outside companies to correct and enrich the text of my publications before submission. I have been teaching in English for 8 years at Master’s level<sup>61</sup>.”

They were then invited to select answers from five possible motivations to answer the question: Why have you signed up for this course? The most popular response was ‘I want to improve my speaking and listening skills in English’ (28%), followed by ‘I am going to teach in English in the future’ (23%), with responses then shared evenly between ‘I would like to teach in English in the future’ (19%), and ‘I want to find out how to adapt my teaching for the new context of EMI’ (19%). The lowest response rate (11%) was for ‘I am already teaching in English and want to reflect on my practice.’ This is primarily because just under a third of teachers participating in the programme are already teaching in English. Teacher motivation for coming into training is thus motivated by the desire to improve language skills and in particular to develop flexibility in interaction. While they feel able to function in their research setting, their responses show that they believe that the level required for teaching in an EMI programme is much higher than their current actual command of English. Their comments bring to light that they lack confidence in the quality and flexibility of their English for teaching.

Responses from post-training questionnaires indicate a shift in perspective following the training. Participants are asked which aspects of the intensive course they found most useful. *Experimenting with group dynamics*, *Flipped classroom for EMI* and *Interactive lecturing* are placed first by respondents, followed by *English pronunciation and intonation* and *Micro-teaching*. *Classroom English* is placed in fifth position before *Student evaluation* and *Developing tasks from written materials*. These responses indicate a shift in perspective as a result of the training, moving them on from their initial concern about their language skills to the classroom situation of EMI and being able to identify aspects of language that support classroom communication. Having clearly identified issues of relevance to a classroom methodology for EMI during the course, the extent to which teachers are willing and able to adjust their teaching practice still requires further investigation.

## 6.2 Teaching practices (follow-up survey of classroom practice and impact)

The 30 respondents had all taken the course in the previous academic year. Nine were teaching their discipline in English in an international Master’s programme taught entirely in English, 4 were teaching in English at bachelor’s level in international options within francophone programmes, 9 were teaching occasionally in English in seminar sessions, and 8 were teaching in English at that time. The respondents were teaching in a variety

<sup>61</sup> “Mon niveau d’anglais (américain) oral est suffisant pour comprendre et me faire comprendre aisément mais mon vocabulaire et mes tournures grammaticales sont assez pauvres. J’ai régulièrement recours à des sociétés externes pour corriger et enrichir le texte de mes publications avant soumission. J’enseigne en anglais depuis 8 ans en master.”

of disciplinary areas: Science and Technology (6), Biological and Medical Sciences (18), Law and Political Sciences (3), History (1), and Business Studies (2). The proportional breakdown of disciplines reflects the wider group who have come through the programme. It is important to note that although there is a higher proportion teaching sciences in English, 6 were teaching in social sciences and the humanities. The disciplinary breakdown needs to be taken into account because disciplinary knowledge structures have an impact on classroom discourse, the teaching format and language load<sup>62</sup>.

In the follow-up survey the lecturers were asked if they had tested some of the pedagogical tools and strategies that were presented in the training as being supportive of EMI learning. 14% had tested flipped pedagogies, 55% interactive lecturing, 55% jigsaw reading activities, and 13.8% reported testing other methodological tools they had seen during the course. 90% of respondents said that following the training they had changed their teaching approach in French and/or English. All respondents reported feeling more confident in teaching their discipline through English.

The respondents were then asked in open questions to describe what they had put in place in their teaching, what impact they felt the training had had on their teaching and on themselves as teachers. Finally, space was given for open observations from respondents. The responses have been read and compared carefully to identify common themes.

The lecturers teaching in international programmes reported a variety of modifications, but the most common were adjustments to timing of information with careful presentation of material both during and before teaching and the introduction of peer-to-peer checking at key stages within the lecture format, as summarized by the following participant:

I added interactions into my lectures straight after the training course in the second semester of 2015. That allowed me to revisit the pedagogical objectives on a number of levels and to re-focus my speech. It also allowed me to design a better exam and prepare them for it. The evaluation of my teaching was positive at the end of the year, with some students asking for even more interaction. So, this year I have included more interaction, which was easier to design than last year; I now know how to respond better to any mistakes in their answers. And so, I'm still refining the content in view of the objectives. The student participation is really satisfying<sup>63</sup>.

These relatively minor adjustments were reported to have a positive impact on learning. Similarly, the addition of group work in seminar sessions was implemented to encourage

<sup>62</sup> J. Airey, *From stimulated recall to disciplinary literacy: Summarizing ten years of research into teaching and learning in English*, in *English-Medium Instruction in European Higher Education: English in Europe*, S. Dimova – J.K. Hultgren – C. Jensen ed., vol. 3, De Gruyter Mouton, Berlin 2015, pp. 157-176.

<sup>63</sup> "J'ai ajouté des interactions dans mon cours en amphî dès la sortie du stage au second semestre 2015. Cela m'a permis de revoir les objectifs pédagogiques à plusieurs niveaux et de recentrer mon discours. Cela m'a aussi permis de mieux concevoir l'examen et les y préparer. L'évaluation de mon enseignement a été positive en fin d'année, certains élèves demandant même plus d'interactions. Cette année j'ai donc ajouté des interactions, cela m'étant plus facile à concevoir que l'année dernière. Maintenant je sais mieux gérer les erreurs dans les réponses. Et donc, je raffine encore le contenu en vue des objectifs. La participation des élèves est vraiment satisfaisante."

interaction. In International Master's level programmes, flipped methodology was tested as a means of helping students contextualise course content before class and to generate more active classroom participation:

Flipped class with docs prepared in advance by the students, small group work to encourage feedback from each student and allow students to complete each other's understanding<sup>64</sup>.

Warm-up, breaks every 15 minutes for quiz/questions, flipped classroom, open debate. I launch a question of interest in the field and I split the classroom into 2 groups: the pros and the cons. They do not decide the group they end into. So, they must find arguments, sometimes against their own feeling. They love it.

These changes may not on the surface seem to lighten the language load on the students – group discussion on complex subjects is a higher order cognitive and linguistic task. However, it is the diversity of activities and active student-centred approach which teachers cite as having a positive impact on their EMI classrooms. More generally, teachers report making changes to the traditional lecture format to diversify the presentation of information in response to the specific context of the EMI classroom.

I have realised that I should reduce the volume of information in lectures and check more that they have understood the concepts contained in the lecture because the students' English isn't necessarily very good and a long speech without any break is not necessarily effective<sup>65</sup>.

The responses indicate that teachers have reflected on the language load of the teaching for both students and themselves.

However, respondents who were not teaching in EMI settings also reported that they had implemented changes in their teaching that had made a positive impact. The following account shows how careful consideration of timing of information and management of communication has transformed a classic lecture format in French:

I have found a renewed enthusiasm for lecture hall teaching, which I had ceased to enjoy. I had been feeling that I had lost their attention and I had quite a bit of absenteeism. The student interactions have allowed me to check on their understanding and adapt my lecture better. The minute for thinking that I give them before they reply to a question allows them to discuss the matter among themselves

<sup>64</sup> "Classe inversée avec docs préparés par les étudiants à l'avance, travail en petits groupes pour favoriser le retour d'expérience de chacun et que les étudiants se complètent les uns les autres dans leur compréhension."

<sup>65</sup> "Je me suis rendue compte que je devais réduire le nombre d'information en cours magistral et plus vérifier l'acquisition des concepts en cours d'intervention car les étudiants ne sont pas forcément très bon en anglais et qu'un discours trop long sans pause n'est pas forcément productif."

and give me a micro-break, which I find beneficial. I no longer feel that I am exhausting myself trying to hold their attention without much success<sup>66</sup>.

Many of the respondents underlined their previous lack of contact with pedagogical methodology and that the training had inspired them to test out new methodologies.

The course was, first and foremost, a training course in pedagogy for me. It filled the vacuum left by the lack of training for university lecturers and researchers<sup>67</sup>.

It had a considerable impact, because it showed me that you can achieve the same outcomes with other methods besides just lecturing<sup>68</sup>.

Those who were already innovating in the classroom felt validated (“confortée”) in their choices and able to go further, as one respondent put it, “It allowed me to better situate my practice among other things...”<sup>69</sup>

Similarly, the contact with colleagues from other disciplines was cited as an impetus for experimentation since participants were “able to benefit from experience and advice from other teachers from other disciplines”<sup>70</sup>.

Of the 30 respondents, 12 had sought to benefit from other strands of the programme to support their teaching through English, through individual coaching or by attending conversation workshops or follow-up sessions to share practice. The training had thus given them a pretext for rethinking their teaching strategy more generally with a more student-centred approach and use of peer-to-peer interaction to support learning.

### 6.3. Use of English (follow-up questionnaire)

Lecturers teaching in English reported that they felt more confident and consequently more spontaneous but also that they were more aware of the language load on the students.

I understand better the difficulties that the students face and have thus adopted a strategy to help “unblock” them<sup>71</sup>.

<sup>66</sup> “J’ai repris du plaisir à enseigner ce cours en amphi qui ne me satisfaisait plus. J’avais la sensation de perdre leur attention, et j’avais plus d’absentéisme. Les interactions me permettent de sonder leur compréhension et de mieux adapter mon cours. La minute de réflexion que je leur laisse avant de répondre leur permet de discuter entre eux et me permet à moi-même une micro pause qui m’est bénéfique. Je n’ai plus la sensation de m’épuiser à attirer leur attention inefficacement.”

<sup>67</sup> “Ce stage a d’abord été un apprentissage de la pédagogie pour moi. Cela a rempli le vide laissé par la non-formation des enseignants-chercheurs à l’université.”

<sup>68</sup> “L’impact est important, car cela m’a montré que l’on pouvait arriver aux mêmes résultats avec d’autres méthodes que magistrales.”

<sup>69</sup> “Cela a permis de mieux situer ma pratique parmi d’autres...”

<sup>70</sup> “J’ai pu bénéficier de l’expérience et des conseils d’autres enseignants dans d’autres matières.”

<sup>71</sup> “J’ai mieux compris les difficultés des étudiants et donc adapté une stratégie pour “les débloquer.”

They reported feeling less inhibited (“moins décomplexée”) when using English, for example when teaching classes with students who were native speakers. Respondents who were not teaching in international programmes also reported feeling more confident, that teaching in English was possible for them, and they also felt that they understood the interaction between classroom methodology and language and how it enabled them to envisage teaching in English.

The positive feedback at the end of the course gave me confidence and I put myself forward as a potential resource for teaching in English<sup>72</sup>.

Positive encounter with university pedagogy. Gained confidence in the possibility of my speaking English in public without having rehearsed and prepared everything in advance<sup>73</sup>.

Experimenting with active learning formats and changing the organisation of classroom communication had a positive impact on participants’ language confidence. This may seem paradoxical since active learning formats imply a wider variety of interaction and less predictable communication than traditional lecturing. However, here we can see that a different model of classroom communication has gone some way to alleviating performance anxiety with regard to teaching in English. The shift in focus from lecturer monologue to different forms of classroom interaction, at different time points throughout a session, is enabling, partly because it is a shift to a more appropriate, and more realistic, idea of what is required for teaching in English.

The responses indicated that teachers had moved away from a “native speaker” language model for themselves to implementing classroom strategies to support communication, as pointed out by the following participant:

It allowed me to understand that English is just a means of communicating the content. Allows me to stop aiming for linguistic perfection and to stop feeling that we have to be able to speak better than the students<sup>74</sup>.

Gaining a better understanding of *English as a lingua academica* had enabled them to better situate how teaching in English fits with their disciplinary teaching identity. This transition is dependent upon moving away from the idea of EMI as based purely on linguistic expertise towards an understanding of how disciplinary expertise, classroom methodology and language competence all combine to authorise the lecturer to teach

<sup>72</sup> “L’évaluation positive à la fin du stage m’a donné confiance et je me suis signalée comme ressource potentielle pour enseigner en anglais.”

<sup>73</sup> “Confrontation positive avec la pédagogie universitaire. Prise de confiance dans ma possibilité de parler en anglais en public sans avoir tout répété et préparé à l’avance.”

<sup>74</sup> “Ca m’a permis de comprendre que l’anglais n’est qu’un moyen de communiquer un contenu. Permet de ne pas viser la perfection linguistique ou de ne pas avoir l’impression qu’il nous faut mieux parler que les étudiants.”

through English. This means moving away from framing EMI as a language problem to framing it as a specific disciplinary communication context. For the participant quoted above, his positioning with regard to the students has been altered – the communication hierarchy has been readjusted. Indeed, lecturers often report that the shared *lingua academica* context has a levelling effect between students and teachers, changing the traditional classroom dynamic in a positive manner, an effect that has been noted in other EMI development programmes<sup>75</sup>.

Overall, the responses indicate that the lecturers are better able to diagnose the language and communication requirements for EMI classrooms and thus take appropriate action to support their development for EMI, which in turn gives them confidence in their ability to teach. “Without question, the course, but also the conversation workshops, have made me to feel more at ease<sup>76</sup>.”

### 7. Discussion

The findings here are consistent with other studies on teacher development through teaching in English, since the use of another language for teaching throws into perspective the role that communication plays in learning and inspires teachers to find workable strategies for their own classroom contexts<sup>77 78</sup>. In France, and in other similar higher education contexts where the “technology” of university teaching is still defined along traditional lines, it might be argued that the “fresh” discovery of teaching methodology through teacher development for EMI is, in fact, an enabling and motivating factor for university teachers.

In this paper, the overview of the French context for EMI highlights how cultural and political issues have been a complicating factor in the way that disciplinary teaching in English has emerged. There is a gap between the top-down pressure to internationalise teaching and maintain disciplinary excellence which contrasts with the on-the-ground classroom experience. The teacher responses are a reminder of the fundamental importance of teacher cognition in shaping international classrooms. Teaching is a process of active decision-making informed by teachers’ thoughts<sup>79</sup> and in this respect professional development for EMI has to provide teachers with the tools for clearly identified EMI classroom practice. In higher education settings, traditional models of teaching have meant that teacher cognition has not received much attention<sup>80</sup> and yet the teacher responses

<sup>75</sup> M. Guarda – F. Helm, ‘I have discovered new teaching pathways’..., pp. 7-9.

<sup>76</sup> “Pas de doute que le stage, mais aussi les ateliers de conversation, m’a permis de me sentir plus à l’aise.”

<sup>77</sup> P. Ball – D. Lindsay, *Language Demands and Support...*, p. 59.

<sup>78</sup> M. Guarda – F. Helm, ‘I have discovered new teaching pathways’...

<sup>79</sup> S. Borg, *The impact of in-service teacher education on language teacher’s beliefs*, “System”, 39, 2011, 3, pp. 370-380.

<sup>80</sup> U. Smit – E. Dafouz, *Integrating content and language in higher education: An introduction to English-medium policies, conceptual issues and research practices across Europe*, “AILA Review”, 25, 2012, 1, p. 5.

in our study show how attention to teacher cognition and sharing of this experience are important in encouraging and implementing educational change.

With regard to our first research question (What adjustments to their teaching practice did lecturers make for teaching through English?), a key aspect of the findings presented here is that many of the changes reported are small adjustments to approach that have had a considerable impact. Teachers were able to experiment informally whether they were teaching in English or French because they were simply invited to report back on what they had done. One of the difficulties with the development of quality teaching in English is the extra workload that it most definitely places on teachers<sup>81</sup>. The findings presented here indicate that, given the tools, disciplinary teachers are willing and able to explicitly manage and organise classroom communication to support EMI learning. This may be a long way from an explicit integrated content and language approach – lecturers who have come through the programme reject quite strongly the idea that they might take on this role –, but it does change perspectives on the role of language in learning. This implies investment on the part of teachers, but if they see gains in the classroom, then they are more likely to make that investment. In this respect, anchoring the practice of EMI firmly in an appropriate pedagogical methodology is not just important for the quality of EMI programmes but also for institutional development of EMI because teachers need to see an added value both for themselves and students. These gains need to be visible across the institution and adapted to its wider needs.

As regards our second research question (What impact did participating in *Défi International* training have on their conception of teaching through English?), the data reveals that there is a clear shift in the participants' perspective. Not only did they change their teaching practices by making their classes more student-centred, but they also started to think of English as a *lingua franca*, which helped to dispel some of their fears as non-native speakers. Changing perspectives on the way language, communication and thus learning can be managed in the university teaching classroom allows teachers to feel more legitimate in teaching in English because it lowers the stakes for teachers – language load is shared and managed in a learning approach based on co-construction of knowledge. This is helpful because it shifts teacher identity from being a model of linguistic perfection to a facilitator and manager of a classroom situation and places the student at the centre of learning.

Although the *Défi International* course is explicitly presented as a course in both pedagogy and language, the teachers entering the training identify language competence as the main issue for teaching in English. The shift to another language allows lecturers to assume a position of reassessing their pedagogical approach. This might be challenging for confirmed and experienced professors in university settings<sup>82</sup>. Teacher development for EMI is thus a pretext for rethinking university teaching, as teachers are more likely to accept the need for professional development for EMI than for a rethink of their pedagogical approach in general. The shift to a more student-centred approach is justified

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<sup>81</sup> A. Doiz – D. Lasagabaster, *Teachers' beliefs about translanguaging practices...*

<sup>82</sup> M. Guarda – F. Helm, *'I have discovered new teaching pathways'...*, p. 7.



in the course by the need to adapt to the more fragile language context of *lingua academica* learning, allowing for more collaboration to consolidate communication between teachers and students<sup>83</sup> and this is transposed quite readily by respondents to their everyday French teaching context.

This study and ongoing study of the *Défi International* programme would thus tend to confirm the disruptive value of implementing EMI in higher education<sup>84</sup>. Higher education is changing fast, due to multiple influences such as learning technology and new perspectives on learning from the field of cognitive science and neuroscience, all of which are changing the way that university learning is framed. There is currently much discussion of pedagogical transformation in higher education but seeing the results of such transformation on the ground takes time. Teaching and learning through English implies a shift in teaching practice which may contrast with locally ingrained models of learning. The constraints and demands on teachers and students, related to implementing EMI, mean that teachers need to be able to reflect on their practice and make appropriate adjustments. In these respects, internationalisation of higher education is subject to the constraints of the local context (as we have seen in the history of EMI development in France), but it can also become a driving force for change within local higher education contexts.

There are, however, limitations to this study. The findings need to be supported with more classroom-focussed research and more extended interviews with teachers and this is currently underway. The study reports on one university setting in France and although there is supporting data from similar European settings, each context needs to be considered in terms of its own specificities. Another issue, which needs to be underlined, is that the focus of this programme is on teachers whose English level allows them to envisage teaching in English – the shift from a focus on language competence to an adapted pedagogical methodology is enabling in this French context. However, this is not to suggest that language competence is not a key issue for developing international learning of quality in French higher education; in this respect, professional development for EMI needs to be supported by strong institutional language policy. The balance between language competence issues and pedagogical implementation in EMI is surely subtle and complex and highly specific to individual disciplines: in fact, study of EMI settings tends to highlight the dependence of the quality of teaching and learning on a complex blend of communication and disciplinary skills whatever the language<sup>85</sup>.

## 8. Conclusion

*Défi International* was set up with the explicit aim of developing a community of practice for EMI. EMI has had a limited and controversial development in France which has

<sup>83</sup> K. Hahl – H.M. Järvinen – K. Juuti, *Accommodating to English-medium instruction in teacher education in Finland*, “International Journal of Applied Linguistics”, 26, 2016, 3, pp. 291-310.

<sup>84</sup> M. Guarda – F. Helm, ‘*I have discovered new teaching pathways...*’, p. 14.

<sup>85</sup> J. Airey, *From stimulated recall to disciplinary literacy...*

contributed to a lack of understanding of how such a community of practice might work and what it implies for university teachers. The findings here indicate that having access to a more clearly defined “technology” for EMI teaching, being able to share experiences with colleagues from other disciplines and receive continued support within the programme are a first step towards developing EMI classroom practice and a more accessible community of practice with which teachers can identify. Recent work on continuing professional development for internationalisation highlights the need for “a more systematic and holistic approach” and the value of mentoring for the development of international classrooms<sup>86</sup>. The benefits of this holistic approach go beyond primary considerations of quality in teaching and learning, as continuing professional development also becomes important for developing more locally-determined, bottom-up approaches to internationalisation within higher education which support educational innovation.

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<sup>86</sup> K. M. Lauridsen, *Professional development of international classroom lecturers* in *Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education: perspectives on professional practice*, J. Valcke – R. Wilkinson ed., Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main 2017, pp. 24-37.

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