STAFF SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION – A CASE OF LANGUAGE AND CONTENT TEACHERS COLLABORATION

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Abstract: *In the context of growing efforts for becoming more international and, hence, more attractive for staff and students worldwide, higher education institutions implement and support English Medium Instruction (EMI) and try to enhance visibility of research results through publishing in English. The resources necessary for this successful enterprise include a teaching and research staff highly proficient in using English both for teaching subjects other than English and writing materials based on research. The general context of EMI can be further complicated by local factors which add to the complex puzzle of forces that shape higher education today. The present paper describes and analyzes the case of a Romanian higher education institution which, although offering English taught programs for over a decade in several engineering fields, has only recently decided to reconsider the needs of the EMI teaching and research staff and to provide ongoing support, with the view of increasing quality of EMI education and also of adding new programs taught in English. The recent support program consists of three components: language courses focused on speaking and listening skills and on grammar-discourse features of written texts, pedagogy-focused workshops and a one-to-one tutoring support for editing and improving the accuracy and readability of research-related texts to be published in English. The components were implemented as an integrated system which has fostered collaboration between language and content teachers involved in EMI. Informing each other in both practice and research, EMI and TESOL (here represented mostly by English for Specific Purposes) form a productive symbiosis when all stakeholders are involved. The implications of such cases can be consequential for the further development of support programs for EMI teaching and research staff, based on specific needs of local EMI communities of practice and on principles derived from the language and content teachers' collaboration.*

Keywords: English Medium Instruction, internationalization, ELT/ESP, higher education, language support

1. Introduction
The increased connectedness, interdependence and interaction of groups and their activities, called globalization, have led in the higher education sector to the

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process of internationalization as a means to the end of going global. Often mentioned together as driving forces in trends that shape higher education at present, globalization and internationalization have been misperceived as synonymous. Advocating for a process-oriented view on both concepts, Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley define internationalization as the "specific policies and programs undertaken by governments, academic systems and institutions, and even individual departments" (2009: 23). As Yeravdekar & Tiwari observe, engaging as global players higher education institutions (HEIs) need the competitive advantage of internationalization in order "to be partakers in the global marketplace of higher education as well as the multinational job market" (2014: 204).

The role of education providers and the responsibility for competitive skills formation of HEIs are primarily directed towards students. However, HEIs which adopt internationalization policies have a responsibility to support and provide skills and competencies for their staff, too, if international programs and curricula are to be implemented. For most HEIs, internationalization means the adoption of English Medium Instruction (henceforward EMI) whether in full (entire programs taught in English) or partially (where only some courses are offered in English). The comprehensive studies of Mayworm and Wachter (2002, 2008, 2014) showed that the number of English taught programs in Europe grew exponentially, a trend in line with recent global developments (Dearden, 2015). Each HEI committed to an internationalization policy and, hence, to offering an ever increasing number of courses and programs in English must carefully consider the necessary resources to successfully carry out such enterprise without lowering the quality standards of its education. The human resource willing and able to teach courses in English is the most important and the most valuable, but, as research has so often revealed, is also hard to find. Proofs to the fact that HEIs underestimated this challenge, notably in relation to the teaching staff, are studies such as Dearden's (2015) which revealed a lack of enough qualified teachers (83.6% of all respondents in 55 countries). In Europe the situation was different according to Lam and Wächter (2014) who report in their study that the overwhelming majority of EMI program directors considered the proficiency of the EMI teachers as good or very good. When it comes to EMI teaching staff's opinions, many, however, indicate less confidence in their ability to teach successfully in English (Borsetto & Schug, 2016; Macaro et al, 2018) or even negative feelings due to having no choice but teach through English (Costa & Coleman, 2013).

Given these unfolding challenges, HEIs had to offer support to the EMI teaching staff and more and more professional development schemes developed, even though they were not embedded from the very beginning in the EMI implementation policies. Typically, three areas are covered by support programs for EMI teaching staff: English language proficiency, intercultural communication skills, and pedagogical training, although the focus and emphasis of various programs may vary (e.g. language-centered support vs pedagogy-cantered).

This study presents the case of a Romanian HEI – The Technical University of Cluj-Napoca - which, although offering English taught programs for over a decade

in several engineering fields, has only recently decided to reconsider the needs of the EMI teaching and research staff and provide ongoing support, with the view of increasing quality of EMI education and of adding new programs taught in English.

2. Context and methods

In many respects, the adoption of internationalization measures such as EMI implementation at all three cycles (Bachelor's, Master's and PhD studies) in Romanian HEIs has gone through the same stages as in most countries of the European Higher Education Area. Nevertheless, several aspects of the national and university policy on EMI are specific to the Romanian context.

The first is part of the national law regulating higher education, which states that all courses in an undergraduate or postgraduate program of studies must be in the same language. If the program is in a foreign language, it has to run parallel with the same specialization in Romanian. The impact of this stipulation is that, when a HEI decides to implement EMI courses, it has to do so with an entire program of studies and cannot offer only several courses in English for the students of a specialization. The other consequence is that a HEI must employ considerable human resources to staff both the programs in Romanian and the EMI ones. The ideal practice (also the most cost effective) is to have the same lecturers to teach a course both in Romanian (for the Romanian medium program) and in English.

The second peculiarity of the Romanian higher education context is that most teaching staff is also involved in research and is expected to publish on their research activity and results. As Corcoran, Englander & Muresan (forthcoming) note, "the *publish or perish* adage has been revised to *publish in English or perish* in many parts of the world". This puts extra pressure on researchers to acquire a high level of English language proficiency as well as of disciplinary discourse in English.

With these constraints at national level, HEIs that implement EMI must find the teaching staff to both teach in English their courses and be able to publish in English. The desire to maintain a high quality standard of education under such circumstances has compelled providers of EMI in Romanian higher education to design and offer support for their staff for teaching and publishing in English. The measure is similar with trends elsewhere, such as those reported in Tuomainen (2018), Helm&Guarda (2017) and Banks (2017).

After running a support course for EMI teaching staff as a first measure to foster English language proficiency as well as raise awareness of specific pedagogical needs of teaching in English (Munteanu, forthcoming) a year ago, the TUC-N set itself a more ambitious target, that of making support courses an integrated professional development program. In the following section the design and impact of these courses will be described. The post-course feedback, as well as discussions during the activities constitute the data analyzed here with a qualitative approach focused on how the lessons learnt can feed forward into the support components being developed and offered continuously in the TUC-N.

The first course for EMI teaching staff, run in the previous academic year, was called *English as a Medium of Instruction for Teaching Staff* and had a twofold focus: on English language and on elements of pedagogy for teaching in English. Based on its feedback and on the post-course evaluation, the new support program, offered a year later, branched out into two language teaching course and two workshops on EMI pedagogy. Additionally, a one-to-one tutoring system was set up to assist researchers in editing, proofreading and improving the language of research papers or other written (teaching/research related) materials they produced in English.

The participants were EMI lecturers with a range of experience in teaching in English from under one year to over ten years. A total of 26 lecturers participated to the language modules and of these, 13 participated to the workshops. The difference in numbers is due to previous commitments some of the staff had which prevented them from attending. The one-to-one sessions for improving written text were organized as pre-booked meetings (via an online application).

The language modules focused on a set of skills, one on listening and speaking, the other on language structures (morphology/syntax) and discourse (genre features, style, etc.).

The pedagogical aspects of teaching in English were the subject of separate sessions organized as workshops. The rationale for the workshop was to offer the participants a format conducive to pooling ideas, opinions, and personal practice suggestions for improvement in the area of teaching in English.

Participants to each of these components completed feedback forms (questionnaires) at the end of the course/tutoring sessions. Additionally, a session of reflection on activities carried out and on own learning was organized in each course/workshop. Participants shared their attitudes and opinions on whether their English improved, how and what can be done next. Although the data collected is not quantitatively relevant to lead to generalizable conclusions, they can offer a fairly comprehensive view on the outcomes of this support system for EMI lecturers, when viewed from a qualitative approach.

3. Results and discussion

Although separate units, these three components were designed to be an integrated system of language and pedagogy support for EMI lecturers in the TUC-N.

Informed by the previous year course and by research into English as a lingua franca (ELF) in academia (Mauranen, 2010), the language modules targeted areas such as intelligibility (rather than accent) of non-native English pronunciation, adaptive processes (accommodation) or negotiation of meaning (Cogo & Dewey, 2012) and active listening for note-taking to raise awareness about students' comprehension needs in EMI – an additional English for specific purposes (ESP) focus. The participants rated highest the scope and the targeted practice of the language modules, both in the post-teaching feedback (satisfaction questionnaires) and the in-class evaluative discussions, stating that the content catered for their

specific needs related to teaching their subjects in English. They appreciated the specific narrow-focus of the courses (as opposed to general English language courses) as being the most effective way of improving their communicative skills necessary for successful teaching and research in an EMI context.

The pedagogy focused workshops brought into discussion topics such as planning materials to ensure comprehension of content delivered in English, strategies for effective teaching and assessment planning. The lecturers were asked to reflect on their own practices when teaching in English, identify challenges and share their experience in pairs or in group activities.

These sessions were meant to be rather exploratory in nature, to stimulate self-reflection and the sharing of ideas and strategies for effective teaching in English. The feedback to these consisted of post-session discussions as well as open-ended questions (in the program evaluation questionnaire) inviting participants to detail what they found useful and consequential for their teaching in English.

The gains identified by the participants included:
- the sense of community of practice developed during these sessions, which allowed them to express freely their concerns, to share solutions, to assess presented solutions and attempt generalizations as a means of creating an inventory of best-practice samples for recurrent teaching/learning situations they encounter;
- the awareness-raising value of discussion;
- the resources (ideas, teaching strategies/techniques described in the discussions, further readings) produced during the sessions.

Several aspects cropped up as challenges which should be addressed in the future by professional development programs for EMI teaching staff:
- the lack of previous pedagogical training for teaching in English, and/or insufficient relevance of the training (if any) they received for teaching in English;
- the need to improve their English language proficiency to be able to employ a wider range of teaching/communication techniques to foster students' learning;
- the need to share experience on a regular basis during teaching career to self-monitor own development.

The one-to-one tutoring system was meant to be a 'clinic' for research related materials the staff needs to produce and publish in English. It consisted of meetings between authors and a language specialist whose purpose was to review and improve the accuracy of texts and eliminate lexical, grammatical and rhetorical errors. However, as opposed to other systems where a text is simply sent to a language reviewer for editing and proofreading, the format of this activity had also a pedagogical component built into it. The texts produced/translated into English by the authors went first through an initial evaluation process whereby the authors themselves had to identify the sections/paragraphs which posed the most challenges from the point of view of the linguistic resources needed to convey a certain message. These sections/paragraphs were the focus of the one-to-one tutoring sessions. If during the discussion the authors felt the need to review the

whole material together with the language specialist, they did so. The editing process was carried out jointly by the author and the language specialist, which ensured content was accurately conveyed and all language errors were corrected and explained. Increased attention was given to recurrent errors with a view to raise awareness about possible fossilization of errors (Selinker & Lakshmanan, 1993) and to suggest remedial action. In the feedback questionnaires all respondents stated they were satisfied with the outcome of the session as they fulfilled their objective of improving the accuracy and readability of their texts. All reviewed texts were published in international journals and were not returned to the authors on language related grounds after peer-reviewing. When asked to identify the most useful aspect of the one-to-one sessions, authors mentioned the interactive and collaborative nature of the activity, the learning-oriented component through which they felt they gained more confidence as writers, and the awareness about the recurrent nature of some errors.

Several aspects of research writing seemed to pose difficulties to most authors (e.g. the use of connectors, passive/active appropriate choice, use of personal pronouns for author reference, wordiness, hedgers, etc.). Samples of these occurrences were collected from the reviewed texts and used in the language class for the EMI lecturers as starting point for practice targeting a variety of lexical-grammatical and rhetorical aspects of research discourse. They supply authentic material for language learning in the EMI context and were appreciated by the EMI lecturers participating to these course for their precise-target language practice.

Although with limited breadth, the connection established between the one-to-one reviewing sessions for researchers and the language courses for EMI lecturers described here (often the same people as in the Romanian HE context lecturers are also researchers) can support the view that EMI, in which language development is rarely a priority or a learning objective, and ESP/TESOL should be more tightly connected. As Pecorari & Malmstrom have recently showed, "[...] if EMI and TESOL are not obvious companions they can exist in a very natural symbiosis, and can potentially inform each other, both in research and in practice" (2018:497).

The three-part language support system for EMI teaching and research staff in the TUC-N aimed at improving the quality of teaching and writing in EMI and research. Successful outcomes were identified on a professional, personal and institutional level. Participants developed their professional profile by improving their chances of publishing in English and increasing the quality of their teaching in English. Incorporating activities that promote reflection on own English language performance and awareness raising, participants gained autonomy in specific-purposes language learning. From the point of view of the institution in search of quality in internationalization, the TUC-N fostered close collaboration between language teachers and subject lecturers/researchers involved in EMI. Needs related to the latter's teaching and research activities in English were more accurately identified and, part of them, catered for. English language teachers have become more involved in supporting the institutional efforts to become more international.

4. Conclusion

As a growing international university, the TUC-N, a major Romanian HEI, implemented a support program for the teaching and research staff involved in English medium instruction. With a previous one-year experience of an English language course which combined pedagogy and language practice, the recent program offered three components: language courses focused on speaking/listening and grammar-discourse, pedagogy-focused workshops and a one-to-one tutoring support for editing and improving the accuracy and readability of research-related texts to be published in English. The components were implemented as an integrated system and fostered collaboration between language and content teachers involved in EMI. Each informed the others in order to better define the specific needs of EMI lecturers and researchers in a local context but with international aspirations. The pedagogy-focused workshops raised awareness about common practices in teaching in English, generated solutions to shared difficulties and could be the foundation of a community of practice. The language courses and one-to-one tutoring session for text improvement contributed to language development and specific purposes language practice, through the shared understanding of specific needs.

EMI related activities, whether pedagogical or research-oriented, constantly pose challenges to users of English in this specific context. Using these challenges and practices reported by a growing community of EMI lecturers in the university, English language teachers can design focused support where EMI is not only the context but also informs language teaching on the target situation of language use. A largely unexplored area, the dynamics of EMI and TESOL/ESP symbiosis (Pecorari&Malmstrom, op.cit.) can offer ground for further answers to questions such as what makes support for EMI effective and more principle-based.

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