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The relationship between motivation, gender, L1 and possible selves in English-medium instruction

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ABSTRACT

English-medium instruction (EMI) is considered to be one of the main instruments to internationalize universities all over the world. Due to its recent implementation, research on linguistic outcomes is on the increase, whereas non-linguistic outcomes have been neglected. In fact, research on motivation in traditional English as a foreign language contexts is abundant but it is remarkably scant in EMI settings, that is, studies focused on motivation when English is used to teach content are much less habitual than when English is taught as a foreign language (language subject). To fill this gap, this article focuses on the relationship between EMI, motivation and possible selves, and how they are mediated by variables such as gender and students’ L1. Thus, this study elicits aspects overlooked by motivational self-system research such as students’ motivation towards English as an L3 in an EMI context, as in previous studies English (L2) was taught as a foreign language. The participants in this study were 189 students enrolled in EMI courses at a Spanish university. The results indicated that students’ ideal L2 self, their attitudes to EMI and family influence were the best predictors of their intended learning effort. The gender variable and the participants’ L1 exerted no significant influence.

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Introduction

Nowadays there is widespread agreement that English has become the main global lingua franca. This is easily observable in many different social spheres, but it is especially remarkable in educational systems all over the world, both at pre-university (Dalton-Puffer, 2011) and university levels (Doiz, Lasagabaster, & Sierra, 2013a; Smit & Dafouz, 2012). Governments and education systems, realizing the dire need to design efficient language learning schemes, have been forced by the hegemony of English to implement English-medium instruction (EMI) programmes. They believe that by combining meaningful academic content and foreign language learning, EMI can help to accomplish two objectives – content and language learning – at the same time (Dafouz, Camacho, & Urquia, 2014; Doiz et al., 2013a; Smit & Dafouz, 2012). On that score EMI has emerged as an asset rather than a liability.

Higher education institutions are currently immersed in an internationalization process unlike any ever seen. Universities located in areas where English is not an official language
are being compelled to offer individual courses, part of their programmes and even whole degrees in English, as this is their conditioned response to the fact that EMI has become one of the main indicators of how ‘internationalized’ a higher education institution is seen to be (van der Walt, 2013, p. 73). The ever increasing importance of university rankings is also worth considering, since competition has boosted the current privileged position of English, which constitutes ‘a covert form of language policy’ as it strongly favours EMI (Piller & Cho, 2013, p. 23).

While some see offering EMI as internationalizing, critical voices have highlighted that it may produce unexpected side effects (Piller & Cho, 2013; Shohamy, 2013; van der Walt, 2013), such as content not being learned due to the students’ lack of English proficiency, their limited participation and interaction in classes, and a monolingual English-only approach that overlooks students’ linguistic repertoire and multilingual abilities. English currently holds a central position in language planning, but generally speaking researchers and universities have not contemplated the consequences of teaching in English. This is why many scholars believe this global trend needs to be critically analysed (Dafouz & Smit, 2014; Jenkins, 2013; Lasagabaster, 2015; van der Walt, 2013).

As a result of the rapid and global spread of EMI programmes, their implementation has outpaced research on its effects, motivation being one area that has hardly been examined so far. EMI has been found to help improve students’ English competence (Dalton-Puffer, 2011; Yang, 2015), it also fosters learners’ mobility and employability (Wächter & Maiworm, 2014), and it is believed to be a powerful motivator factor for English learning (Doiz, Lasagabaster, & Sierra, 2014; Yang, 2015). Although much has been written in the last few years about EMI and its positive and negative consequences, several authors (Breidbach & Viebrock, 2012; Lasagabaster, 2011; Lasagabaster, Doiz, & Sierra, 2014) underscore that little is known about how EMI affects students’ attitudes and motivation to learn English in European countries, such as Spain. We will explore this question by considering the interaction of different variables and constructs such as motivation, gender, L1 (first language) and possible selves.

**L2 Motivational self system**

Although the notion of self had been on the psychology radar for decades, the theories of the self were not first applied to studies on second language acquisition (SLA) until the early 2000s. Dörnyei (2005, 2009) paid particular attention to the SLA/self connection and developed the L2 (second language) Motivational Self System as: ‘a model where language-speaking/using selves function as internalised future states that the learner desires to attain, thus generating motivated behaviour’ (Henry, 2011, p. 236), a motivated behaviour that derives from the learner’s desire to become a speaker/user of the target language.

Dörnyei’s (2005, 2009) model encompasses three components: two forms of possible selves and the learning experience. The first component is the ideal L2 self and refers to the person the individual would like to become as a speaker of the L2. The ideal L2 self generates motivation which reduces the discrepancy between our actual and our ideal selves. This component fits in with Gardner’s (2001, 2010) concept of integrativeness (the genuine interest in learning an L2 to come closer to the L2 community and, in the extreme, even become like them), as well as internalized instrumental motives (hopes,
aspirations and advancements). It has to be noted that several authors such as Dörnyei (2009) and Lamb (2007) have raised doubts about the adequateness of the ‘target L2 community’ concept in the case of English, due to its spread and diversification. Motivation for learning English because you identify it with a specific linguistic and cultural community is difficult to explain in our ever more globalized, multilingual and digital world. As for instrumentality, Dörnyei (2010) demonstrated that this traditional concept can be divided into two distinct types (instrumentality-promotion and instrumentality-prevention), the promotion focus being closely related to the ideal L2 self component.

The second component is the ought-to self and refers to the attributes (duties, obligations and responsibilities) one believes one ought to possess to meet the expectations of significant others. This component therefore includes more extrinsic and less internalized types of instrumental motives, and it is closely linked to the prevention focus of instrumentality in contexts where English is the L2 (Dörnyei, 2010). As Hamilton and Serrano (2014, p. 4) point out,

In this system, the Ideal L2 is the best case scenario, while the Ought-to L2 self represents traits to avoid or norms to obey. The combination of push and pull factors, or the discrepancy between the current and the Ideal/Ought-to selves, provides the motivation for action.

The final component is the L2 learning experience, that is, the motives related to the environment in which the language is being learnt and the language learning experience. The L2 learning experience ‘is conceptualized at a different level from the two self-guides’ (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 29) and includes the impact of the teacher, the teaching approach, the language learning materials, the curriculum, peer group attitudes towards the L2, and the experience of success.

Studies carried out in diverse EFL (English as a foreign language) contexts such as Hungary (Csizér & Lukács, 2010), Indonesia (Lamb, 2007), China, Iran and Japan (Taguchi, Magid, & Papi, 2009) have demonstrated that the ideal L2 self exerts a determinant influence on the learner’s L2 motivation. However, to my knowledge no previous study has focused on the impact of EMI on students’ possible selves. Since EMI is mushrooming in education systems all over the world, but especially in Europe and Asia (Doiz et al., 2013a; Kirkpatrick, 2011; Smit & Dafouz, 2012; Wächter & Maiworm, 2014), this seems to be a question well worth researching.

Similarly, from a multilingual standpoint, this self-based approach can help to account for the different selves (L1, L2, L3 and LX). However, it is worth noting that there are very few studies on L3 motivation, as the bulk of research on motivation focuses on the L2. Since English is in fact the L3 of the participants in this study, it may also provide further evidence as to the suitability of the L2 Motivational Self System in multilingual settings in which English is the main foreign language. The presence of three languages in the curriculum is an expanding phenomenon in Europe (Cenoz, 2009; Lasagabaster & Huguet, 2007), brought about by the concurrence of regionalization and internationalization, two processes that, although at first sight may seem exclusive, have actually become complementary. Since there is increasing and avid interest in the recovery of minority languages in diverse parts of the world, as well as a great awareness of the need to learn English as the current lingua franca, it seems reasonable to conclude that the self approach to motivation in English-L3 contexts deserves further attention. In fact, research undertaken in the Basque Country in Spain has revealed that students whose mother
tongue is Basque (the minority language in this bilingual region) tend to show less positive attitudes towards EMI and the increasing presence of English in the curriculum than those whose mother tongue is Spanish (Doiz, Lasagabaster, & Sierra, 2013b). These results seem to indicate that there is a close relationship between the desire to recover the minority language (more rooted among those whose L1 is Basque) and students’ motivation to learn English as L3, which consequently may have an impact on their ideal and ought-to selves.

**Motivation and gender**

In the fields of education and psychology there is abundant research focused on the motivation and gender equation (Carr & Pauwels, 2006; Carreira, 2011; Kissau, 2006; Meece, Bower, & Burg, 2006). In their review of the literature Meece et al. (2006) observe that gender differences are still found in achievement motivation. They conclude that, although male students tend to be more motivated towards sciences, mathematics and sports, girls usually have a stronger motivation in reading and language arts and are significantly less likely to drop foreign language learning. Nevertheless, Meece et al. (2006) point out that the gap in motivation towards mathematics and science seems to narrow with age, whereas girls’ enthusiasm for language arts persists throughout the school period.

When analysing the relationship between foreign language learning and gender, Ryan (2009, p. 135) states that ‘There is a common perception of foreign languages as “feminine” subjects’. In fact, in many diverse parts of the world, learning foreign languages is still perceived as feminine terrain, a belief that is underpinned by empirical evidence that shows that female students tend to be more motivated than their male counterparts (Carr & Pauwels, 2006; Henry, 2009, 2012; Kissau, 2006; Meece et al., 2006; Ryan, 2009).

A review of the literature indicates that studies revealing significant differences between girls and boys are much more abundant than those that have found none (such as MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Donovan, 2002). For example, the repeated cross-sectional study undertaken by Dörnyei, Csizér, and Németh (2006), in which 13,391 13–14-year-old Hungarian language learners were surveyed on three successive occasions (1993, 1999 and 2004) with regard to their attitudes and motivation to learn five foreign languages: English, German, French, Italian and Russian. The authors noted a steady trend for girls’ motivation towards foreign language learning to be significantly higher than boys’. As a matter of fact, girls obtained higher scores than boys in 98 out of 120 mean scores, and this irrespective of the foreign language concerned. When the respondents were asked how much effort they were prepared to expend in learning the foreign language, girls also consistently outscored boys.

In one of the few studies in which the L2 Motivational Self System has been considered when analysing the relationship between English learning motivation and gender, Ryan (2009) relied on two research instruments: a comprehensive ‘Motivational Factors Questionnaire’ which consisted of 100 six-point Likert-type items and a series of interviews with learners and users of English in Japan. The participants were a total of 2397 students who were divided into 3 groups: secondary education students, university non-English majors and university English majors. Ryan observed an overall pattern in which female Japanese students appeared significantly more motivated than males in the three scales under scrutiny: ideal L2 self, integrativeness and intended learning effort, although the
least significant gender differences were found at secondary level. Ryan concluded that there was greater uniformity of attitudes in secondary education which increased as students reached university, female students being more clearly motivated towards learning English at tertiary level.

Henry (2009) also relied on Dörnyei’s Motivational Self System model in the belief that gender was of particular interest in its application. In his longitudinal study a Swedish cohort of 169 students was given a questionnaire (containing 23 items) at two points in time, first at the end of the 6th school grade and then again at the end of the 9th grade. When the results were analysed for the whole sample, pupils’ ideal L2 self-concepts remained stable over the three-year period. However, when gender-based separate analyses were performed, the results revealed that girls’ ideal L2 self-concepts strengthened whereas boys’ weakened. These results led Henry (2009, p. 189) to ‘underscore the importance of including gender as a key variable in future attitudinal research conducted within the motivational self-concept paradigm’.

Despite the fact that research studies repeatedly report higher levels of motivation and effort for females (Ryan, 2009), EMI may help to change this gender bias. In fact, some authors (Coyle, 2007) assert that foreign-language-medium instruction may help to address gender issues in language learning on the grounds that male students might feel more motivated to learn both the language and the subject matter, which will enable them to obtain better scores in the subject concerned. However, very few empirical studies have focused on this issue. In an EMI context in Spain, Heras and Lasagabaster (2015) examined the influence of EMI on secondary education students’ L2 Motivational Self System. In this small scale study 46 16-year-old students completed a 33-item questionnaire on motivation and self-esteem in their last year of compulsory education. Whereas no differences were observed in the ideal L2 self component, the male students showed significantly higher means in the ought-to L2 self component, which led the authors to conclude that in the case of males EMI may have reinforced this more extrinsic dimension. Since this study was undertaken with secondary education students, it will be of interest to examine whether this same trend is maintained in tertiary education, as I intend to do in the present study, or whether the results get closer to those obtained by Ryan (2009) who found significant differences in the ideal L2 self at tertiary level.

**Motivation and L1**

The term mother tongue has come in for some criticism lately on the grounds that on some occasions it might be ambiguous and vague, particularly in multilingual contexts. However, many authors support consideration of this variable on three main grounds (Lasagabaster, Cots, & Mancho, 2013). First, as questionnaires usually include different options, such as language A, language B, and both languages A and B, respondents have the option to select either one of their languages or both as their L1. In this way ambiguity cannot be regarded as a hurdle any more, as the individual filling out the questionnaire has clear options to choose from.

Second, the mother tongue variable is deeply rooted in the sociolinguistic surveys carried out in many different contexts. In Spain, for example, all the surveys carried out in Catalonia, Galicia or the Basque Country (all of them officially bilingual autonomous regions) always include this variable and highlight its impact on the respondents’ attitudes.
towards the different coexisting languages. In a recent large scale study carried out in the Basque Country (Uranga, 2013) the impact of 35,820 primary and secondary education students’ L1 on their use of Basque was found to be statistically significant. Students with Basque as L1 were much more prone to use Basque outside the classroom context, while those with Spanish or both languages as L1 did not feel so motivated to use Basque when they were in the schoolyard. The results also revealed a trend demonstrating how Basque diminishes as they get older. Thus, 49% of the students in primary education who had Spanish as their L1 used mostly Basque in class, a percentage that plummeted to just 13% in secondary education.

And third, studies demonstrate that the participants’ L1 exerts a very significant effect on their language attitudes. Studies undertaken in different European bilingual regions confirm the mother tongue’s impact when it comes to analysing students’ attitudes towards the foreign language, as those who have the minority language as L1 tend to be less favourable towards the foreign language. In Friesland, Ytsma (2007) observed that students who had Frisian as L1 were less favourably disposed to English than those whose L1 was Dutch; in Ireland, O’Laoire (2007) also noted that university students who had Irish as their L1 were less positive towards the L3 (mainly French, German or Spanish) than their L1 = English counterparts; in Wales, Laugharne (2007) reported that English = L1 students harboured more positive attitudes towards the foreign language than both those who had Welsh as L1 and those who had both Welsh and English as L1.

As for the Basque Country, previous studies (Lasagabaster, 2004) have also confirmed the influence of university students’ L1 by demonstrating that L1 = Basque students were less positive towards English than those who had Spanish and both Spanish and Basque as their L1. In fact, the L1 = Basque students obtained the lowest means in 7 of the 10 items that made up the attitudes towards English scale, as well as in the general attitude towards English index. The effect of the students’ L1 seems thus to be unambiguous. Lasagabaster (2004) concluded that, despite the fact that this minority group was well aware of the dire need to learn English, they felt that the best way to maintain their own language was to protect it from the risk embodied in two powerful and international languages such as Spanish and English. These languages have a very high degree of ethnolinguistic vitality, that could be defined as what ‘makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup situations’ (Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor, 1977, p. 308). Since Basque is the most prominent symbol of Basque speakers’ social identity, their own perception as a low vitality group fosters more reluctant attitudes towards not only the majority language (Spanish) but also towards the foreign language (English).

The L1 also significantly influences immigrant students’ attitudes towards Spanish and Catalan in Catalonia, another bilingual context located in the north of Spain. Huguet and Janés (2008) noted that Latin American students who had Spanish as L1 were less positively inclined to Catalan than those immigrant students whose L1 was different from Spanish. All these studies therefore confirm that students’ L1 can have a significant bearing on students’ attitudes, motivation and their self-concept constitution in multilingual contexts. This is especially interesting in multilingual contexts in which learning additional languages such as English may have a potential impact on the relationship between identity, attitudes and motivation, as language learners continually construct and reconstruct their identities (Cenoz, 2009), a process that is particularly likely to impinge on the affective side of language learning.
Objectives

There were five main objectives for this study. First, to explore the role of integrativeness in a multilingual context that is remarkably different (although the L2/English group is also absent) from those contexts analysed in previous studies such as Hungary, Japan, China and Iran. The second objective was to test whether the promotion-type of instrumentality correlates with the ideal L2 self, and whether the prevention-type of instrumentality was more closely linked to the ought-to L2 self. These first two objectives are partial replications of Dörnyei and Csizér’s (2002), Dörnyei’s (2010) and Taguchi et al.’s (2009) studies, but in a context in which English represents the L3 and where it is used in an EMI context (in opposition to an EFL context). The third objective was to examine how strongly the different factors considered correlate with the criterion measures (the intended learning effort). This was in order to evaluate the impact of the different L2 Motivational Self System components on motivated language learning behaviour in EMI contexts. The fourth objective was to analyse whether there were different motivational trends when male and female participants were compared in an EMI setting. And the fifth objective was to gauge the effect of the students’ L1 on the 10 scales under consideration, whilst testing whether EMI may help reduce the L1-related differences observed in previous studies.

Method

This study was carried out at the University of the Basque Country (UBC), an officially bilingual university located in the Basque Country in the north of Spain. Local students are bilingual to different degrees in Basque and Spanish, which is why English is a third language for them. This study presents two main new features when compared to previous ones. First, whereas the L2 Motivational Self System has been tested in mainly monolingual education contexts in which English represents the L2 such as Hungary (Dörnyei, 2010; Dörnyei et al., 2006), China, Japan and Iran (Ryan, 2009; Taguchi et al., 2009), the present study was undertaken in an officially bilingual context in which English is the L3, which may have an impact on students’ self system (Henry, 2011). Secondly, the L2 Motivational Self System has been applied in contexts where English is taught as a foreign language, whereas in this study English is the medium of instruction and not just a language subject.

Participants

A total of 189 university students enrolled in EMI programmes participated in the study. All the students were voluntarily enrolled on the different EMI courses, as participation is decided on a voluntary basis at the UBC. The motivation to acquire English at a high proficiency level, which will allow them to succeed on their EMI courses, was one of the main characteristics of these students; however, the EMI experience itself may positively or negatively affect their initially high level of motivation. Their mean age was 20 years and 8 months and they were drawn from four different faculties: Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Economics and Business Studies, and Faculty of Social and Communication Sciences. Of the total sample 88 (46.6%) respondents were male, 99 (52.3%)
were female and 2 (1.1%) did not specify. As for the students’ mother tongue, 20 (10.6%) had Basque as L1, 105 (55.6%) Spanish, and 39 (20.6%) both Basque and Spanish. The remaining 23 (12.2%) had a combination of different L1s (Spanish and French, Spanish and English, Spanish and Catalan, etc.). The last group (those with different L1s) was not considered, as the number of participants in each of the different L1 combinations was low.

When the participants were asked about their overseas experiences, 66 (34.9%) had spent a period of at least three months in English-speaking countries (e.g. travelling or studying), while 125 (65.1%) had not. Eighty-three (43.9%) had taken EMI courses at pre-university level and 106 (56.1%) had not. As for their English competence, the students were asked to rate their current self-perceived proficiency in English. They were shown the six different foreign language competence levels established by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, followed by a brief explanation of each of the levels. Students’ self-perceived English competence was as follows: 76 (40.2%) chose the C1/C2 option (advanced level), 57 (30.2%) the B2 level (upper-intermediate level), 34 (18%) the B1 + level (intermediate level), and 15 (8%) the B1 level (lower intermediate level). Seven participants (3.6%) left this item blank.

**Instrument**

The questionnaire used in this study was the one designed by Taguchi et al. (2009) which measured the respondents’ answers to different items on a 6-point Likert scale from ‘strongly disagree’ (1) to ‘strongly agree’ (6) in the case of the statement-type items, and from ‘not at all’ (1) to ‘very much’ (6) in the case of question-type items. The questionnaire was piloted in English on 30 EMI undergraduates studying at another university located in the Basque Country. Once their comments were considered (see the comments below), the final version was administered.

The questionnaire was completed in English and, in order to avoid any language-related hindrance during its completion, both the researcher and the class teacher were present and willing to help to dispel any uncertainties that might have arisen. The paper–pencil questionnaire was administered in class and all the students completed it willingly. There was a total of 67 items on the questionnaire, including those aimed at gathering background information.

The 10 factors under consideration, their items and their Cronbach alpha internal consistency reliability coefficients can be observed in Table 1. The description provided by Taguchi et al. (2009, pp. 74–75) for each of the factors and the few changes made after piloting the questionnaire were as follows:

1. **Criterion measures** assessing the learners’ intended efforts toward learning English.
2. **Ideal L2 self**, which refers to the L2-specific facet of one’s ideal self.
3. **Ought-to L2 self**, which measures the attributes that one believes one ought to possess in order to avoid possible negative outcomes.
4. **Family influence** examining active and passive parental roles.
5. **Instrumentality-promotion** measuring the regulation of personal goals to become successful such as attaining high proficiency in English in order to make more money or find a better job.
Table 1. The factors, the encompassed items and the Cronbach alpha coefficients.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Factor name</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>α</th>
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| Criterion measures           | 5. If an English course was offered at university or somewhere else in the future, I would like to take it.  
17. I am working hard at learning English.  
28. I am prepared to expend a lot of effort in learning English.  
41. I think I am doing my best to learn English. | 0.688 |
| Ideal L2 self                | 8. I can imagine myself living abroad and having a discussion in English.  
20. I can imagine a situation where I am speaking English with foreigners.  
33. I imagine myself as someone who is able to speak English.  
58. Whenever I think of my future career, I imagine myself using English.  
66. The things I want to do in the future require me to use English. | 0.830 |
| Ought-to L2 self             | 13. I study English because close friends of mine think it is important.  
25. I have to study English, because, if I do not study it, I think my parents will be disappointed with me.  
38. Learning English is necessary because people surrounding me expect me to do so.  
62. My parents believe that I must study English to be an educated person. | 0.719 |
| Family influence             | 2. My parents encourage me to study English.  
14. My parents encourage me to take every opportunity to use my English (e.g. speaking and reading).  
29. My parents encourage me to study English in my free time.  
40. My parents encourage me to attend extra English classes after class (e.g. private lessons/language academies). | 0.801 |
| Instrumentality-promotion    | 6. Studying English can be important to me because I think it will someday be useful in getting a good job.  
18. Studying English is important to me because English proficiency is necessary for promotion in the future.  
31. Studying English is important to me because I would like to spend a longer period living abroad (e.g. studying and working).  
55. Studying in English can be important for me because I think I’ll need it for further/future studies.  
64. Studying English is important to me because with English I can work globally. | 0.745 |
| Instrumentality-prevention   | 23. I have to study English because I don’t want to get bad marks in it at university.  
36. I have to study English, otherwise, I think I cannot be successful in my future career.  
60. Studying English is necessary for me because I don’t want to get a poor score or a fail mark in exams.  
67. Studying English is important to me because, if I don’t have knowledge of English, I’ll be considered a weak student. | 0.700 |
| Attitudes to EMI             | 12. I like the atmosphere of my classes taught in English.  
24. I find learning subjects taught in English really interesting.  
37. I always look forward to/I am enthusiastic about classes taught in English.  
61. I really enjoy learning subjects in English. | 0.750 |
| Cultural interest            | 43. Do you like the music of English-speaking countries (e.g. pop music)?  
46. Do you like English films (culture)?  
49. Do you like magazines, newspapers, or books in English?  
52. Do you like TV programmes made in English-speaking countries? | 0.765 |
| Attitudes to L2 community    | 44. Do you like to travel to English-speaking countries?  
47. Do you like the people who live in English-speaking countries?  
50. Do you like meeting people from English-speaking countries?  
53. Would you like to know more about people from English-speaking countries? | 0.791 |
| Integrativeness              | 45. How important do you think learning English is in order to learn more about the culture and art of its speakers?  
51. How much do you like English? | 0.393 |

(6) **Instrumentality-prevention** measuring the regulation of duties and obligations such as studying English in order to pass an examination. Item 10 (I have to learn English because without passing the English course I cannot graduate) in the original study was eliminated because it did not apply to our context.
Attitudes to EMI measuring situation-specific motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience. The original factor referred to attitudes to learning English, which in this study has been adjusted to attitudes to EMI.

Attitudes to L2 community investigating the learners’ attitudes toward the community of the target language.

Cultural interest measuring the learners’ interest in the cultural products of the L2 culture, such as TV, magazines, music and movies.

Integrativeness, which is assessed with items from Dörnyei et al. (2006) Integrativeness factor, which entails having a positive attitude toward the second language, its culture and the native speakers of that language. One of the items (How much would you like to become similar to the people who speak English?) included in the original questionnaire was eliminated, because during the piloting students found the question difficult to understand and suggested that it should be eliminated.

It has to be pointed out that the Cronbach’s alpha value for one of the factors, namely integrativeness, is very low (0.393), which is why all the reported statistically significant results that include this factor have to be treated with caution.

Procedure

The data were gathered in April and May 2014 at the UBC by contacting colleagues who were teaching EMI at different faculties. The questionnaires were completed anonymously in class so that any queries that students may have had could be dealt with on the spot. University students majoring in English Studies were not included because their motivation towards English was expected to be very high. In fact, Ryan (2009) reported that university English majors had consistently higher scores in different motivational scales (ideal L2 self, integrativeness and intended learning effort) than their non-English major counterparts. Consequently, none of the participants in this study was enrolled in language-related degrees, in an attempt to avoid any selection bias. The statistical analyses were carried out by means of the software package SPSS 22.0.

Results and discussion

As for the first objective of this study, the ideal L2 self and integrativeness were positively correlated ($r = 0.576; p < .01$), which indicated that the two variables were tapping into the same construct domain. The correlation coefficients also showed that there was a higher correlation between the ideal L2 self and the criterion measures ($r = 0.529; p < .01$) than between integrativeness and the criterion measures ($r = 0.416; p < .01$), results which supported the replacement of integrativeness with the ideal L2 self. Since the ideal L2 self attained a higher explanatory power of learners’ intended efforts, it can be concluded that the concept of integrativeness can be substituted by the broader concept of the ideal L2 self (Ryan, 2009).

The second objective revolved around the relationship between the two types of instrumentality, the ideal L2 self and the ought-to self. Table 2 reveals that the ideal L2 self correlated significantly more highly with instrumentality-promotion than with
instrumentality-prevention, whereas the ought-to self correlated more highly with the instrumentality-prevention. Furthermore, the two aspects of instrumentality displayed low intercorrelations, indicating that they were distinctly separate. Hence, the conclusion to be drawn is that the promotion aspect of instrumentality is closely associated with the ideal L2 self, whereas the prevention side of instrumentality links to the ought-to L2 self.

The third objective focused on the analysis of the strength of correlation of the different factors and the criterion measures. The results revealed that two of the main components of the L2 Motivational Self System significantly correlated with the criterion measures (see Table 3). The ideal L2 self and attitudes to EMI (which would embody the participants’ language learning experience in this particular context) were in fact the two factors with the highest correlation coefficients, followed by attitudes to the L2 community, integrativeness, family influence, instrumentality-promotion and cultural interest. Curiously enough, in the case of university undergraduates the instrumentality-prevention scale and the ought-to self did not show any significant correlation, which could be interpreted as the participants not being motivated by the expectation of significant others and the need to avoid negative outcomes. Therefore, the more extrinsic and less internalized types of instrumental motives assumed a subsidiary role when the sample was considered as a whole.

In order to measure more precisely the effect of the different factors on the criterion measures, stepwise regression analysis was carried out, since this analysis allows us to establish the final contribution of those variables likely to have an influence on the dependent variable by pinpointing the best set of predictors. Table 4 shows how the independent variables were entered according to their statistical contribution in explaining the variance of the dependent variable. Four independent variables satisfied the statistical criteria to be included in the model: the ideal L2 self, attitudes to EMI, family influence and instrumental promotion, which together explained 47.6% (adjusted $R^2 = 46.4\%$) of the variance of the criterion measures. The overall relationship was statistically significant ($F(4,$

### Table 2. The relationship between the ideal L2 self, the ought-to self, instrumentality-promotion and instrumentality-prevention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ideal L2 self</th>
<th>Ought-to L2 self</th>
<th>Instrumentality (promotion)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ought-to L2 self</td>
<td>-0.003</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumentality (promotion)</td>
<td>0.587**</td>
<td>0.091</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumentality (prevention)</td>
<td>-0.003</td>
<td>0.696**</td>
<td>0.227**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p < .01 (two-tailed).

### Table 3. Motivational variables and strength of correlation with criterion measures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Criterion measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideal L2 self</td>
<td>0.529**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes to EMI</td>
<td>0.522**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes to L2 community</td>
<td>0.427**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrativeness</td>
<td>0.416**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family influence</td>
<td>0.410**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumentality-promotion</td>
<td>0.407**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural interest</td>
<td>0.365**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumentality-prevention</td>
<td>0.095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ought-to L2 self</td>
<td>0.053</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p < .001.
173) = 38.40, p < .001) and, after applying Cohen’s criteria for effect size, this relationship could be characterized as strong (Multiple R = 0.690). The predictive model excluded the variables that did not contribute to explaining differences in the dependent variable, namely cultural interest, attitudes to the L2 community and integrativeness (ought-to L2 self and instrumental prevention did not correlate with the criterion measures).

With regards to the fourth objective, the first main sub-division of the sample was based on gender, as the review of the literature indicates that female students are usually more motivated to learn foreign languages, although it is also believed that EMI may help to diminish these gender-related differences. The T-tests performed comparing male and female students brought to light some interesting results (Table 5). The descriptive statistics showed that the ideal L2 self and the instrumentality-promotion displayed the highest means, whereas the ought-to L2 self and the instrumentality-prevention showed the lowest means in both groups. Significant differences were observed in five of the scales (criterion measures, instrumentality-promotion, attitudes to EMI, attitudes to L2 community, and integrativeness), but it is worth noting that the effect size is rather small (eta squared = 0.02) in all cases. Therefore, although the differences are significant in the aforementioned five scales, their magnitude is too small to be really meaningful. It can thus be concluded that gender differences tend to disappear in EMI university contexts.

Bearing the fifth objective in mind, the sample was divided into three separate groups of students: those with Basque as L1, those with Spanish as L1, and those who had both Basque and Spanish as their mother tongue. The means showed that the L1 = Basque students had the lowest scores in 7 of the scales, and the highest in the two scales connected with extrinsic motives (the ought-to L2 self and instrumentality-prevention). Nevertheless, a one-way analysis of variance (see Table 6) revealed that there was a significant difference

### Table 4. Stepwise linear regression.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>Adjusted R²</th>
<th>Standardized coefficient, β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sign.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideal L2 self</td>
<td>0.282</td>
<td>0.278</td>
<td>0.373</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>0.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes to EMI</td>
<td>0.377</td>
<td>0.369</td>
<td>0.352</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family influence</td>
<td>0.464</td>
<td>0.454</td>
<td>0.297</td>
<td>5.07</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumentality-promotion</td>
<td>0.476</td>
<td>0.464</td>
<td>0.138</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>0.048</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5. Gender differences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Effect size&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion measures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal L2 self</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>-2.46*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ought-to L2 self</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>-1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family influence</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.99*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumentality-promotion</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumentality-prevention</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>-2.43*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes to EMI</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural interest</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>-2.14*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes to L2 community</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>-0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrativeness</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>-2.29*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>p < .05.

<sup>**</sup>p < .01.

<sup>a</sup>Eta squared.
in only 1 of the 10 scales under scrutiny, namely cultural interest, as students whose mother tongue was Spanish ($M = 5.14$, $SD = 0.74$) were significantly more inclined to show interest in English countries, films, magazines, books, music and TV programmes than their Basque = L1 ($M = 4.66$, $SD = 0.96$) counterparts, although it has to be noted that the effect size was small ($\eta^2 = 0.04$). Thus, and contrary to previous studies in EFL settings, the independent variable mother tongue did not exert any significant influence among EMI students.

### Conclusions

A new paradigm of motivation emerged in the first decade of the current century termed the L2 Motivational Self System ([Dörnyei, 2005, 2009]). Although this construct has been validated by empirical data from different contexts (Dörnyei, 2010; Ryan, 2009; Taguchi et al., 2009), the current study puts forward two main new features: English is the L3 and it is used as means of instruction in the context under scrutiny. Therefore, this research offers further valuable and original insights into the motivational self system by analyzing it in a multilingual university context.

The study confirms that in EMI contexts motivation is generated by self-identification processes, specifically by students’ aspiration toward an imagined L2 future self, as well as by the EMI learning experience itself. The influence of these two components is underpinned by the family influence and instrumental prevention factors. Although Spain is on the lower rungs of English proficiency among the European Union’s member States, it is on the upper rungs when it comes to supporting the importance of language policy and the desire to improve foreign language learning (mainly English) (European Commission, 2012). Thus, social factors are playing a paramount role in the widespread belief that English is an indispensable component of Spanish university students’ cultural capital. In the Basque Country in particular and in Spain in general the early teaching of English and the rapid spread of EMI programmes is due to the importance attached by students’ significant others (teachers, parents and peers), but especially by ‘parents who make it clear to them that they ought to learn English’, as is the case in other contexts (Lamb, 2007, p. 772).

Strikingly, the ought-to L2 self plays a subservient, insignificant role (the mean is by far the lowest among all the factors considered: 2.58 on a 6-point Likert scale). Whereas the

#### Table 6. L1 differences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Basque ($n = 20$)</th>
<th>Spanish ($n = 105$)</th>
<th>Both ($n = 39$)</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>Effect size$^a$</th>
<th>Sequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criterion measures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal L2 self</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ought-to L2 self</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family influence</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumentality-promotion</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>5.34</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumentality-prevention</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes to EMI</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural interest</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>3.42$^a$</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>Sp. &gt; Basq.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes to L2 community</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrativeness</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>5.01</td>
<td>4.98</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$p < .05.

$^a$Eta squared.
ideal L2 self is potent \((M = 5.18)\) and experiences of EMI courses \((M = 4.59)\) boost their motivation, these university students’ do not feel obliged to meet the expectations of others. Although the significant role played by parental influence may seem to contradict the previous statement, the interpretation could be that parents play a paramount role when it comes to encouraging their daughters and sons to learn and use English, but their offspring do not regard this as a determinant extrinsic motive that pushes them to avoid disappointing their parents, whilst their ideal L2 self holds sway and represents their ‘best case scenario’ (Hamilton & Serrano, 2014, p. 4).

The results also seem to indicate that EMI may help to dilute the gender-related differences found in many previous studies (Carr & Pauwels, 2006; Dörnyei et al., 2006; Kissau, 2006). Although some differences were detected, their magnitude was too small to be meaningful. Contrary to the results obtained by Ryan (2009), male and female students did not differ in the ideal L2 selves, which could be put down to the different settings, that is, EFL in Ryan’s study and EMI here. Whereas female students are usually more motivated in EFL settings, EMI seems to help to dispel the belief that learning foreign languages is feminine terrain (Carr & Pauwels, 2006; Kissau, 2006; Meece et al., 2006), and the use of the language to learn content is equally prone to motivate male and female students. EMI seems to help both male and female students to form vivid images of themselves as authentic users and speakers of the language. However, the impact of gender when EMI is compulsory should be analysed in further research to determine whether our results are borne out.

In the case of the L1 variable, previous studies (Lasagabaster, 2004, p. 221) carried out in the same context in the early 2000s concluded that L1 = Basque students regarded English as a threat to the minority language which prompted ‘Basque speakers to build attitudinal fences in order to stand up for their linguistic rights.’ However, the rapid spread of English and the awareness of the need to learn the current lingua franca have led many education stakeholders to support its teaching. The results presented here seem to indicate that there has been an attitudinal change and L1 = Basque students are more motivated than those researched a decade ago. The previous conflicting picture between global (embodied by English) and local (represented by Basque) forces is observed to have significantly waned because the participation of the minoritized community has widened (van der Walt, 2013), a context in which EMI may help to overcome previous qualms and misgivings. It can thus be concluded that these results indicate that attitudinal and motivational studies have to be undertaken at different points in time if a clear picture of a particular context is to be obtained, because changes may take place in just a decade (as our results reveal), especially when a new approach such as EMI has been implemented. In any case, it has to be noted that, in the previous study (Lasagabaster, 2004), all the participants had only learnt English following the traditional EFL approach, since EMI was not available at the time.

These results add to the robust empirical research that confirms the soundness of Dörnyei’s (2005, 2009) self-based approach, even in a multilingual context where English represents the L3 of the students and is used as a means of instruction and not simply in the more traditional EFL context. Learners’ individual changes may be related to the transformation of regional identity as well as the modernization and globalization process a particular context is undergoing (Gao, Zhao, Cheng, & Zhou, 2007), which is why the analysis of the possible-selves-related issues deserves further attention not only in EFL contexts but also in EMI experiences.
The pedagogical implications to be drawn from this study can be summarized as follows. First, teachers have to become aware of the changes that EMI may cause in students’ ideal L2 self, as this novel approach can be as a powerful tool for improving their English language proficiency (Dalton-Puffer, 2011). There is evidence that assisting students to focus their language learning possible self-images can strengthen motivation, as ‘initially consulting with learners about their self-images might help to empower the course-planner to create motivating lessons through activities enhancing the self-images of learners’ (Sampson, 2012, p. 332). EMI teachers should benefit from the positive motivational impact of the language learning experience (here labelled attitudes to EMI). To that end, teachers should try to boost their students’ ideal L2 self by providing them with opportunities to strengthen their vision and develop their self-images as speakers and users of English in their content classes. Student-centered and task-based methodology should help to reach this objective.

Second, the ought-to L2 self keeps a low profile among EMI university students. The fact that these students are adults who have voluntarily chosen to participate in EMI courses may explain the little importance attached to the ought-to L2 self, which seems to indicate that in EMI classes there is no need to place any emphasis on this component.

Third, the boost of multilingualism is one of the main objectives of education systems all over the world, including the European context (European Commission, 2012). The results seem to indicate that EMI may help to ease the language tensions that usually emerge when different languages are in contact (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009). The interaction between the multilingual student’s different selves should receive further attention, as Henry (2011) observed that the incursion of the L2 English self-concept had negative effects on the L3 self-concept, while Lasagabaster (2004) verified that the L3 English self-concept was negatively affected by the L2 Basque self-concept. The present study indicates that the use of all the languages concerned as media of instruction may help to avert the potential conflicts between multiple self-concepts, as the status of all the languages concerned is reaffirmed by their use as means of instruction, while purely language-related tensions seem to be upstaged and eventually defused (in fact no L1-related differences were found).

Fourth, although the international English language teaching industry still often appears to believe that students associate the English-speaking community with the Anglo-American community, learners do not share the same viewpoint (Lamb, 2007; Ryan, 2009). For many years EFL textbooks have spread the idea that English learners aim to identify and integrate with a defined Anglo-American community, although this trend has slowly started to change in the last few years. In the case of EMI our results indicate that this is not the case and, in fact, the impact of the scales attitudes to the L2 community and integrativeness is not significant. EMI contexts do not lend themselves to an anglocentric perspective, as the issues dealt with in class are much wider in scope. This is why teachers should be aware that ‘if English is the language of international HE (higher education), it is not appropriate for it to be a national version of HE’s Anglophone minority’ (Jenkins, 2013, p. 206). Outdated beliefs about native-speaker privileges should be erased while students’ international posture should be fostered.

Last but not least, a number of limitations should be highlighted. One of the main weaknesses of this study has to do with the low Cronbach’s alpha value obtained in the case of the integrativeness factor and, therefore, all the analyses that include this factor should be
considered with caution. It is more than likely that the integrativeness factor would have benefited from a larger number of items, as this factor consists of only two items. It would also be interesting to examine whether the fact that the students participating in this study had opted for EMI voluntarily might have affected the results. As mentioned above, further studies should examine whether the same results are obtained in contexts where EMI is compulsory because, if it were the case, this would definitively allow us to confirm that EMI helps to diminish the impact of the L1 on students’ attitudes and motivation towards English irrespective of its optional or mandatory nature. In addition, since the data were confined to a multilingual EMI context, further research could examine whether the EMI/motivation relationship reported in this study can be applied to other contexts. Since EMI is burgeoning all over the world, this is an issue that undoubtedly deserves further investigation. Future studies could also benefit from qualitative data that would allow us to examine the issues raised in this article in greater detail.

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