Promoting Quality in Teaching through Moving into English-medium Instruction

DOI: 10.47050/66515321.302–324

Melanie Ellis

In many contexts in higher education, there is an increasing trend for institutions to offer courses with English as the medium of instruction (EMI), which presents particular challenges for the prospective teacher. This case study tracks five university lecturers in Poland preparing to begin teaching EMI courses. A course to support their English was offered as part of a project to develop the teaching competences of university staff. Based on data from transcripts of interviews and questionnaires, the study investigates the relationship between how the teachers teach in their own language and in English, the decision-making process as they plan an EMI course, their perception of the language course, and whether the move towards EMI enhances the overall quality of their teaching.

The findings demonstrate that the preparation process to start EMI is highly individual. Deciding what to teach and how is a complex process related to the participant's self-efficacy in English and their concerns about student response and language skills. The course planning has promoted deep reflection on the teaching/learning process. There are suggestions that this will also bring about changes in teaching in the national language. In short, the move towards EMI has the potential for raising quality in teacher education.

Keywords:
English-medium instruction
planning process
self-efficacy
teaching quality

Home

Introduction

Within the European Community, the Europe 2020 Strategy placed a premium on the mobility of staff and students, partnerships between institutions of higher education, and the internationalisation of programmes and courses with the goal of "enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning" (CHE Consult et al., 2014, p. 143). The 2014 report on the impact of the Erasmus programme (ibidem) found that staff involved in mobility, either those visiting or those being visited, strongly felt that the experience had indeed improved the quality of teaching and learning. The 2019 report (CHE Consult et al., 2019) added that staff involved in Erasmus were found to employ more modern teaching methods, including the use of digital media, and introduce innovative curricula. Yet internationalisation, in the form of offering programmes through English as a medium of instruction (EMI), which is defined as "the use of the English language to teach academic subjects (other than English itself) in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English" (Dearden, 2015, p. 2), has a longer history than this. It was introduced at the University of Maastricht as long ago as 1987 (see Wilkinson & Zegers, 2008). Initially a topic of interest in Europe, it has now become a global concern (Dearden, 2015).

Reasons for a move towards internationalisation in European higher education institutions (HEIs) can be traced to the Lisbon 2000 strategy, which aimed for countries to encourage at least 40% of young people to have completed higher education by 2020, with a view to raising the competitiveness of the EU as a world economy. The 1999 Bologna declaration created a European Higher Educational Area (EHEA), across which staff and young people were intended to be able to move freely. Falling birthrates mean that HEIs have to compete for undergraduates, and this has contributed to what Coleman (2006) calls the "marketisation" of these institutions. In order to be attractive for international students, HEIs need to offer courses in accessible languages and English is dominant in this respect. In a report on the extent of EMI in Europe (Wächter & Maiwurm, 2015), it was found that the largest number of programmes are in Scandinavia and the Baltic countries, followed by other countries of northern Europe (the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany), with notably fewer such programmes in the south of Europe. In the period between earlier

reports (Maiworm & Wächter, 2002; Wächter & Maiworm, 2008) and the 2015 study, the overall number of EMI programmes increased substantially. MA level programmes dominate, and are found particularly in HEIs which award PhDs.

Theoretical background

EMI has been the subject of a substantial amount of research (see review article by Macaro et al., 2018). A number of concerns have been identified in the literature (examples given here focus only on Europe and Turkey). These include the attitudes of lecturers and students towards the introduction of EMI (e.g. Dearden & Macaro, 2016; Earls, 2016); difficulties faced by lecturers (language proficiency, see e.g. Campagna, 2016; Guarda & Helm, 2017; Werther et al., 2014); methodology (Klaasen & de Graaf, 2001; Aguilar & Rodriguez, 2012); student responses to the introduction of EMI, in particular regarding difficulties faced with English (e.g. Airey, 2011; Basıbek et al., 2014; Doiz, Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2011; Napoli & Sourisseau, 2013); and the question of whether EMI improves student English language skills (e.g. Aguilar & Munoz, 2014; Hellekjaer, 2010).

Several studies have looked at ways of supporting university staff engaged in EMI. One of the areas of concern is that of the language proficiency of staff in EMI (Lasagabaster, 2018). Klaasen (2008) describes how courses offered in a Dutch HEI initially focused solely on developing the English skills of lecturers, but over time researchers understood the need to devote attention to the pedagogical skills needed to allow the internationalisation of courses. Guarda and Helm (2017), in an Italian context where lecturers had been pushed into EMI regardless of their skills in English, reported on a course to develop the academic language skills of those engaged in EMI through a focus on pedagogical skills in order to help the university achieve its goal of internationalisation. This same study also found that staff reported the course promoted reflection on the nature and quality of teaching. Doiz, Lasagabaster and Sierra (2011) found that staff engaged in EMI perceived that it had positive benefits for their personal and professional development.

Some studies link the question of lecturers' language skills with the language skills of students. Flowerdew, Miller and Lee (2000) found that Cantonese lecturers, aware of their students' difficulties with

English comprehension, attempted to compensate for this by switching languages, a policy only possible if the lecturer and all their students shared a common language. Airey (2011) found that the lecturer becoming aware of the need for students to comprehend is a key factor in successful EMI lecturing, more important than the lecturer's language skills. Erkin and Osam (2015) found that low levels of student language proficiency reduced the level of comprehension of lectures, despite efforts from the lecturer to accommodate for this. They conclude that "the instructional process in the native language and the foreign language (English) are significantly different" (p. 193) and stress that this fact needs to be made clear to those engaged in EMI. In an observational study, Jiang, Zhang and May (2019), in an HEI in China where the aim of EMI is not only to teach the subject but also to develop student skills in English, found that teaching staff focused primarily on the content; however, they also adopted various strategies to support student understanding through, for example, the use of visual support. Students' level of language proficiency was seen as an inhibiting factor in the effectiveness of the process, with a need for additional language for specific purposes seen as a requisite.

To date, it appears that there have been no studies that explore the planning and decision-making processes of university teachers *before* they begin to work in EMI. The study described here aims to address this gap.

The notion of quality in higher education

As this study is based in Europe and the course it features took place thanks to EU funding, it seems appropriate to look to the European Commission (2013) report on "Improving the quality of teaching and learning in Europe's higher education institutions" to gain an understanding of how quality is perceived in this context. In the introduction to this report, Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou stresses that quality higher education is important "to produce the critically-thinking, creative, adaptable graduates who will shape our future" (p. 4). From the report, we learn that the goal is a co-constructive approach to learning with students as partners in the process, where students are actively engaged in reaching deeper levels of understanding and have opportunities to analyze the latest research from across the world in order to "develop academic literacy and both subject

specific and generic skills which they can apply immediately in the real world, especially in the labour market" (p. 19). Courses and activities are to be problem- or research-based, feature work in groups or teams and promote critical thinking (p. 72).

Research context

The internationalisation of HEIs is a priority for Poland (Bobko, 2016) in the face of a falling number of Polish students due to demographics. Data from 2017 (Siwiński, 2017; GUS, 2018) indicate a rising number of foreign students, standing at 5.63% of the student population. In some universities, foreign students now represent around 5–6% of the total number, with the largest group of students coming from Ukraine.

This paper concerns a project, funded from the EU Structural Fund, which aimed to raise the teaching competences of staff at a Polish university. In particular, it aimed to support young researchers (aged up to 35) in their preparation to teach subject courses through the medium of English. An enrollment requirement was that participants would teach a minimum of 30 hours of course(s) through English in the semester following the end of the course and submit the course syllabus as documentation. Participants were taught English in micro--groups of three, 70 hours of group English classes taught by two tutors (one British, the other Polish) who shared the teaching hours, plus 15 hours of live online individual tutorials, similarly divided between the tutors. Other parts of the project included focus on innovations in methodology, but these are not the subject of this paper.

Research design

This is an ethnographic case study of five tertiary lecturers in different fields preparing to teach courses through the medium of English. The researcher was a participant in the process, being the British tutor who taught half of the language course and conducted half of the individual consultations. During these the researcher also used her experience as a teacher educator and her experience in course and materials design. The analysis in this paper consequently offers both etic (researcher/observer) and emic (participant-tutor) perspectives. The broad aims were to explore the planning process undertaken by the participants in the course. Specifically, the study set out to find answers to the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between how teachers work in their own language (L1) and how they plan to work in English?
2. What did the teachers decide to teach in English? Why? What influenced the process?
3. How did teachers evaluate the preparation-to-teach-in--English process?
4. Is there evidence that the preparation process affects the overall quality of their teaching?

Participants

The participants were post-doctoral members of the university staff, aged 34–36, with teaching experience ranging from 3.5–11 years. There were four women and one man. Four of the five had volunteered for the programme, whereas the fifth had been asked to join. The selection process seems to have focused on the individual's research profile rather than their language competence, which varied considerably, particularly in terms of spoken language ability. They represented diverse disciplines: mechanical engineering; biology; political science; geography (teacher education); and artificial intelligence. The brief was that the language course should be at level C1 on the Common European Framework, which was challenging for two of the participants.

Data collection

Participants gave their informed consent to take part in the research. Throughout the course, the researcher kept a log in which notes and reflections were made. Materials submitted by participants as part of the course planning process were collected, including the course syllabuses they prepared. Online individual consultations took place on Skype, during which written messages were used to correct language and give feedback. These messages were then included in the research log.

At the end of the course, participants were asked to complete an online questionnaire, in either English or Polish, with open questions, which was done by three participants. Questions were arranged in four areas: **yourself as a teacher now** (teaching in own language (L1), beliefs about, attitudes and approach to university teaching, self-efficacy); **moving towards teaching in English** (planning process, decision making, comparison between teaching in English and in L1); **course plans** (aims,

approach, criteria for choice of what to teach and how); and **evaluation** (role of individual consultations, how they were used and why, readiness to teach in English, self-efficacy, impact of process of preparing to teach English on self as a teacher in general, on teaching). Course members also agreed to take part in semi-structured interviews in the two groups in which they had been taught. These were conducted in English. Each of these lasted 90 minutes and were recorded and then transcribed. Two participants took part in one interview and three in the other.

Research Methodology

Potter and Hepburn (2012) stress the importance of how interviews are designed, carried out and analysed and the impact of this on the validity of qualitative data. Bearing this in mind, explicit statements are made here about the role of the interviewer and the specific context in which the interviews took place, and statements made on the basis of the interview data are supported by verbatim quotations. Nickerson (1998) warns of the dangers of confirmation bias, whereby the researcher extracts only data which are perceived as supporting preconceived views. For this reason, a grounded theory approach was taken (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) by reading and re-reading the transcripts and creating codes. First, the general areas outlined in the questionnaire were identified and then, within these, more detailed codes were created, comparing and contrasting them across the responses to trace patterns.

While the semi-structured interview followed the same broad outline as the questionnaire, the responses were much longer, and in places participants interacted with each other and/or with the interviewer, discussing the views expressed. Where, for reasons of language limitations, a participant's response was not transparent, the researcher rephrased what had been said in clearer language, using markers such as "If I understood correctly you are saying that..." and "Do you mean that...?" for confirmation or correction by the interviewee, with the aim of ensuring the message was clear. In this context, therefore, we follow Holstein and Gubrium (2003), who state that the views expressed in an interview are co-constructed as a result of interactions between the interviewer and interviewee(s). These may differ from the views an individual interviewee might express in a questionnaire.

Findings

Teaching in L1

Describing their current teaching in their specialist areas in their L1, the participants fall roughly into two groups: those who teach by lecturing to introduce theoretical concepts, followed by classes during which practical work is done based on exercises, and those who actively engage the students in the construction of theoretical knowledge, followed by group problem-solving tasks. There are, however, differences in the first group (3 teachers), where one participant (biologist) explains: "I try to bring the knowledge to the students in an attractive way so that they feel the usefulness of this knowledge in their own lives", while another (artificial intelligence) protests that giving a 90-minute lecture is not effective, as the students "go to sleep... because there is a lot of information, it is not useful for them". This same teacher, however, loves classes: "I love learning by doing, so [I mean] if they have lots of exercises, or the exercise that they need to improve their knowledge". In short, there is evidence that while traditional transmission of knowledge through lectures is standard practice for the first group, one of the lecturers tries to introduce information in ways to make it more understandable for the students and a second is critical of the lecture as a mode of learning. Within the second group (2 teachers), one teacher (mechanical engineer) explains "I am trying to engage students to actively participate", describing that this takes place through spontaneous dialogue with them in the form of questions and answers. The other teacher (political scientist) works with text: "we discuss it and try to find examples". Students then "have to solve the problem connected with [the text] and they have small group work to summarise knowledge".

Asked in one of the interviews if lectures were needed in a modern university, both participants were strongly in favour, explaining that before a student is able to search for information effectively on their own they need a foundation, on the basis of which they are able to discern which information is relevant or reliable. A second argument given was that the lecturer acts as a mediator who helps students interpret new information, modelling ways in which the student can then work on their own and thus serving as a guide. This suggests that viewing the lecture simply as a vehicle for the transmission of knowledge appears to be a misleading over-simplification.

In terms of self-efficacy, four of the participants declared (in the questionnaire or in the interview) that their L1 teaching is rated positively by their students, while the remaining teacher did not answer this question.

Moving towards teaching in English: the planning process

Participants were able to choose what they were going to teach in English. On an administrative level there were problems, as all course syllabuses are required to be submitted and approved at the start of the academic year, yet a project requirement was that 30 hours should be taught in English in the second semester, which required a new, revised syllabus that the regulations did not allow. The students enrolled were all Polish and the courses had not been promoted as being English-medium, which some of the lecturers anticipated could cause difficulties. These issues proved to be one of the deciding criteria in choosing what to teach in English. The question of how students would react was a recurring theme in the discussion. (The following extracts are taken from the interviews where participants spoke in English, and this is reproduced as near to verbatim as possible, with any additions marked with [...] These represent translations when words were given in Polish, or corrections that were felt to be needed to make the text intelligible.)

[1] *I want to introduce [a] mixed course in English and in Polish so some parts of my classes will be in English, maybe some parts in Polish, but I think this is dependent on the students' level in English and also what they want because I can not* [...] *I can not force them.*

This teacher rationalizes the need to use English on the grounds that the latest research is only accessible via articles published in English, and that if a text is presented in the original language, supported with a glossary, then it is logical that discussions about it should also be in English. She also explains the process by which she will justify her use of English to the students:

[2] *I think we can create some need for students to develop themsel*[ves] *in English, they know, they* [find out] *new words, specific words. In the future for them* [it] *will be easier,* [they will]

more understand, so I can [explain to] *them why they need this language and [why] some part of the course is in this language.*

Her colleague, by contrast, was less optimistic, based on her experience from a previous year when she used a text in English in one of her classes which led to an official complaint from a student. She also cites the very low take-up of elective classes in technical English, indicating the reluctance of students to develop their English skills. (This teacher finally decided to meet the project requirement whilst away as a visiting lecturer in Jordan.) The two teachers considered alternative approaches in the Polish context to accommodate the students' lack of English proficiency or resistance: e.g. giving a lecture in Polish with slides in English, lecturing in English with slides in Polish, or lecturing in English with a summary at the end in Polish.

The next criteria noted in the data are that of how the lecturer perceives their level of English and their sense of self-efficacy in the language. This is highly individual and does not always correspond with their actual level of proficiency, as perceived by the tutor.

[3] *I feel a lot of limitation of my language, so when I want to say something very specific, very – the context of what I want to say is very important – so sometimes I think about this what I have to say, but I do not go deep to the knowledge of something – so I feel the limitation of my language.*

Another teacher describes the challenge of coping with content and language simultaneously:

[4] *In Polish when I speak about some process I can imagine this in my mind and I speak in Polish and I understand this process well* [...] *but when I start to think in English about this process it is hard to me to be on the first step, on the second step, then think about this, think about the first steps and think in English to be correct, so I use lots of diagrams.* [Researcher: So it is almost as if it is too much in your head at the same time?] *Yes, yes! So when I have this diagram I have some information – for example, [the] first step is this, written on this diagram, and it helps me to speak about it.*

This teacher has found a strategy to compensate for her language difficulties: using visual support in the form of a labelled diagram. She believes this helps her by reducing the cognitive load and leaving her mental space to focus more on her English.

Another teacher spoke about her sense of self-efficacy in English:

[5] *It is hard to use this language because I want to be perfect and I am not perfect. It is hard to speak in English when you feel that you are not enough good... I am afraid of speaking in English...*

The final extract is from a teacher who has considerable experience in working on European projects with international partners so feels comfortable in her everyday use of English, but had reservations about using English in class, both on account of her own skills and also due to concerns about the students. She has found a solution:

[6] *I want students to work by their own with sources, one of which they will search for, one of them I will give them, this will be English language sources. They will work on it in English and then in the end there will be discussion* [...] *there will be some individual actions they will take, so it will be all in English, so it will be quite a challenge, but I already discussed it with them and half of them is, are terrified, but I make them sure that they will receive the materials to have a chance to* [familiarise themselves] *with them... So I calm them that it is not a competition whose language is best* [...] *the goal is to use English language sources without any boundaries and achieving higher goals because of it.*

Deciding on plans for a course

The decision-making about what to teach in English was a process which involved the criteria outlined above, which then had to be mapped onto the specifics of the subject being taught and the format – lecture or class. Participants appeared to start with an expectation that there would be no difference between how they would teach in English and how they teach in Polish, as expressed here: "I think [I will teach in] the same way, because it is working in Polish, so why does not [...] [it] working in English? We only change the language, yes?" This teacher initially thought of giving a lecture in English to explain the workings

of a computer program. It was not until she tried to rehearse part of this live during an online consultation that she became aware she was not familiar with the English version of the program, so lacked terminology in English, and did not know the specific language to give instructions for using the program. In other words, what she had assumed would be easy because she found it easy in Polish turned out to be a challenge in English. She continues:

[7] *So I think now it is not a good idea to explain how this program works. I think a normal lecture where some theory and then this exercise for them will be* [a] *better idea ... because when I forget something I can see on this slides.*

Another teacher, aware of their language limitations, initially thought of introducing English only in one-to-one classes:

[8] *Because I know what I have to do with this student, I put my attention only on one person and we will conduct what I know, what is for me very automatic, and I can put my attention only on English, and only on one person.*

This appears to echo the cognitive load issue mentioned by a different participant earlier when trying to describe a process in English (extract 4). Here, the teacher feels that having to teach a class, think about students, think about the content and how to explain it in English would be too much to deal with all at once. This teacher, however, went on to explain that she now felt more confident and less concerned about making mistakes and so decided on a mixed language course (see extract 1).

Other planning decisions were pragmatic:

[9] *I chose the classes that will be about the technology of the computer, writing code and engineering calculations, it is based on new software that was created in the United States and also the technology and the knowledge ... was developed mostly in the United States, so I have got lots of books about it in English, so it will be easier to me to prepare it in English. And the form I choose, it means the mini-lecture or talk, it is because I am not*

quite satisfied with the level of my English… sometimes it is quite difficult for me to say something when I have not prepared it… not maybe learning it by heart, but knowing what I want to say. I have got some problems with spontan[eous] *talk.*

Another teacher feels that her course is already challenging for the students as it involves developing critical thinking skills to analyze scientific texts and writing academic articles based on source texts: "They are terrified about everything […] I am talking about, so that is why I do not feel I can use English on this course". Instead, she chose to prepare a course for students/visiting lecturers on Erasmus visits which introduces them to Poland, using authentic sources in English: "I am quite sure that I can find a lot of sources about our country… so I can use these sources and I can discuss with people about other countries, that is why I choose this kind of course".

In the final extract in this section, a teacher views the opportunity to teach in English as a lever for change:

[10] *I discovered that most of the department's text books for didactics are about 30 years old, near my age, so we really need to refresh it, so it is a good opportunity… I am going to add lots of new literature* [in English] *to the syllabus.*

Evaluation

The participants all declared that they had made progress in their English and felt more confident about using it for speaking, and in particular were less concerned about making mistakes. Despite this, they all felt there was still further development needed before they could achieve the goals they had set for themselves. They attributed the change in confidence to the amount of practice they had had, the very small groups, and the intensity of the course. The individual consultations were perceived as playing a key role in the process. The participants decided how they wanted to spend this time:

[11] *I did what I think that was necessary to do, it is mean to check if I am fluent in the oral presentation… I chose some topics that were strongly connected with the subject I wanted to present to my students… I said some things and it assured me … that I did*

it correctly. What is your opinion about that? [Researcher: Sure, I could understand you and I am not an engineer!]

Another teacher used the time to discuss her ideas for materials and for classes:

[12] *Sometimes showing these materials and getting your feedback was also useful for me to analyse, is it the correct thing, or should I use another tool? And also your advices connected with choosing the resources was very important for me, so I spent* [the time] *as I wished, working on courses, and somewhere in the background, during all of our discussion*[s], [my] *speaking skills have improved.*

For the participants for whom English was more challenging, the individual sessions had a particular impact:

[13] *We talk about my topics, yes, I checked myself what I can say in English, and I saw that in some parts I have problems with words, but I also saw that when I speak to you about interesting for me things I do not remember that I speak in English and I speak to you.*

For this participant, the challenge of communicating ideas became more important than her worries about the language, and the sense of satisfaction when she was able to get these ideas across boosted her confidence in speaking in English. Her colleague experienced something similar when trying to explain the contents of an article she had just read:

[14] *I was not prepared because I found this information the day before... I was really shocked about this article, for me it was really news, it was better for me than when I talked to you about my thesis and I love my thesis, I am really attached to it.*

In her excitement about the innovation described (creating a computer animation from a single photograph), she became so absorbed in trying to explain to me how it worked that she spoke spontaneously in English. Earlier, she had evaluated her attempt to tell me about her doctoral thesis as "a tragedy because I can not find these words to explain this

simplest thing in English", describing a process which suggested she was first thinking in Polish and then trying to translate these thoughts into English. She found that in the individual sessions "I do not have time to think in Polish" as if she did not speak there was silence, which moved her to speak at once as she felt awkward about it.

The participants felt differently about the extent to which they were ready to teach in English, as described in the section on the planning process. Their feelings related primarily to their sense of self-efficacy, while concerns about student reactions were dealt with in terms of the methodological approach they decided to take, their decisions about which language to use, the amount of visual support they opted for, and the materials and tasks they chose. The two participants who felt unable to resolve issues with students made decisions to teach alternative courses to non-Polish students.

There was also some indication that the participants had been influenced by some of the activities they experienced during the language classes, such as having to give prepared mini-lectures to their colleagues, watching short educational films as an introduction to a topic, or doing problem-solving tasks in a group. The concept that input material could be divided into parts, prepared by different students and then explained to others in a group was also adopted. This had not been anticipated in the language course design and happened spontaneously.

One of the teachers described how her approach to teaching in English would be different from the approach she had taken so far when teaching in Polish:

[15] *My students will suffer, because I discovered that they are pretty lazy, because – I found the reason – because we read a lot, we research a lot and what we do is serving things to students. I can see that during the learning process that we focused on, on making exercises but based on knowledge,* [it is] *like "I will show you this this this, I will explain you this this this" and then you are making an exercise on knowledge that I served you and it makes them a bit lazy... the English course* [...] *will have an impact on my students for sure, that I will push them harder to look for sources, to build knowledge from information, also from English language sources, that will not be only my job to work for it and serve... I think so, that*

I have to add this point on any course, to make them, to force them to think wider about different things [...] so my goal to expand their boundaries it is, I am sure it will keep on, it is also going to change in the other classes too.

The process of reflection has led this teacher to understand that she has been working in transmission mode, "serving" things to her students, who, as a result, are passive or complacent ("a bit lazy"). In planning the course in English, she determines to move to a more student--centred approach and is aware this could be painful for the students, who will need to be pushed to take a more active role. Interestingly, she declares that this change will not only apply to the new EMI courses but to all the classes she teaches.

Discussion and conclusion

If we consider the way the teachers describe their approach when teaching in their L1 (Polish), we can see that while several of the teachers have a transmission approach, there is also a concern for the students in terms of how the information can be packaged or explained to make it more comprehensible for them. There is already a dual focus on the content and on the students, and not on the content alone. As Airey (2011) pointed out, it is awareness of the need for students to comprehend when classes are conducted in English that is the key to successful EMI. It seems to be a natural extension for these teachers to carry this concern over when they start to consider how they plan to teach in English.

The decision process likewise has a dual focus: the teacher and the students. For the teacher, the concern is their English proficiency, not in the abstract, but as a medium by means of which they need to communicate with and reach their students. For the individuals whose teaching style is highly language-dependent, such as the biologist, who described selecting ways to link the new ideas with the students' everyday lives, or the mechanical engineer, who uses a Socratic questioning technique to activate students and guide them to an understanding of complex new concepts, the move to English is viewed as limiting. It appears to be limiting as these two teachers feel they do not yet have the flexibility in English, which they have in their L1, to spontaneously adapt and respond, without preparation, to the needs

of students in the moment. This 'limitation' is not purely linguistic, it relates to their persona as a teacher. The language skill, for these teachers, is equated with the efficacy of how they teach. The biologist accepts that she is not yet able to teach in English as she feels she needs to be able to, and so seeks a mixed language compromise. In conversation she later explained that she saw this as a transitionary stage, believing that as her proficiency developed she would be able to change her teaching, but not yet. The second teacher, the engineer, also described having to find a temporary alternative way to teach in English until he feels he is sufficiently fluent to teach in the way he wants. He explains he has chosen a safe compromise, where he prepares the material he wants to explain and rehearses it to feel comfortable. To facilitate this, he uses source texts in English, which is not new as he used them himself earlier, but he mediated the content into Polish to explain it to the students. Now he does not intend to do all the work of mediation but rather to share responsibility for this with the students. He will support them in this process by creating a bilingual glossary and adding his own English explanation, but the students will have the text in the original and work to understand it for themselves.

The text as a tool for mediation between languages also appears in extracts (6) and (15), where the same teacher describes her approach. The text will not only support the students in the language change but will also be used to introduce a more student-centred approach to teaching, with the learners active in the co-construction of knowledge based on their engagement with the text and related tasks. The decision-making process about what to teach and how emerges as complex and situated. For each of the teachers, there are personal beliefs and assumptions, pedagogical aims and the relationships between themselves, the students and the content material to consider.

An additional factor which appeared from the interviews is that the participants have formed a close-knit community, not only within the micro-groups which they were in for the language classes but also across the groups. There are discussions going on outside the classes, information is being shared, and how each has decided to tackle the course planning issue is known to the others. In short, they have created for themselves a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). During the interviews, these discussions continued, with one

participant, for example, trying to persuade another that they were under-estimating their language proficiency and were able to teach in English without difficulty. This serves to indicate the deeply personal investment entailed in the move into EMI and how strongly individual it is. That the participants felt the need to form a community in the face of this challenge seems to underline this. Guarda and Holm (2017) also found that staff members reported finding the opportunity to discuss pedagogical issues welcome and innovative and expressed a desire to continue contact beyond the training course.

A final point to make is the use the participants made of the language course itself as a source of ideas for pedagogical approaches. Although not part of the course design in this instance, it is worth considering for future courses to support teachers in EMI. Support courses should not take the form of lectures, but involve participants in active learning, using a variety of ways of interacting with input material, using different media and task-based pair or group activities. It seems that this methodology does not necessarily need to be made explicit to be taken up by participants.

The preparation to teach in English process was evaluated positively by the participants, who particularly affirmed the intimate size of the groups and the fact of having two different tutors, one of whom was British and also a teacher educator. The way in which the individual consultations were used depended on the participant, which also seemed to be a strength. They were used variously – to discuss and plan classes (2 participants), to have additional language practice (1) or to rehearse parts of lectures (4). The individual sessions appeared to have a particular impact on those for whom communicating in spoken English was still challenging. This may have been exacerbated by the fact that it was synchronous online communication, but audio only. Although screens could be shared for materials to be discussed, faces could not be seen. This was to do with technical limitations of the internet connections. This is a much more demanding medium than face-to-face communication where there is additional information from non-verbal gestures. The role of an English language specialist in supporting the subject teacher was also found to be helpful by Klaasen and Graaf (2001), while Lasagabaster (2018) suggests going a step further and having team-teaching with a tandem of a subject specialist and a language teacher working together. The additional

aspect here of the language specialist also having teacher education experience and course/materials planning expertise appeared to facilitate discussions of pedagogical approaches. Guarda and Helm (2017) introduced a course to discuss pedagogical issues relating to EMI through the medium of English, which seems a promising design worth further exploration.

The final question to discuss is whether the process of preparing to teach through the medium of English affects the overall quality of teaching of these teacher-participants. If we consider teaching quality as it is defined in the EU 2013 report, we note several features which are found in the data. There appears to be a growing sense of the need to share responsibility for the teaching/learning process with the students. There is a desire expressed to encourage students to engage with research literature in English in order to develop the skills needed to do this for themselves. The use of resources in English is also seen as a way to obtain a wider perspective and a deeper understanding. The teacher-participants themselves also expressed an awareness that the process of being able to teach in English is the way ahead for their personal and professional development, to become globally mobile in their profession, and also to enable the institution to achieve its aim of internationalisation.

Clearly the language course, in particular the individual consultations and the community of practice the participants formed, led them to reflection and deep thinking about pedagogical approaches. The planning process is closely linked with teacher cognition. The decisions teachers make about what and how to teach depend on their personal beliefs about teaching and learning and assumptions about students, grounded in experience. In addition is what Shulman (1986) describes as pedagogical content knowledge, the knowing what to teach, how and why in the particular context. While these teachers already have expertise in the teaching of their subjects in their own language, the challenge now is to develop an extended view of pedagogical content knowledge which encompasses the additional challenge of the medium of a new language. This medium challenges both the teacher and their students. It appears that the process described here has given the teachers space and time to begin to devise possible ways to find themselves in this new role. They have been supported in this process and have supported each

other. Each participant has found a response they feel is acceptable for themselves and accommodates their particular teaching persona, even if it may only be a transitory stage in a process-of-becoming. This has been a profound experience for all involved and without doubt will impact on how these teachers work in the future. The very fact of reflecting deeply on what we do carries within it the seeds of change and the potential for improvement.

References

- Aguilar, M. and Munoz, C. (2014). The effect of proficiency on CLIL benefits in Engineering students in Spain, *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *24*(1), 1–18.
- Aguilar, M. and Rodríguez, R. (2012). Lecturer and student perceptions on CLIL at a Spanish university, *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *15*(2), 183–197.
- Airey, J. (2011). Talking about teaching in English: Swedish university lecturers' experiences of changing teaching language, *Iberica 22*, 35–54.
- Basıbek, N., Dolmacı, M., Cengiz, B. C., Burd, B. C., Dilek, Y. and Kara, B. (2014). Lecturers' perceptions of English medium instruction at Engineering departments of higher education: A study on partial English medium instruction at some state universities in Turkey, *Procedia – Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 1819–1825.
- Bobko, A. (2016). *Position of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education on the situation of foreign students in Poland* [*Stanowisko MNiSW na temat sytuacji studentów z zagranicy w Polsce*], www.pw.edu.pl/Aktualnosci/Stanowisko-MNiSW-na-temat-sytuacji-studentow-z-zagranicy-w-Polsce
- Campagna, S. (2016). English as a medium of instruction. A 'resentment study' of a micro EMI context. In: S. Campagna, E. Ochse, V. Pulcini, M. Solly (eds.), *'Languaging' In and Across Communities: New Voices, New Identities. Studies in Honour of Giuseppina Cortese* (pp. 145–168). Bern: Peter Lang.
- CHE Consult, Brussels Education Services, CHE, Compostela Group of Universities and Erasmus Student Network (2014). *The Erasmus Impact Study: Effects of mobility on the skills and employability of students and the internationalisation of higher education institutions. Final report to the European Commission*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- CHE Consult, Directorate-General for Education, Youth Sport and Culture (European Commission), ICE consulting (2019). *Erasmus+ Higher*