

4 EMI in Spain

Striving to maintain a multilingual balance

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Abstract

Spanish universities have lately striven to boost English-medium instruction (EMI) programmes, since EMI is viewed as a lynchpin of the internationalization process. Thus, Spanish universities encourage the use of English, which in monolingual regions entails bilingualism as the desired outcome, whereas in officially bilingual regions trilingualism is the aim. Spain is a multilingual country in which some minority languages coexist with Spanish and English in the curriculum and this multilingualism ineluctably generates friction. This chapter analyses how the interaction between Englishization and multilingualism is perceived by society in general and the different university bodies in particular, the reactions encountered as regards the impact of Englishization on the L1, and whether there are differences across disciplines.

Keywords: English-medium instruction, higher education, Spain, bilingualism, multilingualism

1 Introduction

Countries around the world are dedicating substantial resources to the internationalization of their higher education systems. In a global university context in which Englishization, English-medium instruction (EMI) and internationalization are three processes that are inextricably linked (Dafouz & Smit, 2020; Doíz et al., 2013a), the lack of competence in English has become a hot issue in Spain. Unlike countries in Central and Northern Europe, Spain is not renowned for the foreign language learning abilities of its inhabitants (as is also the case of, for instance, Italy and France), which is why content

and language integrated learning (also known as CLIL) has become very popular at pre-university level.

As a natural development of this interest in CLIL, English-medium instruction (EMI) is gaining momentum in Spanish higher education institutions. In the Spanish context it is not usual to refer to *Englishization*, which is usually subsumed under CLIL at pre-university level and internationalization and EMI at university level, as EMI is viewed as the cornerstone of the internationalization process. In fact, the introduction of programmes taught completely in English or, more often, the limited incorporation of some subjects in English in different degrees, is becoming commonplace in the vast majority of Spanish universities (Fortanet-Gómez, 2013; Halbach & Lázaro, 2015). However, the implementation of EMI programmes in Spain lags behind other European contexts (Wächter & Maiworm, 2014), the poor command of English among university teachers, students, and administration personnel being one of the main reasons (Arnó-Macià & Mancho-Barés, 2015).

An issue that should be borne in mind when analysing the Spanish context is that Spain is a multilingual country in which three languages (Basque, Catalan and Galician) hold co-official status with Spanish in six out of the 17 autonomous communities that make up Spain: these six are Catalonia, Galicia, the Balearic Islands, Navarre, the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC), and the Valencian Community. Historically there has been a close tie between language and identity in these regions and one of the main objectives of the Statutes of Autonomy passed in the 1980s was to guarantee that these co-official languages are taught on all the rungs of the educational ladder, from kindergarten to tertiary education. With this in mind, normalization processes have been implemented in the last four decades in order to revitalize Basque, Catalan, and Galician and officially bilingual universities play a key role in this process. In this chapter special attention will be devoted to the linguistic strains caused by Englishization, as some voices consider that the increasing presence of EMI may have a deleterious effect on attitudes and motivation to learn the local languages (Lasagabaster, 2017).

2 The debate about the role of English in the Spanish educational system

Broadly speaking, it could be affirmed that to Spaniards Englishization mainly means the increasing presence of English in the curriculum, both as a language subject and as a vehicular language. Since Spain is a multilingual

country which lacks a foreign language learning tradition and in which minority languages co-exist with Spanish, it does not come as a surprise that EMI has brought about social, political, educational, and linguistic tensions. Since language is at the very heart of both sociopolitical and academic debates about the nation (del Valle, 2020), we should bear in mind that, as Norton (2013, p. 47) bluntly points out, 'language teaching is not a neutral practice but a highly political one'. This is particularly worth considering in a multilingual country such as Spain which is challenged by recurrent linguistic strains. As a result of the 1978 Constitution, there has been a process of devolution in which minority languages are supported by regional governments with a view to reversing the language shift to Spanish. In this highly sensitive sociolinguistic environment, some voices warn against the Englishization process, perceiving it as a potential Trojan horse that may erode the progress made so far in revitalizing minority languages. Although broadly speaking there is a general positive attitude towards the spread of multilingualism, this multilingual context has sparked debate, especially at pre-university level (in some regions debates have been heated), and to a lesser degree at tertiary level.

However, there has been criticism of the mushrooming of English courses at Spanish universities on the grounds that Spanish is an international language, the third most widely spoken in the world after English and Chinese, that represents a linguistic treasure that needs to be nurtured and promoted. According to Kelly (2017), the concern about how to improve foreign language competence has eclipsed the important asset represented by the Spanish language, which has been overlooked when designing internationalization policies, as it is a great potential attractor not only for those who already speak it as their first language (L1) (more than 460 million speakers), but also for those who want to perfect their Spanish language skills. Some voices (Kelly, 2017; Valdecantos, 2012) predict that implementing English bilingual programmes jeopardizes Spanish's privileged position and would end up impoverishing the Spanish language. Valdecantos (2012) finds it striking that those who have organized unflinching and vigorous campaigns to protect Spanish from the other co-official languages have not spoken out against bilingual education in English. A few of the pundits come from the university system itself (Valdecantos, 2012), but the most salient ones are well-known writers (de Prada, 2013, 2015 and 2019; Marías, 2015). The main concern of campaigners against bilingual education in English is that teachers' mumbling English prevents them from delivering content in an efficient and natural way, which Valdecantos (2012, p. 27) defines as 'verbal destitution in a language mastered by neither the teacher nor the learners'

that will undoubtedly have a deleterious effect on the learning of content.¹ De Prada (2013 and 2019) also shares this bleak prognosis and shows his concern about learners leaving school being ‘illiterate in two languages’ or ‘bilingual donkeys’, and about politicians’ fixation with bilingual education, which he labels as ‘utter absurdity’. Needless to say, this author does not provide any empirical evidence to support his opinion and relies on his good judgement and informal conversations with a few teachers. De Prada finds it reasonable that Norwegian and Dutch speakers are in need of a lingua franca, their languages being ‘esoteric and irrelevant’, but deems incomprehensible that a nation which managed to take its language to the New World has – like an American lackey, due to US global economic and cultural dominance – relinquished it in international fora.

These critical voices are not numerous and their backlash against bilingual education in English is mainly directed at pre-university level (de Prada, 2013, 2015 and 2019; Mariás, 2015), whereas few react as violently at tertiary level. As we will see in the next section, both the Spanish Ministry of Education (2015) and the Conference of Rectors of Spanish universities (Bazo et al., 2017) have a completely different approach and agree on the dire need to boost bilingual or multilingual programmes. At university level it is widely believed that offering courses and programmes in English will help to attract international students and international faculty members, to foster more publications in English, to improve local students’ English proficiency and their professional future, to be better placed in international rankings, to stimulate educational and research partnerships, and to disseminate Spanish culture. In fact, when university stakeholders are asked about EMI, and despite initial fears and concerns similar to those found in other European contexts (Alfaro-Tanco et al., 2020), they are mostly and overtly positive, which may be the main reason why the teaching in English has not found much opposition in Spanish universities.

In any case, the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports (2015) urged Spanish universities not to neglect the role that Spanish – the world’s third language in terms of native (L1) speakers and the fourth in terms of the total number of speakers (L1 and L2) – should play when it comes to internationalization. In a document entitled ‘Strategy for the internationalization of Spanish Universities 2015-2020’ and published by the aforementioned Ministry, the need to find a balance between the increasing presence of EMI and the potential of Spanish as an international language to transmit knowledge in higher education was underscored.

1 [I]ndigencia verbal propias de una lengua que no dominan ni el profesor ni los alumnos’.

3 Englishization in Spanish higher education

This section revolves around Englishization at the macro level, that is, at the nation-state level, later zooming in on the meso level (university level) through research studies. Although official language policies repeatedly mention the need to spread EMI, the specifications about how this should be carried out are scarce. This policy goes hand in hand with the initiative launched by the Spanish Ministry of Education, which sought to modernize universities in the current knowledge society and expected that one in three degree programmes would be taught in English by 2020 (Spanish Ministry of Education, 2015). This expectation has not been met, as progress on EMI has not been linear, and very few universities have been able to offer 30% of their bachelor's degrees and 50% of their master's degrees in English in the 2020/21 academic year. Three main reasons may explain why this objective has not been accomplished: the aforementioned low level of English proficiency among the three university bodies (teachers, students, and administration personnel), the scarcity of support and training to implement EMI, and the lack of incentives.

The second reason mentioned ties in with a survey of 70 European universities in eleven European countries, among which Spain was best represented with 22 universities. When comparing the data obtained, O'Dowd (2018) observed great diversity of EMI training and accreditation procedures. Whereas most institutions offered training in communicative skills, almost half of the universities did not provide any EMI methodological training. When it came to teacher accreditation, the requested proficiency level ranged from B2 to C2, which led the author to conclude that there is a compelling need to reach an agreement on some common guidelines across the European higher education area, including in Spain.

This concern was also shared by the Conference of Rectors of Spanish universities who commissioned a study (Bazo et al., 2017) aimed at establishing common guidelines that would pave the way to a common language policy in Spanish universities. The main objective of this initiative was to pinpoint homogeneous criteria around three main aspects, namely accreditation, training, and incentives. As far as accreditation is concerned, the authors underscore the importance of establishing linguistic requirements for all stakeholders, including not only lecturers (who should be accredited at the C1 level to be allowed to participate in EMI courses) and students (the B1 level should be the minimum by the end of the degree), but also administrative staff (who should be supported to improve their foreign language skills) with a view to underpinning the internationalization profile of higher

education institutions. The need to establish common criteria for all Spanish universities is also highlighted. The second aspect addresses the need to equip the three university bodies with the competences to tackle complex academic contents, take part in mobility programmes and provide them with strategies to tackle professional and multicultural contexts, including a number of training activities and courses customized for students, teachers, and administrative staff. The third part proposes the creation of a programme of incentives designed to encourage the three university bodies to take part in the internationalization process. The authors make it clear that this document should not become a checklist but rather a framework to boost coordination between Spanish universities, although each institution should bear in mind its own features and context and apply it accordingly.

Despite this framework document (Bazo et al., 2017), when it comes to research, the number of studies on the Englishization process and teacher development in Spanish universities is rather limited (Ploettner, 2019). Based on questionnaires and interviews, Macaro et al. (2019) looked into what types of accreditation are available in Spain and the beliefs of managers (policymakers, programme coordinators, and internationalizations managers) and EMI teachers as regards professional development and qualifications. Although it is usually taken for granted that EMI teaching staff are highly competent in English, teachers themselves underscore insufficient proficiency as one of the main stumbling blocks for effective EMI implementation, which has led Dimova (2017) to call for the alignment of EMI accreditation. The authors of the study found great variation in beliefs, but widespread agreement on the need to change university teachers' pedagogy. Both teachers and university managers demanded some type of teaching quality-assurance, but they dissented as to what kind of institution or body should award accreditation. However, they concurred that such certification should go well beyond English language competence, as other abilities such as methodological skills should also be considered. However, although there was support for more demanding accreditation, EMI teachers were averse to a more in-depth professional development programme because of difficulties in attending intensive courses that last several weeks.

Ploettner (2019) critically analysed EMI teacher development at a small private Catalan university. The study focused on interdisciplinary collaboration between a language and a content teacher and examined the reformulation of the roles of the participants as defined in the official document. Although the official policy aimed at establishing a relationship of reciprocity and mutual development, the author (researcher and participant in the study) observed that the language specialist claimed superior authority

in the teacher development process, which led her to acknowledge that a more equal distribution of authority is recommended for this collaborative framework to succeed. Thus, language specialists should not hold the upper hand, because this may cause content teachers to shy away from collaborative experiences designed to underpin EMI teacher development. Two of the main causes for dissatisfaction among teachers are the lack of support and the feeling of loneliness (Doíz et al., 2013b; Fortanet-Gómez, 2010; Lasagabaster, 2018), both causes being repeatedly mentioned by teachers when they are asked about EMI (Alfaro-Tanco et al., 2020; Doíz & Lasagabaster, 2018; Doíz et al., 2019; Fernández-Costales & González-Riaño, 2015). That is why it is essential that the collaboration between language and content teachers be carried out on an equal footing and fostering reciprocity, as this seems to be the best way to share experiences and encourage dialogue that leads to reflection and more effective EMI programmes.

There is not much research on teacher collaboration, that is to say, a content teacher and a language specialist working together at university level with a view to paying more attention to language-related issues so that EMI students can more easily grasp the content taught in the foreign language. An interesting study is the one undertaken by Hernández-Nanclares and Jiménez-Munoz (2017), which consisted in boosting the collaboration between a Spanish content teacher in business administration and a fellow economics native specialist and an experienced linguist specializing in EMI. The pre- and post-intervention assessment revealed that this collaboration positively impacted EMI students' foreign language proficiency (more on this study in section 5).

4 Linguistic and identity strains brought about by Englishization

In this section I will focus on the linguistic and professional identity tensions caused by teaching in English. Just as in countries such as the Netherlands, which is viewed as a heartland of EMI (Wilkinson, 2018, p. 607), the increasing presence of English in Spanish universities has encountered some resistance, but these critical voices are particularly noticeable in Spanish bilingual regions. Only from a very naive perspective can the learning of English be deemed neutral, as it is a heavily loaded endeavour that usually raises feelings of linguistic imposition, identity loss, and cultural occupation. Although EMI tends to be highly valued by all members of the university community, linguistic tensions tend to generate the most sensitive debate.

In fact, in a study carried out at the University of the Basque Country, Doíz et al. (2013b) came across a remarkable paradox. On the one hand, some participants regarded English as a predator language that can not only threaten the development and normalization of Basque but also hinder the incorporation of other foreign languages in the curriculum. On the other hand, some (albeit not many) believed that too much effort and too many resources were put into Basque normalization and this impeded the much-needed development of English. Two studies by these same authors revealed that students were more reluctant than administration personnel and teachers to accept compulsory EMI (Doíz et al., 2014), but this was especially the case among those students whose mother tongue was Basque (Doíz et al., 2013c), who were much more concerned about the alleged negative impact of English on Basque – the increasing presence of English being seen as an obstacle for the recovery of the Basque language (e.g., resulting in less resources spent teaching it). However, when students are asked about the importance of English for their future professional lives, all of them – irrespective of their mother tongue – acknowledge that it opens up many possibilities and agree on the fact that the instrumental value of English will keep increasing in the near future (González Ardeo, 2014).

The clash between English and the minority language may jeopardize multilingual language policies in Spanish bilingual regions and, in fact, similar linguistic tensions have also been reported in Catalonia (Llurda et al., 2013) and the Valencian Community (Fortanet-Gómez, 2013), as there is always the underlying fear that English comes to supplant the local languages. Interestingly, strains have also been detected among international students, as they sometimes perceive that the minority language may become an obstacle for their academic objectives and are not always ‘appreciative of institutional efforts inviting them to incorporate a new language (i.e. Catalan) into their linguistic repertoire’ and prefer to use Spanish or English as the lingua franca in their exchanges with local students (Llurda et al., 2013, p. 219). Atkinson and Moriarty (2012) also observed tensions between different types of language ideology as a result of the commodification of Catalan and an ideology of nation and nationhood, as reflected in the electronic resources designed for mobile students visiting Catalan universities.

With the need to foster linguistic ecology in mind, Doíz et al. (2013b) urge university authorities to articulate language policies that clearly state the objectives to be met for each language by developing the necessary tools and indicators to measure them. The final aim should be to help the university community become functionally multilingual by creating an additive multilingual environment with a view to smoothing out the

inherent tensions found in multilingual institutions, particularly in the case of officially bilingual universities. This means that English needs to be rolled out in a mature, balanced manner to avoid increasing tensions between those who support more EMI courses and those who advocate greater resources devoted to developing the minority language.

Dafouz (2018) and Doíz and Lasagabaster (2018) delved into how EMI affects teachers' professional identity. Both studies drew on the concept of investment, as investment theory has been successfully applied to the learning of English in very diverse contexts (Barkhuizen, 2016; Norton, 2016). Teachers and learners invest in EMI because they believe it will increase their cultural capital while helping them to play a greater role in the social sphere. In both studies EMI lecturers viewed English as a means for professional and personal growth, since it enables them to foster their international profile. They also agreed on their developing a stronger agency within academic lingua franca practices (Jenkins, 2014) in which the native vs. non-native speaker debate is likely to fade out. In fact, their objective is to communicate in English in a natural and effortless manner, 'whereby native-like competence and flawless production in English is not their goal' (Doíz & Lasagabaster, 2018, p. 667).

However, Doíz and Lasagabaster (2018) observed significant differences between teachers and students. The former consider that teaching in EMI comes at a high personal cost which, broadly speaking, does not bring economic or institutional rewards, whereas the latter do not see it as such a burden. Two main reasons help to explain these differences: teachers feel more pressed to achieve the ideal EMI teacher they have in mind than students, and the integration of English in students' life comes more naturally than it is the case among teachers, who speak English at work but whose use of English is not so habitual in their private lives (students have incorporated English into many of their daily activities such as watching movies and TV series, or in their social networks). Therefore, teachers think of themselves as part of an imagined professional community, while students contemplate a more holistic imagined community that includes life outside university.

Block (2020) also analysed the emergent identities of three EMI teachers working in Catalonia where English is introduced in a bilingual ecology in Catalan and Spanish. All the participants resisted the English-language teaching gaze and remained loyal to their disciplinary gaze, as they had a strong group/discipline identification. In his study Block finds a strong link between group membership and the notion of disciplinary identities.

Spanish teachers recurrently mention that they feel more insecure in their EMI classes, mainly caused by their inability to tackle language

problems (Aguilar, 2017; Rubio & Moore, 2018), as well as more likely to suffer from fatigue due to the additional effort required to prepare their classes in English. All these factors contribute to lower self-esteem and lack of confidence, which is why they demand more training in EMI-related skills that should go beyond the mere improvement of their English proficiency (Doíz et al., 2019). When they talk about language, their interests are focused on grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary (Block, 2020; Doíz et al., 2019) and appear unconcerned about other language aspects such as pragmatics or discourse. Their disciplinary identity prevents them from paying much attention to language issues, while they recurrently claim that language falls outside their remit because they see themselves as imperfect language users. Whenever they approach language, it is from a 'narrow view of what constitutes language teaching' (Block, 2020, p. 16).

There is no doubt that the discordances found between EMI teachers' professional identities and their language responsibilities while teaching in a foreign language need to be addressed in teacher training programmes, because otherwise this linguistic void may end up negatively affecting the language and content learning process. Although they usually avoid taking on a language teacher role and, therefore, inhabiting an English-language teacher identity (Doíz & Lasagabaster, 2018; Mancho-Barés & Aguilar-Pérez, 2020; Moncada-Comas & Block, 2019), they cannot avoid focusing on language aspects such as vocabulary and, in fact, the majority of language-related episodes (instances in which attention is paid to language) found in EMI classes are initiated by teachers themselves (Doíz & Lasagabaster, 2021), which is an indication of language awareness on the part of EMI lecturers. In other words, EMI teachers do act as language experts in the case of specialized terminology, whether they like it or not, and irrespective of whether or not they exclusively regard themselves as content teachers. As Mancho-Barés and Aguilar-Pérez (2020) point out after examining EMI teachers' written corrective feedback, their actual teaching practices reveal some provision of language-related feedback and show that they do create opportunities for their students' use of disciplinary English in their classes.

This clearly indicates that teacher training courses should include reflection on teaching practices in order to try to improve language management and not limit it to disciplinary lexis, as the integration of language and content should be an integral part of teacher development programmes. We may agree with content teachers' mantra that their main concern is content (Airey, 2012), but it is hard to comprehend how they will achieve this if they do not also become responsible for how their students deal with 'disciplinary discourse with linguistic appropriateness (mostly in terms of

technical and specialized vocabulary)' (Mancho-Barés & Aguilar-Pérez, 2020, p. 21), as it has already been observed that they actually do (Doíz & Lasagabaster, 2021).

5 The impact of Englishization on disciplines

This is undoubtedly one of the areas that deserves further attention, as there is very little in the literature about what influence the Englishization process exerts on particular disciplines. Although I am unaware of any study focused on whether EMI teachers' investment varies according to the importance of English in each discipline, it seems reasonable to conclude that this may well be the case. A quick look at the range of EMI courses reveals that some disciplines such as business studies, economics and engineering are more likely to be taught in English, whereas other areas of study such as physical education, health sciences, history, or art are usually less internationally driven, a trend observable in the vast majority of Spanish universities (Marcos-García & Pavón, 2018). The impact of globalization has been bigger in some areas such as business studies, which could be put down to the fact that 'a high level of competence in English is viewed as a pre-requisite for all business students in the 21st century of Business Studies and given the globalization of the world' (Dafouz & Camacho-Miñano, 2016, p. 58), whereas other specializations do not feel so much pressure from Englishization.

As a matter of fact, in Spain all the studies analysing how EMI affects content learning have been undertaken in business administration degrees. What is more, just three studies have actually measured content learning, as the others are based on impressions of either teachers or students, interesting, however not as reliable. This fact is surprising, given the concerns regarding content learning on EMI courses.

The first was authored by Dafouz et al. (2014) and compared degree students enrolled on Spanish-medium and English-medium courses in business administration. The courses were: Financial Accounting I, Principles of Business Financial Management, and Economic History. The two groups had almost identical university access grades, which ensured their comparability. The results of the two groups were very similar in the three subjects with no statistically significant difference between them. The authors found it striking that even in History, a subject in which verbal and linguistic demands are expected to be higher, EMI had no negative impact on students' academic performance. This indicates that EMI students perform

just as well as students on first language programmes at tertiary level. As for disciplinary differences, both cohorts performed better in History than in Accounting and Finance, which, according to the researchers, could be due to disciplinary discourse distinctions or variation in the way teacher assessment was implemented.

Interestingly, Dafouz and Camacho-Miñano (2016) carried out a longitudinal study in which the grades of the two cohorts of Financial Accounting I were collated during four academic years at the Complutense University of Madrid (where the previous study was also completed). Both cohorts were taught by the same teacher, a teacher with extensive experience in teaching this subject in both languages. The results did not reveal any statistical difference between the EMI and the Spanish-medium students and the assessment format did not have any significant impact either.

Hernández-Nanclares and Jiménez-Muñoz (2017) analyzed content learning in a two-year research project at the Faculty of Economics and Business at the University of Oviedo and the two subjects under consideration were World Economy and World Economic History. The EMI and the Spanish-medium groups had comparable whole group lectures, classroom practice and tutorials, and the cut-off mark for admission was also the same. Unlike in the previous two studies, in this case the non-native EMI teacher collaborated with a fellow economics native teacher in class and a linguist and teacher trainer out of the class. After taking the same exam, the mean scores for both groups showed that EMI students performed better. Thus, whereas the percentage of students with a pass grade was similar in both cohorts, EMI students failed less and their presence in the higher bands or scores was greater. Nevertheless, the top-tier (*Matrícula de Honor*, or with honours) only included Spanish-medium students, which is why the authors conclude that EMI may have some kind of limiting effect in the realm of excellence due to language-related reasons.

The three studies reviewed in this section would fit in what is known as internationalization at home, since most participants (teachers and students) are learning and teaching in a foreign language in their home university. We can wrap up this section by concluding that these results indicate that not only do EMI students perform as well as their Spanish-medium counterparts, but the former are also developing the specific disciplinary knowledge that will enable them to study and work in an international environment should it be needed or desired (Dafouz & Camacho-Miñano, 2016, p. 65). However, more research in other disciplines is sorely needed, because those who are skeptical about (and some even dead against) EMI can only be placated by being given reliable and trustworthy data to counter their criticism. In

addition, the issue of EMI students not achieving the highest distinction grade (Hernández-Nanclares & Jiménez-Muñoz, 2017) also demands more investigation.

6 Conclusions

One of the weaknesses of the Spanish university system is the small proportion of courses delivered in English, which is why the Spanish Ministry of Education (2015) launched an initiative to increase bilingual programmes. Different studies have shown that one of the main stumbling blocks for the success of EMI in Spain has to do with the fact that ‘the majority of students signing up for bilingual programmes are locals with limited L2 expertise’ (Rubio Cuenca & Moore, 2018, p. 99). Moreover, language policies are far from fully fledged, as pointed out by Marcos-García and Pavón (2018). They analysed 76 Spanish (50 state and 26 private) universities and observed that, despite the steady yearly increase of credits taught in English, just 18 of those universities had an accessible document setting out their language policy on their webpages.

Although EMI demands a major rethink in terms of pedagogy (Doíz & Lasagabaster, 2020), Spanish universities have not devoted the necessary means to help teachers transit from L1 teaching to EMI and, in fact, most of their official documents make no reference to the methodological changes required when changing to English as the means of instruction (Llurda et al., 2013). Therefore, Spanish higher education institutions should provide support to EMI teachers ‘in the form of continuous teacher professional development’ (Dafouz, 2018, p. 550), as they regularly feel abandoned to the extent that many of them consider that the success of EMI rests squarely on their shoulders (Doíz & Lasagabaster, 2018). Although EMI has the potential to foster language learning while content is acquired, it does not substitute the necessary teaching of academic and specialized language, a task that can be best performed by implementing collaborative experiences between language specialists and content teachers (Lasagabaster, 2018; Mancho-Barés & Aguilar-Pérez, 2020; Roquet et al., 2020).

EMI teachers also complain about the fact that the current English accreditation required in some Spanish universities put too much emphasis on linguistic skills and overlook important issues such as classroom management, the promotion of student interaction, or supra-segmental language skills (Alfaro-Tanco et al., 2020; Macaro et al., 2019). Much work remains to be done in this respect and some common accreditation is needed to ensure

quality, while Spanish universities should try to avoid operating in isolation and without considering the available empirical evidence (Fernández-Costales & González-Riaño, 2015). Nonetheless, it has to be acknowledged that in the last few years there has been a growing interest in issues such as teacher training, student accreditation, or the internationalization of the administrative staff, as a consequence of which some steps have been taken.

Spanish higher education institutions do not consider that the emergence of EMI programmes may lead to the marginalization of Spanish, as this language enjoys an international status and relies on a large number of speakers that will ensure its attractiveness for mobile students. Nonetheless, the Spanish Ministry of Education (2015) strives to ensure that this linguistic balance is maintained and supports internationalization strategies aimed at this objective. The fact that Spain has the lowest proportion of students enrolled in English-taught programmes in Europe (only 0.3% of Spanish university students are enrolled in programmes taught fully in English; see Wächter & Maiworm, 2014) greatly helps university authorities to convey the message that the pressure exerted by EMI is far from being intolerable.

Last but not least, I would like to conclude that the internationalization process entails that multilingualism must become an inherent feature of higher education institutions. In countries such as Spain, wherein foreign language learning has historically not been fostered by authorities, EMI emerges as a potentially powerful means to achieve this aim. However, EMI is fraught with tensions that need to be tackled before they become deep-seated and hard to overcome, and this is especially pressing in those autonomous communities in which a minority language is also spoken. This is the reason why university authorities should bend over backwards to ensure that sound multilingual language policies are cogently implemented while providing the necessary tools (economic support being indispensable) to diminish linguistic tensions and underpin the desired linguistic ecology. If minority language speakers consider that their linguistic rights are being protected, this linguistic security will pave the way to positive attitudes towards the learning of other languages and EMI will not be regarded as a Trojan horse.

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