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## “English gradually” and multilingual support in EMI: insights from lecturers in two Brazilian universities

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**Abstract:** The adoption of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) is a world-wide phenomenon as part of the internationalization strategies of higher education institutions. While this policy can be seen as a threat to multilingualism, studies on attitudes suggest that EMI lecturers and students see the use of the first language (L1) as a useful resource for content comprehension. Our research questions focused on EMI lecturers’ motivations/reasons for their linguistic choices in the classroom and the strategies in relation to those choices. Our goal was to find out whether they were already adopting an English as a lingua franca approach to EMI, i.e. favoring the use of both Portuguese and English in class. Data collected via questionnaires, interviews, focus groups and observations revealed that both languages are used by lecturers endorsing either an English-only approach or a multilingual one, with similar objectives. Whereas Portuguese seems to increase student participation and reduce insecurity, English provides opportunities to engage with the professional discourse and language practices valued in international research exchanges. In the classroom, a multilingual approach better addresses the lecturers’ pedagogical concerns, while English-only favours their language-oriented goals but is introduced gradually. The results are consistent with a view of English as part of a repertoire of language and pedagogical practices in EMI multilingual settings where students and lecturers share the same language.

**Keywords:** Brazil; English; English as a lingua franca (ELF); English as a medium of instruction (EMI); Portuguese

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**Resumo:** A adoção do Inglês como meio de instrução (IMI) é um fenômeno mundial como parte das estratégias de internacionalização das instituições de ensino superior. Embora essa política possa ser vista como uma ameaça ao multilinguismo, estudos sobre atitudes sugerem que professores e alunos em contexto de IMI veem o uso da língua materna como um recurso útil para a compreensão do conteúdo. Nossas perguntas de pesquisa se concentraram nas motivações/razões do professor para suas escolhas linguísticas em sala de aula e as estratégias em relação a essas escolhas. Nosso objetivo era descobrir se eles já estavam adotando uma abordagem do Inglês como Língua Franca (ILF) para IMI, ou seja, favorecendo o uso tanto do Inglês quanto do Português em sala. Os dados coletados por meio de questionários, entrevistas, grupos de foco e observações revelaram que ambas as línguas são usadas por professores que endossam uma abordagem exclusivamente em inglês ou multilíngue, com objetivos semelhantes. Enquanto o português parece aumentar a participação dos alunos e reduzir a insegurança, o inglês oferece oportunidades de envolvimento com o discurso profissional e as práticas linguísticas valorizadas em intercâmbios de pesquisa internacionais. Na sala de aula, uma abordagem multilíngue atende melhor às preocupações pedagógicas dos professores, enquanto apenas o inglês favorece seus objetivos orientados para o idioma, mas é introduzido gradualmente. Os resultados são consistentes com uma visão do inglês como parte do repertório de práticas pedagógicas e linguísticas multilíngues em ambientes IMI onde alunos e professores compartilham o mesmo idioma.

**Palavras-chave:** Brasil; ILF; IMI; Inglês; Português

## 1 Introduction

The adoption of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) is a world-wide phenomenon, which forms part of the internationalization strategies of higher education institutions. Studies conducted in Europe show that there has been an exponential growth of this kind of offer (Dearden 2014; Macaro 2019). While a survey published by the British Council in collaboration with Faubai in 2018 suggested a similar trend in EMI activities in Brazil (Gimenez et al. 2018), a recent extensive international review (Macaro et al. 2018) revealed no in-depth study from Brazil, in terms of institutional policies and their potential effects and implementations by academics and students. However, Macaro et al.'s survey showed how EMI trends around the world are affected by various contextual aspects, including the challenges of the levels of English proficiency of both lecturers and students.

This paper is part of a larger study involving two state-funded Brazilian higher education institutions (HEIs), which aimed to address their EMI policies and practices from an English as a lingua franca (ELF) perspective. Our study has shown that although EMI policies may remain largely at the document level, and even be ignored by the academics and EMI lecturers, at least in the two institutions in our study, lecturers have decided to run their modules or programmes in EMI. In this paper, we focus on two specific research questions:

1. What are the lecturers' motivations or reasons for their language choices (English or Portuguese or both) in the classroom?
2. What are the lecturers' self-reported classroom strategies in relation to those choices? To what extent do they reflect an ELF perspective in the EMI setting?

In order to answer these questions, this paper has been organized in the following way. The first two sections present an ELF perspective and its adoption in EMI research, which frame the background to our study. We will then explore the EMI context in the South of Brazil which motivated our research questions and the methodological choices. In the final part we analyse the data collected through focus groups, interviews, observations, to illustrate the motivations/reasons and strategies adopted in these two EMI institutions in Brazil and how consistent they are with an ELF perspective. Our findings show that lecturers who believe that only English should be used in the classroom are highly motivated by ideologies of "English for science and access to international research". On the other hand, there seems to be a gradual introduction of English, supported by multilingual practices, which is consistent with a general understanding of multilingual ELF in EMI.

## 2 An ELF perspective

Research on ELF has been thriving and the field has grown to include different areas and domains of expertise. The latest developments have spread into pedagogy both in compulsory education and in higher education and universities (Jenkins et al. 2018). There is not a comprehensive list of aspects that would be associated with an ELF perspective in educational contexts, but researchers and practitioners do agree on some general points and here we will introduce the aspects that are seen as particularly relevant to our study, i.e. (i) the emphasis on diversity of English, rather than an inner circle variety or a sole variety; (ii) the emphasis on multilingualism rather than monolingualism (English-only); (iii) emphasis on content and accommodation, including the use of communication and pragmatic strategies to facilitate understanding, rather than accuracy.

Firstly, researchers converge on the idea that including the diversity of English in HE is recommended. Jenkins (2014, 2019a) explores difficulties arising from current orientations to “English” which view it as inner circle English, of the native speaker, and criticizes the “native-like assumption” and “monolingual target” that are generally associated with the English in EMI contexts. These are the contexts where students and staff from all over the world gather and where English is mainly used as a *Lingua Franca*. The emphasis on the diversity of English, whether ELF or World English varieties, and the move away from focusing on a singular variety (normally British or American English) would be recommended as beneficial in terms of students’ and lecturers’ proficiency conceptualizations, reported communication problems and issues of fairness and justice (Jenkins and Mauranen 2019; Murata 2019).

This takes us to the second point, the emphasis on multilingualism (Cogo 2018, 2020; Jenkins 2015). Jenkins has started to use the term “English as a multilingua franca” (Jenkins 2015: 74) to emphasize its multilingual nature, as opposed to the misinterpretation of ELF being only about English. Overall, researchers converge on the idea that adopting a multilingual approach to linguistic diversity is crucial if higher education institutions want to organize effective and popular international programmes (Jenkins and Mauranen 2019; Murata 2019). For instance, Kuteeva (2019a) explores the policy of parallel language use with Swedish and English as a possible multilingual development in the normally challenging writing mode. However, multilingual practices are not always easily included or welcomed, as shown by attitudinal studies, such as Kuteeva (2019b) where participants reported students’ perceptions of ELF and translanguaging practices. Students saw the mixing of English and the local language as something natural, but they also recognized the challenges for students who are not proficient in the local language and are therefore put in a disadvantageous position. A multilingual approach, therefore, needs to pay attention to linguistic profiling, group dynamics and power relations, to avoid becoming a mechanism for exclusion (for instance, of those not fluent in certain languages).

Lastly, ELF researchers agree on focusing on content instead of form, and accommodation rather than static interpretations of “English” (Cogo 2009; Cogo and Dewey 2012; Cogo and House 2018). As empirical evidence has confirmed, most communication in ELF makes use of accommodation strategies and pragmatic strategies to facilitate and enhance understanding, as well as solve non-understanding and troubles in communication. This research has shown the importance of pragmatic strategies used to pre-empt, negotiate and solve understanding issues (Cogo and Pitzl 2016); the need to emphasize negotiation, accommodation (Cogo and House 2018); and communication strategies and their relevance in pedagogy (Björkman 2011). Aspects of intercultural awareness

(Baker 2018), instead of an idealized cultural neutrality, have also started to be included in pedagogical applications (Bayyurt and Dewey 2020; Sifakis and Tsantila 2018).

### 3 English medium instruction

English is increasingly used as a medium of instruction in university classrooms in many higher education institutions around the world. However, while university disciplinary teachers are encouraged (or even required) to adopt EMI in their teaching, there is generally little support for their work and not enough professional training available to develop as EMI practitioners (Airey 2011). In many contexts, including Brazil, it is common to observe subject teachers, particularly those educated (e.g. MA or PhD) in English-speaking countries, take on or be assigned to teach EMI courses, based on the assumption that they should be able to deliver these courses since they have received EMI overseas (Macaro and Han 2019). These teachers are not necessarily asked to teach EMI courses, they may take it on voluntarily, and are also not necessarily trained to do so. Therefore teachers are likely to have to face a number of challenges and rely on their previous experience to solve them. In some cases, teachers are trained, but the EMI training they take often concentrates on encouraging a move from a knowledge transmission mode to a student-centred mode of teaching, rather than on addressing specific linguistic challenges, or how to exploit multilingual resources in the classroom (Macaro 2019).

The use of the first language (L1) in the EMI class is still a point of contention. Several scholars (see Galloway [2020] for an overview) have argued that the spread of EMI has contributed to the Englishization of higher education by making other foreign languages invisible, causing students to feel distant from their L1 culture and even leading to the loss of the local language. However, research also indicates that the L1 is commonly used in EMI for certain purposes, such as clarifying technical terminology and explaining academic content (see the special issue edited by DeCosta et al. 2021), and generally indicates that EMI implementation can embrace the multilingual and multicultural resources of those involved, in a way that is more sensitive to the local context and socially just (see the special issue edited by Dafouz and Gray 2022). Galloway (2020) emphasizes that research on attitudes towards L1 use in EMI settings suggests that (a) EMI lecturers and students see the use of L1 as a useful resource for content comprehension and (b) they oppose L1 use because it would exclude international students and violate official policy.

However, the dominance of “English-only policy” in the English language classroom has been a topic of debate since the beginnings of EMI, though lately this assumption has started to be challenged with both linguistic and ideological arguments. On linguistic grounds, the notion of ELF has challenged the idea that the “English” in EMI should be seen as a native language (Jenkins 2014, 2019a, 2019b), while recent work on the importance of translation (Cook 2010; Hall and Cook 2013), own-language use strategies and translanguaging (Conteh 2018), has shown the importance of multilingual practices in education. On ideological grounds, avoiding the use of L1 in the classroom has been found to devalue any language that is not English and to perpetuate a native-speakerist attitude (Holliday 2006; Jenkins 2007), to encourage discriminatory employment practices (Lowe and Kiczkowiak 2016) and the promotion of neoliberal ideologies (Block et al. 2012) or colonial perspectives (Pennycook 2002).

In the same area of multilingual research, concerns about the development of discipline knowledge in both L1 and English have been voiced. For instance, Dafouz’s (2018) study shows how lecturers felt responsible for providing students with disciplinary literacy in both English and Spanish to encourage a local/global identity as professionals. In other contexts, the introduction of EMI itself is in dispute, as many authors acknowledge the complexity of the linguistic landscape provoked by the use of English to teach different subjects in countries where it is not a native language, like Brazil. Jordão (2019), for instance, explores internationalization from a decolonial perspective through the voices of Brazilian academics who joined the “English for Internationalization course” at the author’s university.

In Brazilian higher education, attempts to use English as a medium of instruction have just started, but they are already creating feelings of inadequacy and contributing to construct troubled professional identities among scholars who feel compelled to teach in English for the sake of internationalization. (Jordão 2019: 32)

She reports perceptions that reinforce imperialistic cultural attitudes in the use of English, which place native speakers (NS) in the position of colonizers. She proposes to look at competence in terms of intelligibility and detaches it from NS ideology in order to de-stigmatize non-native speaker (NNS) academics and students.

Related to the issue of knowledge production, the relationship between policies and practices is another topic that affects EMI. In a paper which examined EMI policies and practices in a Chinese university, Wang (2019) finds that there is a mismatch between policies and practices, with EMI at the core of the university strategy competing with the promotion of Chinese language and culture. This creates a number of challenges, including EMI teachers’ competence in English,

international students' competence in Chinese, and the balance between English development and disciplinary knowledge.

Linguistic challenges are often reported to be the ones that both students and teachers face in EMI contexts. For instance, in a Turkish university, Soruç and Griffiths (2018) analyse students' challenges and mention linguistic difficulties as one of the most important factors influencing EMI. In Hong Kong secondary schools, Pun and Thomas (2020) explore science teachers' strategies for coping with language challenges when teaching EMI, and the most reported strategy is the use of L1 Cantonese. Teachers in their study expressed the willingness to use any other language to achieve science knowledge, as developing students' science knowledge and understanding (or learning and development more generally) is a priority over English linguistic development. The study also showed, perhaps unsurprisingly, that teachers with lower self-reported English proficiency rely more on their L1 when teaching science through English. This study also showed differences between teachers who started EMI teaching earlier and those who started later – with the earlier starters demonstrating more linguistic awareness and being more comfortable with using English. However, another study by Pun and Macaro (2018) also showed that late EMI teachers, despite using less English in class, are engaged with more critical thinking activities and required more high-quality discussion, thus improving on students' knowledge and understanding.

Overall the research on EMI shows a juxtaposition between policies and ideologies of English-only as opposed to practices which are more flexible and multilingual. In this research we show that while there are still monolingual/English-only ideologies which prevail in the lecturers' motivations and reasons to teach EMI, their practices are more complex and ELF oriented.

## 4 Methodology

For our research, data were collected as part of a larger study that had the overall objective of investigating EMI policies, attitudes and practices from an ELF perspective in two state funded Brazilian universities. The two public universities are located in the state of Paraná (Brazil) and are similarly ranked among the 30 best universities in the country and the two largest and most prestigious ones from that state (British Council and Faubai 2018). They were, however, at different stages of EMI implementation. Upon approval of the ethics committees of both universities, the research questions were investigated by using an online questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Data collection took place between April and June 2019. Although classroom observations were outside the scope of the project, we were able to attend two EMI classes and one EMI workshop

held during that period in Institution B, which contributed to the data interpretation. No EMI classes were identified in Institution A in that first semester of 2019.

In April 2019, an email was sent to the coordinators of the graduate programs in Institution A via the Graduate Office, informing them about the research objectives and asking them to forward the questionnaire (available in Portuguese on Google forms) to lecturers who had an interest in participating in the research and who had already taught courses in English or were willing to start teaching in English.<sup>1</sup> At Institution B, a list of lecturers who teach in English was sent to the researcher of this university by the International Cooperation Office and the researcher sent out emails, inviting them to take part in the study. We obtained responses from 12 lecturers in Institution A and 7 in Institution B. The questionnaire had three sections: (a) personal information; (b) EMI experience; (c) opinion on a series of statements using a Likert scale (1–5).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in English and Portuguese with three lecturers who had taught in English in the past and with five lecturers who were teaching in English during the first semester of 2019. The aim of the interviews was to capture the participants' views on the use of English as a medium of instruction and whether a lingua franca perspective was guiding their practices.

Focus groups were conducted in Portuguese and English in both institutions on two different occasions and with different participants: (a) graduate students who were attending EMI courses in Institution B, and (b) lecturers and language teachers as part of the validation workshops held in both universities. The focus groups conducted with graduate students ( $n = 14$ ) aimed at investigating their perspective on their experience in EMI classes and in other activities for internationalization as well as their opinion about English in this process, lasting, on average, 40 min. At the validation workshops the participants (21 in Institution A and 22 in Institution B) were divided into three groups after the presentation of the project's preliminary results. Their impressions on internationalization policies and the use of English in this process were collected. A selection of three quotes, taken from the questionnaire responses, with contrasting approaches to the use of Portuguese in EMI classes, were given to them to comment. These focus groups lasted for approximately 1 h. For the purpose of this study, participants are identified as P1 to P15.

Both the interviews and focus groups were audio-recorded and transcribed. We conducted thematic analysis guided by the research questions. The transcripts and questionnaire responses were scrutinized to identify those segments in which the research participants commented on the use of English and Portuguese in

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1 Institution A had 49 graduate programmes and Institution B 54 programmes at the time of data collection.



class. They were categorized by the researchers working from a set of categories commonly agreed after each individual researcher had analysed the same data extract and reached 100% agreement.

## 5 Motivations for language choices in the classroom

In this part we analyse the data that contributes to answering the first research question, which aims at understanding the lecturers' motivations for adopting English or other languages in the EMI classroom. We have divided the data in two: on the one hand the reflections concerning adopting only English (5.1) and on the other the motivations that tend towards a more multilingual approach (5.2).

### 5.1 Motivations for an English-only approach

Although the majority of the lecturers mentioned that some Portuguese was used alongside English in their classes, their comments also seem to support an “English only” approach, as the excerpts below illustrate:

- (1) P1: *I have never thought about how to do this, but I think [...] for post-graduation I think we can push them more, keeping English as the single language to use [...]* (Focus group, Institution A)
- P2: *All the texts are in English, all communication with them is in English, since the emails I sent, from the moment I enter the classroom I try to speak everything in English [...] Good morning, etc. I try everything in English [...] of course there are relaxing moments, during the break, for example, “Oh, now you can speak in Portuguese. I try to maintain it”. In terms of assessment, all assessment is in English but is varied. Assessment includes participation in class and online (comments, uploads etc.), reading reports and the final essay.* (Interview, Institution B)
- P3: *It has a theoretical part and a practical part. All the time obviously, in English. There are times when I lecture, there are times we interact in the laboratory, there are times when students give presentations. Everything needs to be done in English.* (Interview, Institution A)

The three quotes show a certain tension between the lecturers' ideal approach to do everything in English and the reality of including Portuguese in the classroom

practices. On the one hand, with expressions like “single language”; “everything in English”; “all the time obviously, in English”; “Everything needs to be done in English”, they appear to have an idea that EMI ought to be 100% in English. On the other hand, they also recognize that doing everything in English can be challenging for the students because it would “push them” and it would not be “relaxing” as when they use Portuguese during breaks. This understanding is challenged by the students’ lack of proficiency (and sometimes the lecturer’s, too) and the lecturers’ implied recognition that the L1 is part of their regular pedagogical practices, which becomes clearer in other comments.

The three quotes above also demonstrate the lecturers’ sensitivity to the demands of graduate studies where English is considered an important academic lingua franca. The justifications, outlined next, seem to endorse the view that EMI supports internationalization efforts both “at home” and abroad, with reference to simulation of international experiences and preparation for studies abroad, thus providing equal opportunity for those who cannot afford or do not have the chance to study or do research in another country. The concern with providing students with similar experiences that take place in other countries is the reason expressed by P4, a professor of Food Science, for whom an “internationalization feeling” is possible if classes are given in English.

- (2) P4: *Because I think the main point of teaching a course in English is to give the students the opportunity to feel how it is to be outside, in a foreign country. So, it is not exactly like this because sometimes they had to speak in Portuguese and if you are in a foreign country you won’t have this opportunity, but the main point is to have this internationalization feeling. Most of them don’t have the opportunity of being abroad. So it’s a way to understand how it is, right? I think it’s valuable to go just in English and see how it goes* (P4, Panel discussion, Institution A)

English-only is perceived to be the approach used in EMI abroad, so including Portuguese in the classroom would not reproduce the experience students would have if they were abroad. The “internationalization feeling” can be possible if the lecturers teach “just in English”, which reinforces the idea that internationalization itself is associated with an English-only approach.

Another lecturer, from the same university, who has not taught in English yet, but is planning to do so, sees EMI as a preparatory stage before going abroad, a strategy that he believes will help reduce students’ stress and lack of confidence with the use of the language:

- (3) P5: *I agree with them, for post-graduates I think we can and we have to push them, even to get them prepared for any situation [...], most of them are starting thinking about a post-doc in another country and this can help us a lot and also to motivate them, to encourage them not to be so stressed to study in English* (Focus group, Institution A – Professor planning to teach in English)

It is not only the students who may benefit from EMI classes. Some lecturers also see advantages for themselves, as researchers and academics who have experienced sharing their research internationally and have increased their confidence in using English, as this lecturer narrates:

- (4) P3: *This experience that I had abroad was very important to give me confidence that I would be able to transmit the information speaking in English. When I came back I was very excited about it and very eager not to lose this skill.* (Interview, Institution A)

Overall, the reasons for an English-only approach are related to academic and personal motivations, associated with internationalization policies or individual interests in keeping language practices that remind the lecturers of their experiences abroad. In this sense, English-only, without Portuguese, is seen as something to aspire to – it represents the connection with the academic world outside and is linked to an international dimension of the participants' professions. And for some this is also linked with a “democratic” move to include EMI for those students who may not be able to experience research abroad, to get the international understanding, or to prepare them for the possibility of international research. All this is also reinforced by an idealization of EMI outside Brazil as an English-only experience, which lecturers feel should be reproduced in the Brazilian context.

## 5.2 Motivations for a multilingual approach

While participants idealized EMI as English-only, all participants referred to using a multilingual approach, that is Portuguese and English in EMI classes, and some of them also questioned an English-only approach on grounds that this may not be entirely beneficial for learning:

- (5) P9: *Now the content entirely in English I am not sure if it is so beneficial, you know, because the level of English we ask for, their requirement, I don't know if it is exactly enough to take the course in English and learn 100%. After all, in Portuguese he can express himself better. You can better check his difficulties.* (Interview, Institution B)

Lecturers refer to using multilingual resources for reasons of “maximizing” or “encouraging” learning, and enabling the students to express themselves in their mother tongue. Allowing for the use of Portuguese in the EMI class is also a way of involving all students in the learning process, including the ones whose English is weaker. This is also emphasized by another lecturer in the following:

- (6) P16: *Everything in English, the slides were in English, I talked to them in English and they asked me in English. Portuguese was used when I noticed that a student needed to express himself, to go deep in something he knew, but couldn't express in English, then I allowed him to use Portuguese. But it was in punctual moments. When I noticed that the language didn't flow, but they talked, I listened, translated to English and the ones who knew more the language helped the others; so, I noticed this cooperation and it was so nice.* (Interview, Institution B)

The lecturers allowed students to express themselves in Portuguese to facilitate sharing ideas and promoting cooperation among students with different levels of English in a way they can help each other.

In Excerpt (7), the lecturer mentions the feelings students may have in a class taught totally in English. So, for her, the way she conducted the class, that is by not imposing the use of English and explaining the purpose of EMI, may have helped students to overcome the fear of using English. Also, she is very attentive to students' reactions to different languages:

- (7) P16: *They loved it because in the first day of the class everybody was very afraid; then I presented the discipline, talked a little bit. I started the class in English; so the proposal was to be everything in English, but there were some moments that I allowed them to express themselves in Portuguese when they couldn't in English. So, when I opened, I said, as it is the first year of the discipline, let's get familiar with it. But it was in the first day, during the others, it was so interesting, the students tried to talk in English, to express themselves ... so, they noticed that I was not evaluating their English, I was using the language as a tool to do what we are going to do. So, when they noticed this, it was easier (mais tranquilo).* (Interview, Institution B)

Here the lecturer shows a flexible approach to classroom language choice and a sensitivity towards students' potential difficulties with using English in her discipline. She emphasized how using English was not only allowed but also not evaluated, and this made the students more relaxed with using it. This quote shows the lecturer's flexible multilingual approach seems more conducive to learning in the classroom.

The lecturer's attitude of openness and not imposing English as the only language used in class made a difference in the way students felt in this class. In Jordão's (2019) report of a training course on EMI where the participants could reflect on "English, native speakerism, linguistic imperialism, (de)coloniality and post-modernity" (Jordão 2019: 40–41), a decolonial and an ELF practice were considered, according to the author. Jordão mentions that, by addressing those aspects in the course, the participants' self-esteem, regarding their use of English internationally, improved. So, we can say that, by discussing those aspects with the participants of the course in Jordão (2019) and by the attitude of P16 in Excerpt (7), different feelings and views related to English were considered in a way to challenge traditional perspectives of the language.

Finally, lecturers pointed out that the use of Portuguese encourages more participation and interaction in class, as observed in Excerpt (8):

- (8) P19: *when you want interaction, the interaction happens in Portuguese. So if you want participation, you're just going to have it in Portuguese. This is what I understood here, yeah? Otherwise like, in the first class, the interaction in English just happened with one student yeah? And you know they were working in groups, but then you know, just one student tried to report in English what they were talking about. But you know, the interaction didn't happen in English at all, only in Portuguese after. So that's why the teacher had to accept Portuguese, yeah? And then it's ok because you have to consider the level of the students as well yeah? We have different levels of English there so... is fine as well, in my opinion.* (Focus group, Institution A)

Based on the reasons presented in this section, we can notice that allowing, or not allowing, L1 use in the classroom can provoke an emotive response, and it seems tied up with important affective factors. These can engender participation and engagement of students in class and with the others. Also, flexibility with the use of L1 in the classroom, including all the linguistic resources employed by students, can facilitate understanding, meaning making and sharing.

## 6 Strategies used to address language needs

In this part we analyse the data that addresses the second research question, concerning the strategies that lecturers report using in class to address students' language needs. We first report on the several practices described by the tutors as means by which they provide scaffolding first in English (6.1) and then translingually, in English and Portuguese (6.2).

### 6.1 Scaffolding the use of English

The strategies explored in this section have been highlighted as supporting strategies for developing English in EMI classes. The tendency is for the lecturers in this section to prefer English only but they do show some conflicting views when they refer to the role of Portuguese. This complex picture is sometimes present in the same participant, at different points of the interview or focus group.

In order to increase the use of English, the participants mentioned that one of their practices is to provide “classroom language”, that is English expressions that the students may need to use in class:

- (9) P6: *It is maybe interesting to provide students with some basic statements and questions they may need to use during class. Like, what is the meaning of [...] What does that mean? Provide some basic structures they can ask, so they don't need to rely on Portuguese.* (Focus group, Institution A)

Presenting the content in English is one of the main strategies mentioned by another participant who was also planning to start teaching in English:

- (10) P7: *I think it is to develop the way they communicate the content in English and try to make them to think [...] It's not an English course, so it's to try to make them think about the content in English. That's my idea.* (Focus group, Institution A – Professor planning to teach in English)

More exposure and input in English, both in terms of useful pragmatic expressions and content, is one of the strategies mentioned to address students' language needs.

More input in English also seems to be linked to emotional aspects related to EMI classes. One lecturer's strategy is to start the discussion in English (and move on to use Portuguese later) in the understanding that this would help dispel students' insecurity while also introducing them to the terms shared by their community:

- (11) P8: *Maybe to start the discussion in English. It's important that our classes do not make the students afraid of participating in English, so they will understand what happens at the same time they start practicing or learning terms that are useful for their profession, for their English. (Focus group, Institution A – Professor planning to teach in English)*

Another lecturer also mentions the idea that exposure to the language can foster language learning, by providing opportunities for practice:

- (12) P9: *I think it has the side of being exposed to the language, to try... Even if the person has a certain degree of fluency, he has to try to expose himself. At the same time he ends up having exposure, he ends up practicing. One can check for errors in the dialogues, especially with someone from abroad, native speakers, you see that you speak quite differently. (Interview, Institution B)*

This idea that exposure to English-only from the start can help students using English is recommended by a few, inexperienced, teachers. However, other lecturers also tend towards English-only in EMI but still allow the use of the L1, when it is reduced to a minimum. Portuguese can be “tolerated” if there are communication obstacles, as one lecturer explained:

For those lecturers who endorse an English-only approach to EMI, Portuguese is reduced to a minimum. Although we did not adopt a quantitative approach in this study, we identified four lecturers who supported English-only and “tolerated Portuguese”, and their comments are reproduced in excerpts (13)–(16). Those lecturers reported that Portuguese can be tolerated if there are communication obstacles, as one lecturer explained:

- (13) P11: *In my class I have decided 100% in English, even in the emails, but in many situations, if students have problem with communication, they could talk in Portuguese, no problem; [...] In my class they work in small groups, they talk in English to each other and with me, [...] I say: Imagine we have a Chinese student here, for example, so try to communicate with this student [...] we are trying to have some international student here, so let's try to speak just in English, if it is necessary, in Portuguese. So, they engage in this way in my class. (Focus Group, Institution B)*

Portuguese is also “tolerated” in the beginning stages of the course, a strategy this lecturer learned in her EMI training. As time goes by, when the students become

more familiar with English, Portuguese can be used as the supporting language, for out-of-class reading, or preparation before class:

- (14) P12: *In my opinion, in the beginning I would try to push for English. Just as the last resource I would go to Portuguese [...] because it seems to me in the very first or second class, English will be rusty. So, people will have difficulty [...] later, ok [...] maybe you can get best results. If you allow Portuguese, maybe it would come even in moments that it is even not necessary. [...] What we have been taught in EMI is that you can beforehand use Portuguese. So students have a sense of the subject in English and they come to the class you can present in English and they are familiar with the terms in Portuguese. This is one way you can do it. (Panel, Institution A)*

The recognition that the two languages serve complimentary roles is also reinforced by comments concerning the use of code-switching as a possible strategy to keep the flow of the lesson, though the use of Portuguese as a last resort still seems to be preferred:

- (15) P13: *What we – in the course I taught to undergraduates – what I allowed was something like this: one word or another. You don't know the word, you can't mimic, there is no other way, so speak the expression in English and use that word in Portuguese. (Interview, Institution B)*

The different distribution of both languages in the language practices of professional communities is recognized by another lecturer who believes that exams can be in Portuguese, but for explanations he would rather use English. English, in this case, is used mainly in oral communication, for explanations, whereas students would be expected to demonstrate knowledge in Portuguese.

- (16) P14: *You can allow Portuguese, but as minimal as possible; Portuguese would be helpful: in specific terms, in exams (you may give the exam in English, but they can choose if they want to answer in Portuguese); I don't think I would use Portuguese to explain things. I would try in English. I think the main situation to allow Portuguese would be to write down. (Focus Group, Institution B)*

Lecturers were concerned with maximizing the use of English as much as possible, while the use of Portuguese is a way to deal with students' lack of proficiency. For those who believe Portuguese should be used as a last resort, Portuguese is only acceptable when there is no other alternative and it is only tolerated but not encouraged, although it is allowed during relaxing and informal situations.



## 6.2 Support with both English and Portuguese

In this section, we present the multilingual strategies which involve the use of both Portuguese and English in class. Participants report an overall practical multilingual approach in class, which is also shown in class observations and focus group discussions with the participants.

For instance, in a class observation of a science professor, Portuguese was used most of the time and English served “to introduce vocabulary/technical terms” and “perform classroom instructions”. The following field notes, from a class observation, illustrate it:

- (17) *The language most used in class is Portuguese. It is used in the teacher’s explanations and instructions, in students’ interactions with themselves and with the teacher. English is being used by the teacher in the following situations: to refer to technical terms (“serial dilution”, “plaque assay smog”, etc.), to name the materials from the lab (for example, “plate”), to give instructions or ask students to do things (“share”, “pick a plaque”, “touch”, “mix up and down”, etc.), in individual words in a sentence (“time-consuming”, “minus three”, “minus five”, “a hundred”, “Essa técnica a gente vai fazer daily basis”, “attachment do vírus na bactéria”).*  
(Institution B)

This practice seems to help vocabulary acquisition of specific technical terms, for the students to get familiar with the specialized jargon and area of study. Moreover, the explanation in Portuguese seems to be an earlier stage in preparation for the English term and to facilitate understanding of the vocabulary used in class.

- (18) P10: *so the students can have a sense of the subject in Portuguese and then when they come to the class they will be presenting just in English, but at least they are already able to reach the information, they are familiar with the terms in Portuguese and we are just presenting in English [...] if they are learning from the very first time they need to know the term in Portuguese, it is important for them, so you cannot be presenting just in English.*
- Researcher: *So would you consider Portuguese a resource like that? Like bringing texts in Portuguese beforehand, would you consider?*
- P10: *Beforehand yes.*
- P6: *I would. To help clarify things before*  
(Focus group, Institution B)

Using Portuguese to familiarize students with content before it is presented in English is also a strategy that participants valued because it helped with incrementing/increasing the use of English in class.

Participants seemed to prefer to introduce English slowly and alongside Portuguese. For instance, we could also observe in our data the strategy that a professor reports concerning the use of English to present content/topics and Portuguese to discuss them. It seems that it works well when students have some time for previous preparation in English to present seminars or papers, but when discussing some topics they still need to use Portuguese.

- (19) P16: *They made their presentation in English in a very beautiful way. They tried, there were some students when they couldn't, the presentation itself was everything in English, when there was the discussion part, I made questions to them, interact, then it came Portuguese and English; so, it was so diversified, then when we started to go deep in the subject, even in their research*
- Researcher: *Right, they felt the need to use Portuguese*
- P16: *Yes, they felt the need to use Portuguese. But the presentation itself, they studied, so this part was very well rehearsed, but then in the discussion, we used a lot [...]*
- Researcher: *in Portuguese by them [...]*
- P16: *Yes*
- Researcher: *And, even so, you kept using English*
- P16: *I kept, it was difficult, we were so used to using Portuguese and when we use English, we try, I always tried, the most I could, to keep using English, to talk in English with them.*
- (Interview, Institution B)

Another strategy reported is to switch to Portuguese when students do not understand what is being explained in English by the lecturers. For P7, using Portuguese can facilitate students' understanding, especially when lecturers have tried to explain something in different ways in English. Here the lecturer makes a difference between planned presentation (in English) and the more spontaneous discussion (in Portuguese or both English and Portuguese) and students making an effort to deliver presentations all in English. The lecturer is especially emphasizing the effort and repeated trials ("I always tried") to keep everything in English before allowing Portuguese in the classroom.

- (20) P7: *I think that for post-graduate students that we are planning to do is to use just English in class, of course, we don't know the students, we don't know the English level, so we are planning to use just English and use Portuguese just when they don't understand what we are talking at all. So, if we are explaining in three or more times and they don't get it, I can try some specific words to help them understand the content, but our idea is to encourage them to talk just in English and when they don't know, if they can't express themselves, so we can try in Portuguese, if they ask in Portuguese, I will answer in English just to push them to talk in English. (Focus group, Institution B)*
- P17: *I think you can switch to Portuguese when you noticed that, you know, some of your students didn't understand, you can use some teaching strategies... (Focus group, Institution B)*

The motivations reported in this section for using Portuguese and English are: English to introduce vocabulary/technical terms; Portuguese to familiarize with content before it is presented in English; English being introduced slowly and alongside the use of Portuguese; English to present content/topics and Portuguese to discuss them; Portuguese when students do not understand what is being explained in English by the lecturers. As observed in the discussion of the strategies used, Portuguese can be seen as a resource for maximizing learning, especially when all the students share the language.

Despite the clear preponderance of Portuguese in EMI classes, the lecturers' comments in this project still focused on EMI as if it should be all in English. So, they still felt that the emphasis should have been on developing content in English, while mixing languages was allowed in practice, but frowned upon. Despite their experience that mixing the two languages in situations like these may give confidence to students (for instance in their presentation and follow-up discussion), the lecturers still report their "efforts" to keep everything as much as possible in English.

## 7 Discussion

While our findings are generally in line with the literature review carried out by Galloway (2020), in which L1 use was seen as a useful resource in EMI classes, there are various nuances and perspectives regarding roles of English and Portuguese in the classroom: while some believe in an "English-only perspective", and therefore, think about Portuguese as the last resource or as a step towards 100% English classes, others believe that mixing both languages is acceptable and desirable. The

ones who believe in an English-only approach consider it useful to simulate international experiences, to prepare for experience abroad and to keep practicing English; for them, various strategies are used to maximize English in the classroom, such as introducing it from the beginning and gradually, providing key phrases, among others. Those who endorse a multilingual perspective, justify it based on increasing the students' participation and interaction in class, enhancing understanding of the content as well as a way to build confidence. The lecturers, then, also report the strategies for using both languages in their practice. Table 1 summarizes our findings concerning the motivations/reasons and strategies for choosing an English-only or a multilingual approach in EMI classes.

As these results show, both English and Portuguese are used by lecturers endorsing either an English-only approach or a multilingual one, with similar objectives. Whereas Portuguese seems to increase student participation and reduce insecurity, English provides opportunities to engage with the professional discourse and language practices valued in international research exchanges. A multilingual approach better addresses the lecturers' pedagogical concerns, while English-only favours their language-oriented goals, if only in ideal terms.

**Table 1:** Reasons and strategies for choosing an English-only approach versus a multilingual approach.

	English-only approach	Multilingual approach
Reasons	Important academic lingua franca; Inclusion of international students; Feeling of being abroad (i.e. internationalization); Preparatory stage to going abroad; Opportunity to continue practicing English.	To facilitate sharing of ideas and promote cooperation among students; To enable participation in class; To overcome insecurity and give confidence; Portuguese to promote understanding of the content.
Strategies	Provide classroom language in English; Present content in English; Encourage attempts to use professional terms in English; Provide exposure to English to increase language practice; Use Portuguese in the beginning stages of class; Admit one or other word in Portuguese; Give explanations in English, exams in Portuguese.	English to introduce vocabulary/ technical terms; Portuguese to familiarize with content before it is presented in English; English introduced slowly and alongside Portuguese; English to present content/topics and Portuguese to discuss them; Portuguese when students do not understand what is being explained in English by the lecturer.

## 8 Final remarks

Considering that EMI as an institutional policy is largely restricted to official documents in both institutions, it is understandable that lecturers develop commonsensical views based on their confidence in the use of English and previous experiences in academic settings abroad. Additionally, they are also sensitive to the students' learning outcomes and try to enact classroom practices that attend both official "implicit understandings" of the policy and their teaching goals.

Overall, lecturers value teaching through English as a way of helping the students get socialized into academic cultures, by taking their potential experiences abroad as a model. They do so by using mainly English, but also Portuguese. English is chosen to increase exposure, especially to technical language, and Portuguese to maintain motivation and build confidence, as well as overcoming fears of inadequacy. The lecturers also draw on their personal experiences abroad to justify EMI, and adopt several strategies to navigate between the two languages. The heterogeneity of language capacities of the students functions as a resource when those who know more help others who may be struggling with the language.

In terms of approach, there seems to be consensus among the lecturers that EMI should not be imposed as English-only, and that English should be introduced incrementally, little by little, possibly also at the same time monitoring what the reactions of the students are, and adapting the integration of English and Portuguese to how students progress during their study. This is reflected in the classroom practices they adopt, which make use of both English and Portuguese.

Equally, in terms of ELF perspective, the lecturers seem to adopt a perspective that can certainly be seen as ELF-oriented. So although participants in our project could have heard about ELF, we did not explicitly probe into their understanding of the concept. Rather, we adopted an exploratory approach focusing on their motivations and practices in EMI. Still, without explicitly discussing ELF in EMI, they showed a tendency to appreciate diversity, multilingualism and preference for content knowledge, rather than linguistic correctness, which align to an ELF perspective.

However, in the final stage of the project, during our validation workshops, we included a discussion of ELF and multilingualism in EMI which contributed to raising awareness of ELF. Our validation workshops also showed that lecturers are keen to engage in discussion about English diversity and multilingualism, including issues related to ELF and pedagogy. They also raised questions concerning the use of Portuguese linked to aspects of decolonizing the EMI curriculum, which we did not have the space to cover in this paper.

In future, it would be good for EMI courses to include space for reflection. This could include raising awareness of the roles of the students' languages in their learning process and in their communicative practices, as well as discussion about English in the classroom and around the world. In this sense, approaching this discussion with lecturers would probably help them reflect about incorporating the L1 or other resources in their pedagogical practices. We feel that future projects of this kind could develop in a participatory way, with validation or feedback workshops included at different stages of data collection, while also contributing to EMI professional development.

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