

Training teachers of English as a medium of instruction: The use of metadiscourse devices

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ABSTRACT: This paper explores the outcomes of training pragmatics identifying the metadiscourse devices that are used by the content teachers enrolled on a course leading to a university qualification for teaching in English within the context of a Spanish-speaking country. Specifically, I focus on the analysis of the frequencies of the textual and interactional devices used by university lecturers during an online English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) course with the aim of identifying the use of devices and how it could affect in their profession. The method followed involved the analysis of one hundred teaching units. The first step of this analysis was to collect the final projects written during three academic years by EMI university lecturers who were enrolled on an online course at Universitat Politècnica de València. I then identified the frequencies of textual and interactional devices, analysed their functions in the teaching unit and compiled examples. The results were later compared with the pragmatic training received during the training course and I also proposed some guidelines to help EMI teachers improve the use of metadiscourse devices. Finally, conclusions that could be useful for EMI trainers and trainees were drawn.

Key words: teacher training, metadiscourse, EMI, textual devices, interactional devices.

La formación de profesores de Inglés como medio de instrucción: El uso de marcadores metadiscursivos

RESUMEN: Este artículo explora los resultados de la formación en pragmática, identificando los elementos metadiscursivos que utilizan los profesores de contenido que realizan un curso para obtener un diploma universitario para enseñaren inglés en España. En concreto, me centro en el análisis de las frecuencias de los marcadores textuales e interactivos utilizados por estos profesores universitarios durante el curso online sobre Inglés como Medio de Instrucción (IMI), con el objetivo de identificar su uso y cómo puede ello afectar en su profesión. El método utilizado implicó el análisis de cien unidades didácticas. El primer paso de este análisis fue recopilar los trabajos finales redactados durante tres cursos académicos por profesores universitarios de IMI matriculados en un curso online de la Universitat Politècnica de València. A continuación, identifiqué las frecuencias de los elementos textuales e interactivos, analicé sus funciones en la unidad didáctica y comenté los ejemplos. Los resultados se compararon posteriormente con los conocimientos pragmáticos recibidos durante el curso de formación y también realicé algunas propuestas para ayudar a los profesores de IMI a mejorar el uso de los marcadores metadiscursivos. Por último, se extrajeron conclusiones que podrían ser útiles para los formadores y aprendices de IMI.

Palabras clave: formación de profesores, metadiscursos, IMI, marcadores textuales, marcadores interactivos.

1. INTRODUCTION

English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI), that is, teaching a subject in English, is an ever-increasing phenomenon in non-English-speaking higher education institutions. EMI teachers are mainly trained in grammar use and as Dearden (2014, p. 6) explains, “it appears to be a phenomenon which is being introduced ‘top-down’ by policy makers and education managers rather than through consultation with the key stake holders”. Most of the training designed for content teachers involved in EMI does not take into account the complex processes involved in EMI. The effects of EMI on English proficiency seems to be vocabulary and grammar acquisition, but only few studies have focused on the analysis of metadiscourse in EMI lectures (Denvera et al., 2016; Brogini & Murphy, 2017).

In this light, the study presented here aims to identify the most and least frequent metadiscourse devices used by EMI teachers and thus consider their functions and propose the reinforcement of training in metadiscourse. I believe this study to be innovative in a number of ways: first, because it focuses on the language training of EMI teachers, a topic that has not been of much interest till now. Second, because it focuses on the metadiscourse devices used by EMI teachers at university level. In this sense, here I distinguish between the training of EMI teachers that are qualified to teach in primary and secondary education and those EMI teachers that are competent to teach in higher education, as the cognitive discourse functions are not the same (Breeze & Dafouz, 2017). University students are learning complex subjects through English and their language proficiency entails being able to use grammar and pragmatics to communicate in an effective way. Finally, this study follows a quantitative approach and analyses the pragmatic performance of EMI teachers by studying metadiscourse devices and identifying those not frequently used by teachers trained to become EMI lecturers.

The research questions posed in this study are the following:

1. Which are the metadiscourse devices that are most and least frequently employed by teachers who use English as a medium of instruction?
2. What metadiscourse devices should be included in EMI teacher training to guarantee that EMI university teachers use persuasive strategies in communication?

The paper is structured as follows: the introductory section includes the objectives of the study and research questions. Sections 2 and 3 narrate the theoretical background of the study. Then, section 4 describes the corpus used in this study and the method followed to answer the objectives and the research questions. Section 5 is devoted to the results of the study and the discussion of the findings and finally, in the last section, the conclusions and limitations are considered.

2. ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION AND TEACHER TRAINING

The interest in EMI has been shown in several studies from different points of view, as pointed out by Barnard and McLellan (2013), Blaj-Ward (2017), Margic &

Vodopija-Krstanovic (2017, 2018), Bradford & Brown (2017) and Kim, Kim & Kweon (2018). These authors focused on code switching and on the effect, the true aims and objectives of EMI, paying attention to language learning, the effect of glocalisation and lecturers' perceptions in higher education. All these authors highlighted the benefits of EMI as a way to improve communication skills and linguistic competence, aspects also explained by authors such as Dearden (2014), Belhiah & Elhami (2015) and Macaro (2018). They described the discipline as a growing global phenomenon and a way to enhance participation in classrooms.

At the same time, however, researchers also pay attention to some drawbacks such as the low proficiency level in English of students and, in some cases, the scant amount of time available to reflect, consolidate and adjust subject syllabuses (Belhiah & Elhami, 2015). Further to these appreciations, Li and Wu (2018) point out the need to develop and implement training programmes in support of the professional development of EMI teachers regarding assessment. Similarly, Kim, Kim & Kweon (2018) identify teachers' perceptions of EMI in Korea in two senses: on the one hand, teachers know EMI has been used as an index for the internationalisation of universities and, on the other, EMI is a primary cause of "... dramatic increases in their teaching load which interfered with other scholarly activities including international publication" (Kim, Kim & Kweon, 2018, p. 113). So, it seems the EMI approach has been used by universities to internationalise education but not a lot of attention has been paid to teachers' training needs and the increase in workload. Kim, Kim & Kweon (2018, p. 121) also recommend translanguaging for lower proficiency students and that "... teacher preparation includes L2 teacher training for EMI and the design of English curricula for the development of L2 communicative and interactional competences across different academic disciplines".

Dordevic & Blagojevic (2019) identified some drawbacks in the implementation of EMI in Serbian universities. Mainly, in their study senior lecturers are not aware of the importance of the changes to be implemented in the teaching methodology for EMI and non-native English speakers are also reluctant to the use of English in their classes. The study by Margic & Vodopija-Krstanovic (2018) focuses on the need for teachers to have language proficiency, enabling them to pay attention to both the language and the content, considering in their training that a very strong emphasis on errors may impact negatively on teachers' self-esteem. The authors suggest the need to "... design and organise programmes at different levels that allow for sufficient exposure to the language and guided language hours to adequately develop prospective EMI teachers' skills" (Margic & Vodopija-Krstanovic, 2018, p. 39).

Some authors (Li & Ruan, 2015) also focus on some of the problems that may be faced by EMI teachers, such as the divergence between the English educational context and the educational context of students involved in EMI subjects, a crucial aspect to motivate learners and to adapt EMI teaching to their cultural needs. Furthermore, Dafouz & Camacho-Miñano (2016) refer to national differences such as language policies and teaching traditions that should be considered when implementing the EMI approach in higher education. Another important issue pointed out by Kuchah (2018,

p. 37) when describing the implementation of EMI as part of the ‘Education for All’ policy in Cameroon is that “... the language of instruction presents a barrier to parental involvement in education for children whose parents are not educated in the language of their schooling”.

Developing academic literacy becomes of paramount importance in EMI programmes for training teachers as stated by Belhiah & Elhami(2015) and Dearden(2015). Nevertheless, Macaro, Jiménez-Muñoz & Lasagabaster (2019, p. 105) highlight that in some countries “... teachers did not particularly envisage a need for a qualification that confirmed an ability to deliver their subject through English”. This means that some content teachers may not consider that EMI entails both curricular and methodological changes in subject planning. This fact may entail that not enough attention is paid to the training of the communicative competence that may be essential to motivate students and teach EMI subjects proficiently.

In spite of the increasing number of studies devoted to the implementation, teaching experiences, advantages and disadvantages of EMI, limited research (Carrió-Pastor, 2019; Lin, 2020) has been conducted on the need to teach persuasive strategies to EMI teachers that facilitate to engage learners in discussions or to guide them throughout the whole EMI class sessions.

3. METADISCOURSE

Many studies have highlighted the importance of pragmatics and that communicating in a language is something more than just grammar and vocabulary (Kasper, 2001; AlcónSoler, 2005; Nikula, 2005; Jianda, 2006; Carrió-Pastor & Mestre-Mestre, 2013; Carrió-Pastor & Casas-Gómez, 2015; Carrió-Pastor & Martín-Marchante, 2016). The different aspects contemplated by teachers to make students acquire proficiency in a foreign language are crucial. Teachers should be aware that students copy their teachers and so all the aspects related to teaching should be incorporated into the planning of classes. The pragmatic implications of a foreign language should be practised during EMI classes to help students improve their language proficiency. This paper focuses on the use of metadiscourse devices, that is, the elements that allow speakers to guide, provide coherence and cohesion, convince, mitigate, engage or boost in a given genre.

Metadiscourse has been a popular topic of research, mainly led by Hyland (2005). It “refers to linguistic resources that have interactional and organizational functions” (Thomson, 2020, p. 26) and the devices that have metadiscursive functions are mainly divided into textual metadiscourse, that is, the elements that organise and provide cohesion to speech acts, and interactional, i.e. the elements that convince, engage and maintain social relationships with readers. Most research about metadiscourse has been devoted to the academic genre, but some researchers have also investigated language learning and teaching considering metadiscourse devices (Polat, 2011; Li & Wharton, 2012; Lin, 2020; Thompson, 2020). But no much research dedicated to the study of metadiscourse devices used by EMI teachers has been found (Denvera et al., 2016; Broggin i& Murphy, 2017).It should be noted that

no studies have focused on the need to include metadiscourse devices in teacher training in higher education and, consequently, on the training of metadiscourse devices to EMI teachers. In this light, this paper aims to deepen in the study of persuasive strategies, specifically the metadiscourse devices used by EMI teachers.

4. CORPUS AND METHOD

The corpus of this study is composed of one hundred teaching units that were presented at the end of the online university course leading to a qualification for teaching in English offered by Universitat Politècnica de València (Spain). This qualification is equivalent to 220 online hours and 380 hours working at home. The aim of this qualification is to prepare teachers to deliver their content subjects in English. The teaching units compiled were delivered by higher education lecturers during the academic years 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20. It was necessary to compile the corpus from different courses as most of the students enrolled on this course designed their teaching units for primary or secondary education, so the teaching units of those teachers working at the university as part-time lecturers were selected for this study, as they were the real EMI teachers.

These lecturers implemented EMI and not Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach at university level, teaching their subject in English in different degrees at Universitat Politècnica de València making no reference to language acquisition as CLIL does. Additionally, these EMI teachers were enrolled in language classes to be trained on grammar proficiency.

The corpus was selected from those content teachers who obtained the qualification after passing all the subjects and planning and presenting a teaching unit. In the course, there is one specific subject that focuses on the training of pragmatics: “Pragmatic discursive aspects of language”, which is equivalent to 20 teaching hours. The teaching units are composed of several sections and are sent to the evaluation boards, each consisting of two teachers from the course, that decide if content teachers are capable of using English as a medium of instruction in their classes. The sections of the teaching units are the following:

- Context and students (age of learners, current level of English, prior knowledge required),
- year of study,
- timing (number of lessons and their duration),
- aims of the unit (the general teaching aims of the unit, knowledge, skills and understanding),
- teaching objectives (regarding the 4Cs, that is, content, cognition, culture and communication),
- methodology (planning of subject, scaffolding, tasks, higher order or lower order thinking skills, etc.),
- learning outcomes (skills acquired),
- sequence of teaching and learning activities,
- assessment (evaluation, rubrics, etc.),

- list of resources (materials and equipment used),
- checklist.

As can be seen, the pragmatic content of the teaching unit could be included in the teaching objectives and in the learning outcomes, but no explicit mention is made of pragmatic competence. But this is not always the case in the EMI certificates offered by different organisations. This qualification is offered by many Spanish higher education institutions. Cambridge English also offers a Certificate in EMI skills, which is a 40-hour online learning course. As announced on their EMI certificate webpage:

Support your internationalisation objectives and improve student experience by ensuring your faculty are confident working in English. The Certificate in EMI Skills is for university professors, lecturers, tutors and researchers whose first language is not English, but who use English to teach students, present academic papers and interact with colleagues.

The online course modules include video demonstrations of University of Cambridge lectures, seminars and tutorials. With the Certificate in EMI Skills, participants can show that they:

- can use English as the medium of instruction with greater effectiveness
- are able to use a wider range of strategies to engage students
- can take part more confidently in professional activities in the medium of English.
- (Available at <https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/teaching-english/teaching-qualifications/institutions/certificate-in-emi-skills/> [Accessed 06/10/2020])

In the case of the Cambridge EMI certificate, in some of the different modules of the online course, metadiscourse devices are included and taken into account although they are not mentioned explicitly. For example, in the module ‘Language for lectures’, the sections included in the content entail the use of textual markers (Different lecture styles; Introducing a lecture; Signposting and cohesion in lectures; Concluding a lecture) as well as in the module ‘Language for tutorials and supervision’, in the section ‘Advising students on strengths and weaknesses’, the use of boosters, attitude markers and hedges are explained. Furthermore, in the module ‘Language for online communication’ some metadiscourse devices are part of the syllabus. In this sense, the Cambridge EMI certificate emphasises the use of persuasion in EMI classes.

The corpus compiled here is thus composed of one hundred teaching units designed by one hundred university lecturers that followed a course aimed at training them in the teaching of content in English. The total word count of the teaching units is 495,487 words, the average length being 4,954 words per teaching unit. As explained above, the teaching units were divided into sections which helped content teachers to guide readers by specifying different aspects to be considered depending on the content. All the teachers were Spaniards who used English as a foreign language.

The method applied in this study was divided into different stages. Thus, the first step was to collect the final projects written during three academic years by EMI university lecturers who were enrolled on an online course at Universitat Politècnica de València. The second step was to identify and classify the frequencies of textual and interactional devices

and their subcategories, analysing their functions in the teaching unit. For the classification of metadiscourse devices, the taxonomy proposed explained in the Introduction section (Hyland, 2005; Mur-Dueñas, 2011) was initially taken into account but finally the proposal by Thomson (2020, p. 31) was adopted considering the corpus compiled for this study. The author adapts previous taxonomies (Hyland, 2005; Ådel, 2006, 2017) paying attention to the resources that serve interactional and organisational (textual) functions, that is, two main metadiscursive functions that are fundamental in the pragmatic organisation of discourse: signposting (textual devices) and stance (interactional devices). Table 1 shows the different subcategories taken into account in the category of textual or signposting devices:

Table 1. Textual or signposting categories and subcategories

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	DEVICES
Transitions	Additive	Furthermore, moreover, similarly, also...
	Contrastive	However, similarly, in contrast, but, yet, rather...
	Inferential	Thus, in order to, therefore, consequently, then...
Code glosses	Exemplification	For example, for instance, illustrates, can be seen...
	Reformulation	In other words, that is, i.e., means...
Frame markers	Sequencers	First, second, finally, to begin with, next...
	Topicalisers	With regard to, concerning, turning to, in terms of...
	Discourse labels	Thus far, in sum, in brief, briefly...
Endophoric markers	Announcers	Aim to, will, seek to...
	Anaphoric	As noted earlier, in this paper, above, previously...
	Cataphoric	See Table X, the next section, in Fig. X...

Table 2 shows the different subcategories of stance or interactional devices considered in this study and adapted from Thomson (2020). Evidential devices are considered to be textual or signposts by some researchers (Hyland, 2005; Mur-Dueñas, 2011), but here they are considered to be persuasive, “drawing readers’ attention to external sources that support writers’ views” (Thomson, 2020, p. 31), and are classified as stance or interactional markers.

Table 2. Interactional or stance categories and subcategories

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	DEVICES
Hedges	Downtoners	Quite, relatively, few, almost, certain, little, only...
	Rounders	Roughly, around, about, roughly, some, general...
	Plausibility shields	Potential, tend, may, might, perhaps, possible...
	First person	I/we believe, guess, opinion, think...
Boosters	Amplifiers	Extremely, very, much, major, perfect, significantly...
	Universals	All, everybody, never, completely, greatest...
	Plausibility	Clear, indeed, sure, certainly, clearly, definitely...

Engagement markers	Questions Reader reference Directives Personal asides	Direct questions, tag questions, rhetorical questions You, we, our, us, let's... Look at, consider, write, remember, think about it... By the way,
Evidentials	Personal Impersonal	According to X, as X argued, explains, describes... Previous, past research, previously...
Self-mentions	Personal references	I, my, we, our...
Attitude markers	Negative Positive Emotional	Inappropriate, disappointed, unusual... Agree, appropriate, correctly, significant, honest... Dramatic, shocking, !, prefer, surprised, dramatically...

The occurrences that functioned as metadiscourse devices were identified automatically with the tool METOOL, fruit of the research project supported by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (Reference FFI2016-77941-P). This tool identifies metadiscourse devices and the annotator can check, after being directed to the text, if the device functions as a metadiscourse marker or not. In this way, after checking the functions and tagging the devices automatically identified by the tool, the occurrences were counted.

In the third stage, examples were compiled and some functions of the devices were discussed. Later, the least and most frequently used metadiscourse devices were studied. Once completed, I proposed the metadiscourse devices to be included in training courses to help EMI teachers improve their communicative competence. Finally, conclusions that could be useful for EMI trainers and trainees were drawn.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section shows the results from this exploratory study, including examples of signposting and stance subcategories from the corpus to illustrate how each subcategory was used by EMI teachers. A total of 2,121 textual or signposting markers and a total of 1,624 interactional or stance devices were found after the analysis of the teaching units. Altogether, 3,745 markers were identified in the corpus of one hundred teaching units.

Firstly, I display the occurrences in the two main categories (textual and interactional), the ten categories and the twenty-eight subcategories. Secondly, I show some examples of the different categories identified and finally I compare the different occurrences found in the categories and subcategories. Table 3 below shows the occurrences of textual or signposting markers found in the corpus. The first column shows the four subcategories included, the second column shows the subcategories studied and the third column shows the occurrences found in the analysis.

Table 3. Textual or signposting categories and subcategories

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	OCCURRENCES
Transitions	Additive	424
	Contrastive	271
	Inferential	210
		Total: 905
Code glosses	Exemplification	198
	Reformulation	78
		Total: 276
Frame markers	Sequencers	324
	Topicalisers	123
	Discourse labels	75
	Announcers	83
		Total: 605
Endophoric markers	Anaphoric	128
	Cataphoric	207
		Total: 335

The mean of signposting markers per 100 words of the corpus is 2.33. As Table 3 shows, transitions were the most frequently used metadiscourse category, additive being the most frequent subcategory. The EMI teachers thus used these devices to guide readers through the teaching unit, aware that this is one of the most important aspects to cohere language. The devices ‘and’, ‘also’ and ‘but’ were the most frequently used, as also noted in the study by Thomson (2020, p. 33).

Example (1) shows a sentence with different transition markers:

- (1) “*Finally*, the task will be divided into different parts *so that* students can face them easily *while* they can also have a better understanding.” [Biology]

Code glosses were mainly used to provide examples, although some markers that explained concepts were also useful to make the teaching more comprehensible. It should be noted that the purpose of a teaching unit is to be basically pedagogical, thus it should include examples and explanations of new concepts, but in the corpus analysed this was the least frequently used category.

Example (2) displays the way code glosses were used in the teaching units:

- (2) “An *example* of a rubric for evaluating the final task on Mathematics is included below.” [Mathematics]

Frame markers were the second most frequently used category of devices in the teaching units. They connect parts of the discourse in a linear, progressive manner, structuring arguments, the most common sequencers being ‘first’, ‘second’, ‘finally’; organise the discourse mainly with the specific aims of introducing related topics with devices such as ‘concerning’, ‘in terms of’; act as discourse labels with ‘in brief’, ‘in sum’; and announce the intention of the writer with markers such as ‘we aim to’. In a way, these devices organise the discourse and organise the propositions. The most commonly used in the corpus were ‘first’, ‘second’, ‘on the one hand’ and ‘on the other hand’.

Example (3) shows the function of frame markers in discourse:

- (3) “*Finally*, before teaching this unit, students should have some prior knowledge required, that involves mainly knowing about Old Regime and its social, political and economic structures.” [History]

The last category in the typology of textual or signposting markers is that of endophora, which refers to the expressions, figures or tables that refer to something within the text. It is divided into anaphoric, when the elements refer to information previously shown, such as ‘before’, ‘above’, ‘previously’, and cataphoric, which refer to subsequent text, figures or tables, as in ‘see table...’ and ‘as shown in figure...’ and ‘below’. These devices are quite useful in a teaching unit to illustrate ideas or provide students with further information about the tasks, assessment or extra activities.

Example (4) shows the way these devices were used:

- (4) “*Below*, rubrics for Task 1 and participation in class are provided.” [Fine Arts, photography]

As teaching units are mainly descriptive and their aim is to motivate students to acquire content and practise a foreign language, EMI teachers should use pictures, graphs and images to motivate students, and so endophoric markers are quite popular in the corpus.

Table 4, below, shows the occurrences of the interactional or stance categories and subcategories found in the teaching units analysed:

Table 4. *Interactional or stance categories and subcategories*

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	OCCURRENCES
Hedges	Downtoners	153
	Rounders	127
	Plausibility shields	154
	First person	21
	Total:	455
Boosters	Amplifiers	34
	Universals	97
	Plausibility	94
	Total:	225

Engagement markers	Questions	0
	Reader reference	25
	Directives	329
	Personal asides	0
		Total: 354
Evidentials	Personal	149
	Impersonal	53
Self-mentions	Personal references	49
Attitude markers	Negative	34
	Positive	203
	Emotional	102

The mean of stance markers per 100 words of the corpus is 3.03; some examples can be seen below. EMI teachers used more signposting than stance devices, which may be due to the corpus analysed, as EMI teachers could have considered that coherence and cohesion were crucial when designing the teaching unit for their students. Stance shows the position of EMI teachers, namely, to persuade readers and try to convince students about the importance of the content being taught. Thus, a low frequency of stance markers could indicate that EMI teachers have not been trained effectively to use these metadiscourse devices when teaching content. Signposting is important in teaching, but persuasive strategies should also be used to motivate students and improve content acquisition.

Table 4 shows that the most frequent devices used by EMI teachers are hedges. The reason for this may be that teachers prefer not to sound commanding when teaching EMI classes, as this could discourage students. Specifically, the results for plausibility are interesting as they are the most frequent, that is, authors indicate that some of the statements may not be true, with modal verbs being the most frequent (e.g. may, might, could), but if we consider the number of items and the number of teaching units, the correlation is quite low. An example can be seen in (5):

- (5) “Regarding the timing of the unit, it *may* be structured for a total of three lessons that encompass two weeks of the subject.” [Design]

The teacher presents a vague structure of the teaching unit with ‘may’ with the aim of showing that there are other possibilities.

Regarding boosters, they are used to mark that the teacher is certain about some facts and to emphasise some aspects of the teaching unit, as shown in example (6). They are not frequently used in the teaching unit; the mean is about two occurrences per teaching unit:

- (6) “Henceforth, this aspect is *highly important* in the following sections.”

Engagement markers, the devices used to engage readers, are the second most frequently used. It should be noted that no occurrences were found in the subcategories of questions and personal asides, given the nature of the corpus. Basically, the subcategory of directives

was the most common in this category and this may be due to the characteristics of the genre analysed. In a teaching unit, teachers should use imperatives to direct the students to perform an action, as can be seen in example (7):

(7) “*Build* a scientific culture, appreciating the benefits of science and research in our society and *identify* sources of information to look for quality scientific content in the media”. [Biotechnology]

Evidentials were typically used to cite extra-textual sources or to point to some image shown in the teaching unit, as in (8):

(8) “*According to* Ellis’s definition, a task involves a primary focus on meaning, involves processes of language used in physics.” [Physics and Chemistry]

Self-mentions were the least frequently used category, as in the teaching unit, EMI teachers rarely made claims using the first person. This category was mainly used to defend their decisions in choosing one activity or another, as in (9). But, in general, EMI teachers prefer the use of the passive voice and to hide their authorship:

(9) “*I have included* this rubric here to illustrate the assessment of the teaching unit”. [Biology]

Concerning attitude markers, this category is the third most frequently used in the corpus, although these markers were not frequent, that is, the average number is three markers per teaching unit. They are mainly used by EMI teachers to show the interesting or important sections of the teaching unit, motivating students as in (10):

(10) “This type of game is very *interesting* for students because it increases *dramatically* their cooperation and their personal initiative and participation”. [Biology]

Summarising the occurrences found in the study, and taking into consideration that a good command of metadiscourse devices facilitates the motivation and content acquisition of students, it may be stated that the EMI teachers analysed are not aware of the importance of using metadiscourse devices in their teaching units. Textual markers are used more frequently than interactional ones, but this has also been stated by other researchers in the analysis of students’ corpora, for example, as in Li & Wharton (2012) or in Polat (2011). Similar results have been found in the academic genre, as signposting is considered easier to use for non-native English speakers than stance (Carrió-Pastor, 2016). Li and Wharton (2012, p. 354) indicate that “... writers can benefit from specialised training [...] their repertoire of interactional metadiscourse is narrower”. Thus, these authors also noticed that it is advisable to train non-native writers of a language in metadiscourse devices, making them aware of the broad repertoire and of the significance of the markers used.

Figure 1 shows the different occurrences gathered for the analysis. The frequencies do not mean that EMI teachers should use some metadiscourse markers more frequently, as some of these categories are not frequently used even by native speakers or in other genres. For me, the important aspect about this analysis is to identify whether EMI teachers make frequent use of metadiscourse devices to cohere the teaching unit and to engage and convince students about the content they teach. The use of a foreign language to teach a content

subject should not be considered a very tough nut to crack for students. Language should be used in a persuasive manner that makes students feel comfortable. Figure 1 indicates that signposting and stance markers are used in a similar way, some of their subcategories being the most frequently used, but it cannot be confirmed from this study that EMI teachers should be trained in some subcategories more than in others. In general, as seen in Tables 3 and 4, the use of metadiscourse is not frequent in the teaching units. Maybe the cause is the nature of the genre analysed. Teaching units are planned in such a way that they follow a structure that guides students and this may have been the cause of the low number of textual markers. Coherence and cohesion in discourse may be caused by the use of markers or by a formally organised structure. Dahl (2004, p. 1819) explains that in some texts, “the content presented is forced into information categories in a given sequence, and no extra processing effort is needed by the expert reader to orient him or herself within the text.” Moreover, the teaching units do not try to persuade students – on the contrary, they are expositive, using language mainly to inform and not to persuade.

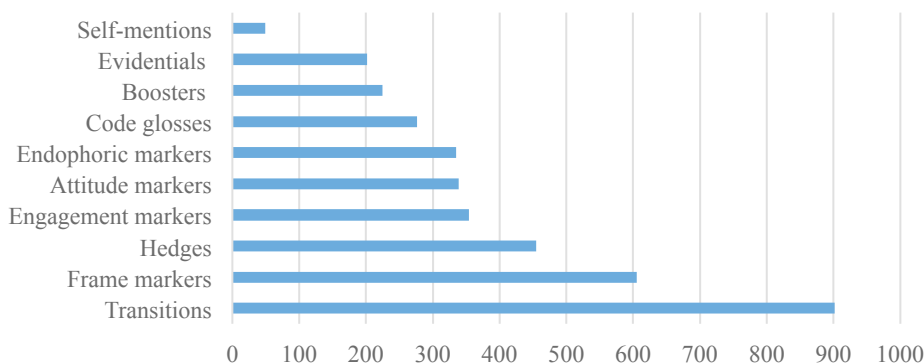


Figure 1. Comparison of occurrences in signposting and stance categories

Basically, I think the results show that metadiscourse markers should be included specifically in the training of EMI teachers in Spain. In some way, in the Cambridge English EMI certificate, pragmatic knowledge is crucial for teacher training, paying less attention to legislation or to formal aspects. In contrast, in Spain it seems that grammar or formal aspects are more important than convincing students to acquire concepts in English. As Macaro, Jiménez & Lasagabaster (2019, p. 105) state, “Traditionally-trained Spanish teachers [...] may not be fully aware that a paradigmatic change such as EMI requires both curricular and methodological adaptations”. These authors were aware of the shortcomings of EMI training (Macaro, Jiménez & Lasagabaster, 2019, p. 115): “... from an excessive emphasis on linguistics skills – which classroom experience tells them not to be enough – to the lack of any further requirements, other than willingness to teach through English”. They add “Our informants have already identified further training needs in terms of academic register, more supra-segmental language skills and stylistics”. In this study, it has been identified a training need in terms of metadiscourse devices to persuade and guide students in EMI classes.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This study on the use of metadiscourse devices by EMI teachers has shed some light on a number of aspects that may make a significant contribution to the fact that teaching EMI requires more than just switching from the mother tongue. The low frequencies found in the study show that training in metadiscourse devices is needed to enrich the way EMI teachers communicate with students and the need to provide EMI teachers with language support was also evident, as Margic & Vodopija-Krstanovic (2018) and Kim et al. (2018) point out. It was noticed in the results that the proportion of textual resources used was higher than that of interactional resources. These findings are in line with other studies (Li & Wharton, 2012; Thomson, 2020).

The training courses designed in Spain for EMI teachers in higher education should be focused on the acquisition of pragmatics, a fact that could help teachers to interact with students and to explain subjects in a more comprehensible way. Given that the EMI teacher training course analysed includes pragmatic content, it seems that this is not enough to increase teachers' awareness of the importance of metadiscourse devices. Thus, there is a need to design training activities on the use of metadiscourse devices that show how to interact in the classroom in an explicit way. EMI teachers should understand the potential of metadiscourse in teaching and, from there, some activities should be proposed, following the indications of Alcon Soler (2005).

The first research question, that is, the metadiscourse devices that are most and least frequently employed by teachers who use English as a medium of instruction, was answered in the results section. The most frequently used were transitions and the least frequently used were self-mentions. I believe that these results are fruit of the type of corpus chosen. EMI teachers aimed at cohering their ideas and parts of the teaching units as well as not mentioning the authorship of the teaching unit, since self-promotion is the aim of this kind of text.

The second research question, the metadiscourse devices that should be included in the training of EMI teachers to guarantee that university teachers use persuasive strategies in communication are those related to stance. Explicit instruction on stance should be included in the training to improve the use of persuasive strategies that could be useful in the future.

I am aware that the taxonomy used here could be expanded to include more sub-categories, but I think the results illustrate the need for pragmatic training in EMI. If teachers use metadiscourse devices poorly, then their students will be even more limited in the use of signposting and stance markers. Future studies could include written production of EMI students to compare the use of metadiscourse markers in discourse produced by teachers and students and try to identify a correlation in their use.

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