

# The lecturers' perspective on EMI quality

Autor(en): **Pinyana, Àngels**

Objekttyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Bulletin suisse de linguistique appliquée / VALS-ASLA**

Band (Jahr): **- (2018)**

Heft 107: **Internationalizing curricula in higher education : quality and language of instruction**

PDF erstellt am: **28.05.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-978639>

## **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Inhalten der Zeitschriften. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern.

Die auf der Plattform e-periodica veröffentlichten Dokumente stehen für nicht-kommerzielle Zwecke in Lehre und Forschung sowie für die private Nutzung frei zur Verfügung. Einzelne Dateien oder Ausdrucke aus diesem Angebot können zusammen mit diesen Nutzungsbedingungen und den korrekten Herkunftsbezeichnungen weitergegeben werden.

Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. Die systematische Speicherung von Teilen des elektronischen Angebots auf anderen Servern bedarf ebenfalls des schriftlichen Einverständnisses der Rechteinhaber.

## **Haftungsausschluss**

Alle Angaben erfolgen ohne Gewähr für Vollständigkeit oder Richtigkeit. Es wird keine Haftung übernommen für Schäden durch die Verwendung von Informationen aus diesem Online-Angebot oder durch das Fehlen von Informationen. Dies gilt auch für Inhalte Dritter, die über dieses Angebot zugänglich sind.

# The lecturers' perspective on EMI quality

**Àngels PINYANA**

Universitat de Vic – Universitat Central de Catalunya  
Sagrada Família, 7, 08500 Vic, Spain  
mangels.pinyana@uvic.cat

Les mesures de qualité dans l'enseignement supérieur ont tendance à accorder une plus grande importance aux connaissances du contenu de la discipline de la part du professeur et à sa recherche qu'à ses compétences pédagogiques, qui sont plutôt négligées ou considérées comme allant de soi. Cependant, les mesures de qualité pour les enseignants dans les contextes EMI, où les apprenants et les enseignants n'ont pas l'anglais comme langue maternelle, doivent inclure des aspects linguistiques et didactiques. La fiche d'observation créée dans le cadre du projet de recherche «Internationalisation of Universities of Applied Sciences» (voir Studer ce numéro) est l'un des outils qui abordent la qualité de la performance des enseignants EMI en classe. Le présent article vise à mettre en évidence la pratique pédagogique EMI et ses implications sur la qualité en rendant compte des perceptions de huit enseignants EMI. Dix séances EMI différentes mises en place par huit enseignants ont été observées et évaluées en termes de qualité à l'aide de cette fiche d'observation. Les perceptions des enseignants sur les séances ont ensuite été recueillies au moyen d'un entretien et d'un questionnaire en ligne. Les résultats révèlent que, bien que les enseignants observés n'aient pas affiché certains des paramètres sur la fiche d'observation, la fiche reste un outil précieux pour évaluer la qualité de l'enseignement EMI parce qu'elle tient compte de la complexité de ce contexte.

## **Mots-clés:**

Mesures de qualité, EMI, croyances de l'enseignant, observation de classe.

## **Keywords:**

Quality measures, EMI, lecturer beliefs, class observation.

## **1. Introduction**

Higher Education Institutions (HEI) have been adopting English Mediated Instruction (EMI) at an ever-increasing rate in the last decade. With this increase, the challenges that EMI implementation brings about have become evident (Shohamy 2013; Wilkinson 2013). For example, in terms of overall organisation, HEIs have had to overcome the fact that no specific language policies were established before the spread of EMI, or that empirical research and budgets were not attuned to the EMI context (Hernandez-Nanclares & Jimenez-Munoz 2015). Some other points of concern include intercultural communication issues (Klaassen & De Graaff 2001), an increasing workload for both lecturers (Vinke et al. 1998) and students (Tatzl 2011) or a reduction in the amount of content that can be taught in EMI compared to teaching in the native language (Costa & Coleman 2010).

Since EMI courses are taught in countries where English is not the native language, the linguistic aspect is one of the main concerns that seems to affect both EMI students and lecturers (Cots 2013; Lasagabaster & Sierra 2011, 2013). Students show "lack of sophistication" because their "school English" differs substantially from academic demands (Erling & Hilgendorf 2006: 284),

which may affect their class participation (Knapp 2011), induce anxiety and reduce motivation (Inbar-Lourie & Donitsa-Schmidt 2013), and ultimately have an influence on their grades (Dafouz & Camacho-Miñano 2016). Students' perception on the language-skills of their lecturers is not very promising either (Evans & Morrison 2011). Airey (2013), for instance, mentions that lecturers have the unavoidable demand of solving "language-related issues" (Airey 2013: 64) as well as the requirement to make adjustments in order to make content linguistically comprehensible (Costa & Coleman 2010). Hence, determined efforts should be put in place to ensure that limited language proficiency, on behalf of both the lecturer and the student, does not hinder fluid communication and, therefore, learning in the class.

The linguistic issue is not the only concern. Successful EMI implementation requires lecturers to have some elemental knowledge of second language acquisition processes and develop "effective classroom behaviour", such as "effective lecturing behaviour skills" (Klaassen et al. 2001: 282), that go beyond translating the content of a given subject into English (Cots 2013; Dafouz et al. 2007). Lecturers should also be able to adopt teaching techniques suitable to the EMI classroom, such as paraphrasing knowledge or calling attention to subject-specific vocabulary and technical terms (Dearden 2014). The use of these teaching techniques are in line with a methodological move towards more learner-centred forms of instruction (Cots 2013), where the focus shifts from a mere transfer of information to greater student participation. EMI teaching, in the same way as teaching for mixed ability classes, requires lecturers to promote active engagement so that learning is warranted regardless of learners' background. As Biggs (2011: 5) points out "Teaching that engages students' learning activities appropriately minimizes differences of ethnicity between students as far as learning itself is concerned."

In this context it is not fortuitous that quality in EMI has become a focus of attention within quality assurance (QA), which adds to the QA measures that HEIs already implement for accreditation purposes to legitimise the institution and their programmes, as well as to adapt to transnational processes like the European Higher Education area (EHEA). An example of QA targeted at EMI teaching quality has been developed in Switzerland, where the trend of implementing English taught programmes (ETP) has been on the increase in the last 10 years. In Wächter and Maiworm's (2014) analysis of ETPs in Europe, 39 HE institutions offering 239 ETPs were identified in Switzerland (Wächter & Maiworm 2014: 34). The project "Internationalisation of Universities of Applied Sciences" aimed at generating and testing a set of quality management parameters that would evaluate the quality of international study programmes in English. As part of this project, an observation form was developed (See Studer: this volume) in order to gauge quality standards in English-taught lectures in Swiss higher education. In particular, the present study looks at the lecturer's viewpoint on the parameters developed in this observation form.

## 2. Data collection and analysis

Data for the present investigation, which aimed at discovering what EMI teachers think of the parameters established on the observation form, was collected mid-semester during a week at a university of applied sciences in the area of German-speaking Switzerland within an International Programme in Business Administration. Data was retrieved by means of class observation followed by an informal structured interview and a subsequent online questionnaire.

### 2.1 Class observation

Class observations were carried out in eight different modules (Introduction to Business Administration, Financial Accounting, Management Accounting, Tax Law, Microeconomics, Security Analysis, Derivatives and International Business Management) by six observers, two in each observation. Although there were eight modules observed, the final number of observed sessions was ten, as two lecturers were observed teaching the same course to two different groups, which makes an amount of 15 hours of recorded observations in total.

All the observations followed the same procedure: Before classes started, students were informed that an observation was going to take place and, even though video-recording was not necessary for this study, they were asked to give their permission to be video recorded as the data retrieved would be used in other studies (see Khan, this volume, for an example of how the data was used). The video camera was placed in one of the corners of the class ensuring that the shot took the students as well as the lecturer and that the sound recorded was clear. During the class, observers were as unobtrusive as possible while they took notes on the observation form created for this purpose. Once the class was over, one of the observers maintained an informal interview with the teacher and informed them that they were going to receive an online questionnaire, which had to be returned to the observers at their earliest convenience.

The observation form designed for this study was divided into five sections: Linguistic Competence, Monological Communicative Competence, Dialogical Communicative Competence, Strategic Competence and Didactic Competence. Each section was further subdivided into additional subsections, assembling a total of sixteen parameters. Each parameter was clearly identified with a label and a short definition of its meaning, which allowed the observer to identify specific features of the class. It also included a four point rating scale for each parameter, where 3 was *fail*, 4 was *pass*, 5 was *good* and 6 was *very good*<sup>1</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> In Switzerland a 6 point grading scale is used, where 1 represents the lowest possible grade and 6 the highest one. In the present study it was assumed that none of the teachers would score lower than 3.

Next to the rating scale there was an available space for observer's comments or notes on the lecturer's performance (see Studer, this volume, for a detailed description of the form).

After the observations an inter-rater reliability analysis using the Kappa statistic was performed to determine consistency between the two raters for each observed class. Even though raters had not been trained beforehand for this particular study, inter-rater reliability ranged from  $Kappa = 0.47$  (moderate agreement) to 0.83 (almost perfect agreement), which indicates an acceptable agreement for class observation research (Rui & Feldman 2012).

## *2.2 Interview*

Once the class observation was over, one of the observers interviewed the lecturer who had done the class. Although the interview was informal, it was structured around three points: 1) class procedure (whether the class had gone according to their plan), 2) student behaviour (whether students had acted as they usually did, or whether they had been affected by the observation), 3) the lecturer's perception of the quality parameter observation form. That is, during the interview lecturers got to see the form and expressed their opinion about whether the parameters were relevant to EMI in general and/or to their classes, as well as how they perceived their own performance in relation to each parameter. During the interview, the observer took notes of the lecturer's responses and wrote down comments that she deemed relevant for the investigation.

The observers' notes and comments were subjected to content analysis, from which categories related to their motivation for teaching EMI courses, their language background and their teaching experience, as well as categories on their opinion of the form were drawn.

## *2.3 Questionnaire*

Just after the interview, lecturers were informed that they were going to receive an electronic questionnaire, which was made available to the lecturers for two weeks after the class observation. The return rate was 100%.

The questionnaire consisted of 13 questions, six of which were open for them to give extended answers and seven were closed. Questions were divided into five sections: Language background, teaching experience, motivation for teaching and EMI course, EMI training received and, finally, the observed parameters.

In the same way as the interview notes, qualitative content analysis was performed to the open questions in order to extract common categories, while descriptive statistics were calculated for the closed questions.



### 3. The observed parameters

Observers filled in the observation form with comments of observed behaviour in the classroom. Figure 1 shows the parameters in each section and an example of the type of comments the observers noted.

	Parameter		Example of observers' notes
Linguistic Competence	1	Vocabulary range	Proficient use of domain-specific vocabulary.
	2	Vocabulary control	Native speaker control
	3	Phonological control	Fast. Too fast for some students? Stress: - re-bal-AN-cing
	4	Cohesion	Fluent
Monological Communicative Competence	5	Communicative competence, overall oral production	Can communicate clearly and effectively Long explanations Shows links between different terms and concepts
Dialogical Communicative Competence	6	Conversation	Elicits information from students. Asks direct questions to check terms already covered in previous lessons.
	7	Formal discussion and meetings	Not appear
	8	Goal-oriented co-operation	Use of whiteboard to draw illustrative figures.
	9	Non-/ para-verbal communication	Confident. She doesn't move from the front of the class.
Strategic Competence	10	Monitoring and repair	No need to reformulate in this class.
	11	Active listening comprehension	Able to understand students perfectly.
Didactic Competence	12	Facilitating a positive learning experience of students in L2 situation	Task descriptions show examples from foreign companies.
	13	Planning teaching units facilitating student comprehension in L2	Couldn't be fully observed. Judging by the slides, lecturer prepared her class beforehand.
	14	Managing teaching units facilitating student orientation in an L2 situation	Writes answers to task on board (handwriting not clear). Links her session to what students will be doing next semester.
	15	Facilitating comprehension and development of L2 register	New terms were displayed on slides. Shows video to illustrate concepts
	16	Facilitating development of communication skills in L2	Students can participate if they wish. No pressure on the part of the lecturer to participate

Figure 1: Parameters and examples of comments from observers on the observation form

Moreover, observers also assessed the teachers' behaviour against the descriptors given with each parameter. Figure 2 shows the mean score for each parameter (3 is the lowest score, 6 is the highest) and the total mean score per lecturer. The mean score for each parameter was calculated from the scores given by the observers. When observers could not produce a score, because a particular parameter was not observable, a hyphen appears in the table.

As Figure 2 indicates, with the exception of parameter 15 (Facilitating comprehension and development of L2 register) for Lecturer 4 (T4), and parameter 16 (Facilitating development of communication skills in L2) for Lecturers 3 and 6 (T3, T6), the scores given by observers are all 4 or above 4, which is the pass mark. The highest scores (5.9) are for parameters 1 (Vocabulary range), 5 (Monological Communicative Competence) and 13 (Planning teaching units facilitating student comprehension in L2). The lowest score is for parameter 16 (Facilitating development of communication skills in L2). This seems to suggest that lecturers displayed greater control of their language but less control on their didactics and promotion of L2 skills.

The number of hyphens in the table reflects that some parameters in the observation form like 'Formal discussion and meetings' proved challenging for the observers because in the classes under observation such elements did not appear. Furthermore, these hyphens show that some parameters, such as 'Planning teaching units facilitating student comprehension in L2' or 'Facilitating a positive learning experience of students in L2 situation' proved problematic for the observers since they could not be judged from just one single observation. The observers explicitly commented that repeated observations would be required to evaluate these aspects as well as a thorough review of the class materials and specific interviews.

Parameter	Lecturers								Total mean/ parameter
	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	
1	6	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	5.9
2	6	5	6	6	6	5	6	6	5.8
3	5.3	4	6	5	6	5	5	4	5
4	6	5	6	6	6	6	5	5	5.6
5	6	5.3	6	6	6	6	6	6	5.9
6	5.7	5.7	6	6	6	6	5	4	5.6
7	6	5	5.5	-	5	-	-	-	5.4
8	5.25	5	6	6	-	5	4	6	5.3
9	6	5.3	6	6	5	5	6	5	5.5
10	-	4	6	6	6	6	-	-	5.6
11	6	-	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
12	6	5.5	6	6	5	6	6	6	5.8
13	6	5	6	-	6	6	6	6	5.9
14	5.5	5	5.5	6	5	-	6	5	5.4
15	5.3	5	6	3	5	5	6	5	5
16	5.3	4	3	6	3	5	6	5	4.7
<b>Total mean / lecturer</b>	5.3	4.7	3.5	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.5	5.4	

Figure 2: Mean scores per lecturer and total mean per parameter.

## 4. The lecturers and their perspective

### 4.1 The lecturer's profile

With the online questionnaire (n=8), the lecturers' motivation for teaching EMI courses, their language background and teaching experience was determined.

Concerning lecturers' motivation to teach an EMI course, an open question revealed six categories: Management decision, Benefit for student's employability, Teacher's L2 improvement, Teacher's professional development, Personal interest and Lack of sufficient language skills in German.

Three of the teachers mentioned that they are teaching in English due to a management decision. These lecturers considered that they are teaching in English because their high level of English renders them more appropriate to teach than other colleagues whose English language skills are weaker. Two of them also mentioned that proficiency in English is an important business capability not only for their students, as their future job is probably going to be in the international field, but also for their own improvement as teachers, since working in English allows them to hone their own English skills, which in turn



help them advance professionally. Moreover, two of the teachers also emphasised their own intrinsic motivation either because they have always wanted to work in an international field or because they are personally interested in other cultures. Finally, one of the comments retrieved referred to the lecturer's lack of skills to teach in German, which forced him/her to teach in the International Programme in English.

A second open question inquired about the lecturers' English language acquisition background. In terms of their level of English competence, all the lecturers self-reported at least a C1 (CEFR) level. In particular, three lecturers self-reported an "advanced language level" (between B2 and C1), whereas the other five considered themselves as "proficient" users of English (above C1). As for the reasons for their language proficiency, having lived in an English-speaking country like New Zealand, the US or England for a long period of time (between one and six years) for work or study purposes was the most prevailing argument. Other reasons that accounted for their English proficiency were having done an international academic stay during their studies, having learned their English at school from native lecturers, or having taken extra language courses in English speaking countries. At the time of filling in the questionnaire, half of lecturers reported that they were doing their research exclusively in English and six of them mentioned that their work environment outside the university required them to use English. Finally, three lecturers reported that thanks to travelling they could put their English skills to good use.

As far as their teaching background is concerned, all of them reported an extensive experience in their first languages. Two of them had an experience that spanned up to more than twenty years, another two more than ten years and the remaining four lecturers more than five years. However, their EMI practice was more limited, ranging from five years or less (5 lecturers) to a maximum of ten years (2 lecturers).

#### *4.2 Lecturers' perspective on the parameters observed*

The lecturers' opinion about their classroom performance was retrieved by means of both the interview done after the observation and the questionnaire. Although lecturers were not given any explanation about the meaning of the parameters, they were prompted to mention their concerns by asking open questions about each of the parameters. Their answers, as mentioned above, were subjected to qualitative content analysis.

##### **4.2.1 Linguistic competence**

In line with their self-reported proficiency, all lecturers displayed a high degree of vocabulary range and control, allowing them to express themselves in coherent and understandable speech. They were also confident of their language skills and their ability to convey accurate and appropriate messages

in their subject specific domain in English, which is in line with their reported proficiency level (advanced or proficient) in the questionnaire. Proof of their confidence is that, when asked about this aspect, one of the lecturers responded:

- (1) "English has not ever been a problem or source of complaint in my courses."

It is true, however, that some of the lecturers were aware of their own gaps in their proficiency. Thus, two lecturers pointed out that the greatest problem they were confronted with in their EMI classes were their own language mistakes. One lecturer also mentioned that he found it troubling to

- (2) "express myself in a differentiated 'academic' way",

as he considered himself fully competent when he had to use English in everyday situations, whereas finding the right tone and style in the classroom proved more demanding. Finally, two more lecturers reported that

- (3) "it's sometimes difficult, to find the right words quickly",

therefore showing that fluency is somehow problematic for some of them.

#### 4.2.2 Communicative competence

Communicative competence in the observation form was divided into monological and dialogical competence. The former refers to the competence the lecturer shows in giving a monologue - or in lecturing in front of the classroom - and the latter refers to both the ability to communicate with the students in various forms of interaction, like in a conversation or a formal discussion, as well as the ability to display specific features when engaged in interaction, such as giving support to the interlocutor to convey the message or using classroom-appropriate body language. During the classroom observation monological competence was straightforward to observe as most of the lecturer talk fell in this category. Even so, lecturers' reaction to this parameter shows that they recognise that

- (4) "explaining a complex issue is easier in the native language. It is demanding and definitely more work"

or

- (5) "I still have difficulties to explain a topic in another way as I prepared it".

While monological competence was a common trait in the classes observed, dialogical competence was less frequent or even non-existent. That is to say, in the classes observed there were no instances of tasks in which formal discussion or meetings among students, or lecturer and students, were called for. However, the fact that these kinds of interaction did not occur in the particular class being observed does not preclude that discussions and

meetings could be present in other classes. Moreover, as one of the lecturers commented, the use of interactive activities can be subject-specific. She said:

- (6) "I am teaching finance. Because the subject is difficult and many ideas/instruments are completely new to the students the interaction with the class is very limited. I cannot ask many questions in class. Other topics are more prone for interaction"

One of the lecturers, whose module is taught both in German and English, indicates that because the contents of her module is based on the German curriculum, it is difficult to find published textbooks in English that cover all the topics. Therefore, she feels the need to provide all the content herself and cannot spend class time on interactive activities. She remarks:

- (7) "As courses at this university have to be the same in German and English and as the German courses have been there before, many courses are based on German textbooks. It can be very difficult if not impossible to find a suitable English textbook for my classes. If I don't find one, classes become quite tough as I have to give most of the inputs in class more as a lecture and less interactive."

Finally, another lecturer also mentions that the observation procedure may have influenced that particular class being observed, making the students more passive than in the other classes given by the same lecturer:

- (8) "In the class on Monday students were less responsive than usually. That was not the case with the class on Wednesday, which had already gone through other observations before."

#### 4.2.3 Strategic Competence

As far as Strategic Competence is concerned, some observers mentioned that it was not noticeable in some classes, or that it was difficult to observe in a single session. One of the reasons for the lack of observations in this parameter might be simply that this type of strategic behaviour did not take place in that particular session, but we may infer that it can occur in other sessions. Another reason might be that class observation, as a research instrument, does not allow the researcher to grasp the differences in strategy use that other, more precise instruments, may reveal (see Khan's study in this volume). The lecturer's perception of their own strategic competence seems to be limited as they do not seem to be aware that any type of interaction, especially when it takes place in a foreign language, entails a vast array of strategies. For example, one of the lecturers recognised that:

- (9) "I don't change anything, the students are English literate. There is no need to adapt",

whereas in the actual observation comments, the observer states:

- (10) "The lecturer is able to rephrase what students meant in different words. When she doesn't understand/hear what a student says she repeats the last words the student said."

Thus, although she does not recognise or is not familiar with the term "strategic competence" her actual strategic behaviour is effective. Similarly, although "monitoring and repair" instances were not documented in the observation form, as observers indicated that there was

(11) "no need to reformulate in this class",

the mean score given to this parameter is above average (5.6), which probably reflects the observers' assumption that this type of strategic behaviour is already part of an advanced user of a foreign language as these EMI lecturers are.

#### 4.2.4 Didactic Competence

The last part of the observation form considers Didactic Competence, which encompasses parameters related to class management (planning and managing teaching units), assistance with L2 progress (facilitating comprehension, developing L2 vocabulary, developing communication skills), and positive L2 experience. The presence of "no observed comments" shows the observers' difficulty in detecting instances to illustrate some parameters on the form. These parameters are not readily observable either because they did not appear in the session observed or because a deeper knowledge of the module is required for the researcher to perceive them. This is the case of the parameter "Formal discussion and meetings", which even though it is one of the milestones that needs to be addressed in EMI, it was not possible to be noticed in one single observation.

A different situation is the case of the parameters related to class management. "Planning teaching units facilitating student comprehension in L2" had a considerable percentage of "no observed comments" as well as "Managing teaching units facilitating student orientation in an L2 situation". Both parameters comprise two ideas: firstly, the fact that lecturers show the ability to plan or manage their lessons, which are behaviours that consider the general teaching ability no matter if the lecturer is in an EMI context, and secondly, the underlying idea that the lecturer should display their intention to aid L2 comprehension or orientation. With both parameters, observers seemed to struggle with documenting the lecturer's plans and intentions, since these aspects are subjective and hard to grasp in observation. Thus, observers were only able to draw their observations from few moments that reflected the actual lecturer's performance when facilitating comprehension and orientation, even if such moments were not frequent.

When the observed lecturers were confronted with the parameters related to didactics in the post-observation questionnaire, five of the lecturers replied that they did not do any kind of adjustment to their EMI classes with the specific goal of facilitating L2 learning. Comments such as

(12) "I do as if they were proficient"

and

(13) "The students are English literate so no adaptation is needed"

are proof of their point of view. Moreover, two lecturers indicated that, as they were using materials already published in English there was no need for them to alter or modify their instruction. Examples of this opinion are the following comments:

(14) "I do not adapt because the literature and the materials are in English and do not require any adaptation"

or

(15) "All the literature is in English, including the slides. So there is no need to make adjustments on these fronts."

Last but not least, only one lecturer expressed that he did adapt his teaching *precisely* because of the use of English textbooks. He acknowledged that

(16) "I have taught a similar subject in German. But through English, I use other books. Thus I have different approach to the subject".

The last element that Didactic Competence takes into account is "providing a positive experience", which was operationalised in the following terms: "drawing attention to multilingualism and multiculturalism as a resource and opportunity for learning and classroom interaction". As with other parameters, this parameter was too broad to be observed in a single class observation. Even so, when lecturers were asked about this parameter in the interview and post-observation questionnaire, three of them considered that their teaching should be not only

(17) "attractive for international students"

but should also prepare students for their prospective international jobs. Three remarks that illustrate this point are the following:

(18) "English is the language of Economics today. I believe that, by teaching the subject in English, we are enhancing the students' ability to use their knowledge"

or

(19) "Finance around the world is mostly done in English. Today the language of business is English, but in finance it is even more important and relevant."

Therefore, they consider it is a must to

(20) "provide (students) with international standards".

Finally, the online questionnaire revealed the notion that EMI lecturers are required to negotiate their identity in non-English speaking countries. One of the lecturers explicitly indicated that he felt more at ease with the international students in the EMI classroom than when he taught in German. He regretted that, when teaching in Switzerland, he could not get rid of the stereotypes about German people in this country. However, in his EMI classes, he felt that all the



preconceived ideas about his background dissipated because he was in an international environment. He mentions:

- (21) "In my special situation as a lecturer of German origin in Switzerland I am sometimes faced with certain preconceptions when teaching in German. In my English classes I am considered a "normal" foreigner as some of the students as well."

## 5. Discussion

The lecturer profile in this study is an expert lecturer who has been teaching for at least 5 years in their own language, with good level of English thanks to having previously studied or worked in an English environment, and who, at present, has ample opportunities to use this language in their research or job outside the university. This is the same type of profile found in other studies that have looked into the lecturers' perceptions in EMI settings (Vinke et al. 1998; Tatzl 2011).

Considering the score given by the observers on the observation form, the lecturers in this study excel at all the parameters that could be observed. First of all, they do not show considerable problems with their English language competence. Although imperfect linguistic skills, especially flaws in pronunciation, is one of the most relevant problems when considering the quality of an EMI course/programme (Wilkinson 2013; Airey 2004), it would seem that the lecturers in the present study do not find shifting their language of instruction to English a major challenge. It is true that some of them have concerns related to their ability to use the language in an academic way, or to being fluent enough, but overall, they match the profile of the "successful switcher", that is to say, a lecturer who "explicitly stated not to have any problems with their language-related skills" (Vinke et al 1998: 388), as they consider themselves advanced or proficient in English in addition to being active English users in their research and/or their work environment.

Secondly, all the parameters associated with communicative competence, both monologic and dialogic, scored above 5. Even parameter seven (Formal discussion and meetings), which was only observed in four classes, was given a mean above 5. Nonetheless, lecturers relied on monologues to deliver their content either because of the lack of published English textbooks that covered the curriculum of a module, which in turn forced the lecturer to be the only source of input, or because the nature of the module prevented the lecturer from delivering it in a learner-centred fashion. Hence, although student-centred learning has been argued to be an effective course design (Wilkinson 2013: 15; Cots 2013), only few instances of this approach could be observed. Here is where stronger EMI teacher training that attends not only to linguistic aspects but also "attends in detail to the methodology of teaching through a foreign language" (O'Dowd 2015: 12) would surely help lecturers to change their teacher-centred approach towards a type of instruction largely focused on the



learner. This shift should promote active learner engagement which would enhance their learning.

Thirdly, in terms of strategic competence the lecturers received high scores for the two parameters included in the observation form. However, they did not seem to be aware of the number of strategies they displayed when teaching. As all of them possessed considerable teaching experience in L1, they seemed to be transferring the teaching strategies used in L1 to their L2 teaching. Thus, they did not consciously use any specific teaching strategy adapted to the EMI context. Instead, they simply relied on their teaching experience and trusted their intuition as proficient L2 users.

Finally, no problems were documented in the observed lecturers' didactic competence either. In general, the lecturers did not perceive the need for didactic adaptations in their way of teaching or the materials or resources they used in their classes, especially when lecturer and students are both English proficient. In this case, they believed that students should be treated as if they were native speakers, like the students they have in their L1-taught classes. However, when materials, such as the textbook used in the EMI class is already in English, the English textbook seemed to help EMI lecturers to adjust their teaching to the EMI environment. Comparable perceptions were found by Tatzl (2011) in his study of English-taught masters in Austria.

## 6. Conclusion

The results described allow us to gain a deeper insight into lecturers' perception of EMI teaching quality. Even though these results are drawn from a group of lecturers teaching in an international programme in Switzerland, their perspective may be of interest when considering quality elements related to EMI lecturers in other settings.

The international lecturer quality profile can be succinctly described as an expert lecturer, both in L1 and to a minor degree in L2, with high English proficiency, who uses the language in his/her everyday life for a variety of purposes, like travelling or research, outside the university.

All the lecturers in this study received high scores, which reflect their EMI quality when assessed using the observation form. Their overall scores ranged from a minimum of 3.5 to a maximum of 5.7. Similarly, all the sixteen parameters in isolation received a score above the pass mark (minimum score=4.7; maximum score=6), which, in turn, entailed that they demonstrated the five competences described in the observation form.

Even so, the scarce amount of observed instances of dialogic competence and the nearly exclusive use of lecturing in the classes would call for a more intensive EMI training in student-centred methodologies, which would enable lecturers to incorporate a variety of didactic elements. This would lead to an

increase of dialogic competence, moving away from using practically only lecturing towards a more interactive environment, which would entail increased learner engagement, thus rendering learning more effective.

Future research into quality parameters for international profiles should contemplate a diversity of settings, namely international programmes held in other areas of the world with different teacher and student's features, in order to achieve a broader, more complete picture of quality management in EMI teaching.

## REFERENCES

- Airey, J. (2004). Can you Teach it in English? Aspects of the Language Choice Debate in Swedish Higher Education. In R. Wilkinson (ed.), *Integrating. Content and Language: Meeting the Challenge of a Multilingual Higher Education* (pp. 97-108). Maastricht: Universitaire Pers.
- Airey, J. (2013). "I Don't Teach Language." The Linguistic Attitudes of Physics Lecturers in Sweden. *AILA Review*, 25, 64-79.
- Biggs, J. B. (2011). *Teaching for quality learning at university: What the student does*. Maidenhead (UK): McGraw-Hill Education.
- Cots, J. M. (2013). Introducing English-medium instruction at the University of Lleida, Spain: Intervention, beliefs and practices. In A. Doiz, D. Lasagabaster & J.M. Sierra (eds.), *English-medium instruction at universities: Global challenges*, (pp. 106-130). Bristol: Multilingual matters.
- Coleman, J. A. (2010). Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education in Italy: Ongoing Research Francesca Costa. *International CLIL Research Journal*, 1(3).
- Dafouz, E. & Camacho-Miñano, M. M. (2016). Exploring the impact of English-medium instruction on university student academic achievement: The case of accounting. *English for Specific Purposes*, 44, 57-67.
- Dafouz, E., Núñez, B., Sancho, C. & Foran, D. (2007). Integrating CLIL at the tertiary level: teachers' and students' reactions. In D. Marsh & D. Wolff (eds.), *Diverse Contexts-converging goals. CLIL in Europe*, (pp.91-101). Frankfurt: Peter Lang.
- Dearden, J. (2014). *English as a medium of instruction-a growing global phenomenon*. British Council.
- Erling, E. J. & Hilgendorf, S. K. (2006). Language policies in the context of German higher education. *Language Policy*, 5(3), 267-293.
- Evans, S. & Morrison, B. (2011). Meeting the challenges of English-medium higher education: The first-year experience in Hong Kong. *English for Specific Purposes*, 30(3), 198-208.
- Hernandez-Nanclares, N. & Jimenez-Munoz, A. (2015). English as a medium of instruction: evidence for language and content targets in bilingual education in economics. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 1-14.
- Inbar-Lourie, O. & Donitsa-Schmidt, S. (2013) Englishization in an Israeli teacher education college: Taking the first steps. In A. Doiz, D. Lasagabaster & J.M. Sierra (eds.), *English-medium instruction at universities: Global challenges*, (pp. 151-173). Bristol: Multilingual matters.
- Klaassen, R. G., & De Graaff, E. (2001). Facing innovation: Preparing lecturers for English-medium instruction in a non-native context. *European Journal of Engineering Education*, 26(3), 281-289.
- Knapp, A. (2011). When comprehension is crucial: Using English as a medium of instruction at a German University. In A. De Houwer & A. Wilton (eds.), *English in Europe today: Sociocultural and educational perspectives*, (pp. 51-70). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

- O'Dowd, R. (2015). *The training and accreditation of teachers for English medium instruction: A survey of European universities*. Online. (2016-04-12).
- Rui, N. & Feldman, J. M. (2012). IRR (Inter-Rater Reliability) of a COP (Classroom Observation Protocol) - A Critical Appraisal. *Online Submission*.
- Shohamy, E. (2013). A critical perspective on the use of English as a medium of instruction at universities. In A. Doiz, D. Lasagabaster & J. M. Sierra (eds.). *English-medium instruction at universities: Global challenges*, (pp. 196-210). Bristol: Multilingual matters.
- Tatzl, D. (2011). English-medium masters' programmes at an Austrian university of applied sciences: Attitudes, experiences and challenges. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 10(4), 252-270.
- Vinke, A. A., Snippe J. & Jochems W. (1998). English-medium Content Courses in Non-English Higher Education: a study of lecturer experiences and teaching behaviours. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 3(3), 383-394.
- Wächter, B. & Maiworm, F. (2014). *English-taught programmes in European higher education: The state of play in 2014*. Bonn, Germany: Lemmens
- Wilkinson, R. (2013). English-medium instruction at a Dutch University: Challenges and pitfalls. In A. Doiz, D. Lasagabaster & J. M. Sierra (eds.), *English-medium instruction at universities: Global challenges*, (pp. 3-24). Bristol: Multilingual matters.