

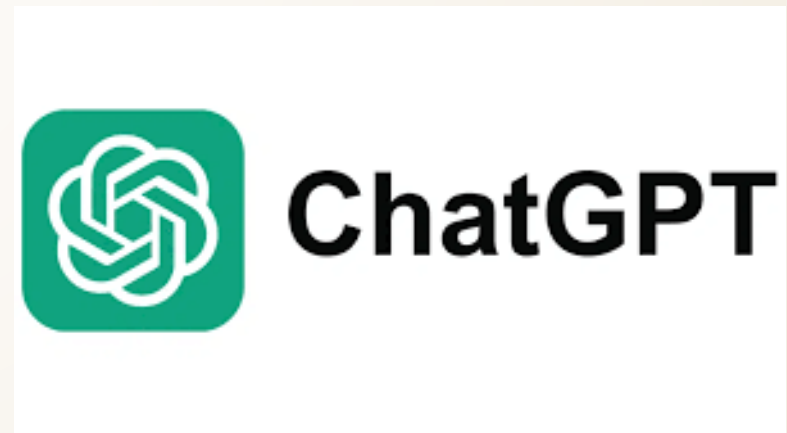
TESL Nova Scotia Conference

# **Critical language policy-making as key teacher competency: A curricular case study**



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# Critical language policy-making as key teacher competency: A curricular case study

## Agenda

- What is language policy?
- Teachers as language policy brokers
- Gaps in Language Teacher and EMI Lecturer Training
- The Curricular Intervention
  - Learning outcomes, activities, and materials
  - Examples
- Challenges and Tensions
- Implications for Practice

Slides available at  
[jennifermacdonald.ca](http://jennifermacdonald.ca)





Teaching English language learners

Training and development of language teachers

Training content lecturers for English-medium instruction (EMI) contexts, using Content and language integrated learning (CLIL)



# Educational Language Policy

“Official and unofficial policies that are created across multiple layers and institutional contexts from national organizations to classrooms that impact language use in classrooms and schools” (Johnson, 2013, p. 54).

- Language use across the institution
- Which languages are considered home languages/mother tongues and which foreign/additional languages?
- Which languages are taught and learned at an institution
- Who are these languages taught by and for whom
- Which methods, tests and materials are used (Shohamy, 2006)

Shohamy, E. G. (2006). *Language policy: Hidden agendas and new approaches*. London; New York: Routledge.



# Language Policy in our Teaching Contexts

- Language policy operates at multiple levels:
  - Macro (national/governmental)
  - Meso (institutional)
  - Micro (classroom/individual)
- Language teachers as language policy actors
- Teachers enact macro and meso-level policies through everyday classroom decisions, in other words, navigate the gap between institutional policy and classroom reality
- The importance of (critical) language policy awareness
  - Whose voices are amplified/silenced by language policies in our teaching contexts?



# The Syllabus as "Master Classroom Genre"

- Bawarshi (2003): the syllabus as "master classroom genre" (p. 119)
- The syllabus as more than an administrative document
  - Communicates explicit and implicit policies
  - Operates at meso and micro levels simultaneously
  - *"Transforms the physical setting of the classroom into a discursive and ideological site of action"* (Bawarshi, 2003, p. 119)
- The syllabus as a site of language policy enactment



# What's Missing in Teacher and Lecturer Training?

- Language teacher training and development:
  - Language and linguistics foundations, SLA theory, methods and approaches, Curriculum and materials development, Assessment and testing, Sociolinguistics and language in society
- EMI Lecturer training programs:
  - language competence, communicative competence, pedagogical competence, multicultural competence (Sun, 2023; DeRoey, 2023)
- What is largely absent: language policy awareness and policy-making competence
- As a consequence, teachers and lecturers are often unprepared for their role as language policy brokers



# Case Study



# EMI Lecturer Training Program Contexts

Two training contexts, both based in CLIL in HE:

- (1) Critical EMI Practitioner Training Program
  - 80-hour certificate, f2f
  - Faculty in Latin America
- (2) Canadian university offering EMI lecturer training
  - 90-hour certificate, online/f2f
  - Teachers and university faculty, from EMI contexts globally
- This talk's focus: one specific module within each program:
  - Language and Language Use in EMI (types of language, plurilingualism and pedagogical translanguaging, hard vs. soft CLIL, etc.)



# The Curricular Intervention — Module Overview

- 4-hour face-to-face module, week 1 of 4-week, 80-hour course



## Language(s) in the EMI Classroom

### Agenda

- Multilingualism as Critical EMI
- Multilingualism, Plurilingualism and Translanguaging
- Flavours of CLIL
- Language Policy in EMI
  - Activity: Creating a language use policy for your course

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Differentiate between different “flavours” of CLIL approaches and explain how plurilingualism, translanguaging, and classroom language policies shape language use in EMI contexts.
- Develop a context-appropriate classroom language use policy for their own course that integrates principles of CLIL, plurilingualism, and scaffolded learning.



# Key Learning Activity — The "Language Use Policy"

- To be used in a future course; In-class workshop, peer sharing and feedback, instructor feedback



## *Your* Language Policy: Language Use Statement

→ On your course syllabus / course outline

- A statement that explicitly describes the expectations around the use of English and other language(s) in your course. It might also communicate values or approaches.
- It might include:
  - Classroom instruction
  - Readings, videos and other input
  - Assessments and assignments
  - Group work and classroom interaction
  - Technology to support language use
  - Evolution of the “flavour” of CLIL over the course of the semester
- Can be a short statement on your syllabus or other formats
  - What format would we use for a secondary school class?



# Learning Materials and Scaffolding

- Model Language Use Policy from the EMI Training Course
- Sample Language Use Policies, very brief intro to language policy in EMI; prompts



## Language Use in your Course

- What is the linguistic makeup of your course? Does everyone speak the same L1?
- What level of English language proficiency do your students have? What is their level of confidence?
- Will your students have already taken courses via EMI?
- Do your students already have communication skills related to the content area in their L1?
- Other considerations?



# Example: Language Use Statement

This course is delivered through the medium of English but it is a multilingual environment.

The classes will be facilitated in English and the course materials (slides, readings, handouts, etc.) will be primarily in English. The assessments will be primarily in English but may include Spanish if that is appropriate for your context.

However, you are free to use the language(s) in your language repertoire to increase your learning. For example:

- Using bilingual dictionaries or translators to check your understanding or make links between new vocabulary in this course and concepts you already know in Spanish or other languages
- Taking multilingual notes
- Drawing on Spanish or other languages in class discussions or asking questions

At the same time, you are encouraged to use English in this course as much as you feel comfortable in order to further develop your fluency, disciplinary language, and confidence. This is a space of learning, so remember: any mistakes are seen as an opportunity for learning and growth!



## PUBLIC RELATIONS LANGUAGE USE POLICY

Through this policy, you will know how English will be used during the classes and how it's going to help us improve it while we learn about P.R. In our first, an introduction to CLIL will be made in order to have everything clear.

### A learning space has to be a respect space

Students can ask the professor to change CLIC conditions if they're not comfortable. New conditions will be agreed among students and professor.

None of us is an English native speaker, so we can only improve our English level. Making fun of your classmates won't be allowed.

If you make a mistake while speaking, you can start over. And if you get nervous and want to speak in Spanish, you can do it.

### General assignments instructions



You can use tools to help you improve your assignments: research, brainstorming, editing, translate or make your English more accurate. Always remember to explain how you used this tools; this means making an ethical us of these tools.



For group work, each team will be made up of students with different levels of English to ensure equitable improvement.



Students are allowed to suggest reading, videos, podcasts and other resources in English that they considerer are suitable for the class.

### General classes instructions

At the end of every class, the professor will make a feedback about language.

We hope we can have full classes in English by the end of the semester, but it will depends on the classe's pace.

The professor will tell the class when a new CLIL stage is about to begin so doubts can be resolved before starting.

### CLIL STAGES

Weeks	CLIL flavor	Description
2 to 6	SOFT: lenguaje focused PARTIAL: from 10' to 50' every class. LANGUAGE: plurilingual	During these weeks the CLIC focus will be in knowing the students English level and familiarize them with the PR concepts in English. Every week, more minutes will ve invest in CLIC. Students can make small talk in Spanish.
7 to 11	HARD: content focused PARTIAL: from 60' to 120' every class. LANGUAGE: plurilingual	During these weeks the CLIC focus will be in PR content in English. From week 7, the time invested in CLIC will be increasing. Students can make small talk in Spanish.
12 to 16	HARD: content TOTAL: 3 hours in English LANGUAGE: monolingual	During these weeks the CLIC focus will be in PR content in English. From week 12, the 3 hours of class will be en English. Students have to make small talk in English.



## Trainee Responses

“So that for me was very interesting and very important because it was like, yeah, we can, or I can start thinking **that this language policy can make my life easier and a student's life easier because I don't want them to [feel pressured] to speak perfect English because I don't even do it. What I want for them and for us is that we can communicate.** [...] So I think it's a very useful tool and also it's like a lifesaver. It's like, yeah, I don't have to speak perfect English. I just need to start communicating.”



## Trainee Responses

“I [also include] the CLIL elements like soft and medium and strong CLIL. I think that's also very interesting because it's like we're going to walk together towards another point, but it's not **an imposition, it's a path that that we are going to work together, and the signs in that path are that language policy.**”



# Challenges and Tensions

- Unfamiliarity with policy-making as a "teacher task"
- Some lecturers still sorting out their approaches to EMI teaching and the role of language(s)
- Institutional constraints and different roles of the syllabus
  - Creative vs. traditional syllabus
  - Many included it in classroom slides, or even posters
- Terminology (translanguaging, CLIL, etc.) vs. plain-language descriptions



## Summary and Key Takeaways

- Language teachers and EMI content lecturers are policy actors and training must reflect this
- The syllabus is a powerful, underused site for policy-making competence development
- This simple, practical curriculum intervention offers a replicable model for a variety of contexts
- Critical language policy awareness and policy-making is a language teacher and EMI lecturer competency



# Questions for Language Teachers and Teacher and Lecturer Trainers

- How do I create channels between macro/meso policy and classroom realities in my own teaching practice?
- How can I promote thinking of the syllabus as an accessible and meaningful vehicle for policy work?
- How do we carry out bottom-up, micro-level policy innovation?
- How can we include language policy as a key competence in teacher and EMI training curricula?



Thank you!  
¡Gracias!  
Merci!

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Slides and References



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