English Medium Instruction and Idiomaticity in English as a Lingua Franca

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A B S T R A C T

This paper critically considers the implications of the growth of English-medium instruction (EMI) globally for idiomaticity in English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). We first make the case for idiomaticity in English in terms of its contribution to language processing and use and regarding the challenges and affordances it presents to users of English as a second/additional language. We then compare the domains of ELF and EMI in order to pinpoint the similarities and differences between their characteristics, with specific reference to the role of idiomaticity. We argue that EMI prepares students for academic ELF, which is idiomatically distinct from academic L1-English and non-academic varieties of English; that the unidirectional nature of much EMI discourse has implications for ELF-specific idiomaticity; and that the large-scale, long-term language contact engendered by the growth of EMI denotes that an increasing number of L2-English users may be underprepared for a wealth of ELF events, particularly those which draw more substantively on idiomaticity or are themselves idiosyncratically idiomatic. We consider how EMI pedagogy might foster students' idiomatic competence and creativity to take account of their ELF needs beyond the ivory tower.

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Introduction

English as a foreign or second language (L2) is widely taught as a language subject at tertiary level in non-Anglophone settings. Increasingly, however, universities are eschewing traditional instruction in favour of English-medium instruction (EMI), whereby courses in content subjects are delivered through the medium of English. This reconceptualization of English language pedagogy allows students in non-English speaking countries to receive the entirety of their university education in a language other than the national majority language. In EMI courses English is the conduit through which content subjects are delivered: students acquire knowledge of content material while, ideally, also improving their English language proficiency. Key to distinguishing EMI from other methods is the ancillary role of English language development—a side effect of instruction rather than an explicit pedagogical target. EMI is distinct from Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), in which content and L2 development are dual explicit learning goals (Macaro, 2015). EMI resembles Content-Based (Language) Learning (e.g., Met, 1999), a method used in majority English speaking countries to deliver both content and English to minority language speakers. Students in Content-Based Language Learning settings, however, will likely also be exposed to English in non-academic settings, while EMI students live in settings where English is neither their mother tongue (for most), nor the majority language.

Universities are expanding EMI offerings (e.g., Wächter & Maiworm, 2014; Brenn-White & Faethe, 2013), motivated by institutional and student-based factors: universities themselves may seek to 'internationalize' with EMI, raising name recognition, graduate employability, global prestige and/or ranking, and subsequently attracting higher numbers of international students (Rose & McKinley, 2017). Students, particularly those in science, technology, engineering, and math fields, are expected to engage with literature published in English, and to benefit from an aligning of course input, interaction and assessment in English. On a broader level, English is seen as an asset for a future in an increasingly global workplace, and the expectation is that EMI students' English language proficiency will develop in conjunction with their subject knowledge.

This paper focuses on the implications of the global growth of EMI for idiomaticity in English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). We posit that idiomaticity plays a key role in English language processing and use, regardless of the first language background of interlocutors or whether or not discourse is benchmarked against English as a Native Language (ENL). We discuss and compare the domains of EMI and ELF to argue that EMI exposes students to the idiomatic profile of a niche of English as a lingua franca—academic ELF—and is unlikely to develop the high-level interactional competence required to foster the idiomatic creativity that is characteristic of ELF exchanges. As such, the exponential expansion of EMI would suggest that an increasing number of L2-English users are underprepared for the use of English as a lingua franca, particularly for ELF in non-academic contexts that draw differently and/or more substantively on interaction and idiomaticity. We consider how EMI pedagogy might foster students' idiomatic competence and creativity through cooperation between content teachers and language teaching specialists.

The Case for Idiomaticity

Formulaic sequences, notoriously hard to define multi-word combinations, are generally considered essential for highly proficient spoken English (Pawley & Snyder, 1983). Formulaic language can be defined as a sequence of words "prefabricated: that is, stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use," for example: *to be frank*, *take the cake, hand over fist* (Wray, 2002, p. 9; Read & Nation, 2004). There are numerous overlapping and/or hierarchical definitions for different aspects formulaic language. The constellation of terms for describing formulaic language

includes: collocations, chunks, formulaic phrases, multi-word phrases, and idioms (Wray, 2005). These items function comparably to individual lexical items, with multiple words combining to express a singular meaning or function (Martinez & Schmitt, 2012; Wray, 2002). While there is controversy over how to define, identify, and quantify distribution and frequency of these items, advances in corpus linguistics have provided further support that these items are frequent in naturally occurring discourse (Erman & Warren, 2000; Sinclair, 1991) and are essential elements of the English language (Wray, 2002, 2008).

Idioms, in particular, are seen as an especially rich element of formulaic language, expressive, inventive, sometimes whimsical and always with enormous communicative strength. These figurative phrases convey a function or meaning that cannot be deciphered from the literal dictionary definitions of the components, and are, to use an idiom, *greater than the sum of their parts* (Cutler, 1982; Liontas, 2015). Idioms can be 'frozen-in-time' relics relating to a historic context (*riding shotgun*; *up to snuff*; *burning the midnight oil*); or novel idioms that continue to develop, rising and falling in popularity with the evolution of language and broader cultural shifts (*garbage in, garbage out*; *Elvis has left the building*).

Formulaic sequences have been conceptualized as giant lexical items in and of themselves (Nippold, 1998), and arguably should be counted in measures of vocabulary size. If multi-word phrases were counted, 500 multi-word phrases would feature in the 5,000 most commonly used word families (Martinez & Schmitt, 2012). Formulaic language facilitates encoding, decoding (Poulsen, 2005), and fluency (Wray, 2005). Furthermore, the predictability of fixed expressions likely enables faster language processing (Pawley & Syder, 1983; Gibbs, Bogdanovich, Sykes, & Barr, 1997) and increases reading speed (Siyanova-Chanturia, Conklin, & Schmitt, 2011; Conklin & Schmitt, 2008). Research in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Psycholinguistics has focused on how units of words are accessed, represented and stored in the mental lexicon (Ellis, Simpson Vlach, Romer, Brook O'Donnell, & Wulff, 2015; Wray, 2002, 2012, 2013), looking to links between formulaic sequences and underlying cognitive processes for insights into language learning and use (Ellis, Simpson-Vlach, & Maynard, 2008; Wray, 2012). Sinclair's Idiom Principle states that:

> A language user has available to him or her a large number of semi-preconstructed phrases that constitute single choices, even though they might appear to be analysable into segments. To some extent, this may reflect the recurrence of similar situations in human affairs; it may illustrate a natural tendency to economy of effort; or it may be motivated in part by the exigencies of real time conversation. (1991, p. 110)

In other words, using idiomatic language is an economical approach to communication of meaning because prefabricated ways of expressing meaning in commonly-occurring speech acts negates the necessity to self-generate, e.g., *better luck next time* as a chunk is more efficient to use than constructing 'I am sorry you weren't successful this time and I hope you are more successful in future'. Comparisons of written corpora against their spoken counterparts indicate that idiomatic language is used more frequently in spoken than written English (e.g., Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, & Finegan, 1999; Leech, 2000): this is likely due to the added constraints on working memory in speaking as compared to writing, making reliance on formulaic language a key strategy to avoiding having to self-generate language when facing 'the exigencies of real time conversation' (Kuiper, 1996; Bresnan, 1999). However, even in written language, formulaic sequences make a significant contribution to the composition of discourse in English (e.g., Chen & Baker, 2010; Hyland, 2012).

Idiomaticity and Learners of English

Formulaic sequences, in particular especially highly opaque and/or idiomatic phrases, have been shown to present a particular challenge to learners of English. Differences in processing and use of sequences of words have been presented as a distinguishing feature between first and second language users (Wray, 2005) with frequent, fluent, natural production considered a hallmark of highly proficient speakers (Ellis, 2002; Ellis et al., 2015; Erman, Forsberg Lundell, & Lewis, 2016; Howarth, 1998; Paquot & Granger, 2012; Pawley & Syder, 1983; Conklin & Schmitt, 2012; Sinclair, 1991; Wray, 2002; 2005). Idioms, and other highly opaque formulaic phrases, have been shown to present a particular challenge to learners and to negatively impact reading comprehension (Bishop, 2004, Barfield & Gyllstad, 2009; Cooper, 1999; Liontas, 2002; Martinez & Murphy, 2011). Even advanced learners may struggle to develop *idiomatic competence*, "the ability to understand and use idioms appropriately and accurately in a variety of sociocultural contexts, in a manner similar to that of native speakers and with the least amount of mental effort" (Liontas, 2003, p. 299).

The presence of idiomatic phrases has been shown to present an obstacle to L2-users due to their multiple potential meanings. L2-users may fixate on literal interpretations of idioms to infer figurative and metaphorical meanings. So much so, in fact, that they sometimes attempt to interpret figurative phrases literally, even when a literal interpretation is in complete mismatch with context (Bishop, 2004). Learners have also been shown to assume that, because they know the individual words that make up an idiom, they have comprehended the meaning, and therefore are not even alert to these understanding gaps when reading an English text, even when literal interpretation makes no sense or is impossible in passage context (Martinez & Murphy, 2011). These multiple potential interpretations make idioms a road block for otherwise skilled language users, preventing comprehension and L1-like production.

Research on how L2-users process, comprehend, and acquire English idioms has found that context plays a significant role and learners demonstrate profound struggles in its absence (Colombo, 1993; Irujo, 1986, 1993; Liontas, 2001, 2003; McGlone, Glucksberg, & Cacciari, 1994). Liontas (2003) points out that the elements that make idiom interpretation difficult (semantic opacity, lack of decodability, specifics of institutionalized usage) are ameliorated to varying degrees when the idiom is encountered in a meaningful context. Liontas (2003) also found that context supported understanding of Spanish vivid phrasal idioms for L1 English learners; the presence or absence of context impacted interpretation accuracy of Spanish idioms, with significantly better participant performance in the condition with context than without. Findings indicated that all four of Laufer's context factors (absence of clues; lack of familiarity with words in which the clues are located; presence of misleading or partial clues; incompatibility between the reader's schemata and text content) exerted a negative influence on outcomes (Laufer, 1997; Liontas, 2003). Contextual information provides the essential support desperately needed for learners to interpret 'only child' idioms, without any L1 equivalents to rely on. Liontas' (2001, 2003) findings show L2 learners of Greek and L2 learners of Spanish demonstrate significantly improved processing, comprehension, and interpretation of idioms without L1 counterparts when the idioms are presented with contextual support. As such, natural presence of idiomatic speech in context—for example, in the classroom—is likely the best method for helping L2 users to develop their idiomatic competence.

Given the complexity inherent in comprehending and using idiomatic language, the idiomatic profile of L2-English production is likely to differ considerably from L1 production. For example, there is evidence to suggest that even very highly proficient speakers of an L2 are less idiomatic overall in their production than L1 speakers (e.g., Ekberg, 2013; Laufer & Waldman, 2011). L2 users are wont to use certain classifications of idiomatic language more frequently than L1 users, particularly discourse markers (e.g., Forsberg, 2008; Hancock, 2000; Raupach, 1984), and to use

others less frequently (e.g., De Cock (2004) found that attenuation markers such as *kind of* and *sort of* are underused, which she attributes to a lack of informal register mastery). World Englishes research on idiomatic language further shows considerable differences across English speaking communities (e.g., Jenkins, 2015; Melchers & Shaw, 2011; Sebba, 2009). One could therefore argue, because both EMI lecturers and students are predominantly L2-users of English (and as such are likely to produce less idiomatic language when compared against L1-users), that the development of idiomatic competence in EMI settings is less important than in settings where L2-English users interact regularly with L1-English users. However, as we shall demonstrate with reference to the literature on English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), the ability to comprehend and use idiomatic language appropriately in a range of sociocultural contexts, as Liontas (2003) suggests, is also important in L2-L2 interaction, and not solely as a means of converging on shared meaning.

English as a Second Language and as a Lingua Franca

Users of English for whom English is not the mother tongue can be characterised on the one hand as second language (L2) learners—reflecting Second Language Acquisition (SLA) as a field of study, whereby the ultimate attainment is a native-like command of the non-native language—and on the other hand as users of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), whereby English is conceptualised as a contact language between individuals from different L1 backgrounds (including different L1-English backgrounds) (Jenkins, 2013). In the ELF domain all varieties of English are accepted with equal value as opposed to being held up for scrutiny against native speaker norms. That is, non-native Englishes are considered as different from English as a Native Language (ENL) and not as deficient varieties (Jenkins, Cogo, & Dewey, 2011). ELF, as argued by its proponents, focuses on the fluidity and flexibility of English, rather than on the determination and investigation of bounded non-native speaker varieties, and is theoretically framed by the sociolinguistic notions of language contact and language evolution (Jenkins, Cogo, & Dewey, 2011).

Language contact is defined as a phenomenon that occurs when speakers of different languages interact with one another, resulting in one or more of their languages being influenced (evolving) as a result (Matras, 2009); for example, the influence of the Norman Conquest on British English. Therefore, ELF is not only a contact language but also a site of language contact (Mauranen, 2012). That language contact is likely to lead to language change is undisputed (e.g., Thomason, 2001), and the scope of language change can be as modest as the borrowing of some words in a language whilst using another, and as extreme as the creation of entirely new languages (Winford, 2003).

Similarly to the notion of language contact, theoretical perspectives on SLA have also claimed an important role of interaction. The Interaction Hypothesis is based on the tenets that (1) comprehensible input is required for SLA to take place; and that (2) input is modified through interaction to combat comprehension difficulties (negotiation for meaning), thus making the input more comprehensible to the learner: in this way interaction is seen as key to SLA from an interactionist perspective (e.g., Ellis, 1991; Long, 1983). Pica (1987) extends the interactionist model by adding that (3) situations in which interlocutors regard themselves as having equal status (in terms of the importance of their conversational needs/obligations) provide greater affordances for negotiation for meaning: in other words, not only is interaction in itself important, but so are the conditions under which interaction takes place (Ellis, 1991).

Conceptually, then, in ELF individuals are positioned as language users who employ English as a vehicle for interaction, the outcome of which is likely to be language change to a lesser or greater extent. In EMI, lecturers and students are also language users who interact in English, yet—given the broad expectation that EMI students' English language proficiency will develop in tandem

with their content subject knowledge—students are also positioned as learners of English who stand to benefit (in terms of linguistic development) from the L2 input and interaction facilitated by studying through English. In this way EMI can be classified as a type of academic ELF to which SLA theory is applicable.

English as a Lingua Franca and English Medium Instruction

Although EMI and ELF contexts share similarities, they are not one and the same. ELF is characterised as a contact language used to facilitate communication between people from *different* language backgrounds (e.g., Galloway & Rose, 2015; Jenkins, 2013). As an example, the English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings (ELFA) corpus—a collection of academic spoken ELF texts from Higher Education institutions in Helsinki—makes prominent in its corpus description the wide distribution of speakers in the corpus by first language background, highlighting the small percentage of Finnish mother tongue speakers despite the geographical location of the data collection, and containing no events with same-L1 speakers. Tertiary-level EMI, then, presents something of a conundrum to the ELF paradigm in that in university courses in many EMI settings the lecturer and the vast majority (if not all) of the students share the same first language (Briggs, Dearden, & Macaro, forthcoming): unlike the highly multilingual landscape of the use of English as an academic lingua franca presented by the ELFA corpus, the extant EMI literature paints a different picture, pointing to settings in which code switching to a shared L1 is common (e.g., Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2017; Ishamina & Deterding, 2017; Kim, Kweon, & Kim, 2016), often as a strategy to overcome students' difficulty in comprehending input delivered in English (e.g., Park & Min, 2014; Poon, 2013). Thus we see key differences in EMI as compared with ELF: (1) where EMI lecturers and students share the same L1 background, the use of *English* as the lingua franca is not derived from a lack of other available codes; and (2) the use of English in EMI is not a free choice made by the interlocutors themselves but rather a top-down requirement imposed by institutional managers/administrators (Dearden, 2014).

Further, although academia has been conceptualised as "a typical ELF domain" in that "it is international, mobile and its dependence on English has skyrocketed in the last few decades" (Mauranen, 2010, p. 7), we would argue that it is atypical in the extent to which the communication it comprises is primarily unidirectional. That is to say, much of an EMI student's course input is delivered via the traditional lecture or via reading of academic journal articles or textbooks, and there is evidence to suggest that in EMI lectures there is little student-student or student-lecturer interaction. The literature also indicates that outside of class EMI students and lecturers are more likely to use a language other than English to interact with one another (e.g., Evans, 2017). With reference to the Hong Kong context, for example, Li (2009) argues that for many students, "English has very little reality outside school premises or in their lifeworld" (p. 74). Thus, the conclusion can be drawn that whilst in EMI English is very much a lingua franca, the nature of much EMI interaction is distinct from the more dialogic encounters characterised by the extant ELF literature.

A further feature on which EMI and ELF diverge refers to independence from ENL norms. Bjorkman (2013) notes that a majority of academic ELF speakers do not need English for communication with native English speakers, and reiterates the prevailing stance that ELF deserves consideration independently of native speaker norms. However, leading theorists of language contact and change such as Mufwene (2012) are unconvinced that non-native varieties are not benchmarked against ENL, including by those who speak them. Indeed, he argues that divergence from ENL norms to any great extent risks "defeating the very reason why they invest so much energy and money to learn the language" (p. 369). Jenkins (2006) claims that the desire of many language users to adhere to native speaker norms derives from a pressurizing native speaker ideology at the core of much SLA research. One could argue that a native speaker ideology prevails accordingly in the global academic milieu: for example, a preponderance of

academic journals state in their author guidelines that non-native English authors are strongly recommended to use editing services prior to submission; in some cases going so far as to recommend collaboration with a native-speaker co-writer. Galloway and Rose (2015), however, point to evidence that some journals—particularly those in the hard sciences—are changing such recommendations. Certainly though, to gain entry into EMI courses in non-Anglophone settings students are required to adhere to ENL norms in that their success is dependent upon gaining specific score levels on large-scale international language assessments (such as IELTS or TOEFL) that are themselves benchmarked against ENL.

What the literature suggests, then, is that in many EMI settings as compared with more typical ELF settings:

- The use of English is often a requirement, not a choice

- Despite this requirement, other codes (e.g., a shared L1) are often available, and are commonly used

- Language contact occurs inside the lecture hall and for assessment and coursework, but may not extend to any significant extent beyond these educational confines

- Language contact can be characterised as more often unidirectional than dialogic

- Native speaker ideology to some extent prevails

Idiomaticity and English as a Lingua Franca

Idiomaticity has been claimed to be of little relevance for users of ELF (Jenkins, 2000) due to the strength with which it is characteristic of ENL and the extent to which there is idiomatic divergence between L1- and L2-English varieties (Seidlhofer, 2001). Attempts at adherence to idiomatic ENL norms can cause problems for ELF users: Seidlhofer (2001) posits the construct of 'unilateral idiomaticity', whereby one user of ELF does not comprehend an idiomatic expression used by another, potentially leading to communication breakdown. Unilateral idiomaticity may derive from the cultural loading of idioms (as an example, Cockney rhyming slang is unlikely to travel from British to American ENL); from the opacity of an idiomatic expression (e.g., *once in a blue moon*); from its lexico-grammatical complexity (e.g., *a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush*); or from a combination of all of these factors.

The literature suggests, however, that idiomaticity when *not* benchmarked against ENL norms indeed plays an important role in ELF. For example, Seidlhofer (2009) argues that divergence from ENL norms is a strategy used by ELF users to overcome the difficulties posed by unilateral idiomaticity—a strategy which may itself lead to language change. Using data from the Vienna-Oxford Corpus of International English (VOICE)—a circa 1 million token corpus of naturally-occurring spoken English derived from non-native, ELF speakers of the language, with entries classified by speech event type, including conversations, service encounters and press conferences—Seidlhofer and Widdowson (2009) demonstrate that ELF users co-construct idioms in interaction, calling on both Sinclair's (1991) Idiom Principle (in that words are combined into phrasal expressions to meet the exigencies of on-line conversation) *and* the 'open-choice principle' (whereby utterances are constructed lemma-by-lemma in a bottom up fashion). These pro tem constructions can be viewed through an interactionist lens as instances of negotiation for meaning (Long, 1985; 1996), in that lexical modifications are made which serve to render the input comprehensible. They further function as markers of shared territory in that they help to establish

a localised affective space of understanding and belonging between interlocutors (Seidlhofer, 2009): "in using English *on* their own terms, ELF users will quite naturally use English *in* their own terms" (Seidlhofer & Widdowson, 2009, p. 37).

If, as the literature suggests, ELF-specific idiomaticity derives from interaction, and most prominently from spoken interaction, then in largely unidirectional communicative contexts (such as in EMI) it is reasonable to expect the idiomatic profile of English usage to conform to the lexical profile of non-native English use when compared with ENL: i.e., that non-native language is less idiomatic than ENL considered broadly; over- and under-uses idiomatic expressions when benchmarked against ENL norms; and is subject to learner-internal and contextual factors. If, however, spoken interaction between L2-users in a given ELF context is commonplace, then we can expect idiomatic creativity to flourish on its own terms, serving to enhance cooperation for mutual understanding and to foster a mutual affective space between social actors.

Idiomaticity and English as a Medium of Instruction

Academic English is lexically distinct from general (i.e., 'everyday') English. For example, Coxhead's (2000) development of the highly influential Academic Word List (AWL) indicates that there is a 'core' academic vocabulary: the AWL comprises 570 word families extracted from a 3.5 million-token corpus of written academic texts in Science, Arts, Commerce and Law, which together included 28 individual subject disciplines. To be included in the AWL, a word family needed to (1) not occur in the first 2k words of the General Service List (GSL: West, 1953); (2) occur at least 10 times in each of the four discipline categories; and (3) occur in 15 or more of the individual subject disciplines. Considered together, the 570 word families accounted for 10% of academic texts in a 3.5 million-token corpus, whereas they covered only 1.4% of non-academic written discourse.

Academic English is arguably less idiomatic than general English. For example, Biber *et al.* (1999) determined that 'lexical bundles' comprised approximately 30% of their conversational corpus, yet covered only about 20% of academic prose. It is further distinct from general English with regard to the specific idiomatic language used: as argued by Martinez and Schmitt (2012), for every kind of commonly occurring communicative need, including in academic discourse, there develops sets of conventionalised lexical sequences (e.g., Biber, Conrad, & Cortes, 2004; Wulff, Swales, & Keller, 2009). Simpson-Vlach and Ellis (2010) developed a list of the most commonly occurring academic formulae—the Academic Formulas List—to find that the formulaic sequences they identified appeared significantly more frequently in academic than non-academic discourse.

There is also evidence that in some EMI settings lecturers are actively encouraged to avoid idiomatic language, especially that which is semantically opaque: in some contexts quality assurance certification offered to lecturers makes explicit reference to the avoidance of idiomaticity. For example, the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg assessment criteria for the Certification of English Medium Instruction Competencies in English Degree Programs includes the descriptor 'Lexical choice is... semantically transparent (avoidance of opaque idiomaticity)'. Guidance toward lexical simplification is likely made in an effort to facilitate students' comprehension of lectures: whilst Mauranen (2010) states that miscommunication is rare in academic ELF (as determined from analyses of the ELFA corpus), the EMI literature directly counters this claim. For example, studies to date that have looked at the influence of EMI on content subject learning have either found negative effects or have indicated comprehension difficulties on the part of students (e.g., Airey & Linder, 2006; Barton & Neville-Barton, 2003, 2004; Hellekjaer, 2010; Klaassen, 2001; Marsh, Hau, & Kong, 2000, 2002; Neville-Barton & Barton, 2005; Vinke, 1995; Yip, Tsang, & Cheung, 2003;). EMI teachers may attribute these effects directly to the lexical restrictions imposed on them: for example, Vinke (1995) found that

Dutch tertiary teachers considered that the content being taught was diluted and less flexible as a result of the more limited vocabulary that they could use with their students.

English in EMI, therefore, is likely to have a unique idiomatic profile. It is arguably (1) lexically distinct from general (i.e., non-academic) ELF/ENL; (2) less idiomatic than general ELF/ENL; (3) less idiomatically flexible than (the arguably more interactional) general ELF; (4) less idiomatic than ENL; and (5) differently idiomatic than general ELF/ENL and academic ENL. Thus we may deduce that EMI input considered broadly is idiomatically distinct when benchmarked against ENL academic discourse and against L1- or L2-English non-academic discourse. Global figures on the number of students studying through English at tertiary level have yet to be established, but all the evidence points to a massive growth in recent years (e.g., Dearden, 2014), with potentially many millions of students experiencing the long-term, predominantly unidirectional and idiosyncratically idiomatic language contact that EMI's use of English as a lingua franca brings.

Implications of EMI for Idiomaticity in ELF

What are the implications of the growth of EMI for English as a Lingua Franca with specific reference to idiomaticity? Firstly, we suggest that the increase in EMI globally means that more and more students are being prepared for idiomatic competence in a niche of English as a Lingua Franca—academic ELF. Tarone (2009) posits that when language users are restricted to the use of a language in one social context (such as the use of English primarily in the academic setting in EMI), they are affected because they have not mastered the strategies for language use requisite for interaction in other social settings. Indeed, Selinker and Douglas (1985) found that university-level learners of English who had attained high academic linguistic proficiency were unable to operate successfully in English in other settings, such as when cooking in a kitchen. Likewise, Varonis and Gass (1985) determined that academic English learners were unprepared for the use of English in non-academic contexts, finding that a telephone conversation with a TV repair shop assistant was too idiomatic to be comprehensible. As academic English is differently idiomatic than general English, we may infer that EMI does not prepare students well for the idiomatic profiles of non-academic varieties of English, whether ENL or ELF. Thus, EMI students may not be able to access the types of English they hope EMI will help prepare them for, particularly varieties that draw more substantively on idiomaticity or are themselves idiosyncratically idiomatic (e.g., informal ELF; work-based ELF; study abroad; migration; or English language-mediated cultural contact such as TV shows or music).

Secondly, we posit that the largely unidirectional nature of EMI communication in many contexts may mean that EMI students do not develop high-level interactional competence, which will limit their capacity to create the pro tem ELF idioms described by Seidlhofer (2009) and Seidlhofer and Widdowson (2009). That is to say, EMI students are likely over time and by necessity to develop the skills and strategies necessary to comprehend idiomaticity in written academic English and the lectures of their university course(s). They may not, however, have sufficient exposure to interactional ELF contexts, either on campus or beyond, to develop the confidence, skills or strategies to adapt or coin formulas that serve communication with other ELF users, particularly outside of academic settings and/or with interlocutors who do not share their L1 or cultural background. Even if interaction is encouraged in an EMI setting, one could argue that in lecturer-student dialogue the interlocutors are unlikely to regard themselves as having equal status in terms of the importance of their conversational needs/obligations, thus limiting the extent to which negotiation for meaning takes place: students may deem their status as lower than their teachers' (particularly in contexts where the educational culture confers greater authority on teachers). In this way the growth of EMI may lead not only to a significant number of ELF users who are unprepared for idiomaticity in non-academic discourse, but also to ELF users who have not

developed the interactional competence to be idiomatically flexible, whether in academic settings or beyond.

Pedagogical Implications

Given the implications stated above, one could argue that EMI prepares L2 users of English for ELF communication less well than does the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), which focuses on developing a broader range of competencies. Unlike EMI, where the focus is squarely on content learning, EFL contexts give rise to opportunities for language teachers to explicitly train students to become efficient users of ELF, such as those classroom-based activities reported in Galloway and Rose (2014; 2017) and Rose and Galloway (2017). Nevertheless, EFL is very much benchmarked against ENL norms (e.g., Galloway & Rose, 2015) whereas EMI represents a form of ELF (which places equal value on non-native varieties of English) in which EMI students and teachers are already engaged: as such it is prudent to suggest that EMI pedagogy takes explicit account of students' linguistic and sociocultural needs, goals and expectations with regard to the use of ELF and of idiomaticity in non-educational settings. To do so would require a reconceptualization of EMI in many contexts; one which would profitably mirror more closely the approach taken in CLIL (whereby content subject learning and linguistic development are dual explicit goals). To achieve this symbiosis, a dialogue might usefully be engendered between content teachers and language-teaching specialists in order to encourage verbal interaction in EMI settings that would serve to develop high-level interactional competence, encourage negotiation for meaning, and in turn foster idiomatic competence and creativity.

We suggest that a dialogue between content teachers and language teaching specialists would be one way of freeing EMI teachers from linguistic restrictions which derive from a desire to make input more comprehensible to students (e.g., the avoidance of semantically opaque formulaic language). To enhance the comprehensibility of input there are two options: (1) make the input more comprehensible; and/or (2) encourage negotiation for meaning. Regarding the former, comprehensibility can be achieved by simplification of the input; through the use of other available codes (e.g., a shared L1); and/or via non-linguistic means (such as the use of visual aids). As for the latter, a strong body of language teaching research has indicated that interactional modifications to language and negotiation for meaning are more frequent in students' dyadic activities than in teacher-fronted interaction (e.g., Benati, 2009). Language teaching specialists are well placed to work with content teachers to highlight to them where linguistic difficulties may arise from the idiomatic input of EMI discourse, how the input might be best modified/enhanced to make it more comprehensible, and how student-student interaction can be utilised to support comprehension and development. Without such a dialogue, the only available option to content teachers is to simplify input; a solution which is unlikely to foster either communicative or idiomatic competence.

For true linguistic democracy and to prepare students for the plurilingual realities of modern communication in many contexts across the globe, linguistic development in tertiary education need not pertain only to gains in competence in the use of *English*: one could argue that in an ideal world, language pedagogy in higher education would reflect translanguaging pedagogy, whereby stakeholders are encouraged to draw upon the totality of their linguistic resources (e.g., García, 2009). However, given that an Anglophone ideology persists in many academic settings worldwide (Jenkins, 2013) and in light of the continued prevalence of the use of English as the global lingua franca, it is our contention that EMI pedagogy bears a responsibility to develop users of English who can operate successfully beyond the confines of the academy and who are

prepared for the interactional patterns of ELF exchanges: only if this goal is achieved will the maximum potential of ELF for idiomatic variation and creativity in English be realised.

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