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## INTEGRATING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN ESP AND EMI: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

### Abstract

As internationalisation policies like English-medium Instruction (EMI) are increasingly implemented in European higher education, EMI and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classrooms become small international spaces where local students' intercultural skills can be developed. I suggest that the internationalised higher education poses challenges also to non-mobile students, who find themselves in culturally diverse classrooms where English is used as the medium of instruction. The aim of this study is twofold. It first attempts to provide a research-based framework that accounts for the reasons why Intercultural Competence (IC) should become a learning outcome in ESP and EMI courses, with an emphasis on ESP. Second, it explores two ways in which this integration could take place drawing on Holmes & O'Neill's ethnographic model (2012). The seminar genre is proposed to showcase IC integration, as participation helps students practice their English skills and provides them with opportunities to develop disciplinary knowledge while debating on a specific topic. In brief, this study suggests that both ESP and EMI courses have the potential of preparing students for a future professional career in a globalised world and that ESP lecturers, in particular, emerge as the best prepared professionals for teaching intercultural skills.

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### Key words

intercultural competence, English for specific purposes, English-medium instruction, internationalisation at home.

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## Sažetak

Sa sve češćom primenom politika internacionalizacije u evropskom visokom obrazovanju (npr. nastava stručnih predmeta na engleskom jeziku [EMI]), EMI i ESP (engleski jezik nauke i struke) učionice postaju mali internacionalni prostori u kojima je moguće razviti međukulturne veštine lokalnih studenata. Mišljenja sam da internacionalizovano visoko obrazovanje predstavlja izazov i za nemobilne studente, koji studiraju u kulturno diversifikovanim učionicama gde se nastava odvija na engleskom jeziku. Cilj ovog rada je dvostruk. Najpre ću pokušati da prikazem istraživački okvir kojim obrazlažem zašto bi interkulturalna kompetencija (IK) trebalo da postane ishod učenja na EMI, a naročito na ESP kursevima. Drugo, na osnovu etnografskog modela Houmza i O'Nil (2012), u radu se ispituju dva načina na koje je ovu integraciju moguće izvesti. Žanr seminara (grupne rasprave) predlaže se kao ilustracija načina integracije IK, jer učešće pomaže studentima da razvijaju veštine engleskog i pruža im mogućnost da usavrše disciplinarno znanje kroz debate na određene teme. Ukratko, ovaj rad sugeriše da i ESP i EMI kursevi imaju potencijal da pripreme studente za buduću profesionalnu karijeru u globalizovanom svetu, kao i da su nastavnici engleskog jezika nauke i struke najobučeniji za nastavu međukulturnih veština.

## Ključne reči

međukulturalna kompetencija, engleski jezik nauke i struke, nastava na engleskom jeziku, internacionalizacija kod kuće.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

It is widely accepted that in our connected and globalised world, multilingual and intercultural skills are increasingly necessary among professionals, who need to be competent in communicating with culturally diverse people. European higher education is no exception to this internationalisation trend: the success of the Erasmus programme and the rapid growth of English-medium instruction (EMI) in most European universities during the past decades attest to this tendency (Wächter & Maiworm, 2008, 2014). Unsurprisingly, global, international and intercultural skills (Knight, 2004; Soria & Troisi, 2014) have particularly been in the spotlight for the past two decades and their role in enhancing students' employability and improving communication between host and foreign students has been recognised (Bocanegra-Valle, 2015b; Holmes & O'Neill, 2005). Indeed, a good command of a foreign language alone does not guarantee success in an international professional or academic context (Dervin, 2010). Within this

internationalisation trend in European higher education (HE), other moves are taking place surreptitiously; more specifically, some faculties that offered both EMI (i.e. content specialists teaching in English) and ESP courses (i.e. language specialists teaching specific language skills to meet students' needs) have recently decided to cancel ESP instruction and offer EMI only instead. This choice is usually made to reduce expenditure (González-Ardeo, 2013; Wilkinson, 2008) and is driven by the assumption that an EMI course alone will suffice to develop academic literacy and disciplinary language in English (Arnó-Macià & Mancho-Barés, 2015). Nevertheless, research has shown that EMI lecturers usually refuse to teach English (Aguilar, 2017; Airey, 2011, 2012; Arnó-Macià & Mancho-Barés, 2015; Yang, 2016) and by and large lack pedagogical awareness (Fortanet-Gómez, 2012: 59).

At the same time, at some south European universities – which traditionally have not been highly internationalised (Wächter & Maiworm, 2008, 2014) – incoming mobile students show an overwhelming interest in courses taught through English. Given that ESP and EMI courses are a favourite choice, they are also becoming more international in comparison with other courses. These newly international classrooms can be conceived of as a global landscape from a sociolinguistics perspective: global spaces need not always be global cities but can also be smaller collectivities like a school with “a large proportion of its student body from outside the country where it is located” (Block, 2011: 162). From this perspective, the culturally diverse ESP and EMI classrooms could then be regarded as a small ‘global space’ (Block, 2011: 162) within a clearly local context. The new international configuration of these courses can be researched from multi-layered strands of research, ranging from ESP, EMI, English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) or Intercultural Competence (IC, also known as intercultural communicative competence), among others. Likewise, if one scrutinises internationalised higher education through the lens of the spread of ELF in the academia, academic discourse can be seen as a form of specialised discourse with few English native speakers, where academic expertise tends to prevail over linguistic expertise (Mauranen, Hynninen, & Ranta, 2016). In this strand of research attention is also turned to factors like pragmatic and discourse approaches, local variation, post-normative approaches (Dewey, 2012; Jenkins, 2011) and academic users' attitudes or language ideologies (Sung, 2014; see Mauranen et al., 2016 for an overview of ELF and EAP).

From an intercultural viewpoint, the challenges for lecturers who find themselves teaching in an increasingly multicultural classroom have been analysed (Ippolito, 2007; Tange, 2010; Teekens, 2003). Worth mentioning is that recently, probably as an outcome of the enhanced mobility promoted by the Bologna process and the Englishisation of European HE programmes, research has proliferated; the EU project on lifelong learning, Modularising Multilingual and Multicultural Academic Communication Competence (European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe, 2014), is an outstanding example. Yet, as some studies on IC from an ESP perspective have pointed out (Bocanegra-Valle, 2015a,

2015b; Planken, 2005; Planken, van Hooft, & Korzilius, 2004; Shaw, 2006) further work is necessary, particularly vis-à-vis the rise of internationalisation in higher education. In fact, the need to revise academic needs and update syllabi in post-Bologna higher education has only recently started to be addressed (see Bocanegra-Valle, 2016 for an updated overview) because few ESP textbooks seem to cater for IC, as discussed in Section two below. Finally, from an EMI standpoint, attention has been paid to challenges in the IC implementation (Bradford, 2016; Ippolito, 2007) and mostly to aspects like stakeholders' language deficiencies or the need to attract international students and internationalise HE (Dimova, Hultgren, & Jensen, 2015; Doiz, Lasagabaster, & Sierra, 2012; Smit & Dafouz, 2012;). Some EMI studies do mention IC: for example, cultural and educational diversity is regarded as one of the challenges posed by EMI in higher education (Kling, 2015: 210); increased IC skills are seen as a clear benefit of a multilingual and multicultural learning environment (Saarinen & Nikula, 2012: 138-9); and IC promotion is also mentioned as one of the reasons for introducing EMI courses (Pulcini & Campagna, 2015: 80). However, still little is known about IC gains in EMI, how and to what extent IC is catered by EMI lecturers (Aguilar, 2016a) and what kind of training EMI lecturers should receive in this respect.

In light of absence of proper attention given to IC in ESP and EMI classrooms, as evidenced by research, this work aims at (i) providing a theoretical and research-based framework that helps us understand *why* IC should be incorporated in ESP and EMI courses as a way to respond to this international context, and (ii) suggesting *how* this integration may take place.

## 2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

As said above, university classrooms have recently become “a learning environment where both domestic and mobile students and staff take part” (Teekens, 2003: 103) and therefore they represent a good example of Internationalisation at Home (IaH). The term IaH was defined and described in Crowther et al.'s (2000) position paper, drawing on the information available at that time that less than ten percent of European university students had participated in an Erasmus mobility exchange. This low percentage has driven universities to search for ways of providing a large amount of non-mobile students with international skills and intercultural sensitivity so that they can develop tolerance to diversity, ethno-relativism and intercultural sensitivity at their home university. In this way, IaH was defined in a preliminary way as “any internationally related activity with the exception of outbound student and staff mobility” (Crowther et al., 2000: 6). Essentially, internationalisation comprises not only academic programmes (like internationalised curricula, foreign language study, area or thematic studies, or student exchange mobility programmes) but also actions related to extracurricular activities, research, scholarly collaboration

and other external relations (Knight, 2004). However, IaH should not be left to the hands of home students – who may hardly interact with mobile students; rather, it requires university support and conscious efforts to become a driver of IC (Lantz-Deaton, 2017).

This study draws on research on IaH and suggests that ESP and EMI should rely on IC theories to integrate intercultural competence as a learning outcome; in addition, the paper examines the ways in which IC learning can be promoted. Determining the specificities of how to integrate IC pedagogy in ESP and EMI classrooms falls beyond the scope of this study but some observations should be made. Even though both types of courses tend to attract an international student population, we cannot ignore that the profile of ESP and EMI lecturers differ in important ways. Not only do EMI lecturers seem to be mostly focused on content, refusing any accountability as English language teachers (Airey, 2011, 2012; Arnó-Macià & Mancho-Barés, 2015) and sometimes showing lack of pedagogical awareness (Fortanet-Gómez, 2012: 59), but in a recent survey of south-European EMI engineering lecturers (Aguilar, 2016a) these reported no interest in handling IC in their multicultural classrooms. Additionally, reluctance to receiving EMI methodological training among EMI lecturers has also been reported (Aguilar & Rodríguez, 2012: 188-9; Klaassen, 2008: 33), which implies that even though attention to IC is paid in EMI pedagogy, not all EMI lecturers may handle IC.

The case of ESP is different. On the one hand, ESP courses have traditionally been customised and tailor-made according to the users' academic context as well as social and professional demand, which implies that ESP lecturers are used to relying on needs analysis as a common strategy to design and update ESP materials. Unfortunately, ESP does not seem to cater for IC, and traditional ESP pedagogy seems to be lagging in this respect for two reasons. Firstly, materials, or rather, publishing houses, do not seem to be up to the job (Bocanegra-Valle, 2015a). Bocanegra-Valle (2015a) analysed ten ESP textbooks from different fields (medicine, law, tourism, marketing, business, ICT and engineering) to examine the extent to which indicators that measure IC were complied with at three proficiency levels and found that IC is not a learning/teaching outcome on its own. Secondly, it is necessary to raise awareness about the need to train ESP teachers in methodologies for developing intercultural skills among university students. This is crucial because foreign language teachers in general are said to have obstacles to cater for IC in their foreign language classrooms and may tend to pay more attention to culture-free content and grammatical accuracy than to the incorporation of the cultural dimension (Byram, 2014). Closely related to this is the fact that within ESP research, culture has been dealt with from a contrastive rhetoric perspective, from Benesch' *rights analysis* (1999) perspective, from the notion of community in genre analysis, but most relevantly here, from the recent realisation of the need to incorporate learner identity construction in needs analysis (Belcher & Lukkarila, 2011; Brown, 2016). Sometimes research on communication problems among professionals has dealt with the issue from a

native and non-native perspective or from a linguistic and pragmatic perspective (see, for example, Planken, 2005 for sales negotiators and Frank, 2000 for medical professionals), but a close look at many of these studies reveals that some of these problems in fact derive from poor intercultural communicative skills. It must also be said that studies on interculturality from the technical communication branch date back to the nineties. In addition, many are US-oriented and they explore ways to help international students studying in the USA to understand and effectively communicate technical information. Business English is the field in ESP that has probably paid more attention to the importance of interpersonal and professional skills, within which pragmatic skills, etiquette and cross-cultural differences have been usually tackled (Jendrich, 2013: 55). In fact, some universities in Europe teach professional skills in separate courses but they are not always taught from an intercultural communicative competence viewpoint and, unless it is a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) course, they are not usually taught in English. This paper argues that in those universities where professional skills are not offered, ESP (and EMI to a lesser extent) can incorporate IC as a learning goal.

In the following section, relevant research on IC is reported and an overview of the tasks that allow for IC integration within ESP and EMI courses is presented.

### 3. IC RESEARCH AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Intercultural Competence has been traditionally defined as “a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself” (Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006: 12). A fundamental underlying assumption is based on Allport’s (1954) contact hypothesis, which posits that prejudice could be reduced if individuals in one cultural group participate in sustained interpersonal contact with individuals from a different group. According to the tenets of this theory, cultural prejudice and negative stereotyping will diminish provided four requirements are present, viz. equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and institutional support. Allport’s theory has been criticised but the basic underlying assumption in his hypothesis is still present in many IC theories. Other assumptions also present in most IC theories are that individuals’ (fore)knowledge of the rules about how and what to do is important, that knowledge of another culture is empowering and results in increased self-knowledge and cultural identity, and that it is through self-reflection that critical cultural awareness emerges (Holmes & O’Neill, 2012; Jackson, 2013). IC is said to evolve in different stages and to consist of different dimensions and components, which vary depending on the models that have been put forward. Many studies define IC as a set of three major components, viz. Attitudes, Skills (behaviour), and Knowledge (Deardoff, 2009); particularly within attitudes and skills, different qualities have been repeatedly mentioned in the literature like awareness, the ability to delay judgment, respect, ethnorelativism



and open-mindedness, together with willingness to listen, motivation, or investment, as they are linked to having an intercultural attitude (Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005; Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006). Nevertheless, traditional conceptualisations of IC have been put into question lately (e.g. Holmes & O'Neill, 2005; Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002; Spitzbeg & Chagnon, 2009). These recent appraisals have pointed out that the above-described concept of IC is not only western-biased but also somewhat limited because other interacting physiological, affective and emotional aspects have to be taken into consideration, and because speakers do not always behave rationally.

By and large, intercultural competence has more often than not been associated with foreign language learning since learning to communicate in a foreign language will often encompass learning about the cultural norms and habits (e.g. food, weather) of the foreign language being studied (Byram, 2014; Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002). For this reason, IC learning should go beyond the mere knowledge of the other's diverse culture and bring about change. Change or even conflict results from acceptance of the 'other', and is followed by a subsequent reconsideration of one's 'self' from the other's perspective (*otherisation*). The role of culture in language learning has therefore been acknowledged in intercultural studies (hence the notion of *linguaculture*) as well as in basic literature on immersion and CLIL (e.g. Cummins, 2000; Coyle's 4Cs framework for CLIL, 2009) because immersion and CLIL educational contexts are considered to deepen students' intercultural awareness through the positioning of the 'self' (*emic* or insider perspective) and the 'other' (*etic* or outsider perspective) (Coyle, 2009: 184). For this reason, IC has usually been regarded as one of the possible outcomes of a study or stay abroad experience –these experiences have the potential of facilitating intercultural encounters that contribute to the development of participants' IC, even though to different degrees (Byram & Feng, 2006; Byram & Dervin, 2008; Cots, Aguilar, Mas-Alcolea, & Llanes, 2016; Messelink, van Maele, & Spencer-Oatey, 2015; Salisbury, 2011).

More recently, it has also been shown that IC is not only acquired during an Erasmus exchange programme but also through participation in on-campus programmes and activities where national students meet and interact with mobile students (Crowther et al., 2000; Holmes & O'Neill, 2012; Salisbury, 2011; Soria & Troisi, 2014). Salisbury (2011), for example, evidenced that growth in ethno-relativism, an important component of interculturality, can also be achieved within college experience, and Soria and Troisi (2014) found that students who had participated in IaH activities on campus had even benefitted more and deployed an even higher IC than students who had taken part in a study abroad experience. What is important in either case (study abroad or IaH) is that participants undergo experiential learning, i.e. they are *learning by doing*. By interacting with culturally diverse learners, they are likely to develop IC, especially if students are prompted to reflect on their experience.

Regarding interaction, it is also worth mentioning Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern's (2002) study, where they found that American college students felt frustrated and impatient when communicating with international students due to their accented speech, different non-verbal styles and cultural variations in values and customs. In their study these communication barriers gave rise to intergroup hostility and prejudice against foreign students, sometimes regardless of the amount of social contact. In fact, highly interactive social contact with foreign students did not cause a decrease but rather an increase in prejudice, because higher interaction only made communication difficulties more salient. As pointed out above, recent studies have shown that emotions are important predictors and that the quantity and quality of social contact does have a bearing on the expected development of IC. In fact, there seems to be agreement on the fact that intercultural contact that occurs merely at a functional level (through teamwork in or beyond the classroom) does not of itself develop intercultural competence, but may even strengthen cultural stereotypes (Holmes & O'Neill, 2005). For IC to develop, intercultural encounters must consist in regular, constant relationship building (Holmes & O'Neill, 2012).

Thus, for these positive outcomes to emerge and to eschew some of the above-mentioned drawbacks, pedagogy is vital. It is generally acknowledged that pedagogy and didactics, assessment and teacher education are among the most salient, yet underdeveloped, areas in IC (Byram, 2014; Dervin, 2010; Yu, 2012). For example, in a recent analysis of the development of the intercultural dimension in foreign language teaching, Byram (2014: 219) refers to the LACE report, which yielded that more than 80% of the language teachers participating in the study reported using oral teacher input as the only methodological approach to teaching IC. This may be too large a percentage if one takes into consideration that an IaH setting offers the possibility of experiential learning to students (*learning by doing*), which may be far more effective than merely listening to the teacher. These findings in fact place ESP lecturers at the centre, mainly because their experience and education as language specialists potentially make them the most suitable instructors to carry out this task in higher education. This study argues that if ESP lecturers intend to adapt to new educational settings, they should (i) deploy the basic features of the ideal intercultural teacher (Teekens, 2003), (ii) make the most of their syllabus and their culturally diverse classroom to design and carry out activities that lend themselves to IC integration, and (iii) jointly collaborate with EMI lecturers by offering updated EMI teacher training or by means of tandem-teaching.

Having said this, this study builds on Arnó-Macià and Mancho-Barés's (2015) study on the role of ESP in truly integrating content and language in tertiary education and takes one step further by pointing to an additional challenge that tends to be overlooked, namely integrating intercultural skills in EMI and EMI teacher training. In this sense, this study also aligns with Bocanegra-Valle (2015b) in exploring ways in which IC can be integrated in an ESP classroom. Given that



prior intercultural experiences have been found to be an important intervening factor that can act as a predictor of high intercultural competence (Alkhashnam, 2012), I claim that ESP (and ideally EMI) courses with well designed and planned activities can help students develop their intercultural skills. It may even be hypothesised that intercultural awareness-raising tasks can pave the way for a future study abroad experience. In other words, by helping students develop their linguistic and content knowledge in their internationalised classroom at home, ESP lecturers can not only teach content and develop the specific skills in English but also raise students' intercultural awareness.

#### 4. FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE: HOW CAN IC BE INTEGRATED IN ESP AND EMI COURSES?

Having outlined the theoretical framework, I will now focus on two broad types of pedagogical activities (reflection and interaction) and suggest that seminars, a largely underrepresented genre in many south European classrooms, can be the showcase of a relevant communicative arena for students to develop academic and intercultural skills. It should be pointed out that although I propose that seminars could become a more usual genre to rely on in universities where they are rare, seminars may differ depending on the educational culture (Aguilar, 2016b; Mauranen, 1994; Weissberg, 1993). Student seminars are here defined as pedagogic genres that revolve around classroom discussion on a given text students have previously read. They can be more or less tutor-led and are largely believed to lead to the acculturation of students, who are given the opportunity to engage in theory-practice disciplinary dialogue, talk about topics related to their field of study and improve their communication skills. Drawing on an ethnographic model that was specifically designed to develop IC (PEER, *Prepare- Engage-Evaluate- Reflect*) (Holmes & O'Neill, 2012) and that can be followed by both ESP and EMI lecturers, two broad types of activities (promoting reflection and interaction) have been chosen because they are relatively easy to introduce and because they promote content matter development and disciplinary-specific language skills. When these tasks are performed in a multicultural team, practice on the different representations of the 'other' (i.e. different cultures) and the 'self' can also be gained. I suggest that these activities be performed and assessed drawing on Holmes and O'Neill's (2012) PEER model, which argues that regular relationship building through interaction with a 'cultural other' guides students through four interdependent stages. The first is *Preparing* students by asking them to identify their prejudices and stereotypes about other cultures before the encounters, and to report any relevant experiences or anecdotes. The second stage is that of *Engaging* students, i.e. stimulating actual interaction and contact, which can be limited to the classroom setting. *Evaluating* is the third stage, which elicits the students' interpretation of their interaction, preferably by means of written

accounts or by orally sharing their thoughts with their classmates. In the last stage, *Reflecting*, students are encouraged to critically reflect on their previously held assumptions, their behaviour and communication.

The PEER model is chosen here for various motives. Relevant stages in IC development usually referred to in the literature are embraced. For example, reflection, a very important stage according to research, allows students to introspectively prepare themselves for interaction by reflecting on their prior and current experience in order to evaluate it later. Students can be asked to analyse their views and feelings and can (voluntarily) share them in teams and/or articulate their observations by writing them down in self-reports, diaries or portfolios. The model also allows for lecturer assessment, a challenge both for language and technical communication teachers (Yu, 2012), and it is open enough to welcome both qualitative assessment methods (such as interviews, personal narratives, or portfolios) as well as quantitative methods (such as multiple choice tests and open or closed questionnaires). Finally, the model is generalist, so it is suitable for integration in both ESP and EMI classrooms.

What follows is a general description of two main types of tasks, reflection and interaction, that characterise the PEER model. Both activities can in fact be interwoven but are described separately here on the grounds that making students participate in seminars and engage in oral production can help them raise awareness about, for example, the language used in discussions and debates across cultures. It is important to remember that Allport's (1954) four general conditions are to be met: there must be equality between groups (they are classmates), students must be engaged toward a shared goal (e.g. a task, role-play), they should have the opportunity to relate to their mates and develop sufficient intimacy to contradict previously held stereotypes (through questions posed by the teacher or critical thinking stirred by the teacher), and they must feel supported by the teacher (the authority figure). Another important requisite for all activities is that students are frequently made to work in teams and that teachers ask mobile students to mingle with local students, trying to avoid the presence of two students with the same nationality in the same group.

#### **4.1. Activities on reflection and critical thinking**

As mentioned above, IC is thought to be enhanced and become substantial lifelong learning when the intercultural experience is reflected on during or after an international experience (Crowther et al., 2000: 18; Jackson, 2013: 198-201; Messelink et al., 2015: 6-9). Similar results are expected when students are given well-planned opportunities for interaction or when activities have been designed so that negotiation of meaning and socialisation are guaranteed. For example, it is known that if students realise that tolerance toward language variation or pronunciation is usually greater in ELF, they will feel relieved from the pressure of

speaking near-native English (Jenkins, 2011), which will boost their confidence in important ways. These activities are therefore awareness-raising tasks that provide students with (self)knowledge about international and intercultural interaction, helping them identify their stereotypes and prejudices, and offering opportunities to critically evaluate their ideas.

These activities can be included in different ways and with different emphases in ESP and EMI courses. Focusing on the ESP classroom, IC can be touched upon when covering listening comprehension techniques to overcome different kind of communication barriers. For example, in the module on pronunciation in an oral communication course, or after any listening activity where some of the speakers speak different varieties of English, a debate can be opened on the features of English as a Lingua Franca and the role of its speakers. When students are asked to reflect on English varieties and their preconceived ideas about being a native speaker, awareness about existing varieties other than the British or American ones can be raised and, after critically evaluating their assumptions, students may be confronted with the commonly shared stereotype that native English is not to be equated with native speaker varieties. If necessary, a short text like Modiano's work (1999) on Kachru's inner, outer and expanding circles can be used to provide a more theoretical explanation. After reading and summarising the article, students can be invited to discuss and contrast cultural differences, and reflect on the reading in groups or individually. Other tasks can be integrated in an ESP oral communication course when covering verbal and non-verbal communication cues as comprehension strategies (cross-cultural discursive and pragmatic differences), when practising the language of discussions and when dealing with job-searching activities (for instance, helping students reflect on the impact of their IaH and mobility experiences and verbalise the IC skills they have reaped). In all these activities students can engage orally – speaking and discussing with their classmates – and in writing.

## 4.2. Interactive activities

Interaction and verbal production are at the heart of engagement. Lecturers may decide how to approach a given task and whether the focus and time devoted are to be put on oral or written reflection. Thus, some of the activities listed above can also primarily revolve around speaking so that students engage and re-engage as many times as necessary to practise and become acquainted with the verbal and non-verbal language associated with, for instance, disagreeing in the western culture. It is imperative that activities are concomitant with comparison of one's values and reflection of the intercultural communicative competence deployed by students (their peers and their own). In this way, reflection on cross-cultural comparison of communicative behaviours can be triggered and encouraged by the teacher.

Well-known activities that spark discussion are case studies, role-plays or problem-based projects. Yet, given that seminars are a neglected genre in ESP courses at some European universities, I will showcase the seminar as an example of a speaking activity that can be used to develop students' IC, because it leads to interaction and engagement and can easily be accommodated to follow the PEER structure. The potential benefits of seminars can be summarised as follows. If students work in multicultural teams in seminars, at some point they have to reach a consensual agreement and take a 'team stance'. Seminars can finish with a team or individual written summary of the decision taken and with some evaluation and reflection on how the task evolved in terms of intercultural communicative competence (e.g. turn-taking and non-verbal behaviour). Moreover, as seminar interaction is buttressed in prior reading, this can help students internalise related vocabulary and disciplinary language relevant to the topic. Additionally, seminars also allow for problem-based learning, which is to engage and motivate students while providing them with quasi-naturalistic communicative environments where they can interact, disagree, negotiate, etc. in English with culturally diverse students. Through participation in this activity, students can gradually develop skills to cope with an international community and begin to approximate some of the professional and academic identities they aspire to (Planken et al., 2004: 312). In a word, seminar participation can therefore provide students with practice in their English skills that can later be transferred to international business meetings and encounters. Mastery and expertise in discussing and debating in seminars will not only instil confidence but also raise 'cross-genre awareness', understood as the bridge building between genres through transferring their skills of recontextualisation (Yayli, 2011). This transfer of learning can be achieved in ESP courses (Green, 2015) if, for example, ESP lecturers use multiple-genre portfolios (Yayli, 2011: 122-24) in genre-based writing instruction or dynamic assessment (Shrestha, 2017).

To conclude, in both kinds of activity, reflection and interaction, the role of the teacher is that of a facilitator and of an "intercultural broker" (Bocanegra-Valle, 2015b). Seminar participation can definitely be used to assess IC, although this tool can be better used in combination with other assessment methods, such as journal entries or personal portfolios, which allow ESP teachers in particular to triangulate data in order to aim at greater validity and reliability (Yu, 2012: 183).

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In this study I have explored several IC-related issues and set forth a range of suggestions for the integration of IC in the ESP and EMI courses. First, neither ESP nor EMI seems to cater for IC integration. Thus, I claim that needs analysis should inform ESP and EMI lecturers and that a possible way to demonstrate adaptability and resilience in an increasingly international European educational setting is by integrating IC as a learning goal within syllabi. EMI content lecturers do not seem

to be concerned about teaching English language (Aguilar, 2017; Airey, 2011, 2012; Arnó-Macià & Mancho-Barés, 2015), so it comes as no surprise that they are not interested in developing their students' IC either (Aguilar, 2016a). This study suggests generalist guidelines that trained lecturers could follow, such as resorting to seminars and paying special attention to reflection and oral skills while drawing on the PEER model. However, further work is necessary to come up with detailed and validated pedagogic strategies for integrating IC according to the type of instruction, ESP or EMI. All in all, if we take into consideration the close relationship between students' self-reported development of foreign language skills and intercultural competencies (Soria & Troisi, 2014), and the compelling need to teach IC from a systematically planned approach (Byram, 2014; Dervin, 2010), ESP lecturers particularly emerge as the best qualified and prepared faculty to help students develop their IC in this increasingly internationalised landscape. Additionally, ESP lecturers could not only teach IC to their students at those universities where no course on interculturality is offered, but also to in- and pre-service EMI lecturers (Arnó-Macià & Mancho-Barés, 2015) who also teach in highly international classrooms.

In this paper, I followed an intercultural-based model and proposed that for IC to develop, pedagogy should encompass two fundamental methodologies that allow the integration of IC, namely interaction and reflection. In this sense, I set forth hands-on activities that can be quite easily integrated in ESP and EMI classrooms. I suggested the PEER model be used and regarded as a landmark for the lecturer. Further work, however, is necessary to examine to what extent students' intercultural skills are honed when a systematic methodology like the PEER model is followed. I also suggested that the seminar can act as an effective arena to practise disciplinary, linguistic *and* intercultural skills in ESP and EMI teaching. This study also concurs with Bocanegra-Valle (2015b) in that ESP classrooms in particular provide the suitable learning environment for raising awareness of *otherness* among home students because placing students in temporary international communicative contexts on a regular basis can help them develop both language and intercultural skills. The same could be said on EMI.

Several implications can be derived from the suggestions made in this article. If we agree that ESP and EMI teachers have the potential to foster intercultural communicative competence (Bocanegra-Valle, 2015b; Planken et al., 2004), we can conclude that the internationalised higher education landscape poses challenges to ESP lecturers. If properly faced, these challenges can in fact reposition ESP as necessary instruction for 21st century technical professionals. The challenge of teaching academic English and developing students' IC, however, implies that ESP lecturers may find themselves in an academically demanding position where transferable skills (Jendrich, 2013) will have to be resorted to, so that students are better prepared for a prospective study or work abroad experience.

Finally, we should not lose sight of the overarching picture. One last implication derives from the above-mentioned argument that IC is not usually

catered for by EMI lecturers, and maybe not even by ESP lecturers, and that ESP lecturers can rise to the challenge of training EMI lecturers. While this line of reasoning seems valid, it is flawed insofar as it borrows from a misconception of what EMI is and from lack of awareness of what EMI in fact implies. Some EMI lecturers seem to believe that EMI merely requires translating materials and teaching in another language (Aguilar & Rodríguez, 2012; Fortanet-Gómez, 2012; Klaassen, 2008). A conceptualisation of an internationalised European university prioritising EMI (and downplaying or barring ESP) seems to ignore the fact that if student composition changes in the classroom, other factors are to be taken into consideration, such as the students' familiarity with a given teaching style, their educational, content and cultural background or their English proficiency, to name but a few. Internationalised landscapes in fact render the integration of IC necessary. Harrison (2015) and Dervin and Layne (2013) pointed to problems of IaH, such as the home students' unwillingness to establish contact with international students (thus cancelling out any possibility of international transformation on both sides) or university policies that are tacitly excluding students with fewer opportunities and instead aim at more privileged students – who at university entry level already have a good command of English and high intercultural skills. Policy-makers should take these changes into consideration, promoting ESP courses prior to EMI in the curriculum and fostering ESP and EMI collaboration. If we assume that both ESP and EMI are forms of Content-Based Instruction (Cenoz, Genesee, & Gorter, 2014) that integrate language and content in different ways, they will emerge as allies that act as drivers of intercultural competence.

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