English as Language of Instruction for Professors: Reporting an Experience with ESP classes in a Brazilian Context
Inglês como Língua de Instrução para Docentes: relatando uma experiência com aulas de *ESP* em um contexto brasileiro

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ABSTRACT: This papers reports initiatives and practices of the Language without Borders (IsF) crew at Federal University of São Carlos (UFSCar), aiming at offering the course *English as Language of Instructionfor Professors*. A first step was the offer of a pilot course to better understand the demands of the target audience (university professors) in the end of 2017. Then, formal 32-hour-long courses were offered throughout 2018. We describe our methodology for both pilot and formal courses, and present three different perspectives for reflection: from the IsF teachers, in regard to both materials design and course deliveries; from a junior researcher who followed one of the formal courses and from the target audience, based on feedback that the professors themselves gave after attending the course.

KEYWORDS: English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI); English for Specific Purposes (ESP); Languages without Borders Program (IsF).

RESUMO: No presente trabalho exploramos as iniciativas da equipe do programa Idiomas sem Fronteiras (IsF) da Universidade Federal de São Carlos (UFSCar), na oferta do curso intitulado *English as Language of Instructionfor Professors,* desde um curso piloto para conhecer melhor as demandas do público (professores universitários) no final de 2017, até o curso "oficial" de 32 horas, ofertado durante o ano de 2018. Descrevemos nossa metodologia de planejamento e desenvolvimento tanto para o curso piloto quanto para o curso "oficial", assim como três perspectivas diferentes para análise e reflexão a partir dessa experiência: por parte dos professores do grupo, com relação à elaboração do material e oferta dos cursos; por parte de uma estudante de graduação (Letras), bolsista PIBIC de Iniciação Científica, que acompanhou uma das ofertas dos cursos; e por parte do público alvo, com base no feedback dado pelos professores que frequentaram os cursos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Inglês como Meio de Instrução; Inglês para Propósitos Específicos; Programa Idiomas sem Fronteiras (IsF).

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1. Introduction

Universidade Federal de São Carlos (UFSCar) has participated in the program Language without Borders (IsF)[1] since its beginning in 2014. The aim of the program is to support the use of Languages for academic purposes and internationalization at Brazilian universities. In its first 2 years, each of the 63 participating Brazilian universities had the freedom to propose (to be analyzed by the central administrative office) courses and syllabi, depending on their local necessities, interests and possibilities. In the third year of the IsF program, its administrators proposed the creation of a kind of menu, based on common characteristics of courses in different institutions. Besides that, more institutions joined the program, a total of 141 now, so it would be hard to have a large number of courses with similar aims, but different titles and syllabi being offered under the same national program.

One of the courses included in the menu was *English as Language of Instructionfor Professors*[2](we consider it to be part of EMI – English as a Medium of Instruction[3]) to be taught to professors who intend to teach classes in English. Brazil has had a great deal of investment in outgoing internationalization[4], but closer attention to incoming internationalization is relatively new and EMI is one of the actions desirable to facilitate the scholar visit of international students and researchers.

The adoption of EMI in Higher Education contexts, in Brazil, for instance, could favor the learning of English as a foreign language and increase the reception of incoming students, besides helping the country to value its own language and culture and expand the prominent position in the international scenario, with the attraction of foreign students and professors to this context. Though there are few records and publications related to EMI contexts in Brazil, the teaching of specific content using English as a medium of instruction is somehow a 'small' reality in our country, occurring in a non-institutionalized or systematized

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[1] According to Denise de Abreu e Lima, national president of the program, it has 3 foci of actions: live courses; online courses and proficiency testing. Information available at: http://isf.mec.gov.br/pesquisas-e-relatorios, where further information and data can be found. Access on November 14, 2018.

[2] Name of the course in Portuguese: Inglês como Língua de Instrução para Docentes

[3] EMI focuses mainly on subject learning and **exploits the language of instruction** as a mere neutral tool to perform that goal. (Francomacaro, 2011, p. 34, *apud* Martín, 2015, p.154). EMI setting/context - each EMI setting can have a very different relation with English - contexts are different from each other; implication on the decision to teach using English in Higher Education (HE) varies greatly depending on the location and reasons for this decision.

[4] Some major outgoing internationalization actions in Brazil - Science without Borders Government Program (from 2012 to 2015 at http://cienciasemfronteiras.gov.br/web/csf/o-programa); BRICS Network University Project (see at https://we.hse.ru/en/brics/), MOUs with international HE institutions, among others.

way. Generally, the EMI practice happens empirically and informally, through a few professors' individual initiatives and officially unrecognized by their home institutions (Höfling & Zacarias, 2017, p. 256).

Taking into consideration the importance of offering EMI courses for the UFSCar community, IsF NucLi[5] coordinator talked to the English teachers working under her supervision, proposing that the team started planning and preparing classes and teaching materials for EMI.

In the end of the second term of 2017 the group focused on studying and discussing the theme and its practices. Bearing in mind the importance of needs analysis (Robinson, 1991)[6], the group decided to offer pilot classes to better know their potential audience and their needs/wants regarding the EMI approach, besides making them aware of possibilities in English for Specific Purposes, as many learners do not know/understand this methodology (AUGUSTO-NAVARRO et. al., 2012). Detailed procedures are described in the following session.

2. Methodology

In is this section we describe the 3 parts of the methodology adopted for course design and delivery in the reported experience, as follows: (1) pilot EMI course (needs analysis); (2) syllabus and teaching materials design; and (3) 32-hour-long courses delivery.

Before detailing these three parts, it is important to characterize our target audience, which comprises professors of all fields, coming from varied backgrounds. Considering that the classes in focus aim at teaching English for a specific purpose for professors, in this paper, we call them professor-students, especially to differ course participants from teachers.

3. Pilot course

An email explaining the purposes of a pilot EMI course was sent to UFSCar professors, inviting them to participate. Almost 40 professors answered and 30 enrolled.

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[5]NucLi is a language center specially devoted to IsF actions that each participating institution in the national program has.
[6] Many authors discuss the term needs analysis in Language for Specific Purposes (LSP). We have chosen to point Robinson (1991) because she defends that necessities are not simply found out, but understood based on the perspective of different parts involved in a context of LSP learning, centrally learners, teachers and institutions co-operating.

In a first moment, IsF English teachers, working under the supervision of the local IsF coordinator, designed a pilot course with the aim of getting to know the target audience better and understanding their needs, following Robinson's (1991) perspective on needs analysis, a process of understanding the focus from different perspectives (learners', teachers' and those of the institutions). In this exploring phase, two teachers delivered two separate classes with a course length of 12 hours each.

Considering that we should prepare professors who expect to receive foreign students in their classes and use English as the language of instruction to better accommodate them, our first action was to look for materials available with similar purposes and accessible in public domain sites. These materials served as source of inspiration for the design of new teaching materials and many parts have been adapted to our context.

4. Syllabus and teaching materials design

After the first trial, the teachers scheduled a series of meetings to discuss possible demands for a formal material for an EMI course. At those meetings, a brainstorming was done and the team (five teachers and their coordinator) brought in their ideas for the course. After some discussion, the group reached the following topics to be approached: a) What is EMI?; b) discourse issues; c) how to introduce a course; d) body language and cultural aspects; e) instruction giving; f) explaining concepts; g) tools for class preparation; h) discussions about the students; i) evaluations; j) office hours and k) conference presentations. The criteria for raising these topics was established based on the previous experience with the experimental course and surveys with potential students. After approaching each topic, practical and integrated skills activities were implemented.

We provide some illustration of our teaching materials in Appendix 1. It is possible to observe that Unit 3, which is about introductory lectures, starts with a discussion about good practices on the first day of class. Then, professor-students watch two videos of professors introducing a course in different universities and take notes about the topics approached and how it was done, in order to compare and discuss them. As homework, they were supposed to prepare a short introduction simulating what they would say on the first day of a course delivered in English.

Our IsF group is composed of five teachers, so the different topics and practical activities were divided equally among them, with established deadlines for elaborating each

unit of the material. For the design of the materials, principles of input authenticity (GILMORE, 2007; TOMLINSON, 2010, among others) were followed, with texts and video-lectures being taken from copyright-free University resources[7]. Further meetings were scheduled to present, review and edit these units, so all the teachers were involved in the elaboration of the entire material. During the process of reviewing, the teachers received help from the ETAs[8], who pointed out possible language topics and adaptations in order to make the units more cohesive. Each new unit was presented at our weekly pedagogical meetings, commented by the coordinator and discussed by the group as a whole. The planned and reviewed units were compiled together, diagrammed into the standard pattern of our materials and then it was ready for usage on our first official courses.

5. 32-hour-long courses delivery

In 2018, the EMI course was offered five times until October. The classes were composed by professors of the University and Graduate Students who claim to intend on becoming professors[9]. There was participation of Fulbright ETAs, and their contribution was related specially to language aspects, giving feedback on the professor-students' presentations and helpíng with questions.

Three groups were attended by participants with B1 level of proficiency and two groups had participants classified as B2. In March, a B1 group was composed by seven professor-students out of 14 participants and a B2 group was composed by six professor-students out of 12 participants. In August, a B1 group was composed by two professor-students out of 10 participants, a B1 group had five professor-students out of 11 participants and a B2 group was composed by five professor-students out of 11 participants, but the attendance was low.

Due to the noticeable heterogeneity, some classes needed adaptation in content (such as the third and the fifth group described above) and the teachers conducting them created

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[7] Some examples: https://www.youtube.com/user/YaleUniversity , https://www.coursera.org/learn/teaching-english, https://www.britishcouncil.org.br/sites/default/files/emi_a_growing_global_phenomenon.pdf
[8] ETA stands for English Teaching Assistant. UFSCar has received three ETAs in 2018, as part of the Program intlited "CAPES/FULBRIGHT Programa de assistente de ensino de língua inglesa para projetos institucionais". ETAs are young Americans who come to participant universities in order to act as assistants in undergraduate subjects in the English undergraduate majors, besides performing several other activities in different programs and unities as the IsF-UFSCar and the Languages Institute.
[9] The national ISF program determines that all courses have at least 10 students enrolled, so the group found it risky to limitate subscriptions only to professors. Also, some graduate students reported the demand and interest, as some pursue a teaching career as well.

new hand-out materials to better deal with students' specific needs, switching the focus from the professors to the students, for instance. Nevertheless, the classes with a majority of professors enrolled did not have to undergo significant changes, and the course schedules were delivered as planned. During the process of delivery, notes on possible improvements for activities were taken for further collective reflection and discussion. Some of these notes are presented in the next section.

6. Results and Discussion

Results and discussion are based on three major perspectives, as follows: 1) reflections of the team about course design and delivery; 2) data collected by a junior researcher who observed one of these classes and collected data in the form of questionnaires and personal diary notes; 3) written feedback given by four professor-students (participants).

6.1 Reflections of the team about course design and delivery

One important aspect for this reflection is the fact that, although only two of the teachers engaged in the delivery of the actual classes for the 32-hour-long course, the entire group of English teachers participated in the discussion and elaboration of the materials. The group was united in favor of bringing the course to this context and, in order to do so, theoretical and practical knowledge had to be mobilized, meetings were scheduled not only with the teachers, but also the coordinator (who participated by giving feedback and helping with the theoretical background) and the ETAs (who participated by proofreading) to reassure the quality of the material proposed.

Also, since one of the IsF pillars is teacher education, the group had this opportunity to start a completely new material from scratch, that was different from other materials that had already been designed by the group. EMI was a very new concept for all of the involved, so the elaboration of this course demanded deep reflections about the potential professor-students' needs, which provided a differentiated practice, at least from the point of view of a student-teacher.

The class focuses on the pragmatic elements of classroom interaction and general lecturing, as well as reflection on the practice. Since the professor-students come from varied backgrounds, there is a vast influx of experiences, that can be shared in class, which facilitates the exploration of pedagogical possibilities that enrich classroom practices.

The group also benefited from the experience of teaching this particular audience. Although IsF courses receive occasional subscriptions from UFSCar professors, this course had an increase in participation, since it was the first one developed according to their needs. The teachers who delivered the courses had the opportunity to reflect about and improve their own professional practice through the discussions and practical activities performed in class.

6.2 From the junior researcher's perspective

During two *English as Language of Instructionfor Professors* course offerings at IsF UFSCar in 2018[10], classes were observed, where interaction, participation and other more specific details about the classes could be analyzed[11].

As the classes were observed, we realized that professor-students - mostly with solid academic background - had significant participation in the classroom; they were very communicative and willing to participate in the discussions and they always had something to say or add. In addition, they were clearly eager to talk about their research and academic areas using the English language and making the presentations/lectures requested by the course teacher. The professor-students also expressed their desire to teach in their own contexts using the EMI approach in a near future, considering that this subject had been discussed in several classes and was the objective of the course.

At the end of the second offer, the junior researcher applied a pilot online questionnaire for 2 professor-students who attended the courses, aiming to have a prior idea about those professor-students' opinions about the course they had taken and its materials. For this reason, it was asked what they thought about the topics selected for the materials (question 13 of the questionnaire). Their responses pointed to the topic/unit entitled "Teaching a class" as the best and most useful/productive topic. This information demonstrates that the classes in which they were supposed to prepare their lessons/lectures in English and present them to the teacher and their peers were the most important of the course for them. Another

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[10]In the first offering, 14 students attended the course (from which 07 were professor-students, and the others were graduate students who declared the intention to become professors) and only 07 concluded it). As for the second offer of the EMI course, 10 attended the course, only 05 concluded it, from which 01 was a professor-student. Both offers were attended by participants with B1 level of proficiency.

[11]The observation and data collection for further analysis was possible due to an undergraduate research project (Scientific Initiation Project funded by CNPq - PIBIC) conducted by a student (junior researcher) from the Languages Major at UFSCar, whose main objective is to understand and analyse some aspects of the professor-students' behavior (professors who attended the EMI course at IsF Program), as well as their reactions to the material produced for this specific course and the themes present in it.

aspect which could be observed in their responses was related to their concerns about their proficiency in English, considering that both have pointed to this fact as something they miss or lack to start preparing classes in English, both groups had B1 level of proficiency in English (question 16[12]). One of the professor-students suggested "... the possibility of a workshop about class preparation and oral training in English for the classes"[13]. Therefore, the comment shows his concern about these two points: classes with practice activities and language proficiency. To sum up, it can be concluded, as an initial result, that the professor-students are interested in teaching classes using the EMI approach in their contexts, but they may still have some challenges to face (individually and institutionally), such as their own English proficiency levels and raising peer awareness of the importance of EMI classes in their contexts.

6.3 Written feedback given by four professor-students

In order to measure this experience's results, our IsF team decided to collect feedback from professor-students themselves. An email was sent to six of the most engaged ones asking whether they could collaborate with their opinions about the course, and four of them answered[14]. The message contained a few directions aiming to help them answer, such as "I just need a few words concerning how the course was for you. What were your previous expectations? Were they achieved? What were the classes like? Did the course add something to you or your professional practice? Feel free to leave suggestions, criticisms and comments."

Based on the answers provided by the professor-students who replied the email with their opinions and comments about the course, it is possible to analyze the results, reflect upon them and think about improvements to be made in future offers.

A professor-student from the Department of Chemical Engineering wrote "The course was excellent. I pondered three aspects for this evaluation: the content, its length and, mainly, the teacher's attitude. The way the teacher led the classes contributed in a positive way to

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[12]16. O que você acredita que falta de sua parte para que você comece a preparar suas aulas pela abordagem EMI? ( ) Proficiência na língua estrangeira; ( ) Conhecimento sobre técnicas e abordagens de ensino de aprendizagem; ( ) Incentivo da gestão/instituição com políticas linguísticas e políticas de internacionalização; ( ) outros: _____.

[13]The professor-student's original statement: "Uma sugestão seria a possibilidade de uma oficina de preparação de aulas e treinamento para a oralidade em inglês para aulas".

[14] These professor-students were part of a group classified as B1, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

motivate the learning/improvement of English as a medium of communication in the university."

Among other compliments, he declared the course length was a positive aspect, indicating that the choice for a 32-hour course was enough time to achieve the expectations of improving communication skills in the EMI context.

A professor-student from the Department of Statistics wrote "I subscribed to the course aiming to practice English communication skills (mainly speaking and listening) focused on giving lectures. This expectation was well achieved due to the quality of materials used in the class, the class dynamics and the teacher's competence. Besides the considerable improvement in communication, the interaction with other professors during classes also made possible the exchange of information and experience"

An interesting aspect brought by this participant was the possibility to interact with other professors. During the classes, they were already demonstrating how the experience was being useful to meet people from other departments and exchange thoughts and ideas. They were eager to share experiences and listen about the challenges they face in the academic context.

Another professor-student from the Department of Chemical Engineering wrote "I really liked the course and the format in which it was offered. It showed me that Portuguese native speakers have similar difficulties when preparing/teaching a class in English. The course surely added to my professional improvement and will be useful when preparing lectures in English. I believe the course would benefit from more short-lecture activities (like Ted Talks), but I think it was a limitation given the amount of people in class. Something that made the course difficult was trying to keep the participants in the topic of the unit, because some of them tend to be more talkative."

This answer reveals that the course gave participants an opportunity to notice that other professors also struggle to deal with the English language, which made them feel more comfortable to participate. Also, there is the suggestion of having more short-lecture activities, which indicates the kind of skill they want and need to practice. In the end, she mentions how difficult it was to keep everyone in the topic to be discussed. As mentioned before, the professor-students were eager to speak and share knowledge, but they also declared being happy for the opportunity to speak English for a few hours a week, which is

not very common in their routines, so they tended to speak about diverse topics, not only the focus proposed.

A professor-student from the Department of Mathematics divided the email questions and answered them separately. He wrote "What were your previous expectations? I expected to improve my work presentations in conferences", "Were they achieved? I think so.", "What were the classes like? The classes were above expected, with many activities and possibilities of language practice.", "Did the course add something to you or your professional practice? Yes, mainly regarding the presentation of courses I teach." and "Feel free to leave suggestions, criticisms and comments. Maybe a second module in which participants could have more expositive activities, with time limits. Each participant could offer 8-hour mini-courses throughout the module."

Once again, the demand for more opportunities to lecture comes up in the answers. This professor-student even suggests a second module, an interesting possibility for future offers. Some of them enrolled in different IsF courses afterwards in order to continue practicing, mainly courses focused on speaking and writing skills. This indicates that the professor-students recognized the necessity to improve their proficiency and it is beneficial to the IsF program, making it more well-known and prestigious. Hence, it would be interesting to offer more possibilities to keep this target audience engaged in the program.

We propose a table that summarizes the main aspects observed in our practice and reflection, as follows:

Teacher Education	Professor-Student Development	Further Practices / Possibilities
● Learning about material design theory and practice; ● Reflecting about internationalization at home through classes; ● Raising awareness about the importance of being a reflective teacher; ● Better understanding of on-going needs analysis.	● Getting to know and understanding better the process of internationalization in their own university; ● Being in touch with classroom practices in English; ● Getting more comfortable with their owns limitations, more confident for being part of a group, still insecure with their proficiency level, but motivated with the opportunity.	● Updating the material aiming to add more practical activities; ● Designing of a second module of the course; ● Developing strategies to keep the university professors engaged with the program; ● Raising of on-going reflections on needs, wants and possibilities.

Information in this table show that there has been many gains for all parts involved in this experience, but also exhibits challenges to be overcome, revealing that there is still a long process to go in order to improve our EMI support through ESP courses at national universities.

7. Conclusion

In this paper we have proposed to share the local experience of the NucLi UFSCar with the offer of courses aiming at preparing professors to adopt an EMI perspective in some of their courses. The *English as Language of Instructionfor Professors* course was designed based on ESP principles, as we understand that there are clear identifiable needs that can be approached in the classes, and the experience has proved enriching for the IsF local crew, mainly for the student-teachers education, as well for the target audience, UFSCar professors from different areas of expertise. For the student-teachers designing and offering this course has provided new concepts, reflections and practices. As for the target audience, they became motivated, revealing a sense of belonging to a community and of achievement.

Bearing in mind that we should think of better and more appropriate practices in this relatively new demand, at least in our teaching context, we could not agree more with Johns, when she declares:

> I have been involved in ESP research and curriculum development for more than 30 years, and I continue to learn and revise my thinking. ESP specialists must be open, flexible, sensitive to context—and very good learners! (2015, p.118)

For all involved, it is clear that there is the need for more: further offers, more reflections, new opportunities of assisted practices for the professors and the design of more central and collateral courses and materials, some still focused in higher education classroom practices in English and others in proficiency level development, as many professors reveal still insecure with their own proficiency in English.

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