University professors' representations on an online EMI course in Paraná - Brazil

Representações de professores sobre um curso online de IMI no Paraná - Brasil

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Abstract

In Brazilian higher education institutions, English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) courses and workshops play a key role in helping professors to rethink their methodology and their concepts of language, especially regarding English conceived as a lingua franca. In an attempt to bring a local perspective for EMI, this paper examines university professors' representations on an online EMI course for professors from nine public universities in Paraná. It is grounded on the concept of representation from critical discourse analysis. The results reveal the beliefs and motivations of the participants concerning EMI in Brazil. The motivations for EMI were related to language use/practice; the status of English in the world and in the scientific scenario or field of study; and internationalization reasons. On the other hand, the challenges were associated with language aspects and students' participation. In relation to the online course, results indicated that there were more potentialities than limitations and that the course had an impact on the resignification of concepts, especially related to English as a Lingua Franca as this perspective has the potential to transform professors' views on language conception and use of Portuguese in the classes.

Keywords: English as a Medium of Instruction; English as a Lingua Franca; Representations; University Professors; Paraná-Brazil.

Resumo

Nas instituições de ensino superior brasileiras, os cursos e workshops de Inglês como Meio de Instrução (IMI) desempenham um papel fundamental para auxiliar os professores a repensar sua metodologia e seus conceitos de língua, especialmente em relação ao inglês concebido como língua franca. Na tentativa de trazer uma perspectiva local para o IMI, este artigo examina as representações de professores universitários em um curso online de IMI para professores de nove universidades públicas do Paraná. O estudo baseia-se no conceito de representação a partir da análise crítica do discurso. Os resultados revelam representações e motivações dos participantes em relação ao IMI no Brasil. As motivações para IMI estavam relacionadas ao uso/prática da língua, ao status do inglês no mundo e no cenário científico ou área de estudo; e às razões para internacionalização. Por outro lado, os desafios estavam associados a questões de língua e participação dos alunos. No que diz respeito ao curso online, os resultados indicam mais potencialidades do que limitações; ainda destacam que o curso teve um impacto na ressignificação de conceitos, especialmente os relacionados ao Inglês como Língua Franca, pois esta perspectiva tem o potencial de transformar a visão dos professores em relação à concepção de linguagem e ao uso do português em sala.

Palavras-chave: Inglês como meio de instrução; Inglês como Língua Franca; Representações; Professores universitários; Paraná-Brasil.

1. Introduction

Understood as the use of the English language to teach academic content in places where English is not the first language of the majority of the population and where content learning is often the primary objective (Galloway, 2020), the adoption of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) has grown exponentially around the world in the last decade (Galloway, 2020; Macaro; Curle; Pun; An & Dearden, 2018).

Following this trend, recently university professors in Brazil have been teaching content in English (Baumvol & Sarmento, 2016; Martinez, 2016; Gimenez et al, 2018). Literature already portrays that this context is somewhat under-researched (Martinez, 2016; Gimenez et al 2020; Gimenez et al, 2021) and the practice is not without criticisms or calls for a critical perspective (Jordão, 2016). An example of the incipience of the studies can be seen in Macaro et al (2018), an international review on EMI in which there was no Brazilian research on the topic.

The research initiatives on EMI in the country show that many of its implementations have to do with personal initiatives from university professors due to their beliefs that learning content through English might be beneficial for students' academic life, with very little support from institutions (Gimenez et al., 2019). Galloway (2020) argues the implementation of EMI programs should go hand in hand with specific support systems developed for teaching staff, integrated

into the institutional structure in some form of professional development that incorporates pedagogical strategies and reflective practice.

In this scenario, EMI courses and workshops offered to university professors play a key role in helping those professionals to understand their practices, reflect on their choices, get familiar with other professionals who are also teaching in English and, many times, to seek institutional support. In our experience in educating EMI professors, these courses have helped them to rethink their methodology and their concepts of language, especially regarding English conceived as a lingua franca (ELF) (Gimenez et al., 2019).

Thus, this paper examines professors' representations about motivations and challenges concerning EMI in Brazil in the context of an online EMI course entitled *EMI for Universities in the State of Paraná (Brazil) -* for professors from nine public universities in Paraná State. Grounded on the concept of representation from Critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2001, 2003, 2009), we analyze data gathered from survey responses and other classroom-based data from October to November, 2021. The paper also analyses the potential and limitations of the online course itself.

This text is organized as follows: we first present our theoretical background on representations to point out their importance in university professors' education on EMI; then, we contextualize it in Brazil and make considerations related to language conceptions; afterwards we present the data analysis. We conclude by stating the importance of providing university professors room to discuss EMI practices, concepts and challenges as opportunities to transform their perceptions on language and improve their practice.

2. Representations

Representation is a process of social construction of practices, including the reflexive construction of the *self* (Fairclough, 2001). It is also a way to attribute meaning. In this sense, it is linked to power relations because those exerting power to represent can define identity (Silva, 2004). According to Fairclough (2001), actors within any social practice produce representations about how things are, could be or should have been. Hence, representations penetrate social processes and practices and shape our identities.

Representation is an important concept associated with language because representations of social life are inherently positioned – that is, social actors in different positions see and

represent it in different ways and through varying discourses (Fairclough, 2001). That means we can understand a particular view or position through ways of representing. Since particular aspects of the world are represented in different ways, looking towards discursive representation allows for an understanding of how different discourses portray the world in differing ways. In this sense, "representation is clearly a discoursal matter, and we can distinguish different discourses, which may represent the same area of the world from different perspectives or positions" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 26). Discourse as representation, therefore, refers to "semiotic ways of constructing aspects of the world (physical, social or mental) which can generally be identified with different positions or perspectives of different groups of social actors" (Fairclough, 2009, p.164).

From a socio-historical-cultural perspective, representations also assume an important role because "knowledge of the world is mediated by virtue of being situated in a cultural environment and it is from this cultural environment humans acquire the *representational systems* that ultimately become the medium, mediator, and tools of thought" (Johnson, 2009, p. 2). Therefore, understanding the ways professors represent themselves and others in discourse may indicate their systems of beliefs, attitudes, and how they see the world and who they are.

This is important because "it is through meanings that are produced by the representation that we give meaning to our experience and to what we are" (Woodward, 2011, p. 17). Discourses and representation, in essence, construct the 'place' from where individuals might be positioned and from where they can speak. Through representations individual and collective identities are established (Woodward, 2011).

3. EMI in Brazil

Universities around the world have widely adopted EMI as a strategy to attract international students. This phenomenon is sustained through practices that consolidate English as the language of science, for example, in the massive use of the language in renowned scientific publications (Rajagopalan, 2015), as well as in the establishment of international university rankings, which give higher scores to institutions that use the language in classes and in the dissemination of research (Delgado-Márques, Hurtado-Torres & Bondar, 2011).

Until 2010, there was little evidence about the use of EMI in Brazilian universities (Martinez, 2016). Not coincidentally, the scenario changed drastically after the creation of a Federal program

– Ciência sem Fronteiras (Science without Borders -SwB) - which aimed at outbound internationalization and, from 2011 to 2016, offered more than 90.000 scholarships, mainly for undergraduate students to study overseas. Since then, there has been an increase in the supply of EMI courses in the country, highlighting that Brazilian institutions have recently been following such a trend, especially aiming at internationalization at home strategies (Gimenez et at, 2018).

In 2018, the British Council, together with Associação Brasileira de Educação Internacional - FAUBAI (Brazilian Association for International Education), published a survey on the issue. The Guide to English as a Medium of Instruction in Brazilian Higher Education Institutions 2018-2019[1] contacted 240 institutions, from which 83 answered the survey about programs, courses, and additional activities from 2017 to 2019 taught through the medium of English. The report found that 66 (79%) of those universities offered some EMI initiative and 6 of them (7%) proclaimed planning to do so in the coming year.

Research on EMI in the country shows that the studies generally focus on the analysis of courses offered in EMI in specific universities (Beggie, 2019; Stallivieri; Gonçalves, 2015; Rodrigues & Rocha, 2020), on the need of institutional support (Verdu, 2017) and few initiatives focus on theoretical and empirical research on EMI.

In fact, a recent review on the publications in the country showed that the majority on the research carried out on EMI in the country is exploratory while there is a great amount of research focusing on critical perspectives on EMI with the use of ELF perspective, decolonial and critical approaches to internationalization, which shows that some researchers are questioning the use of EMI in the country (Gimenez et al., 2020).

The widespread use of English, therefore, of EMI practices, inevitably entail considerations related to the conceptualization of languages in the contemporary world. The dynamics of globalization and internationalization have posed ELF since it embraces uses, functions and contexts in which interactions occur between speakers who are mostly 'non-native' and have this language as a tool available for communication in international and intercultural contexts (Seidlhofer, 2011; Jenkins, 2009).

Due to increased global flows (of goods, people and knowledge), the deterritorialization of English has lately been framed by multilingual lenses according to which ELF is conceptualized

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[1] Interactive guide available at http://faubai.org.br/guideemi

within translingual practices, focusing on the emerging linguistic hybridisms (Jenkins, 2015). Such understanding conceives that languages are not closed and independent semiotic systems, but compose complex and varied linguistic repertoires used by speakers worldwide (Garcia; Wei, 2014).

Addressing those language issues along the activities promoted by the workshop allowed the university professors in Paraná to reflect about critical aspects underlying EMI practices. The description of the course context and goals, as well as the analysis of the gathered data display how such concepts emerge from the participants' representations.

4. Methodology

This is a qualitative based-research approach as it focuses on professors' representations on an online EMI course. Qualitative research is conceived as a situated activity which aims to develop interpretations about human relationships, behaviors and beliefs that permeate real world events (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Holliday, 2007).

The *EMI for Universities in the State of Paraná (Brazil)* was a project sponsored by the Regional English Language Office (RELO) of the U.S. Embassy in Brazil, through the Virtual English Language Specialist Program. The initiative involved the development of an online course for professors from nine public universities in the State of Paraná who were interested in learning about ways of using EMI in their content classes. It was proposed by three Brazilian professors and facilitated by an English Language Specialist (ELS), a U.S. academic from the field of EMI. All four professors involved in carrying out the project are authors of this article.

Among several other consequences, the COVID-19 pandemic brought up a whole new reality for internationalization practices, strongly supported by online interactions. The Virtual English Language Specialist Program was one opportunity that quickly emerged as a response mechanism during these times. Aiming at connecting institutions, teachers, and students, the program was an adaptation of a traditional initiative of the RELO office which sponsored projects proposed by Brazilian universities focused on various areas of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and Applied Linguistics.

The project had four overarching goals: 1) to develop theoretical and pedagogical knowledge of Paraná university professors on EMI; 2) to internationalize the curriculum of universities in Paraná; 3) to promote opportunities for interacting in English with a Virtual English

Language Specialist, and 4) to foster a community of practice of professors from different universities from Paraná.

Based on the needs and interests of the participants and stakeholders, the ELS identified seven key themes to explore over the five weeks of the course, through synchronous (Zoom Meetings) and asynchronous (Google Classroom activities) interactions: a) building a community in EMI classes; b) making use of both English and students' first languages to support content learning; c) learning about English as a lingua franca and EMI; d) making expectations clear to students regarding course requirements; e) lecturing to support students' learning of content; f) leading open-ended discussions; and g) facilitating interaction and cooperative learning among students.

The 15-hour course was held for five weeks, from October to November, 2021, and there were 51 professors as attendees. These participants teach in various fields, including Mathematics, Theater, Chemistry, Philosophy, and Linguistics. Whereas some were experienced in the use of EMI already, the majority had not used English to teach yet but were interested in potentially doing so in the future.

Data was gathered from Google classroom comments and Likert scale items from the pre and post-course surveys and were analyzed inductively focusing on the professors' representations. Two major categories were created: motivations and challenges regarding EMI and potentialities and limitations of the course.

For the analysis, we considered only the responses of the ones who gave the consent: a total of 45. All participants are referred to "P" and a number. Responses and comments are maintained as originally submitted by participants[2].

5. Data analysis and discussion

In this section, analysis of professors' representations on motivations and challenges of EMI in Brazil are presented as well as their views on the potentialities and limitations of the online course - *EMI for Universities in the State of Paraná (Brazil)* - offered from October to November, 2021.

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[2] The research project is approved and registered by the research ethics committees of the three public universities responsible for the initiative (State University of Londrina, State University of Maringá and Federal University of Technology -Paraná State), though the Certificate of Ethical Consideration number 37434820.8.3001.5547.

5.1. Motivations and challenges of EMI

The pre-course survey was sent through Google classroom to all the enrolled professors in the course before its beginning and it aimed at identifying the participants profiles, their expectations and motivations around the course as well as some of their representations around English language. From their answers, we analyze the motivations and challenges of EMI.

Regarding the motivations, the most indicated reasons were related to: i) language use/practice; ii) the status of English in the world and in the scientific scenario or field of study; iii) internationalization.

Some professors believe that using English to teach allows them and their students to practice and use the language. Also, it is a way to improve their proficiency and language skills:

> *Becoming more confident speaking about mathematics in english. Helping math students to improve their english skills in math. (P26)*
> *To practice the language and facilitate conversations around texts in English. (P37)*

Such representation coincides with several studies on the country (Baumvol & Sarmento, 2016; Baumvol & Sarmento, 2019; Marengo & Sarmento, 2019), as it generally appears as one of the reasons professors implement EMI: as a way to provide students who cannot have experiences abroad or as a way to prepare them to join in a scientific community. Although language skills are not the focus on EMI, this has been a common purpose for its implementation in the country as many of university students do not have proficiency in English.

Other respondents consider the status of English in the world and in the scientific scenario a strong motivation. For them, English is the language of science and important for researchers:

> *English is very important for researchers. (P9)*
> *(...) Scientific data are generally disseminated over the world in English language. (P21)*
> *English is the scientific universal language so I am sure that english classes will improve the way that students reconnect themselves to science. (P4)*

The representation of English as the language of science is an ideology (Altbach, 2013; Ammon, 2007) not questioned by the professors and it appears as another common reason for its implementation. English is portrayed as the natural language of science and for this reason, professors believe they need to enable their students to master such language. Such representations tend to portray English as a "natural, neutral and beneficial" (Pennycook, 1994, p. 9) asset in universities internationalization processes.

Following a similar train of thought, other professors consider other internationalization practices in their responses, such as the role played by English in several practices: inbound mobility (P22 and P58), international collaborations (P43) and opportunities abroad (P23), as the excerpts demonstrate:

> *In my opinion, IES [Higher Education Institution] has a great potential to attract foreign students (mainly Spanish and Portuguese speakers but african English-speakers too) and these classes could improve a international culture in campus. (P22)*
> *I would like to receive more students from other countries to share their experience in our laboratory. When you offer an opportunity to attend classes in English, I think you can attract more students with the similar interests. (P58)*
> *it gives my students the opportunity to interact with Professors and Students from other countries. (P43)*
> *I want to teach in other countries as a guest teacher, or to present seminars at international congresses. (P23)*

The reasons regarding the internationalization process are another common representation in the country due to similar experiences the public universities have: first, for collaboration and mutual learning; and second, due to external factors such as the evaluation of graduate programs in the country that assesses the level of the programs also based on their international collaborations.

In a general way, the results of our research dialogue with the findings of another study in the Brazilian context in two universities in the state of Paraná (Gimenez; Cogo; El Kadri & Calvo, 2019, p. 15-16):

> [...] they [the professors] see it [EMI] closely articulated to internationalisation (both at home and abroad) and an inevitable trend, although their reasons appeared to be more strongly related to language development for academic purposes and empowerment. However, even those among who considered English the universal language of science, some expressed concerns with the potential negative consequences of EMI, such as satisfying external agencies only, or deepening language inequalities.

Acknowledging the roles played by English in the global academia, and, therefore, allowing our students to master it are part of the commitments professors assume nowadays. However, a careful and critical approach of using English in internationalization activities is desirable if Brazilian universities and scholars aim to be integrated in the process rather than subservient to it.

Regarding the challenges, the most recurrent aspects pointed out by the course participants were: i) language-related challenges; ii) students' participation.

About the language-related challenges, the professors mention the students' and their own level of English. Some of them feel that their English could be better or they do not feel confident in using the language.

> *I'm not sure that our students are able to follow a course like that.* (P3)
> *My english level is not good enough. In general the English level of the students is lower than mine. (P40)*
> *I feel as I cannot give my better performance and share knowledge as I know I can do in Portuguese. It's quite frustrating. (P5)*

Such challenges coincide with the purpose professors generally implement EMI that is the desire to improve students' level of the language. Thus, it is possible to acknowledge that the participants ambiguously conceive English. It is both portrayed as an incentive and as a constraint in their teaching practices in Brazilian universities.

These representations are reinforced by the professors who mention the students' proficiency heterogeneity in class and identify some difficulties with specific language issues (vocabulary; fluency; pronunciation; grammar). Sometimes, some of them tend to compare themselves with native speakers:

> *In my case, it is really hard to express in English because I am not a native speaker. The main challenges are to pronounce technical terms and use grammar correctly. (P58)*

The comparison with a native speaker demonstrates a common representation on how some professors see themselves: not being as proficient as the native speaker. The native speakerism ideology (Holliday, 2015) is still something professors believe when they first start using EMI. We will come back to this issue when talking about changing conceptions.

Another challenge professors see in classes taught in English is students' participation in EMI courses, which points out reasons for low engagement.

> *The students resistance. To conciliate the disciplines and English difficulties. (P14)*
> *I think there is a prejudice against English classes as they were a kind of exclusion of non-proficient students. (P22)*

Resistance or no interest in joining classes taught in English or even the possible exclusion of non-proficient students can be related to the Brazilian population's English level. According to the EFI Proficiency Index 2022, Brazil is #58 in a ranking of 111 countries, displaying a moderate-proficiency level of English. With a long history of limitations in the field of language learning, the Brazilian basic education system, both in the private and public sectors, has left room for language

institutes to flourish (Passoni, 2020). In this scenario, the commodification of English, i.e., its conception as a "selling and buying product" (Jordão & Martinez, 2015, p.63), marks the "(im)possibilities of access to language learning, and consequently, the opportunities (not) arising from this access" (Passoni, 2020, p. 74). Mostly available to the elites, English proficiency or even the possibility to aspire to it is seen as barrier to EMI classes for some Brazilian students.

Based on these results, we can say that although there are strong motivations to teach in English, concerns about this practice are also pointed out and should be considered when planning and implementing EMI classes, mainly because they have to do with aspects related to exclusion and language inequalities. Language policies, thus, are paramount in this internationalization scenario of higher education institutions.

5.2. Potentialities and Limitations of the EMI Course

When the course finished, the post-course survey was sent through Google Classroom to all enrolled professors. It aimed at identifying whether their expectations were met, along with suggestions to improve the course. It also aimed at identifying whether their representations around the English language were impacted. The responses to the post-course survey were analyzed (a total of 33 with consent) to examine the potentialities and limitations of the EMI Course. Also, comments in the activities assigned at Google Classroom were examined to illustrate some topics.

Of the 32 survey questions provided, we present here the analysis of the three in which the potentialities and limitations of the course were most evident: 1) Think of your initial motivations for taking the course. Did the course satisfy your expectations? Why/Why not?; 2) Which part of the course had the greatest impact on your learning?; 3)Are you encouraged to implement EMI in your university after attending the course? Why/Why not?.

From participants' responses, it is possible to identify that their expectations were met or exceeded and, after the course, most of them are encouraged to implement EMI in their universities. Considering these results, the potentialities we identified through their answers were related to: a) learning; b) feelings; c) follow-up actions / impact of the course; d) resignification of concepts.

Regarding *learning*, professors indicated they could learn: a) different strategies, techniques, pedagogical procedures, approaches to EMI; b) other/more concepts of EMI and ELF, c) about the reality of other professors in Paraná; c) some issues/topics discussed in class about EMI. They address this topic mostly by positive descriptions: relevant issues; were helpful; clarified the use of EMI; how productive EMI can be for students, him/herself and science. The following responses are examples of how they describe what they learned.

> *I learnt (and revisited) many pedagogical procedures to use in the EMI context. (P45)*
> *The course gave me the chance to learn more about teaching practices and best approaches to engage students and make my classes more interactivity. (P5)*
> *Before the course, I didn't have much knowledge of practical resources and strategies, but now, I believe it will be a safe beginning. (P49)*
> *I learn a lot and I change my mind about EMI. I had a completely wrong idea about what it should be.* (P28)

The excerpts demonstrate that the course allowed them to construct knowledge on EMI, change conceptions (P28) and feel safe and motivated to start implementing EMI practices (P49). Indeed, literature has pointed out the role of courses in changing conceptions and motivating EMI professors. Züge et al. (2020), for example, identified that the course they analyzed enabled the participants to develop linguistic, social and pedagogical skills, not only for their classes taught in English, but also for their teaching practice in general.

Concerning their *feelings*, they also mentioned that after the course, they were more motivated, confident and prepared to teach in English as the excerpts below show:

> *After each class I was seeing myself more motivated, secure and with new ideas for my classes. (P42)*
> *I was in doubt but now I am more confident about being able to teach using EMI .* (P22)

Something important about the way professors represent themselves after the course is the self-image they start to forge. P42 and P22, for example, stress change in identities as they both start to see themselves as more confident and able to use EMI.

With regard to *follow-up actions and the impact of the course*, some professors pointed out they will recommend the EMI course to other colleagues or will convince other professors to implement EMI. Also, most of the respondents affirm they are encouraged to implement EMI in their contexts.

Regarding the impact of the course, some mentioned they can also consider what they discussed/learned in the course for their classes in Portuguese or any other languages:

> *creo que me hicieron reflexionar bastante sobre como dar mis clases en cualquier idioma. (P40)*
> *I was able to learned several other concepts and strategies that I can use in my classes, even those that are not EMI. (P35)*

As we can see, professors report that the course allowed them to reflect on their practices and learn strategies, indicating possible changes in their practice.

Finally, in terms of changes regarding language assumptions, some resignifications were observed during the course. To illustrate this, we present statements[3] professors were asked to react to, both in the pre and in the post-course surveys, in Likert scale items.

During the five-week course, professors were encouraged to reflect on the role played by native-likeness while adopting EMI, primarily through the discussions on the perspective of ELF. They were invited to react to the statement "*It is acceptable that the English used in the classes to be different from the one used by native speakers*", both on the pre-course survey (figure 1) and on the post-course survey (figure 2). The graphs below show that the majority of the group (I agree - 43.2% and I strongly agree - 34.1% in the pre-course survey) already recognized that adopting EMI does not imply the imitation of native speakers. However, after the course, the participants reaffirmed the same tendency in this regard and reinforced their perception (I strongly agree - 57.6% and I agree 30.3% in the post-course survey). The graphs below display how their assumptions around language issues changed.

Figure 1. Pre-course survey - English use and native speakers

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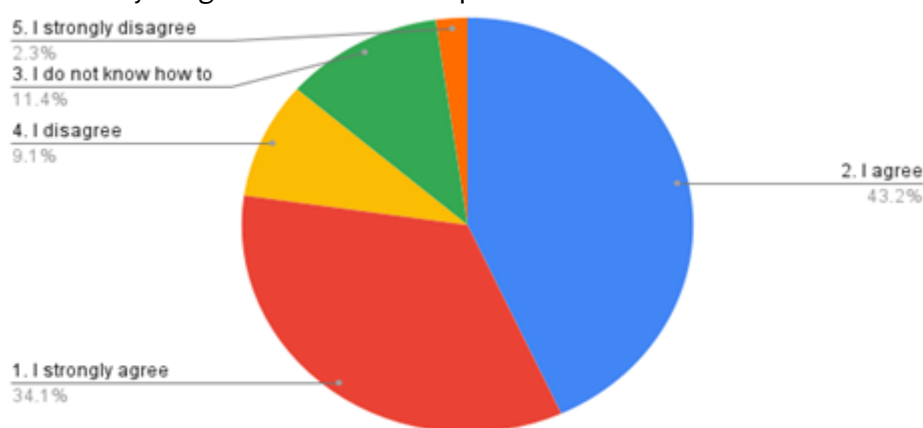
[3] The statements used in the survey were previously elaborated by Gimenez; Cogo; El Kadri; Calvo (2019) in their research "English as a Medium of Instruction in two state-funded Brazilian higher education institutions from an English as a lingua franca perspective: policy in practice".

Figure 2. Post-course survey - English use and native speakers
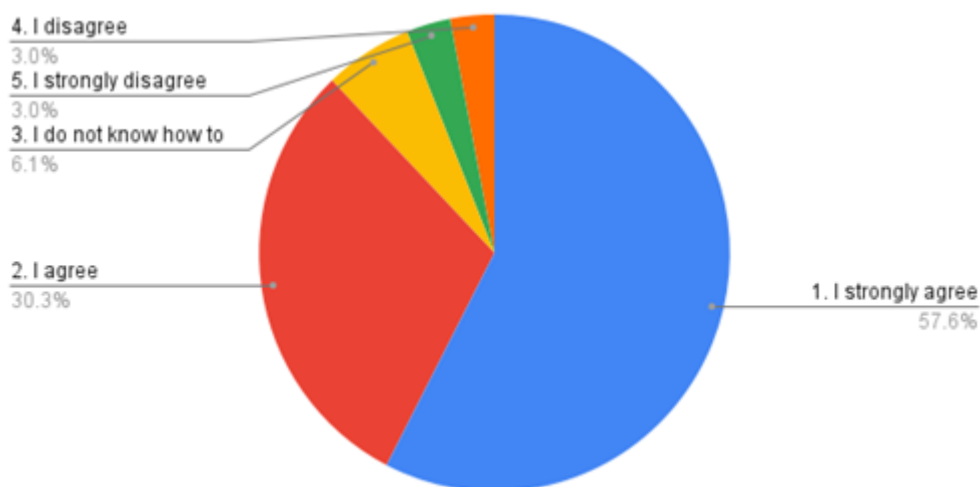
The professors were also invited to consider the interaction between English and Portuguese (or other languages) in EMI practices reacting to the statement *"It is acceptable to the English used in the classroom to be mixed with some words in Portuguese or other languages".* Specifically, regarding the participants' teaching contexts, in which the EMI courses are taught by Brazilian professors, speakers of Portuguese as their first language and of English as a foreign language, the participants were asked to consider the interaction between those two languages.

The graphs 3 (pre-course survey) and 4 (post-course survey) show that most of the participants initially saw the interaction of both languages as acceptable in EMI practices (I agree 51.1% and I strongly agree 20% in the pre-course survey). After taking part in the course, the professors seem to intensify this understanding (I strongly agree 69.7% and I agree 27.3% in the post-course survey), which is emphasized by a diminishment/reduction of doubts and disagreements (I do not know 15.6% and I strongly disagree 4% in the pre-course survey; I strongly disagree 3% in the post-course survey).

Such results show how the professors welcome translingual practices, as these interactions are seen as a part of EMI experiences in their teaching realities. Translanguaging is conceived as communicative practices of (re/deterritorialized) transnational groups that interact using different languages and communicative codes, simultaneously involving varied semiotic resources, in face-to-face or virtual contexts. Thus, according to these representations, communication in international contexts, such as in EMI classes, tends to transcend languages and

encompasses complex repertoires speakers possess (Jacquemet, 2005; Canagarajah, 2013; Garcia & Wei; 2014).

Figure 3. Pre- course survey - Use of English with Portuguese or other languages
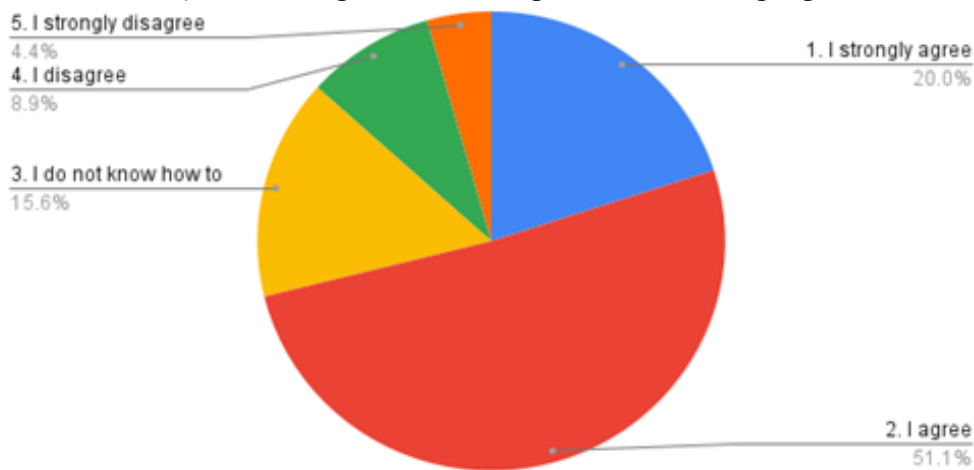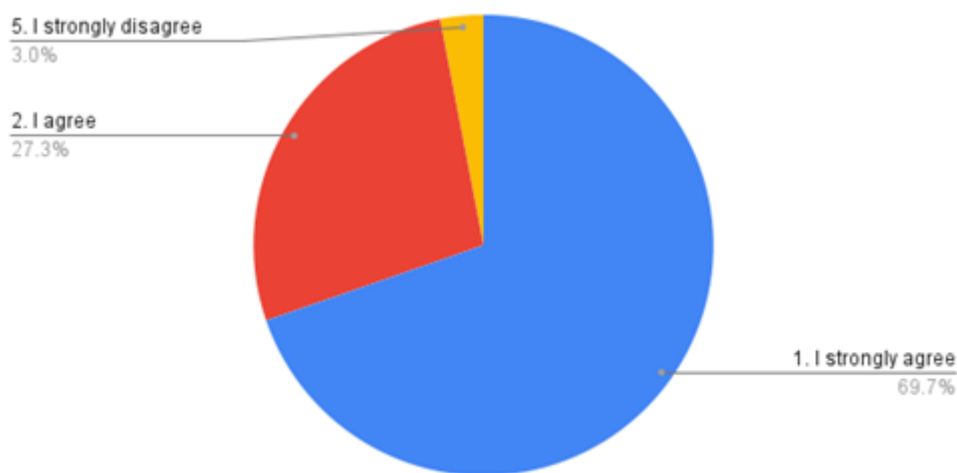

Figure 4. Post-course survey - Use of English with Portuguese or other languages

The questionnaire also allowed the professors to express how they see their use of English. One of the professors declares:

> *I could see that I don't need to be perfect in my English to start EMI in my disciplines. The focus is the student understand the topic I want to teach. Even that as we know a lot of students have difficult with languages so it is an opportunity to provide them ways to learn and improve their English. (P14)*

This comment has to do with how the professor redesigned the view of language and how it could impact their work. After discussing aspects related to ELF in EMI courses, especially regarding multilingualism, translanguaging, or the decentering of the native speaker, the representation expressed by P14 displays how they could feel more empowered in their language use and see their practice as more inclusive.

There were more comments made by the professors concerning how they see the use of Portuguese in class in an activity at Google Classroom in which they had to choose a text (from two available), read it and comment it. The task presented for option 1 the reading *How to Have a Guilt-Free Life Using Cantonese in the English Class: A Handbook for the English Language Teacher in Hong Kong,* by Merrill Swain, Andy Kirkpatrick, and Jim Cummins. As option 2, the task presented the reading *Using all English is not always meaningful': Stakeholders' perspectives on the use of and attitudes towards translanguaging at a Chinese university,* by Fan Fang and Yang Liu.

Some of the professors stated how ambivalent they felt about encouraging the use of their native language during EMI classes before reflecting on the matter during the workshop as the following excerpts show:

> *I was not completely sure that opening the possibility to use Portuguese in EMI classes would be a good idea but the examples presented in the handbook convinced me that this flexibility helps a lot. (P42)*
> *I re-evaluating my approach to use EMI. In the past, when I taught in English I had the English-only policy. (P29)*
> *It opened my mind about the matter. I didn't figure out that a few of Portuguese in EMI classes could be so good for students development (P28).*
> *The use of L1 in English classes can create better teaching possibilities, as well as to increase the level of participation of the students, because they can fell more comfortable to express their comprehension. In my opinion, the most important thing is the construction of meaning during by the student and I have no concerns about using L1 in English classes, as long as it has specific and clear goals in teaching-learning process. (P49)*

These comments highlight how the course gave the professors opportunities to reflect and learn from experiences different from theirs. Based on our data, we can say that such results are meaningful, especially regarding these Brazilian EMI professors' identity. Their responses depict how their representations imply possibilities of (re)shaping and (re)framing language ownership and language use in internationalization practices such as EMI classes. As Jordão et al (2020) point out, problematizing the underlying language conceptualization within EMI practices, striving away from native speakers' varieties, is a way of defying subservient attitudes in the internationalization

processes. Local initiatives, such as the ones promoted by the course, are able to foster democratic practices which can empower professors' identities (Jordão, 2016).

Regarding the limitations of the course, the following questions from the post-course survey were analyzed: 1) "What would you advise for the next time the English Language Specialist teaches a course like this? Should he keep the course the same as it is, or should he make changes? (If so, what should he change?)"; 2) "Any comments on … [here there is the topic the participants should evaluate from 1 to 5"[4]].

From our data, we observed that the limitations of the course were related to: i) time; ii) duration of the course or when it should be offered; and iii) the dynamic of classes or other aspects associated with the planning or the content taught.

Regarding time[5], the professors indicated that they wanted more time for: thinking and planning; developing the activities/tasks; discussion in groups; preparing and presenting the demo lessons.

Considering the duration of the course, some participants commented it should have had a longer duration and one professor mentioned it should have been in the beginning of the year:

> *If the course would be offered at the beggining of the year I would have more time to dedicate to the activities and I would be able to immediately change my classes inserting the strategies and tools which I learned.* (P42)

Concerning the dynamic[6] of classes or other aspects associated with the planning or the content taught, some of the participants' suggestions were: to reduce the amount of information during the course; the teacher could speak more slowly or the course could be delivered more gradually; to add more examples (related to the use of English as a Lingua Franca, the use of L1, "good" teaching, and the use show digital techniques, i.e. the break out rooms).

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[4] For example: Any comments on the topics of the course?; Any comments on the demonstration lesson?; and so on.

[5] As mentioned in the Methodology, this 15-hour course was held for five weeks, from October to November, 2021, using both synchronous and asynchronous interactions. There were two groups of participants. One met on Thursdays, from 7 to 9 pm; and the other group met on Fridays, from 2 to 4 pm.

[6] In the synchronous meetings, participants learned about EMI and engaged in breakout rooms for joint discussions. Asynchronously, they responded to questions and completed assignments in the Google Classroom. In the final week, the professors prepared a short demonstration of how they could apply course principles to teach content.

Besides those points, one professor went further and pointed out the following aspects to be taken into account:

> *Consider different disciplines and how they build knowledge; how EMI is connected to other internationalization efforts; how to assess students in EMI contexts. (P37)*

From the data presented here, we could see that, in the participants' views, the online course provided more potentialities than limitations. Those potentialities impacted on professors' learning, feelings and (re)definition of concepts. So, we believe that EMI courses, when planned taking into consideration theoretical, pedagogical/methodological and linguistic aspects, have the potential to challenge professors' ideologies and prepare them to teach their courses in English in a way they can feel more comfortable and empowered. Also, courses or workshops on EMI must consider the participants' context and immediate reality. Thus, each initiative will be unique for each group of professors and should consider the local reality, their profile and objectives.

Final Remarks

This paper aimed to analyze the representations of participants of an online course about EMI in Paraná - Brazil, as well as the potentialities and limitations of it.

Data showed that motivations for EMI were related to language use/practice; the status of English in the world and in the scientific scenario or field of study; and internationalization reasons. On the other hand, the challenges were associated with language aspects and students' participation.

Results indicated that there were more potentialities than limitations regarding the online EMI course. The potentialities were related to learning, feelings, follow-up actions or impact of the course and resignification of concepts, especially related to ELF as this perspective has the potential to transform professors' views on language conception and use of Portuguese in the classes. This demonstrates that critical discussions on EMI may have the power to change conceptions and representations and create new identities. As limitations, the time, the duration of the course or when it should be offered, and the dynamic of classes or other aspects associated with the planning or the content taught were pointed out.

By exploring the motivations and challenges of EMI in our country by the representations of a group of professors in Paraná, we could see that some results of our study dialogue with

others in the same context. So, this can indicate how Brazilian professors are making sense of this global trend in a local way: there are motivations but also concerns that should be carefully analyzed.

Also, their representations on the online course demonstrated that aspects related to language ideologies should be considered in these courses as it is an opportunity to discuss not only the E (English) in EMI but also the other languages and resources used by professors and students in classes taught in English.

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