emerald PUBLISHING

Journal for Multicultural Edu

Language, identity, and internationalization: EMI faculty's meaning-making of multilingual and multicultural identities

Journal:	*Journal for Multicultural Education*
Manuscript ID	JME-08-2025-0188.R1
Manuscript Type:	Research Paper
Keywords:	EMI, Spain, Identity, Higher Education, English Medium Instruction, Multilingual Multicultural

SCHOLARONE™
Manuscripts

Reply to reviewers

We are grateful to all reviewers for their insightful comments and helpful suggestions, which we have incorporated into the revised version of our article. In addition, we would like to include our replies next to the reviewer comments, so as to facilitate the tracking of our changes.

Reviewer 1	**Reply from the authors**
General comment: This manuscript offers a timely and well-conceptualized exploration of the multilingual and multicultural (MLMC) identities of EMI (English-Medium Instruction) faculty in Spain. It is well written, theoretically informed, and empirically grounded. The study contributes to ongoing discussions on Englishization, intercultural competence, and faculty development within internationalized higher education. I find the paper to be of publishable quality, though several refinements would strengthen its impact.	Thank you for your kind words.
1. Originality: The paper presents a novel exploration of EMI (English-Medium Instruction) faculty identities in a Spanish higher education context. While teacher identity research is well developed, this study extends the discussion by integrating multilingual and multicultural (MLMC) identity dimensions and focusing on the holistic lived experiences of EMI faculty rather than isolated aspects such as classroom practices. The originality also lies in its attempt to frame EMI faculty as agents of change within internationalization, which adds conceptual depth. However, as it is a single-institution case study, originality is somewhat tempered by limited scope and generalizability.	We thank the reviewer for acknowledging the originality of our study and for noting the limitations associated with a single-institution design. While we agree that the findings are not intended to be statistically generalizable, we would like to emphasize that in-depth qualitative case studies are particularly well suited to investigating identity construction, lived experience, and agency in intercultural education contexts. As argued by Flyvbjerg (2006) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016), such studies generate analytically transferable insights by providing rich, context-embedded understandings of complex social phenomena. Importantly, single-institution qualitative research is well established within the *Journal for Multicultural Education*. Numerous articles in the journal draw on localized qualitative data to explore identity negotiation, multilingualism, and intercultural learning (e.g., Ben Hammou et al., 2026; Wong, 2025; Zmire et al., 2025). Our study aligns with this tradition by offering a holistic account of EMI faculty members' multilingual and multicultural identity trajectories and by conceptualizing EMI faculty as agents of change within internationalization processes.

	We therefore see the depth afforded by our qualitative, single-institution approach not as a limitation to originality, but as a methodological strength that contributes nuanced insights and lays the groundwork for future comparative or multi-site research. **References:** Ben Hammou, S., Razkane, H., & Benzehaf, B. (2026). Exploring English-medium instruction (EMI) in health sciences: students' experiences and implications for broader implementation in Moroccan higher education. *Journal for Multicultural Education, 20*(1), 27–41. https://doi.org/10.1108/JME-03-2025-0057 Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *12*(2), 219-245. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800405284363 Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass. Wong CE, P. A. (2025). Professional identity development patterns among beginning Tamil teachers: generating propositions for supporting minority language teachers. *Journal for Multicultural Education*, ahead-of-print. https://doi.org/10.1108/JME-09-2025-0206 Zmire, Z., Chen, X., Guo, T., & Ryoo, J. (2025). Impact of geopolitical conflicts on education: challenges for mixed and immigrant families in East Asia. *Journal for Multicultural Education, 19*(2), 170–183. https://doi.org/10.1108/JME-01-2025-0003
2. Relationship to Literature: The manuscript demonstrates extensive engagement with current scholarship, citing both foundational works (e.g., Byram 2020; Deardorff 2006; Kim 2009) and recent studies (e.g., Wingrove et al., 2025; Hillman et al., 2023; Xiong et al., 2023). It engages with debates on Englishization, plurilingualism, intercultural competence, and teacher identity theory, and situates its findings within these frameworks. I suggest to review recent articles such as: https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.ikala.356438; https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2023.2298933; https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01434632.2024.2380389; https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01434632.2024.2373254	We thank the reviewer for this constructive feedback and for recommending additional recent studies to strengthen the manuscript's positioning within current debates. In response, we have expanded the literature review and discussion to better engage with recent work on EMI and teacher identity, as well as with decolonial and postcolonial perspectives on English dominance. The additional sources have been incorporated as follows: ⇨ Lo (2024) and Corrales et al. (2024) were added to the "Conceptual Framework" section, enriching our discussion of identity negotiation and identity conflict. ⇨ Rey-Paba et al. (2024) was included in the Discussion to support our interpretation of fluid identity and the creation of a "safe third space" in the classroom.

	⇨ Aguilar & Arnó (2024) was also integrated into the Discussion to highlight differences in attitudes toward decolonization and linguistic equity between our European context and Global South settings.
The critique of English dominance is noted, but participants' limited awareness of linguistic equity issues is not fully problematized in dialogue with existing decolonial or postcolonial scholarship.	To address the reviewer's point regarding the limited problematization of participants' awareness of linguistic equity, we have strengthened the manuscript's theoretical framing highlighted in the following sentence to the Introduction: "From a decolonial perspective, the normalization of English as a neutral academic medium in EMI settings obscures its role in reproducing epistemic and linguistic inequalities (Canagarajah, 1999; Kubota, 2020; Pennycook, 2017)." We have also highlighted the issue of high-status languages and dominant-language capital in the discussion.
While recent references are included, there could be deeper comparative engagement with non-European EMI contexts (global-south contexts).	We have also expanded the Discussion to engage more explicitly with decolonial and critical scholarship, while interpreting the absence of such concerns in participants' accounts as an analytically relevant finding: "While decolonial and critical scholarship shows that English-medium and additional-language teaching can reproduce Western privilege, native-speakerism, and marginalisation—especially in Global South contexts (Brown & Laihonen, 2022; Kramsch & Zhang, 2018; Tajik et al., 2023; Widodo et al., 2020)—these concerns did not emerge in our participants' accounts, who instead framed English in largely pragmatic, utilitarian terms, in line with Aguilar-Pérez and Arnó-Macià's (2024) findings. This absence is analytically significant, pointing to the normalization and depoliticization of English in European EMI contexts, where EMI correlates with university autonomy and neoliberal governance structures (Wingrove et al., 2024). This, in turn, highlights the need for professional development that foregrounds critical and decolonial perspectives on English in higher education." Finally, regarding the reviewer's suggestion to engage more deeply with non-European EMI contexts, we agree that comparative perspectives are valuable. However, our study is

	intentionally situated within a specific European EMI context and is not designed as a comparative investigation. We therefore treat findings from Global South settings as only partially transferable due to differences in sociolinguistic, institutional, and policy conditions. At present, our study draws on EMI scholarship beyond Europe to situate the study within wider global debates by including work from the Arab world (Abdel Latif & Alhamad, 2023), African contexts (Anchimbe, 2007), Iran (Karimi & Mofidi, 2019), Nepal (Phyak et al., 2022), Turkey and the Mediterranean region (Eren, 2022), the United Arab Emirates (Hopkins & Gkonou, 2023), and diverse East and Southeast Asian contexts (Hu et al., 2014; Widodo et al., 2020; Xiong et al., 2023; Zeng et al., 2023), as well as transnational and diasporic professional contexts (Dai & Feng, 2024; Lee et al., 2024). We believe this engagement enables us to acknowledge the diversity of EMI experiences globally while maintaining the context-specific and exploratory focus of the present study.
3. Methodology: Clear participant inclusion criteria. Use of Saldaña's coding method (iterative, conceptual, and descriptive coding). Strategies to ensure trustworthiness: member checks, reflexivity, anonymization, and verbatim quotes. Sample size (n=16) is small and limited to one private university in Spain, which restricts transferability. The decision to use self-assessed CEFR levels and subjective identity ratings (Table I) may introduce reliability and major concerns. Two aspects: 1) Review a broader sample size; 2) Uses additional research tools (e.g. surveys to collect a more objective identity classification)	We thank the reviewer for this comment. Representativity and generalizability are not aims of this qualitative study; rather, our goal is an in-depth exploration of EMI faculty's meaning-making processes within a specific institutional context, as reflected in the article title. In qualitative interview-based research, a sample of 16 participants is considered appropriate and sufficient to achieve thematic saturation (Guest et al., 2006). Furthermore, an objective classification of identity is not the focus of this study. On the contrary, self-assessment and self-perception are central to our analytical framework, as we examine how EMI faculty understand, negotiate, and articulate their own identities. Accordingly, the use of self-assessed CEFR levels and subjective identity ratings is methodologically aligned with the study's aims rather than a limitation. Reference: Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How Many Interviews Are Enough?: An Experiment with Data Saturation and Variability: An Experiment with Data Saturation and Variability. *Field Methods*, *18*(1), 59-82. https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X05279903

4. Results: Results are richly illustrated with participant quotes, covering multiple identity dimensions (knowledge, skills, attitudes, awareness, emotions, and behaviors). They highlight: Faculty valuing subject expertise over linguistic authority. Ambivalence toward English dominance. Positive but sometimes fragile MLMC self-concepts. Institutional pressures versus personal agency. The framework in Figure 1 (p. 23) visually synthesizes findings, showing MLMC identity as an intersection of macro-, meso-, and micro-contexts. However:	We thank the reviewer for this comment.
While the themes are well analyzed, there is some repetition across categories (e.g., awareness vs. beliefs).	While closely related, *awareness* and *beliefs* are analytically distinct in our framework: "awareness" refers to participants' explicit recognition of EMI-related issues, whereas "beliefs" capture underlying evaluative orientations and assumptions. Some overlap is therefore expected, for example between *recognising* the dominance of English (awareness) and *accepting* it as an unproblematic reality (belief).
Results could more strongly contrast divergent voices rather than emphasizing commonalities.	We have updated the Findings and Discussion where relevant to highlight divergent voices; however, our findings did show overarching commonalities among the participants' experiences and perceptions that we felt we needed to represent.
The reader suggests that results and discussion sections could be united to simplify and avoid redundancies.	We recognize that some ideas from the Findings were restated in the Discussion, and we have updated the Discussion to address that repetition. However, we have kept the two sections separate as our goal was to present the participants' voices in the Findings while we

	have used the Discussion section to reengage with the literature based on our findings.
5. Implications for research, practice and/or society: The paper explicitly addresses theoretical, practical, and policy implications: Theory: Conceptualizes MLMC identity as dynamic and multi-layered. Practice: Recommends institutional forums for reflection and targeted professional development in intercultural pedagogy. Policy/Society: Calls for universities to prioritize MLMC competence to prepare students for plural societies. Economic/commercial implications (e.g., for employability, institutional branding) are mentioned but not deeply explored. Societal-level impact (e.g., influencing public attitudes, language policies) is hinted at but underdeveloped.	We thank the reviewer for this positive assessment. The implications section has been expanded on p. 17 to address economic and societal implications.
6. Quality of Communication: The manuscript is well structured and readable, with clear progression from introduction to implications. It uses accessible academic English, balancing theory with illustrative data. The clarity of participant quotes is particularly effective. The reference list is robust but formatting consistency should be checked.	We thank the reader for this comment. The formatting of the reference section has been revised.
Reviewer 2	
General comments: This is a well-structured and clearly written article that explores the multilingual and multicultural identities of EMI lecturers in a Spanish university. The research question is clear, the argument is	We thank the reviewer for their time and feedback.

coherent, and the methodology is appropriate.	
Minor revisions: 1. Hellekjær reference: As mentioned in item 2, please check the discrepancy between the in-text citation and the reference list. 2. Page 10, line 3: Consider whether "humility" is the most appropriate word here, as it might unintentionally imply that participants who self-identified as MLMC lacked humility. 3. Page 12, line 39 (Discussion): The text states that the focus is on the "distinction between the professional identities of language teachers and EMI faculty." However, the paper primarily explores the professional identities of EMI faculty. This could be rephrased for greater accuracy.	1. The reference has been removed altogether with the recent update and other references have been updated where needed. 2. The word "humility" has been substituted by "a stance of self-effacement", to indicate that participants downplayed their skills. 3. The sentence has been rephrased as follows: The study addresses a gap in the literature by providing an in-depth exploration of EMI faculty's professional identities, with reference to their differentiation from language teacher identities in existing scholarship.
Reviewer 3	
1. Originality: Does the paper contain new and significant information adequate to justify publication? Yes - it highlights an angle previously unexplored in EMI lecturer research.	Thank you.
2. Relationship to Literature: The review of the literature is updated and comprehensive. The only aspect which needs further review and is not dealt with throughout is institutional culture, i.e., the **culture of the university and its orientations towards multilingualism and multiculturalism**. This point is especially pertinent since all the research participants come from the same institution, and its orientations in terms of the beliefs, norms, perceptions towards the topics researched may have a meaningful impact on the formation of the teacher identities.	We have addressed this issue by adding information about the institutional culture in both the methods section and the discussion.

3. Methodology: The research method employed- a semi-structured interview - is suitable and answer the research question.	Thank you.
4. Results: The results are displayed clearly.	Thank you.
5. Implications for research, practice and/or society: The study underscores the importance of the EMI lecturers' awareness of the need to adapt teaching to the EMI format. However, it also demonstrates the lack of a critical perspective towards the dominance of English and the justification for using it as a medium of instruction. These conclusions need further emphasizing - **the extent to which linguistic imperialism in the form of English dominance is aligned with multilingual multicultural values and beliefs**. Also as mentioned above - the contextual role of the institution and the messages it conveys to lecturers and students as to EMI prominence and its position in the set of values the institution upholds. These factors need to be considered also in future research in other contexts.	References have been added in the discussion and in the implications.
6. Quality of Communication: The paper is clearly delivered.	Thank you.
Final suggestions: As was mentioned above there are two issues that need further explaining and revising: 1. reference to the institutional culture throughout, especially in the literature review and the discussion and implications. 2. The implications of the non-critical approach or awareness of English dominance in a multilingual	Please see our comments above.

multicultural mindset.	
Guest editors' comments	
Since the focus of the special issue is on the **development and navigation of identity in intercultural education**, please further expand on how your study engages with these central themes. In particular, please **elaborate on how your study contributes to discussions about the development and negotiation of identity within intercultural or transnational educational contexts**.	We have added references to transnational, transcultural education at the beginning of the introduction, and highlighted this further in the findings.

Language, identity, and internationalization: EMI faculty's meaning-making of multilingual and multicultural identities

Abstract

Purpose: This original research article explores how English-medium instructors in internationalized higher education settings navigate challenges and affordances regarding internationalization, student expectations, and research demands, and how these dynamics shape their multilingual and multicultural (MLMC) identities.

Design/methodology/approach: This phenomenological study explores the MLMC identities of 16 EMI faculty members at a Spanish university, using semi-structured interviews and a conceptual framework examining knowledge, skills, and abilities; values, beliefs and attitudes; awareness; behaviors; and emotions.

Findings: Findings reveal a positive orientation toward MLMC identity and EMI, minimal monolingual bias, and a strong acknowledgement of the need to adapt teaching methods, despite an emphasis on content delivery. Awareness of the negative impacts of 'Englishization' on linguistic diversity and equity is limited. The study positions EMI faculty as potential agents of change but calls for stronger institutional support.

Originality: Teacher identity has been extensively researched, yet much of the focus has remained on language teacher identity or on isolated aspects of EMI faculty identity, such as classroom practices and teaching beliefs, rather than adopting a more holistic perspective. This study offers in-depth insights from a single institution, with implications that are relevant for broader EMI contexts.

Keywords: English medium instruction; EMI; higher education; Spain; multilingual; multicultural; identity; faculty training; Englishization; internationalization

Introduction

'I'm not an English teacher, but an accountant that can teach in English.' – Maria

The internationalization of higher education is characterized by strategic cooperation among institutions (Gaebel and Zhang, 2024), the pursuit of income through international student recruitment (OECD, 2023; Thondhlana~~,~~ *et al.,* 2023), and the goal of creating global learning environments for domestic students (Rumbley and Hoekstra-Selten, 2024; Sercu, 2022). These forces have increased international faculty mobility (ETER Project, 2019), promoted English-medium instruction or EMI (Wingrove *et al.*, 2025), fostered international alliances (Marinoni and Pina Cardona, 2024), and raised the prominence of research in global rankings (Boussebaa and Tienari, 2021), driving the contested trend of '~~Englishisation~~'Englishization' in higher education (Wilkinson and Gabriëls, 2021). However, the benefits of Englishization are counterbalanced by challenges related to quality assurance, cultural and linguistic identity, the European plurilingualism agenda (Beacco, 2005), and equity for non-English speakers (Ben Hammou and Kesbi, 2023; Sah and Karki, 2023~~), particularly~~). From a decolonial perspective, the normalization of English as a neutral academic medium has heightened its role in reproducing epistemic and linguistic inequalities within a context that arguably supports diverse voices (Canagarajah, 1999; Kubota, 2020; Pennycook, 2017), making in necessary to examine its role in intercultural education contexts.

~~Europe, where they conflict with the plurilingualism agenda (Beacco, 2005).~~

~~Previous~~Prior research ~~shows that~~characterizes EMI ~~professors are~~faculty as multilingual and multicultural (MLMC) professionals ~~whose~~operating in transnational educational spaces, engaging in context-dependent translanguaging (e.g., publishing and teaching in English, socializing in Spanish), international mobility, and culturally sensitive interaction. Consequently, their English-mediated identities~~, shaped by their use of English,~~ are dynamic and require ~~continual~~ongoing negotiation as they balance roles as instructors and researchers within complex educational systems (Kim and Tatar, 2017; Stojanović *et al.*, 2025). While studies have

examined EMI teachers' classroom practices and professional development needs (Dafouz and Smit, 2020; Lasagabaster and Doiz, 2021; Macaro and Rose, 2023; Stojanović and Robinson, 2021), less attention has been given to their MLMC identities, particularly regarding transcultural and translingual practices, emotions, sense of community, and career development (Lee Martin *et al.*, 2024). Given teachers' critical role as role models, facilitators, and agents of change (Karimi and Mofidi, 2019), this study addresses this gap by drawing on teacher identity theory and intercultural competence frameworks to explore how EMI instructors construct and navigate their MLMC identities, and how these intersect with institutional internationalization, teaching, and research. In doing so, it aims to generate insights that can inform inclusive pedagogical approaches and targeted faculty development in increasingly diverse academic contexts.

Conceptual Framework

Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) emphasize the importance of teacher identity as 'a lens through which to examine aspects of teaching' and a resource for meaning- making (p. 175). Teacher identity is enacted within specific 'ideological, practical, personal, institutional, emotional and sociocultural dimensions' (Nazari and Costa, 2022, p. 367), as teachers continuously (re)negotiate their identities through interactions with colleagues, policymakers, and students (Fenton-Smith and Gurney, 2022; Lo, 2024; Widodo *et al.*, 2020~~), taking on diverse roles such as teacher, researcher, advisor, administrator, or coach.~~) —an ongoing process that can intensify in EMI settings and lead to identity conflict (Corrales *et al.*, 2025).

Varghese *et al.* (2005) highlight the importance of teacher identity in the sociocultural dynamics of the classroom, particularly for language teachers, who act as linguistic and cultural mediators, creating a safe 'third space' for intercultural interaction and identity exploration in the

classroom (Kramsch and Zhang, 2018). Hopkins and Gkonou (2023), in their study in the United Arab Emirates, support this view, noting that EMI instructors, like language teachers, strive to create such a space. However, the relationship between language and EMI instructor identities cannot be taken for granted, as existing research on teachers' practices and beliefs remains inconclusive: for instance, some studies report prevailing monolingual orientations among policymakers and professors (Eren, 2022; Han, 2023; Serna-Bermejo and Lasagabaster, 2022), whereas others point to instructors' agency in making language choices (Phyak *et al.*, 2022; Xiong *et al.*, 2023). Given the unique position of English as both an enabler and an obstacle in international education (Canagarajah, 1999; Kubota, 2020; Pennycook, 2017), the role of language in EMI instructor identity requires further investigation.

Following Alvesson *et al.* (2008) and Baker (2021), identity is understood as a multiple, fluid construct shaped through relational practices within diverse power structures. This aligns with Kim's (2009) notion of 'intercultural identity' as a continuum from monocultural to increasingly inclusive orientations. In this study, EMI professionals, as multilingual individuals, are viewed as developing dynamic, multifaceted identities, shaped by their language proficiency, cultural background, and the social contexts in which they operate (Atobatele and Mouboua, 2024).

Terminology in intercultural studies varies. Here, 'plurilingualism'/'multilingualism' denote individual or community language repertoires (Council of Europe, 2018), and 'pluriculturalism'/'multiculturalism' refer to cultural resources at individual and group levels (Beacco *et al.*, 2016). 'Intercultural' highlights empathy, openness, and awareness of cultural difference (Arasaratnam and Doerfel, 2005), while 'translingual' and 'transcultural' practices embrace diversity and challenge native-speaker norms (García, 2009; Kramsch and Zhang,

2018), particularly relevant in internationalized higher education (Baker, 2021). As such, the professional context for EMI instructors is inherently multilingual, intercultural, and often transnational, with English being used as a medium of communication with students who have different mother tongues and come from different backgrounds.

Social identity as competency (Stone and Hart, 2019) can be framed through intercultural competence models: Byram (2020) emphasizes communicative and intercultural dimensions; Deardorff (2006) the process dynamics; Fantini (2020) attributes, proficiency, abilities, dimensions, and process; Dai and Feng (2024) attitudes, knowledge, skills, awareness, and outcomes. From Second Language Acquisition (SLA), the Douglas Fir Group (2016) situates language learning within nested micro (interaction), meso (institutions), and macro (sociopolitical) contexts, linking individual encounters to broader structures.

Given the importance ~~as well as the~~and complexity of EMI faculty roles in internationalized and Englishized higher education institutions, this study ~~explores~~explored how ~~English-medium Instruction (~~EMI~~)~~ faculty at a private university in Spain conceptualize and navigate their multilingual and multicultural (MLMC) identities~~, following the models proposed above~~. The focal question guiding this study is: *How do EMI faculty make meaning of their MLMC identity and what professional, linguistic, and intercultural experiences inform identity development in these contexts?*

Materials and Methods

This was a phenomenological study conducted at an institution that has a strong strategic orientation toward internationalization. This is evidenced by its extensive English-taught provision and QS placement within the top 10% for international student mobility (as indicated on the university's website), yet, the institution has no publicly available institutional policy on

language use or internationalization. This fact is supported by the words of one participant, who shared: "I think the Institution considers itself an international university because of the programs they have and because of the mix of students, foreign and local students, they have. I'm not sure it is lived internally," posing a key question about how institutional culture shapes their identity.

Sixteen faculty were ~~purposively~~purposely selected, meeting inclusion criteria ~~and providing oral informed consent.~~. Semi-structured interviews ~~of about 60 minutes~~ enabled participants to share lived experiences, balancing structured inquiry with open exploration. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and anonymized ~~and pseudonyms were assigned~~, to ensure confidentiality. Data were analyzed using Saldaña's (2021) coding methodology: descriptive coding captured key elements, followed by iterative refinement into a structured codebook, and conceptual coding to identify broader themes. Trustworthiness was enhanced through member checks and reflexivity, acknowledging potential researcher bias, and by presenting participants' quotes verbatim, including non-standard language, to authentically reflect their perspectives.

~~This rigorous approach revealed how EMI faculty construct and negotiate their MLMC identities within a dynamic educational landscape, enriching understanding of identity formation in multilingual EMI settings and informing policy, faculty development, and institutional support.~~

Findings

Our findings suggest that EMI faculty operate as intercultural mediators, navigating competing norms and expectations across institutional and transcultural academic spaces. Participants' backgrounds—shaped by time abroad, experience in English-speaking contexts, and professional

use of English—strongly ~~influenced how they~~shaped their perceived and negotiated ~~their~~ MLMC identities. These profiles, ordered by self-assessed English proficiency on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) scale (~~https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/level-descriptions~~https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/level-descriptions), are summarized in Table I, followed by the description of prominent themes identified through data analysis. Each theme captures an element of the faculty's MLMC identity, which is discussed more broadly in the Discussion section.

[Table I. Participant Profiles]

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs)

KSAs—knowledge, skills, and abilities—help explain how EMI faculty perceive ~~their roles.~~the crux of their identity in relation to linguistic vs. subject-matter expertise. Originating in Schultz's (1961) human capital theory to describe qualities that enhance productivity and growth, the concept remains central in ~~HRD~~human resource development and organizational psychology for job analysis, training, and performance assessment (Campion *et al.*, 2011).

In this study, faculty generally rooted their authority in subject knowledge and expertise rather than language knowledge and proficiency. As Emilia noted, English offered functional clarity, highlighting language as a medium while content knowledge sustained authority: 'It's very cultural, but the thing in fact is much better because English is more synthetic.' This signaled to the opinion that the use of EMI even helps focus on the content being taught because of the concise nature of English as a language.

Sara articulated a dual sense of identity related to language KSAs, stating, 'I think I'm both, actually. Um, obviously I'm not a native speaker in all the languages that I think that I have

a high level.' This reflects a common sentiment among EMI faculty, who often viewed themselves as fully proficient professionals in multiple languages, demonstrating their self-assurance in delivering high-quality EMI instruction.

The use of translingual and transcultural skills and abilities, both in the workplace and in private life, characterized the experience of several faculty. José mentioned his use of English not only in professional settings but also in family life, which showcases how language use can seamlessly bridge personal and professional realms. He shared, 'Spanish is my first language, but I consider English to be also... I'm not native speaker, but I've obviously used English for a very long time, also, like familywise, with my wife, we speak in English as well.' Carmen similarly navigates between Catalan, Spanish, and English, creating an inclusive, multicultural environment. She noted, 'Catalan in fact, this is my mother tongue. Spanish and Catalan. Both of them are my mother tongues and then English and a little bit of French,' suggesting a flexible identity that allows her to bring diverse linguistic resources into her teaching.

Finally, Laura reflected on her cultural understanding through English, saying, 'to some extent I feel I understand better other … or English culture as a result of using English.' This understanding deepened the idea of her MLMC identity being shaped by using EMI, making the EMI classroom a shared space where culture and language intersect to enrich teaching and learning experiences.

Awareness

The awareness, or explicit recognition, of linguistic and cultural elements significantly shaped the MLMC identities of EMI faculty, ~~influencing~~reflecting on classroom dynamics, student engagement, and the bridging of cultural divides. ~~Language~~Awareness of language characteristics and resulting impact on communication played a key role in how faculty adapted

their teaching and communication strategies. For example, Juan noted, 'when I speak in Spanish, I feel... I communicate a lot through body language,' but in English, he felt he was 'missing some part of that communication,' highlighting how language affects expressiveness and connection with students. This recognition of linguistic limitations often prompted faculty to use alternative methods, like enhanced body language, to bridge gaps.

Further, faculty's awareness of the dominant role of English as the language of research and academia subtly shapes their professional identities. Matilde discussed her comfort with and awareness of her English and French knowledge, despite not being a native speaker. She reflected, 'I know that I'm not as fluent as mother tongue in English, but yes... I can perfectly run a conversation or a professional negotiation in English or French.' This awareness empowers EMI faculty to access global research, engage in professional dialogues, and contribute meaningfully to their fields.

Cultural awareness is especially crucial in international classrooms. Manuel shared an example of a U.S. student's critical reaction to Spain's legal stance ~~on polygamy, recalling a student commenting 'Why is this? It's horrible... why you should [sic. wouldn't you] prosecute that?'~~against polygamy. Manuel used this as a teaching moment, showing how cultural differences can enrich classroom discussions. His approach exemplifies how faculty can use cultural awareness to foster a safe, respectful space for diverse perspectives, enabling students to understand various viewpoints without judgment.

In another example, José emphasized that language alone cannot convey cultural nuances. He told his students, 'Living abroad is very important... it's not just about languages, it's about having an experience elsewhere as well.' His viewpoint underscores the idea that cultural awareness extends beyond language proficiency to include immersion and socialization

in diverse environments~~. Faculty like José encourage students to seek international experiences, fostering a deeper appreciation of cultural diversity and a broader worldview.~~, promoting the value of transnational education. Francisco echoed this, encouraging his children to live abroad and 'try to understand the values, the culture, the habits, the procedures' of other people. This perspective highlights how EMI faculty often bring a global outlook to their teaching, ~~encouraging students to embrace multicultural understanding and respect for differences~~themselves creating an international environment in their classrooms.

Emotions

Faculty members expressed a range of emotions about teaching in EMI environments, reflecting both the challenges and rewards. While some felt an increased sense of pride and confidence, others faced feelings of discomfort or frustration. Laura, for instance, described her journey of overcoming self-doubt: 'I thought I was never being able to do it because I'm not bilingual... finally, I did it and it makes me feel really proud.' Her experience highlights a common sense of accomplishment among EMI faculty who view their English proficiency as an achievement, contributing positively to their self-esteem and professional growth.

Others voiced comfort in navigating multicultural environments, which they felt aligned with their personal and professional lives. Pilar shared, 'I feel comfortable because it also matches the life experience or professional experience that I've had,' underscoring that EMI teaching aligns with her broader career identity and experiences. Similarly, Manuel expressed ease in multicultural interactions, even if he identified as predominantly Spanish: 'I've been so comfortable with people from other places, with different culture, religion, way of thinking.'

Despite some frustrations, including feelings of inadequacy or limitations in fully expressing their personalities, EMI teaching often inspires a broader sense of open-mindedness.

Laura acknowledged that teaching in English encouraged her to expand her perspectives, saying it made her 'more open-minded... in general in cultural terms.' This combination of emotions—from pride and confidence to frustration and openness—illustrates how EMI teaching is both a challenge and a path for growth for many educators.

Values, Beliefs, and Attitudes

Frameworks of culture consistently link values, beliefs, and attitudes as interdependent elements that shape shared meaning systems and inform behaviors (Rings and Rasinger, 2023). Our findings reveal a wide range of beliefs and attitudes, reflecting underlying evaluative orientations and assumptions, among faculty, centered on their self-concept as MLMC individuals and the perceived value of their English proficiency in teaching, research, and social contexts. When asked if they identified as MLMC individuals, several participants expressed strong agreement (e.g., Pilar, Clara, Marina, José). In contrast, others demonstrated ~~humility~~a stance of self-effacement regarding their linguistic and cultural skills. Emilia described herself as an MLMC 'amateur', and Isabel, despite self-reporting a C2 level in English and 3 additional languages, described herself as only 'probably' multilingual.

The participants also noted differing beliefs about the role of English in personal and professional identity. For example, Pilar stated, 'I consider [English] part of my expression and being a professional,' while Teresa admitted that teaching in English makes her feel 'not as good a professional as [she] should be.' These self-perceptions are closely linked to participants' MLMC experiences in formal education, as well as study and work abroad (see Table 1), while English proficiency level appears to be less influential.

Concerning language ideology, English dominance was accepted unconditionally by most participants~~.~~ as a neutral reality. As Francisco indicated:

> I think nowadays [it] is not only mandatory, but is a good example of…, to improve your professional career at the INSTITUTION, absolutely. If you, if you want to have a good, not only performance, but a good career, professional career in the INSTITUTION, you have to teach, to be able to teach in English and to investigate, to research also in English, and to write in English, to write your paper to publish in a journal of course.

Few participants reflected on the relative ~~importance~~value of English compared to Spanish and other languages they speak. Emilia reported shifting her language of publication from Catalan and Spanish to English. Manuel, despite his bilingual upbringing in Valencian and Spanish, does not consider himself MLMC unless he uses English. Only José reflected critically that 'sometimes there's too much emphasis on English and too little on sort of perfection in the other language as well.'

In this sense, there is a clear utilitarian attitude towards English as a commodity enabling career development, research impact, international networking for professors and opening doors for students in the context of future employment. ~~As José mentions~~This attitude is likely shaped by the fact that most participants speak Spanish as their first language, which Emilija confidently shared is "an advantage" because it is another major world language. Further, José mentioned:

> We see languages as a massive asset in the sense for the future as well. … languages are gonna open a lot of doors for those students, and you know I do internship coordination, and a lot of the companies tell us that one of the things that they value the most about our students is their language skills.

~~Participants~~In the absence of a publicly available language policy, participants believe that the Institution expects English proficiency to enhance the university's international reputation and meet the needs of an increasingly MLMC student body. Francisco described this expectation as 'mandatory,' José as 'a plus,' and Marina as 'essential.' Despite this pressure, participants maintain a positive attitude toward English, seeing it as beneficial not only for their

careers but also for fostering open-mindedness as part of the MLMC identity. As Laura noted, it encourages cultural openness, while Manuel added that it prompts greater international engagement, such as research stays and travel.

Behaviors

The findings revealed several distinct behaviors among EMI faculty ~~members~~ as they navigated the MLMC landscape of their classrooms. Faculty frequently adjusted their communication styles by speaking more slowly and clearly, using body language, and incorporating visual aids to bridge language gaps. Javier explained: 'I try, not always successfully, to speak much more slowly than I would normally do... not to speak as if my audience were native speakers.' To further enhance clarity, faculty often avoided using idiomatic expressions and wordplay, acknowledging the inherent challenges for non-native speakers. Javier mentioned, 'I've stopped doing that... it serves no purpose other than boosting my own ego,' highlighting an intentional move toward more accessible communication. Some faculty also reported cognitive shifts when teaching in English, with Juan reflecting, 'Because I'm not speaking my native language, usually I have to use a ... logical brain,' which can result in less spontaneity and humor compared to his native Spanish classes.

José and Manuel noted that their Spanish and English classes are largely similar, though Manuel explained that teaching international students sometimes requires extra context, such as briefly clarifying concepts like ~~an~~ EU ~~directive~~directives. Likewise, Francisco incorporated Spanish cultural references through familiar brands, allowing students to engage with the culture they were experiencing and enriching the educational exchange.

Institutional actions supported inclusivity, fostering ~~an~~a MLMC environment responsive to students' cultural needs. For example, Carmen described how a student was given space to pray during Ramadan after faculty raised the issue, illustrating efforts to create a culturally inclusive atmosphere.

Discussion

~~Our~~The study addresses a gap in the literature by ~~highlighting the distinction between the~~providing an in-depth exploration of EMI faculty's professional identities ~~of~~, with reference to their differentiation from language teacher identities in existing scholarship. ~~teachers and EMI faculty.~~ While ~~both professions act as linguistic and cultural mediators, the study also underscores the significant differences between these roles. The~~the literature (Kunschak and Strotmann, 2023; Serna-Bermejo and Lasagabaster, 2022) ~~indicates~~indicated a strong monolingual bias among EMI faculty, ~~which~~this was not observed in the attitudes or behaviors of the study's participants. In fact, our findings show positive regard toward EMI as a way of increasing interculturalism in transnational educational contexts and a neutral attitude toward English dominance in academia. Additionally, while professional marginalization often compels language teachers to reflect on their roles and fosters a mission as intercultural and interlinguistic mediators (Kramsch and Zhang, 2018), EMI faculty, by contrast, do not perceive themselves as part of a marginalized community (cf. Stojanović *et al.*, 2025). Instead, they exhibit a strong sense of achievement and professional recognition based on additional language skills (Hopkins and Gkonou, 2023; Xiong *et al.*, 2023).

Our analysis ~~of KSAs reveals that authority primarily derives from subject-matter rather than language expertise. Confidence~~revealed overall confidence in translingual and transcultural interactions is linked to a fluid MLMC identity and the ability to create a safe 'third space' in the

classroom (Kramsch and Zhang, 2018; Rey-Paba *et al.*, 2024). While challenges identified in the literature—such as increased preparation time, unmet training needs, and insufficient incentives—are acknowledged, they are offset by the benefits of EMI, including enhanced recognition, access, and self-efficacy.

~~Hellekjær (2017) highlights challenges in vocabulary and note-taking for EMI students.~~ Faculty participating in this study show ongoing awareness of EMI's impact on language, teaching, and interaction, adapting communication to student needs. However, focus remains on teacher input rather than fostering rich student output, as noted by An *et al*. (2021). Consistent with Hillman *et al.* (2023), institutional and cultural tensions in EMI evoke emotions ranging from discomfort and frustration to a sense of achievement, pride and confidence.

All participants valued English proficiency for career, teaching, and research, though some identified as MLMC individuals while others viewed their competence as inadequate. Unlike negative societal attitudes reported elsewhere (Schiffman, 1996; Stojanović, 2021), all valued ~~an~~a MLMC identity, perhaps reflecting the more positive European context of this study~~.~~, where multilingualism is promoted and considered common, rather than an exception. Further, the overwhelming positive regard toward English may be unique based on the participants' background, as most also speak Spanish—another high-status world language—making them multilingual with dominant-language capital (Bourdieu, 1977).

With one exception, participants uncritically accepted the global dominance of English as a lingua franca, viewing it as a commodity facilitating success for both students and faculty. While ~~decolonization~~decolonial and critical ~~approaches have critiqued additional language and~~ scholarship shows that English-medium and additional-language teaching ~~for perpetuating~~can reproduce Western privilege ~~(Tajik *et al.*, 2023; Widodo *et al.*, 2020),~~ native-speakerism

(Widodo *et al.*, 2020),, and marginalization—especially in Global South contexts (Brown and& Laihonen, 2022; Kramsch and& Zhang, 2018; Tajik *et al.*, 2023; Widodo *et al.*,), no reference to 2020)—these issues was noted among concerns did not emerge in our participants' accounts, who instead framed English in largely pragmatic, utilitarian terms, in line with Aguilar-Pérez and Arnó-Macià's (2024) findings. This absence is analytically significant, pointing to the normalization and depoliticization of English in European EMI contexts, where EMI correlates with university autonomy and neoliberal governance structures (Wingrove *et al.*, 2024). This, in turn, highlights the need for professional development that foregrounds critical and decolonial perspectives on English in higher education, especially in internationalized context where students may not share the same attitudes toward language. participants in this study.

Implications

This qualitative study explored EMI faculty's MLMC identity in depth, offering rich insightsas a socially-constructed phenomenon within the context of international education. Conducted at a single institution with sixteen participants, the findings are not generalizable but reveal the uniqueness of the selected context and can be transferred to similar contextssettings. Further quantitative studies involving larger, more diverse samples from private and public institutions in Spain and other locations could offer an additional dimension to this research topic.

The findings have several implications. In terms of theory, this paper offers a framework that supports the notion of complex, fluid, dynamic professional identities in EMI contexts, reinforcing the relevance of understanding MLMC identity. We conceptualize MLMC identity as the self's integration within diverse cultural and linguistic communities, with the capacity to mediate between them (Figure 1).

[Figure 1. ~~Multicultural multilingual~~MLMC identity framework. Source: Authors' own work.]

The MLMC self exists at the intersection of cultural and linguistic spheres shaped by macrocontexts (historical, political, educational), mesocontexts (local and regional communities), and microcontexts (everyday interactions). Within these layers, languages and cultures intersect, and a competent MLMC individual demonstrates critical reflection, emotional regulation, and effective interaction across intercultural and interlinguistic settings.

Regarding practice, there is a need for forums that foster exchange, reflection, and dialogue among EMI faculty, who—by leveraging their MLMC competence—can act as agents of change (cf. Collins *et al.*, 2016~~). This potential merits further exploration across individual, institutional, and policy levels.~~; Rey-Paba *et al.*, 2024)). From the economic perspective, this study suggests that MLMC identity supports employability, especially in international and intercultural contexts. Ultimately, if universities aim to prepare students for diverse societies, they must prioritize MLMC competence, with EMI faculty serving as key role models within and beyond the classroom.

~~Gaps in understanding persist, yet key implications remain. Institutions~~To that effect, institutions should prioritize professional development on MLMC awareness, intercultural communication, and pedagogical adaptation for EMI. Extending this to faculty, administrators, and students fosters a culture that values MLMC identities and strengthens both teaching and learning in EMI contexts. Formalizing an institutional language and/or internationalization policy would strengthen guidance and transparency, while enabling alignment with Spain's plurilingual language framework and the European Union's multilingualism policy.

Future research could further explore MLMC identity by studying the longitudinal impact of EMI faculty's evolving MLMC identities on their pedagogical strategies and professional development. This could include investigating the impact of institutional culture on EMI faculty identity, or how sustained engagement with EMI influences faculty confidence, teaching methodologies, and career trajectories, as well as how organizations can help in supporting MLMC faculty's identity development. Lastly, because this study focused on the Spanish context, future research in other geographical areas would provide additional information that could help understand the MLMC identity formation of EMI faculty globally.

References

Aguilar-Pérez, M. and Arnó-Macià, E. (2024),"Personal narratives of three EMI teachers: construction of their identities based on their experiential development", *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, pp. 1–14, available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2024.2373254

Alvesson, M., Lee Ashcraft, K. and Thomas, R. (2008), "Identity matters: reflections on the construction of identity scholarship in organization studies", *Organization*, Vol. 15 No. 1, pp.5-28. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508407084426

An, J., Macaro, E. and Childs, A. (2021), "Classroom interaction in EMI high schools: do teachers who are native speakers of English make a difference?", *System*, Vol. 98, 102482. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102482

Arasaratnam, L.-A. and Doerfel, M.-L. (2005), "Intercultural communication competence: identifying key components from multicultural perspectives", *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Vol. 29 No. 2, pp.137-163. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2004.04.001

Atobatele, F.-A. and Mouboua, P.-D. (2024), "Navigating multilingual identities: the role of languages in shaping social belonging and political participation", *International Journal of Applied Research in Social Sciences*, Vol. 6 No. 5, pp.828-843. ~~https://doi.org/10.51594/ijarss.v6i5.1105~~https://doi.org/10.51594/ijarss.v6i5.1105

Baker, W. (2021), "From intercultural to transcultural communication", *Language and Intercultural Communication*, Vol. 22 No. 3, pp.280-293. https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2021.2001477

Beacco, J.-C. (2005), "Languages and language repertoires: plurilingualism as a way of life in Europe", available at: https://rm.coe.int/languages-and-language-repertoires-plurilingualism-as-a-way-of-life-in/16802fc1ba (accessed 18 August 2025)

Beacco, J.-C., Byram, M., Cavalli, M., Coste, D., Cuenat, M.-E., Goullier, F. and Panthier, J. (2016), "Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education", available at: https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016806ae621 (accessed 18 August 2025)

Beauchamp, C. and Thomas, L. (2009), "Understanding teacher identity: an overview of issues in the literature and implications for teacher education", *Cambridge Journal of Education*, Vol. 39, No. 2, pp.175-189. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057640902902252

Ben Hammou, S. and Kesbi, A. (2023), "English-medium instruction (EMI) in Moroccan higher education: graduate students' attitudes", *Journal for Multicultural Education*, Vol. 17 No.1, pp.43-55. https://doi.org/10.1108/JME-01-2022-0011

Bourdieu, P. (1977), "The economics of linguistic exchanges", *Social Science Information*, Vol. 16 No. 6, pp.645–668.

Boussebaa, M. and Tienari, J. (2021), "Englishization and the politics of knowledge production in management studies", *Journal of Management Inquiry*, Vol. 30 No. 1, pp.59-67. https://doi.org/10.1177/1056492619835314

Brown, K. D. and Laihonen, P. (2023), "Marginalisation: non-dominant language learning and teaching from a comparative perspective", *Compare: a Journal of Comparative and International Education*, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp.155-173. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2023.2234281https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2023.2234281

Byram, M. (2020), *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence: Revisited*, Bristol, Multilingual Matters.

Campion, M.A., Fink, A.A., Ruggeberg, B.J., Carr, L., Phillips, G.M., and Odman, R.B. (2011). "Doing competencies well: Best practices in competency modeling", *Personnel Psychology*, Vol. 64 No. 1, pp.225–262. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2010.01207.xhttps://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2010.01207.x

Canagarajah, A.S. (1999), *Resisting linguistic imperialism in English teaching*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Collins, K.S., Duyar, I. and Pearson, C.L. (2016), "Does cultural intelligence matter? Effects of principal and teacher cultural intelligence on Latino student achievement", *Journal for Multicultural Education*, Vol. 10 No. 4, pp.465-488. https://doi.org/10.1108/JME-07-2015-0026

https://doi.org/10.1108/JME-07-2015-0026

Council of Europe.Corrales, K.A., Rey-Paba, L., and Lombana-Coy, J. (2025). The influence of EMI on teacher identity in a Colombian university. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura, 30*(2). https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.ikala.356438 Council of Europe. (2018), "Common

European framework of reference for languages: learning, teaching, assessment. Companion volume with new descriptors", available at: https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-newdescriptors-2018/1680787989 (accessed 18 August 2025)

Dafouz, E. and Smit, U. (2020). *ROAD-MAPPING English medium education in the internationalised universit*y, Cham, Palgrave Macmillan.

Dai, X. and Feng, H. (2024), "Redefining intercultural competence using the Delphi method", *Journal of Studies in International Education*, Vol. 29 No. 1, pp.144-162. ~~https://doi.org/10.1177/10283153241266967~~https://doi.org/10.1177/10283153241266967

Deardorff, D.~~-~~K. (2006), "Identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization", *Journal of Studies in International Education*, Vol. 10 No. 3, pp.241-266. https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315306287002

~~Deardorff, D. and Arasaratnam-Smith, L. (2017), *Intercultural Competence in Higher Education: International Approaches, Assessment and Application.* Abingdon: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315529257~~

Douglas Fir Group. (2016), "A transdisciplinary framework for SLA in a multilingual world", *Modern Language Journal*, Vol. 100, pp.19-47. ~~https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12301~~https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12301

Eren, Ö. (2022), "Towards multilingual turn in language classes: plurilingual awareness as an indicator of intercultural communicative competence", *International Journal of Multilingualism*, Vol. 21 No. 2, pp.783-801. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2022.2090568

ETER Project, The. (2019). "Internationalisation of academic staff in European higher education: European tertiary education register", available at: https://eter-

project.com/uploads/analytical-reports/ETER_AnalyticalReport_01_final.pdf (accessed 18 August 2025)

Fantini, A.-E. (2020), "Reconceptualizing intercultural communicative competence: a multinational perspective", *Research in Comparative and International Education*, Vol. 15 No.1, pp.52-61. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745499920901948

Fenton-Smith, B. and Gurney, L. (2022), "Collaborator, applied linguist, academic, expense? Exploring the professional identities of academic language and learning professionals", *Higher Education Pedagogies*, Vol. 7 No. 1, pp.160-178. https://doi.org/10.1080/23752696.2022.2130390

Gaebel, M. and Zhang, T. (2024), *Trends 2024: European Higher Education Institutions in Times of Transition*, Brussels, European University Association.

García, O. (2009), *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century: ~~a~~A Global Perspective*, Chichester, Wiley/Blackwell.

Han, J. (2023), "When structuralism and post-structuralism collide: EMI lecturers' monolingual ideology and translanguaging practice", In Han, J. (Ed.), *English Medium Instruction as a Local Practice,* Springer, Cham, pp.99-115. ~~https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-19904-2_7~~https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-19904-2_7

~~Hellekjær, G. O. (2010), "Lecture comprehension in English-medium higher education", *HERMES - Journal of Language and Communication in Business*, Vol. 23 No. 45, pp.11-34. https://doi.org/10.7146/hjlcb.v23i45.97343~~

Hillman, S., Li, W., Green-Eneix, C. and de Costa, P. (2023), "The emotional landscape of English medium instruction (EMI) in higher education", *Linguistics and Education*, Vol. 75, 101178. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2023.101178

Hopkins, S. and Gkonou, C. (2023), "Sites of belonging: fluctuating and entangled emotions at a UAE English-medium university", *Linguistics and Education,* Vol. 25, 101148. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2023.101148

Karimi, M.N. and Mofidi, M. (2019) "L2 teacher identity development: an activity theoretic perspective", *System*, Vol. 81, pp.122-134. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2019.02.006.

Kim, J. and Tatar, B. (2017), "Nonnative English-speaking professors' experiences of English-medium instruction and their perceived roles of the local language", *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, Vol. 16 No. 3, pp.157-171. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2017.1295811

Kim, Y.Y. (2009), "The identity factor in intercultural competence", Deardorff, D. (Ed.), *The Sage Handbook of Intercultural Competence*, Thousand Oaks, Sage, pp.53-65. ~~https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452281988~~https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452281988

Kramsch, C. and Zhang, L. (2018), *The multilingual instructor,* Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Kubota, R. (2020), "Confronting epistemological racism, decolonizing scholarly knowledge: Race and gender in applied linguistics", *Applied Linguistics,* Vol. 41 No.5, pp.712–732. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amz033

Kunschak, C. and Strotmann, B. (2023), "Cultivating translingual and transcultural competence in a multilingual university", *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, pp.1-17. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2023.2287669

Lasagabaster, D. (2021), "EMI in Spain: striving to maintain a multilingual balance", Wilkinson, R. and Gabriëls, R. (Ed.s), *The Englishization of Higher Education in Europe*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, pp.77-95.

Lasagabaster, D. and Doiz, A. (Ed.s) (2021), *Language Use in English-medium Instruction at University: International Perspectives on Teacher Practice*, Abingdon, Routledge.

Lee Martin, J.-G., Köhler, T. and Zhao, Y. (2024), "The interplay of multicultural and career identity development", *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 35 No. 8, pp.1577-1601. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2024.2317726

Lo, Y.Y. (2024). From EMI to CLIL: negotiating teacher identity. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development,* 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2024.2380389

Macaro, E. and Rose, H. (Ed.s) (2023), "Editorial: special issue: English medium instruction: areas of research needing urgent attention", *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp.257-269. https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.38274

Marinoni, G. and Pina Cardona, S.-B. (2024), "Internationalization of higher education: current trends and future scenarios", available at: https://www.iau-aiu.net/IMG/pdf/2024_internationalization_survey_report_digital.pdf (accessed 18 August 2025)

Nazari, M. and de Costa, P. (2022), "Contributions of a professional development course to language teacher identity development: critical incidents in focus", *Journal of Teacher Education*, Vol. 73 No. 4, pp.366-380. https://doi.org/10.1177/00224871211059160

OECD (2023), *Education at a Glance 2023: OECD Indicators*, Paris, OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/e13bef63-en

Pennycook, A. (2017), *The Cultural Politics of English as an International Language* (1st ed.). Routledge, New York, NY.

Phyak, P., Sah, P.-K., Ghimire, N.-B. and Lama, A. (2022), "Teacher agency in creating a translingual space in Nepal's multilingual English-medium schools", *RELC Journal,* Vol. 53 No. 2, pp.1-21. http://doi.org/10.1177/00336882221113950

Rey-Paba, L., Corrales, K.A., Lombana-Coy, J., Segura Antury, J., Bianchá Ramírez, H.F., Shah, S., and Castro López, S.J. (2024), "Fostering intercultural competence through EMI", *Language and Intercultural Communication,* Vol. 24 No. 6, pp.632–648. https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2023.2298933

Rings, G. and Rasinger, S.M. (2023). *The Cambridge Introduction to Intercultural Communication*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Rumbley, L.-E. and Hoekstra-Selten, J. (2024), "EAIE Barometer: Internationalisation in Europe", available at: https://www.eaie.org/knowledge/barometer.html (accessed 18 August 2025)

Sah, P.-K. and Karki, J. (2023), "Elite appropriation of English as a medium of instruction policy and epistemic inequalities in Himalayan schools", *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *Vol. 44 No. 1*, pp.20-34. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2020.1789154

Saldaña, J. (2021), *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, London, Sage.

Schiffman, H. (1996), *Linguistic Culture and Language Policy*, Abingdon, Routledge.

Schultz, T.-W. (1961), "Investment in human capital", *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 51 No. 1, pp.1-17.

Sercu, L. (2022), "Internationalization at home as a factor affecting intercultural competence. A study among Belgian university students*", European Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 13 No. 4, pp.536-557. https://doi.org/10.1080/21568235.2022.2094815

Serna-Bermejo, I., and Lasagabaster, D. (2022), "Translanguaging in Basque and English: practices and attitudes of university teachers and students", *International Journal of Multilingualism*, Vol. 21 No. 2, pp.763-782. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2022.2086984

Stojanović, M. (2021), "Are we multilingual yet? A 21st century approach to multilingual literacy skills acquisition", Robinson, P.A.,Williams, K.V. and Stojanović, M. (Ed.s), *Global Citizenship for Adult Education: Advancing Critical Literacies for Equity and Social Justice*, Abingdon, Routledge, pp.63-71

Stojanović, M. and Robinson, P.-A. (2021), "Interculturality at a US university: international faculty's experiences with intercultural communication", *Journal for Multicultural Education*, Vol. 15 No. 3, pp.225-238. https://doi.org/10.1108/JME-03-2021-0029

Stojanović, M., Strotmann, B. and Robinson, P.-A. (2025), "Human resource development in Spanish higher education: faculty needs in English-medium instruction", *Human Resource Development International*, pp.1-21. https://doi.org/10.1080/13678868.2025.2535263

Stone, L.-D. and Hart, T. (2019). *Sociocultural Psychology and Regulatory Processes in Learning Activity,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Strotmann, B. and Kunschak, C. (2022), "Toward the internationalization of higher education: developing university students' intercultural communicative competence in Spain", *Language and Intercultural Communication*, Vol. 22 No. 4, pp.419-438. https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2021.2018450

Tajik, M.-A., Namyssova, G., Shamatov, D., Manan, S.-A., Zhunussova, G. and Antwi, S.-K. (2023), "Navigating the potentials and barriers to EMI in the post-Soviet region: insights

from Kazakhstani university students and instructors", *International Journal of Multilingualism,* Vol. 22 No. 2, pp.990–1010. ~~https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2023.2265428~~https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2023.2265428

Thondhlana, J., Chiyevo Garwe, E., de Wit, H., Gacel-Ávila, J., Huang, F. and Tamrat, W. (Ed.s). (2021), *The Bloomsbury Handbook of the Internationalization of Higher Education in the Global South*, London, Bloomsbury.

Varghese, M., Morgan, B., Johnston, B. and Johnson, K. A. (2005), "Theorizing language teacher identity: three perspectives and beyond", *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, Vol. 4 No. 1, pp.21-44. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327701jlie0401_2

Widodo, H.-P., Fang, F. and Elyas, T. (2020), "The construction of language teacher professional identity in the global Englishes territory: 'We are legitimate language teachers'", *Asian Englishes*, Vol. 22 No. 3, pp.309-316. https://doi.org/10.1080/13488678.2020.1732683

Wilkinson, R. and Gabriëls, R. (Ed.s). (2021), *The Englishization of Higher Education in Europe*. Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press.

Wingrove, P., Zuaro, B., Yuksel, D., Nao, M. and Hultgren, A.K. (2025), "English-medium instruction in European higher education: measurement validity and the state of play in 2023/2024", *Applied Linguistics*, amaf020. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amaf020 ~~https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amaf020~~

~~Xiong, T.,~~Wingrove, P., Zuaro, B., Nao, M., Yuksel, D., Littvay, L., and Hultgren, A.K. (2024), "University autonomy is a predictor of English medium instruction in European higher education", *Higher Education*, Vol. 90 No. 2, pp.497–520. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-024-01333-8 Xiong, T., Song, Z., Zhou, A. and Huang,

X. (2023), “EMI teachers’ agency in the context of international education in China: language choice, identity construction, and cultural negotiation”, *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, Vol. 27 No. 4, pp.472-486.

https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2023.2213375

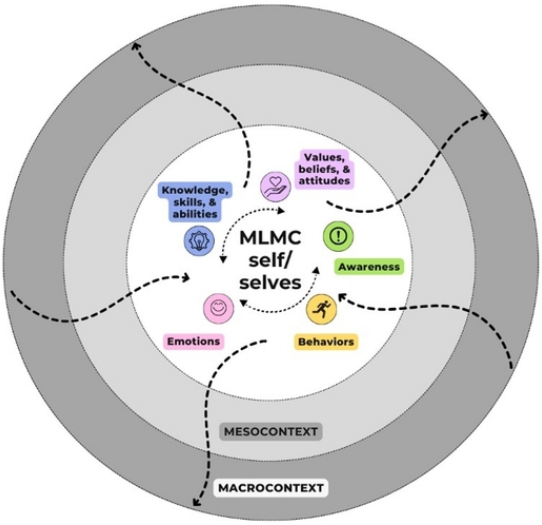

Figure 1. Multicultural multilingual identity framework. Source: Authors' own work.

160x90mm (150 x 150 DPI)

Table I. Participant Profiles

Pseudo-nym	English level	ML/MC identity	Time abroad	Time in EN-speaking country	Language of formal education*	Work experience in EN pre/outside university
Francisco	B2-C1	no	0 years	0 years	ES	n/a
Laura	C1	no	a few months	0 years	ES 80%, EN 20%	no
Teresa	B2-C1	no	a few months	a few months in the summer	ES (but PhD in EN)	no
Emilia	B2-C1	Yes/"amateur"	3 months	3 months	ES and CAT	no
Maria	C1	MC: 8/10**; ML: 6/10	several short stays (1 month or less)	several short stays (1 month or less)	ES	yes (short but frequent)
Carmen	C1	yes (7 on a scale of 10)	0 years	0 years	ES	yes (4 years international environment but in Spain)
Manuel	C1	ML: yes; MC: no	several short stays (3 months or less)	several short stays, 6 months Erasmus	ES	yes (but inside university sector)
Javier	C1-C2	ML: yes; MC: kind of	5 years UK, 8 years US	13 years	ES, EN	yes (UK, US)
José	C1	"cosmopolitan"	16 years (ages 16-32)	11-12 years	EN	yes (Brussels, EN & FR)
Pilar	C1	"a very definite yes"	2-3 years	1 year	mostly ES, some DE and EN	yes (US companies in Spain)
Isabel	C2	yes (10 on a scale of 10)	10 years		ROM, EN	yes (10 years, Madrid, Brussels, Tokyo, London)
Clara	C1-C2	yes	over 8 years	6 years	ES (EN for Master/PhD)	yes (work & study UK, US & Italy)
Juan	C1-C2	yes	several stays of 6 months and above	several stays, one of 3 years for PhD	ES (school, undergrad), EN (MBA, PhD)	yes (Brazil, Mexico)
Sara	C1-C2	yes	various years	over 10 years	DE (school), ES, EN	yes (UK & elsewhere)
Marina	C2	yes	2 years in UK, several stays of up to 2 months		ES, EN	yes (1 year London)
Matilde	C1	yes	several summers, weekly work stays	several summers, weekly work stays	ES	yes (short business trips)

**Note 1:* CAT=Catalan; DE=German; ES=Spanish; EN=English; FR=French; ROM=Romanian

***Note 2*: When asked whether they would identify as multilingual/multicultural, some participants chose to express that by providing a rating; however, no scale was offered to the participants during the interview process