Everyday logic about English in applied linguistic research A topos analysis of conference abstracts on English-medium education

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Abstract (English)

This contribution analyses the argumentative premises underlying applied linguistic research conducted in the area of English-medium instruction. Applied linguistics not only studies language as it is used in the real world but is widely understood as an approach through which real-world problems in matters of language can be solved. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that applied linguistics is commonly used as a diagnostic perspective in English-medium instruction (EMI) research where it aims to provide insight into issues in need of fixing or improvement. Such studies are not conducted in an argumentative vacuum: they are embedded in a background process of policymaking, debate and discussion by stakeholders and policymakers who are involved in the introduction of English as an international language in higher education. This paper aims to highlight the argumentative backdrop against which applied linguistic research into EMI is construed and legitimised. Analysing conference abstracts in the field of EMI, the paper seeks to draw attention to everyday logic and beliefs applied linguists engage in when submitting paper proposals for conferences. It calls for a critical applied linguistic research agenda which foregrounds the potential ideological effects everyday conceptualisations of language have on EMI research and, ultimately, on EMI policymaking.

Keywords: English-medium instruction (EMI), higher education, applied linguistics, research, policy

Introduction

English-medium instruction (EMI, here used as a collective term including ICLHE or EME) is not just a universally accepted global phenomenon but a subject of ongoing controversy, heated discussion and, essentially, of quality

concern to higher education institutions (henceforth HEIs). The introduction of EMI in higher education is often accompanied and preceded by extensive efforts by university management to bring their institution up to speed with current internationalisation and education policy trends. At the core of the debate surrounding EMI is the question concerning the (hegemonic) status of English as an international language of science and university staff's ability and readiness to utilise that language in a way that benefits students and advances science.

This paper seeks to reconstruct argumentative fragments of this background debate through the lens of applied linguists who analyse EMI initiativesand present results to members of their research community. Analysingpublicly available conference abstracts from one relevant European conference traditionally focusing on EMI, this paper reconstructs key everyday argumentation schemes, or topoi, with which applied linguists frame their research argumentatively and ideologically. Since applied research is traditionally anchored in real-world cases and scenarios, these topoi may be found in text passages where authors, often implicitly, refer to their study's rationale or premises. Conference abstracts are an appropriate text type for the reconstruction of topoi, as they summarise study rationales in highly condensed form, providing insight into everyday assumptions on which the writers draw. This contribution rests on the assumption that topoi visible in EMI conference abstracts not only reflect back on broader policy debates in HEIs but touch on everyday logical assumptions concerning the purpose and function of language in education. Everyday logic, in fact, forms an important part in theory building and scientific or policy conceptualisation (Hoyningen-Huene 2013; Moscovici 1988; 1989). In this sense, everyday logic is not understood as a flaw in this paper but as a reality that may need to be embraced and factored in systematically in research (Studer 2012). Everyday logic may be particularly relevant in applied linguistic research into topics that concern language policy and planning, such as EMI, as these topics touch on the political consciousness of stakeholders (cf. Studer 2012; 2021).

The present paper particularly foregrounds everyday conceptualisations of English as they manifest themselves, often implicitly, in applied linguistic research into English in higher education. I will argue that these conceptualisations can be reduced to a limited number of basic argumentative positions towards language. These positions are neither necessarily logical, nor dothey follow science, but they form a unique conceptual backdrop to applied linguistic research that merits further attention. In the following sections, I will first analyse key topoi as revealed in a representative corpus of abstracts.

In a second step, I will contextualise the findings by discussing implications for applied linguistic research.

Theoretical context

Topos analysis has had a long tradition in philosophy and rhetoric, which I have no space to deal with at depth within the scope of this contribution. Iwill, however, briefly outline elements of the theory that seem pertinent inthe context of this study. Firstly, I agree with the school of thought around Toulmin (1958), Kienpointner (1992) and Wengeler (2003) that topoi are fundamentally argumentative in nature, commonly containing, at their core,a warrant to a claim. A warrant can be understood as the logical link between an argument (datum) and the conclusion (claim) that follows the argument(cf. also Kienpointner 1992: 43ff). Let me take an example (I) derived from theabstracts, which I will return to in the course of the analysis:

(I)
Native speakers are authentic users of English (argument).
Therefore English must be learnt through immersion with / exposure to native speakers (conclusion).

Both argument and conclusion can, of course, be contended and they each are expressive of a more complex discourse (Foucault 1981). Taken together in example (I), however, they enter a specific argumentative relationship that can be described by the warrant, i.e. the argumentative premise upon which it is formed. The warrant underlying example (I) may read as follows:

(II)
Only if one is immersed with / exposed to native speakers of a language, can one learn this language in an authentic way (warrant).

We may now be able to step back from this specific relationship even further and think, very broadly, and unrelated to language learning, about the form that may underlie this warrant. It seems to express something like this:

(III)
If X *is defined* by Y, then action Z is appropriate.
(If authentic language learning *is defined* by contact with native speakers of a language, then language immersion with / exposure to native speakers is appropriate).

The progression from (I) to (III) illustrates levels of abstraction from concrete, or specific, topoi to a more formal topos. In topos analysis, this abstraction is described as the distinction between *material* and *formal* topoi. Formal (also structural, common, general) topoi, as in (III) above, are limited in number

and can be considered universal as they pertain to any contexts, while material (also specific) topoi can be understood as thematic realisations of formal topoi in particular contexts. In the context of the above example, material topos (II) can be considered as the warrant underlying a particular argumentation (I). Formal topos (III) can be accessed and reconstructed on the basis of material topos (II) (and vice versa). Wengeler (2003: 245), citing Kindt (1988), also refers to material topoi as "standardised verbalisation", or idiomatic expressions, that can be derived from, and underlie, concrete speech. In example (I) above, such a standardised verbalisation might be something along the lines of "learning from the best", "the best" signifying native speakers in a native English environment. The distinction *material* vs *formal* made here is relevant as I will follow the two steps in my analysis, starting with the presentation of material topoi found in the abstracts before attempting to reveal their underlying formal topoi.

In this paper, material topoi are further understood as social topoi in the sense that their warrants embody taken-for-granted, common-sense, knowledge of particular social groups and communities relating to social reality (cf. originally Kesting 1957, on the link warrant-social topos, cf. Herbig1992: 129). Topoi, in this context, can be viewed as (implicit) expressions of basicbeliefs (cf. Negt 2016: 49–54) by social groups and communities regarding thesocial world in which they live. They essentially constitute a web of reference points members of specific social groups and communities commonly useto position themselves within society, especially as they relate to themessuch as social asymmetries, power relations or social group formation. These reference points, as illustrated with example (I) above, reach beyond individual experiences, prejudices or opinions (Negt 2016); they are broad constructs that express general perceptions of social reality and existence.

Social topoi can be further seen as implicit argumentation patterns expressive of specific social classes or (disciplinary) communities (Wengeler 2003: 217). Given their argumentative structure, they take the form of opposite positions concerning social reality that are debatable (Žagar 2010). I followed this understanding elsewhere (Studer 2012), arguing that (language) policymaking fundamentally operates on the basis of conceptual reference points that are dichotomous in nature, to which policymakers routinely and reflexively take recourse when positioning themselves. In this sense,topoi form the backdrop of interpretative repertoires on social themes that specific actors develop and from which they construe their arguments (cf.also Wengeler 2003: 227; on interpretative repertoires cf. Wetherell and Potter1992; Tileagă and Stokoe 2016).

Kienpointner (1992), in his comprehensive study on everyday logic, distilled typologies from the ancient Greeks to today into an exhaustive inventory of twenty-one formal argumentation schemes which constitute the foundation for everyday argumentation. Following Kienpointner (1992), I will focus my analysis on the dichotomy between descriptive and normative argumen- tation schemes. Descriptive argumentation refers to assumptions concerning the likelihood of a controversial proposition being true or false. Normative argumentation, on the other hand, not only contains assumptions about the truth of a proposition but also about its (moral) rightness (cf. also Eggler2006: 8–10). The twenty-one formal topoi in Kienpointner (1992: 246) are further classified, depending on whether they use, establish or neither use nor establish a warrant. Given the shortness of abstracts, I have limited my analysishere to Kienpointner's (1992: 246) warrant-using topoi relating to classification, comparison, opposition and causal relation. Warrant-establishing topoi and supporting topoi drawing on illustration, analogy or authority have been left aside as they require too much space for argumentation.

Reconstructing implicit premises behind the linguistic surface is obviously always a matter of interpretation, which can be debated (Kienpointner 1986: 339ff). Often, argumentation can be read in different ways. Relevant indicators that suggest a plausible interpretation are 1) explicit references to how something that is said is to be understood; 2) expressions indicating modality in the texts (e.g. modal particles); 3) cohesion and coherence markers;
4) references in the text to the contentiousness of an argumentative claim (Kienpointner 1992: 237–39). I will rely on these four indicators as guideposts for analysis. All topoi will be presented in the affirmative version (cf. also Kienpointner 1992: 241–42).

Analysis

For this analysis, I have used as a document basis the book of abstracts of the 6th ICLHE (Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education) conference in 2019, which at the time of publication, was available online. The conference theme was multilingualism and multimodality in higher education. The book of abstracts contains abstracts of seventy-three oral contributions in total (three plenaries, three colloquia, one workshop, two roundtables,five posters and fifty-nine full papers). For the purpose of the analysis, all abstracts were read several times and a first broad thematic organisation of positions, or "argumentative problems" (cf. also Wengeler 2003: 264) was made

on the basis of this initial reading. This organisation provided the basis for the definition of social topoi and their subsequent classification into formal topoi. In reading the abstracts, I paid particular attention to textual clues which indicate discussions that may have taken place "behind the scenes" of a contribution and which emerged in a talk as basic assumptions, or "givens" (cf. Studer 2013: 194 on ideology as the concealment of the opposite position). In the following sections, I will, in particular, highlight *opposition topoi* and *classification topoi*, which have emerged as the most salient schemes in the corpus.

Opposition topoi

Debates surrounding language in the abstracts, tend to be construed by applied linguists in terms of contrary, contradictory or incompatible opposition pairs (cf. Studer 2012: 120; cf. also Kienpointner 1992: 306ff). They follow the formula: If element X carries property or value Y, it cannot at the same time carry the contradictory, contrary, converse or incompatible property or value -Y. This form materialises in various ways in the data, particularly in the *topos of the functionality of language* and in the *topos of theory vs practice*. Let me illustrate this with some examples.

Topos of the functionality of language

The language functionality topos creates a powerful image in the mind that reveals fundamental positions in education touching on themes concerning who is entitled to use the language and which skills are required to provide quality education. It is a variation of a topos I described extensively in Studer (2021) and which I found to be a theme underlying current and past language and internationalisation policy in Europe. Thematically, it derives from the tension between the perception of language as an expression of identity (sub-topos *language for self-expression*) versus the perception of language as an instrument for efficient communication (sub-topos *language as a tool*). In Studer (2021) I reconstructed this topos as a dilemma in European policy-making that had a significant ideological impact on the perception of the English language. Theoretically it was inspired by Bühler's (1934) communication model and Watzlawick et al.'s (1967) axioms. In the book of abstracts analysed here, we can see ample evidence of this theme:

(1)

In this paper, we focus on two specific lecturers, that we will call Glòria and Xesco, who adopt two different approaches in their lessons; whereas Glòria takes language issues

into account and argues that both content and language should be catered for in all EMI subjects in the degree, Xesco does not see the need for that, and even suggests that his level is sufficient to deliver the content but in no way enough to guide students in language-related aspects. (M. Oró-Piqueras and X. Martin)

In example (1) it is easy for the reader to imagine a vivid discussion between the two lecturers, Glòria and Xesco, about what language is and can do in higher education. The main controversy, in this case, lies in the perceived scope of language. Following Kienpointner's (1992: 307) classification, the two lecturers are introduced as actors holding normative positions that are contrary toeach other. Glòria argues language should be considered a part of the content, possibly as an essential part of teaching and learning, whereas Xesco holds the opposite view that language simply is a means to an end aiding teaching and learning. Glòria, in other words, is appreciative of the fact that teaching not only is a communicative act but that communication, in its literal sense, is a form of "communion" between subjects. For Xesco, language seems to be construed as a thing abstract from communication in the literal sense, as a tool with which subject content can be named, explained and specified. The argumentation scheme we can extrapolate from his argumentation can be paraphrased in the following way: language is a tool used for content teaching, therefore it cannot be considered a subject element of content teaching. Like a software, with which he visualises graphs or tables, Xesco uses language as a coded system that aids mutual understanding of content. Glòria seems to resolve this tension by negating Xesco's assertion or turning it on its head: language is part of a subject's content, therefore it cannot be considered a tool. The two positions between Glòria and Xesco not only seem extreme but mutually exclusive, at least to some extent, and reflect the underlying tension in communication between focusing on the relation between interlocutors and focusing on the "thing" to be said.

The authors of the paper in example (1) apparently wanted to make a point and reflect on a discourse that was going on inside the institution they studied. Their sentiment is echoed in various papers at the conference which variously refer to the subject lecturers' apparent lack of attention to language. Let us consider the following examples:

(2)
most EMI programs typically focus exclusively on the teaching of content with little to no attention to language. (Z. Eslami and K. Graham)

(3)
However, some scholars have noted significant gaps in immersion teachers' language awareness. These gaps constitute a significant obstacle to these teachers whose responsibility is to become linguistic models in the immersion classroom. (T.J.Ó Ceallaigh and N. Chlochasaigh)

(4)
while students expect to develop disciplinary language skills in English, lecturers do not perceive themselves as teachers of disciplinary English (Airey, 2014). (A. Fernandez and M. Aguilar)

(2) is a typical example of the authors' view about how content lecturers address the tension between efficiency and identity in practical terms. They seem to actively try to minimise attention to language in class as they perceive their role as content specialists rather than communicators. In (3) and (4), the authors respond to this perception with another topos: They argue that content lecturers should be "linguistic models" but that students do not recognise contentteachers as such. With this counterargument, the applied linguists in (3) and (4)launch a direct attack on Xesco above by appealing to his sense of duty towardsstudents. Students, after all, deserve high-quality education. They take recourse to normative comparison (*not just some students are entitled to good education,but all of them* (cf. *fairness topos* in Kienpointner 1992: 286; 294) and to the content lecturer's professional identity: *if you are a lecturer in higher education,you should also be a linguistic model* (cf. Kienpointner 1992: 265). Both points in (3) and (4) are taken up by other conference presenters, calling for the formal assessment of lecturers' proficiency levels, for a clear definition of required language skills or for professional development opportunities for EMI lecturers.

Example (5) below adds another twist to the theme in relation to the functionality of language. Referring to a common misinterpretation that the use of an international lingua franca in the classroom amounts to internationalisation, the authors argue that only "interaction [...] amongst students", in that shared language, makes a classroom "truly" international and intercultural. Example (5) can be seen as a critical response to, and policy solution for, education developers and content teachers who conceptualise language in the limited sense as a tool.

(5)
Internationalized classrooms rely on the use of a lingua franca. However, a shared language does not guarantee either internationalization or, more importantly, the development of a truly intercultural environment, with domestic and international students actively interacting (cf. Cruickshank et al. 2012). It may be argued, hence, that the key to intercultural classrooms is not merely the use of a common language but the promotion of interaction, especially, amongst the students (cf. Carroll 2015). (C. Maíz-Arévalo)

Topos of theory vs practice

Another powerful argumentative backdrop within the category of opposition topoi underlying the abstracts is the topos of incompatibility between theory and practice, or between policy and practice (in language policy, cf. Studer,

Kreiselmaier and Flubacher 2010; Studer 2012; in education, cf. Studer and Perrin 2017; in internationalisation policy, cf. Leask 2015):

(6)
While the growing phenomenon of EMI has received much excitement and enthusiasm on the policy level, little attention has been placed on the curricular and pedagogical implications that arise from this linguistic change. (S.-Y. Chang)

I will return to the detailed analysis of this quote shortly. While all topoi found in the abstracts reflect everyday logic, this topos is particularly rich in folk descriptions across cultures in the world. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe mused 200 years ago: “Alle Empiriker streben nach der Idee und können sie in der Mannigfaltigkeit nicht entdecken; alle Theoretiker suchen sie im Mannigfaltigen und können sie darinne nicht auffinden” [All empiricists strive to find the idea (=theory) but are unable to discover it in diversity (=practice); all theorists look for the idea in diversity but cannot find it therein]. Often, theory is mocked and ridiculed, as in the Urdu proverb “To cook imaginary food”, or in the Spanish “El mejor maestro, el tiempo, la mejor ciencia, la experiencia” [The best master is time, the best science experience]. Most of these proverbial sayings are normative in that they emphasise the value of practice and experience over theory, in fact excluding theory as a part of practice altogether, following the formula: *If X receives value V in a specific regard, it cannot simultaneously receive its opposite value in the same regard* (Kienpointner 1992: 312).

When looking at example (6) again, we first may find noteworthy that the author does not clarify who this statement refers to. We cannot say with certainty whether the author, who refers to some invisible agent(s),has educational planners and teachers in higher education in mind or addresses the research community. This is significant in that it shows thatin applied linguistic research, boundaries between the research community and stakeholders involved often tend to blur and, in fact, may blend into one another. It remains unclear who should have paid attention to “the curricular and pedagogical implications” of EMI, policymakers or EMI researchers, and who exactly is excited about developing policies.

While not addressing incompatibility explicitly, the opening statement in (6) clearly addresses a gap between theory and practice, emphasising the need to lend a stronger voice to practitioners and practice, i.e. those who “live” EMI in their classrooms. The argument seems to include the following warrant: *when we pay attention to policymaking / theorising, we do not take into accountthe impact policymaking has on those affected by the policy*. In fact, and I am extrapolating here, the statement could even be translated as follows: *I cannot*

engage in theorising and simultaneously pay attention to how the theory unfolds in practice. This topos clearly is not unique to the author of this abstract, nor is it unique to EMI. It is a common-sense argument, which is frequently adduced when we want to promote and legitimise practice that "really matters". The sentiment expressed in (6) is echoed in other presentations, calling on further research into practices, as in (7) where the author makes explicit reference to the need to bridge the theory-practice gap:

(7)
Macaro et al. (2018: 64) note that "EMI in HE research is dominated by research questions relating to teacher and/or student beliefs, perceptions and attitudes towards its introduction and practice." While this is the case, there is still a need for further studies on how those charged with implementing EMI perceive it as a policy and practice. Experience in educational innovation worldwide shows that new policies often fail if they don't consider the key people involved and their contexts (Wedell, 2009). (T. Morton)

The *topos of theory vs practice*, as illustrated with the examples (6) and (7), is primarily found in relation to presentations on EMI policy and implementation. Unsurprisingly, EMI is particularly perceived as a problem in practice, not in theory.

Classification topoi

In addition to opposition topoi, the book of abstracts contains a series of presentations in which language appears in connection with classificationtopoi. Classification topoi fundamentally define relationships between elements pertaining to a phenomenon and are, in Kienpointner's typology (1992: 250), divided into three sub-types: definition, genus-species and part-whole. Classification topoi surface in the abstracts in various contexts which, in some way, relate to what we may want to call the *authenticity topos*. Other schemes cluster around this topos, such as the linguistic intuition of content lecturers, their L2 deficits and a sense of fairness they should have towards students.

Authenticity topos

The authenticity topos has been introduced earlier in this paper. At the core, this topos reflects the desire to be a real (i.e. authentic) member of a speech community (cf. Keim 1995; Kallmeyer and Keim 2003 from the perspective of communicative social style). We previously established the following formula:

If X is defined by Y, then action Z is appropriate.
(If speakers who use a language like a native speaker are authentic members of this language community, then action Z is appropriate).

In the book of abstracts, we have various references to this argumentation scheme with variable actions that follow from it, emphasising both pro and contra positions. Positions with respect to this topos, especially those favourable to the idea of the native English speaker in EMI, however, are very subtle. Example (8) has been taken from a presentation that highlights the benefits of out-of-country professional development interventions (PDI) for EMI lecturers as opposed to local on-site professional development opportunities. No mention is made of the native English environment other than through the fact that this out-of-country PDI happens to be offered inthe UK. It is almost impossible, however, to ignore the underlying native-immersion theme running through the abstract, so that action Z may read along the following lines: *language learners need to be exposed to / immersed with native speakers*. Had the location of the PDI been in Japan, the reader would have struggled to picture its benefit immediately without further explanation. The author in example (9) takes the opposite position to (8) but refers to the same topos when critiquing "monolingual ideologies" as a guiding principle of universities which "insist on English-only use". While no direct mention of the authenticity topos is made here either, the author endorses the students' and teachers' use of their own language(s) rather than English only. Action Z here may read as follows: *we need to make useof our authentic language repertoire in EMI, even if this means we have to include other languages into the classroom*. An even stronger image emerges in example (10) in which the author speaks of multilingual "whispers of resistance", questioning the monolingual paradigm of EMI constellations. In (10), the call for authenticity is put in opposition to the criticism of artificial communicative situations in the most radical way (cf. Bossong 1994 on the tension between the *lingua naturalis* and the *lingua artificialis*). Action Z here seems to read as follows: *we should resist EMI and use our native languages in order to be authentic members of our communities*. When looking at (9) and (10) more specifically from the perspective of teaching and learning, the authenticity topos may easily transform into incompatibility (cf. also Festinger 1957: 13 for his definition of dissonance): *if speaking in L1 is a pre-condition for (language and content) teaching that is conducive to learning, then speaking in L2 hinders (language and content) teaching and learning*. In other words, communication among non-native speakers of a language is presented as an obstacle to learning.

(8)

However, the dominance of such a professional development model runs the risk of overshadowing the valuable contribution to ICL teacher development that can be made

through alternative, out-of-country provision. This paper reports on one such PDI delivered in a UK HE setting. (R. Herington and S. Webster)

(9)

However, despite the inherently multilingual nature of EMI classrooms, education policies guiding the implementation of EMI are often motivated by monolingual ideologies that insist on English-only use in the classroom. Such policies negate the plethora of multilingual resources available for teaching and learning. This study responds to this tension by examining the language preferences and practices of teachers and students in EMI university classrooms at engineering departments in Turkey. (K. Sahan)

(10)

It (the presentation) then provides contrasting instances of breaches of the English monolingual norm, showing how agents subvert it by interacting in Spanish and Catalan – not only in peer-to-peer/student-to-teacher backstage talk, but also in key learning events such requesting clarification or writing exam questions in Catalan/Spanish. The paper approaches these local-language(s) choices and disengaged identities as multilingual "whispers of resistance", whereby students and lecturers, in effect, question the EMI project. (M. Sabaté-Dalmau)

A further variation of the authenticity topos is found in abstracts that highlight lecturers' teaching deficits when giving a class through an L2 in direct comparison to teaching through L1. Indirectly, these conference abstracts emphasise the topos in its affirmative sense as in example (11). The explicit comparison between L1 and L2, however, is not made frequently in the book of abstracts. Authors acknowledge teaching deficits caused by non-native speaker ability indirectly, as in (12), further linking it to quality concerns. In example (13), the authors look at this theme from the perspective of "multilingual" students in a monolingual business programme, indirectly affirming both the ideology of English-only use and the assumption that non-native speakers of English have "special needs" when learning through English. It must be said, though, that example (13) does not refer to a classical EMI constellation but to the integration of foreign students, touching on the same fairness topos (equal opportunities for all) as introduced above.

(11)

Some research on EMI (English-Medium Instruction) has addressed the issue of the extent to which content lecturers speaking in their L1 perform as well as when they speak in English, hinting that the lecturer may communicate the lecture content less effectively in English (Dafouz and Camacho, 2016). (S. Khan and M. Aguilar)

(12)

Though English medium instruction (EMI) in higher education (HE) has been developed to increase student, teacher and researcher mobility, its growth raises concerns regarding the oral English language skills of lecturers and the implications for the quality of teaching and learning. Consequently, lecturers' English proficiency is under scrutiny and universities are developing language policies for quality assurance, enforced by implementation of internal language assessment procedures. (J. Kling, S. Larsen and S. Dimova)

(13)
this presentation highlights the challenges and opportunities of identifying and supporting the needs of multilingual undergraduate students once they have been mainstreamed alongside native speakers of English in a business program. (V. Spiliotopoulos andB.-G. Sohn)

Topos of linguistic intuition

The final classification topos discussed here, the *topos of linguistic intuition*, follows the logic that if you are a HE subject expert, then you are able to use a wide range of L2 needed to teach your subject. The two clauses form a part-whole relationship: Being able to use a wide range of L2 constitutes a part of a content lecturer's assumed set of competences. The topos of linguistic intuition, as manifest in the book of abstracts, further contains normative assumptions, following the same scheme as introduced above (cf. Kienpointner 1992: 275):

If X is part of Y, then action Z is appropriate.
(If the ability to use a wide range of language constitutes a part of a HE lecturer, then action Z is appropriate).

The topos of linguistic intuition appeals to our appreciation of content teachers as experts in their area of study who know content and who are communicative and sensitive enough to be able to deal with a change of language. Action Z seems to read here: *we should let content lecturers find their own way to deal with the change of language*. Thus, in the affirmative, this topos can be read as a statement of empowerment of content lecturers as language-independent beings who intuitively know what to do in the classroom. Excerpt (14) provides one such example.

(14)
However, some studies often portray lecturers as a uniform clear-cut category, with little interest and/or understanding of language issues, and usually defined against language experts. (E. Dafouz, D. Sánchez and A. Sánchez)

In the book of abstracts read for this analysis, examples such as (14) are rare; the negation of the topos, however, constitutes a well-known and repeated conference theme: lecturers are portrayed as in need of support because they struggle with the language change and do not consider themselves as language experts who are able to address the problems. This is illustrated with example (15), in which the authors emphasise the lecturers' own perception of being inadequately prepared for EMI. Example (16) overlaps in part with examples (3) and (4) but is quoted here because it can also be read as an expression of the sentiment that lecturers need to develop more than just academic language;they need to communicate with students in a broader, more holistic, way.

(15)
The incorporation of EMI has created tensions for some content specialist lecturerswho feel inadequately prepared to teach their content subjects in English. This has led to the establishment of EMI teacher development initiatives (EMITD) to prepare these university lecturers to teach their subjects in English. (J. C. Ploettner)
(16)
One of the main concerns among lecturers providing their lessons in a non-native language in tertiary education is to deal with language issues in addition to content teaching. In fact, some of them are still unaware of the relevance of using language appropriately at this level for an integral training of the students. (M. Sánchez)

Examples (17) and (18) are similar to (15) and (16) but return to the notion of the language expert or teacher of disciplinary English. Citing content lecturers' own concerns about their language expertise, the authors of the abstracts deny the affirmative formulation of the topos of linguistic intuition, indirectly taking recourse to the following image of the lecturer: *if you are a lecturer in HE, you should also be a linguistic model.* The authors may also propagate another theme, which has not been discussed, namely the collaboration between language experts and content specialists.

(17)
In this line, some lecturers show concern about the degree of language correction that they should perform in the classrooms, as they do not usually regard themselves as English language experts. (I. Diert-Boté and X. Martin-Rubió)
(18)
while students expect to develop disciplinary language skills in English, lecturers do not perceive themselves as teachers of disciplinary English (Airey, 2014). (D. Martínez Rodrigo and N. Ruiz Madrid)

Discussion and conclusion

The present analysis of topoi in conference abstracts was to draw our attention to everyday argumentation schemes that underlie, and inform, research conducted into EMI. It rested on the assumption that research and policy action concerning language use are influenced by the everyday argumentative positions we take towards language. Everyday logic about language and its relationship to EMI, however, are significantly understudied. Revealing everyday logic about language is relevant in two ways: It directly helps researchers to understand positions of stakeholders and policy actors, including their own, in matters related to language use in education. Secondly, and more importantly, knowing how everyday logic about language informs action, both in research and policy, may help define a critical applied linguistic research

agenda, which does not put its instruments to use blindly in order to address client needs but which contributes to understanding and questioning, in a more holistic sense, the ideological framework within which it operates.

This perspective is, of course, not uncommon in other areas of research, notably (critical) discourse analysis, language sociology, discursive psychology, radical reflexivity or autoethnography, to name a few. While important theoretical calls to develop a critical position in applied linguistics have been expressed (e.g. Pennycook 2001), they are, however, all too rarely found in applied linguistic research practice, particularly in research into EMI. The thrust of EMI research effort has been invested into solving real-world problems,to the neglect of paying attention to the ideological preconceptions underlyingthem. I would like to suggest changing this focus: Is it not the case that oftena job does not get done precisely because we desperately want to fix a problemwithout looking at its underlying causes? Looking at the causes, however, mayreveal uncomfortable truths about how policy- and decisionmakers framelanguage in a way that prevents exploring its full potential in the classroom. I would like to keep these thoughts in mind as I look back on what I have foundin the above analysis of topoi in conference abstracts.

I can conclude from the analysis that conference presenters in applied linguistics take regular recourse to everyday logic about language when they frame their research for the research community. They do so to varyingdegrees and effects. Everyday logic appears in characterisations of teachers, emphasising typical thought patterns of the "objects of study". These characterisations may be stereotypical representations of actors who are proactive, open, attentive to language versus actors who are passive, inattentive and closed. They are particularly strong in abstracts that are based on argumentation schemes surrounding perceptions of language for self-expression and language as a tool. There are indications in my conclusions from previous research (Studer 2015; 2016) that students also tend to think along a similar dichotomy: Teachers who communicatively engage with students in EMI tend to get away with more language errors than teachers who are perceived to be monologic in their teaching. The present study suggests that the dichotomy dialogic versus monologic (cf. also Studer 2018) seems to be connected to a more fundamental relationship actors may have towards language. In the abstracts, there is further indication that the *Topos of the Functionality of Language* is not only connected to teachers' attitudes to language but equally to their ability to use it: Teachers are portrayed as linguistic models for their students, and teachers who are unable to pay attention to language seem to fall short of fulfilling students' expectations.

Closely related to the theme of teacher ability to use English in the classroom, two other topoi have emerged in the abstracts, which indicate further facets of relationship actors seem to hold towards language. The first topos refers to the idea of the native speaker and teachers' (and students') inability to be authentic speakers in an L2. The need for authenticity, and the challenges that arise from its absence, appear in the rationale of various abstracts, either through the researchers' voices or, indirectly, through the teachers'and students' voices, respectively. In these abstracts, underlying argumen- tation schemes include positions relating to immersion with native English speakers, positions relating to an English-only policy in the classroom, and positions relating to using English as L2 in HE. These themes are taken up by researchers from both sides, highlighting the teachers' and students' linguistic shortcomings and the need for appropriate quality assurance of HE. And even in abstracts arguing for a multilingual praxis, this topos is acknowledged, implicitly and indirectly.

The second topos which relates to the theme of teacher ability to use L2 seems to imply another, alternative, characterisation of teachers. Appealing to both content teachers' expert knowledge and their common sense, theauthors of these abstracts echo discussions about content teachers' ability, as content experts, to address their target audience in appropriate ways, even if they use an L2 in the classroom. Indirectly, these authors point beyond contentteachers' organisational or grammatical competence (cf. Bachman 1990). In the book of abstracts, references to content teachers' lack of this communi- cative competence facet, unsurprisingly, appears much stronger. While this topos also touches on the theme of teacher ability, it refers to a communicativeability that comes with expert knowledge and the teachers' familiarity with thesubject discourse.

I have left the topos of theory vs practice for the end of this summary as it shifts our attention away from attitudes towards language and abilities to the planning dimension of EMI and the strained relationship between planning and implementation. It reminds us of ongoing and endless discussions in HE about who should make decisions about educational matters and whether decision-making should be top-down, bottom-up or something in-between. In the abstracts, this theme emerges in argumentative contexts which portray teachers as practitioners who have to cope with decisions made by people who are unaware of their impact on teaching. Teachers are presented as in need of support and attention when implementing classes in a L2. The topos touches on another dimension relating to EMI, namely the freedom to teach, which,if taken away, becomes an object of desire and defence. Teaching in another

language, if not done so voluntarily, can be perceived as a threat to which we may respond with opposition, ridicule or resignation.

How does the present discussion relate to previous studies on language and internationalisation policy discourses? Clearly, the topoi introduced here, except for the topos of theory versus practice, are embodied in the tension inherent in language policymaking between focusing on communicative efficiency and emphasising language use for self-expression (Studer 2021). This is evident in the topos of the functionality of language and its related topoi, the authenticity topos and the topos of linguistic intuition. The authenticity topos seems to be expressive of our need and desire to use our own tongue(s) for communication with which we can communicate authentically; the topos of linguistic intuition seems to emphasise our ability as experts to engage in efficient communication about our expertise, also in L2. The topoi described in this study are equally reflected in key discourses that shape language policymaking in Europe (Studer 2012): EMI can be considered to create unity in diversity in that English facilitates communication across languages but threatens diversity and fundamental linguistic human rights.

The topoi also seem to intersect with broader internationalisation policy rationales (Knight and de Wit 1997; de Wit 2000; 2002; Knight 1999; 2004). These rationales are assumed to form the motivational premises driving stakeholders' efforts towards internationalisation at the national or institutional level. While a detailed analysis is beyond the scope of this discussion, we would, on the basis of the present study, be able to draw parallels between topoi and rationales with respect to the normative values they share. Knight (2004: 23) distinguishes four rationales, which she terms social/cultural, political, economic and academic. Likewise, the topoi presented in this study embody values that advocate academic excellence (e.g. the topos of linguistic intuition), economic efficiency (e.g. the cluster of topoi surrounding the topos of the functionality of language), or political and social/cultural considerations (e.g. authenticity topos).

I would like, in conclusion, to make the point that the everyday controversies around language that emerge in the abstracts are not, and cannot, be resolved through research. They can be brought to light by research, in a more detailed and systematic way than has been attempted in this paper, but since they touch on our fundamental beliefs, our vision of how the world around us should be, they cannot be answered in a conclusive way. With this thought I echo Macaro's (2018) sentiment and apparent frustration at failing to find "definitive" scientific answers to questions relating to EMI (also cf. Studer 2020), but I come to a different conclusion: We cannot find definitive answers to many questions because decisions about EMI are often, if not predominantly, informed by our

beliefs and values rather than by facts. They shape EMI initiatives and inspire applied linguistic research in a way that may make their outcomes, at least in part, contingent on the positions we take towards EMI. I hope that the thoughts presented in this paper contribute to a lively debate about the role and potential of applied linguistic research into EMI, and possibly related fields of study.

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