

## English as a medium of instruction and internationalisation in Higher Education

## Inglês como meio de instrução e internacionalização na Educação Superior

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### Interviewed

**Joyce Kling (JK)**, PhD, is an Associate Professor at the Department of English, Germanic, and Romance Studies at the University of Copenhagen. Her research focuses on the multilingual, multicultural classroom, with particular emphasis on foreign language use in English medium instruction (EMI) contexts. She has investigated non-native English speaking (NNS) lecturers' professional identity in a Danish EMI setting from a teacher cognition paradigm. Since 2009, Dr. Kling has been active on the development and implementation of TOEPAS, the Test of Oral English Proficiency for Academic Staff. She draws on the TOEPAS in relation to her research and professional development training for NNS lecturers. She has published several articles and chapters on EMI and language assessment and is the co-author of *English Medium Instruction in Multilingual and Multicultural Universities* (Henriksen, Holmen and Kling, 2018) and co-editor of the recent edited volume, *Integrating Content and Language in Multilingual Higher Education* (Dimova & Kling, 2020).

Dr. Kling currently serves on the Board of Trustees of TIRF (The International Research Foundation for English Language Education) and the Board of the ICLHE Association (Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education). She has also

been an active member of TESOL Association for the past 30 years and served on the TESOL Board of Directors from 2006-2009.

## Interviewer

**Márcia Del Corona (MDC)** is a professor at the Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos (UNISINOS) in the Languages and Arts undergraduate program. She holds a Master's and a PhD degree in Applied Linguistics. Her research interests include teachers' development in basic and higher education, teaching methodologies, pedagogical materials development, teachers'/learners' evaluation, bilingual education, English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI), Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and talk-in-interaction.

**MDC: As an Associate Professor at the University of Copenhagen (UCPH), you work at the Department of English, Germanic and Romance (EGR) Studies. What exactly are the duties in your department?**

**JK:** Yes, I am currently working at the EGR in a position funded by the Danish Giese Foundation. Through support from this foundation, I am developing supplemental academic literacy support courses and competence development training for students in the department. In addition, I am part of a team responsible for an intensive course entitled Introduction to Language and Culture course for our first year bachelor of English studies students. I also teach a number of other courses related to foreign language acquisition and applied linguistics.

Prior to joining EGR, I was employed from 2009-2020 at UCPH's Centre for Internationalisation and Parallel Language Use (CIP). CIP is a somewhat unique university language center in the sense that while its mission is to contribute to language skills at the university through foreign and second language courses, it also serves as a research center. Drawing on results from local and international collaborative projects, CIP works closely with the various administrative units to assess language use and language challenges and provide a solid basis for management decisions about language use across the university.

**MDC: While you were employed at CIP, you took part in a project called The Language Strategy: More Languages for More Students. Can you tell us about this project? Why is it important to give students the opportunity to learn (an)other language(s)?**

**JK:** The Language Strategy was a very intensive, exciting 5-year project that ran from 2013-2018. During this period, UCPH carried out this research-supported project aimed at improving the language skills of the students across the entire University. The overall aim was to equip students with the language skills required to study and work abroad, and generally function in an increasingly internationalised education environment and job market. Over the five-year period, 36 pilot projects were implemented in 8 languages. The majority of the language support courses focused on aspects of supporting Danish students studying through English medium instruction.

The Language Strategy was initiated to meet some of the pressing needs facing the University, namely, to help students meet some of the challenges of globalization that they are facing. Increasing numbers of courses and full-degree programs at the Danish university taught in English, as well as increasing numbers of students studying in Danish as a second language, has resulted in more opportunities for students to develop and master foreign languages in connection with studies and fieldwork abroad. Through the Language Strategy, students received training to develop specific academic literacy skills to support their educational goals.

**MDC: In the last years, Higher Education Institutions around the globe have been pressured to internationalize and this movement has resulted in the rapid development of courses being offered through English as a medium of instruction (EMI). There appears to be a spectrum of possibilities in which EMI may occur (Kling, 2019). What are these possibilities?**

**JK:** EMI courses are proliferating around the world. Many of these courses developed during early days related to internationalization and student exchange. To provide instruction for guest students at institutions in countries such as Denmark, universities began to offer courses in English. Since the turn of the century, this trend has extended to meet globalization goals and internationalization at home. Currently, EMI courses and degree programs can be found at institutions in traditional Anglophone settings, at Anglophone branch campus institutions in non-Anglophone contexts, as well as at a broad range of institutions in non-Anglophone context.

**MDC: Language proficiency has always been an issue when it comes to EMI. Students are unsure whether their knowledge of English is good enough to succeed academically in classes taught mainly in English. Professors, many times, do not feel confident to teach, interact with students and assess them in this language. You have helped develop the Test of Oral English Proficiency for Academic Staff (TOEPAS). Can you explain this test and why it has been developed? Also, what level of proficiency do you think professors should have for successful EMI classes?**

**JK:** When I began at UCPH, one of the projects I worked on was the development of a certification program for lecturers. UCPH was developing more and more EMI course offerings and wanted to support teachers who found themselves teaching through their foreign language and focus on quality assurance. Working in cooperation with lecturers and administration, a small team at CIP developed the Test of Oral English Proficiency for Academic Staff (TOEPAS). The TOEPAS is an oral proficiency test where lecturers receive extensive formative feedback based on a simulated lecture performance. This feedback consists of video supported written feedback and a private individualized oral feedback session. Based on our validation studies and alignment with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), we recommend that professors have a threshold level of B2+ in English for the purpose of teaching EMI courses.

**MDC: How do you think the field of TESOL can contribute to deal with the challenges faced by EMI students and professors?**

**JK:** As the largest professional association related to the field of English language teaching (ELT), TESOL can provide a broad range of support for both students and teachers. TESOL has extensive resources that can help to inform those involved in ELT who face challenges of implementing EMI programs in their individual context. ELT professionals and TESOL can also provide advice and support for the development of local language policies, as higher education institutions determine how to navigate their expanding programming in English.

**MDC:** In June/July 2020 you had the opportunity, as a Language Specialist with the Regional English Language Office (RELO)/American Embassy Brasília, to teach an 8 hour course on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) to a group of around forty professors of different fields of knowledge at UNISINOS. That was your first experience with Higher Education in Brazil. How would you describe this experience? How similar/different are Brazilian professors' expectations/anxieties/challenges from those in other countries concerning teaching through CLIL/EMI?

**JK:** My experience in June/July was my first opportunity to work as an English Language Specialist. I really enjoyed developing these workshops for Unisinos in Brazil. Through this project, I was able to consolidate a great deal of material that I have been working with in Europe for some time. This opportunity allowed by to reach a new audience and learn about the local context, including the opportunities and challenges for English medium instruction and the international classroom in another region of the world. I was impressed with the engagement of the participants, particularly given the fact that they were asked to join instruction during their only break in their day, while fighting the COVID-19 challenges and quarantine. The university showed a true sense of desire for sustainability, as well, by integrating colleagues from across disciplines. This provided great opportunities for discussion. Of course, while some of the challenges faced by these teachers are unique to the region, there was a great deal of overlap of experiences and reflections with those I have worked with in Europe. Overall, this was a very positive experience for me and I look forward to continued collaborative opportunities with individuals that I have met through this project.

**MDC:** What advice would you give to a Higher Education Institution which is willing to implement actions to enhance its internalization policies?

**JK:** My best advice for any institution is to consider both top-down implementation strategies, including discussion of an overall language strategy for both administration and education, and bottom-up initiatives developed by passionate individuals. For any new initiatives to be successful, there needs to be a buy-in from all stakeholders. And finally, internationalization needs to be viewed beyond simply providing courses in a foreign language, e.g., English. Internationalization needs to be represented in curricular goals and course offerings.

**MDC:** In your PhD you researched about Teacher Identity in English as a Medium of Instruction. Can you tell us what your main findings were concerning this topic?

My doctoral research focused on non-native English speaking (NNS) lecturers' professional

identity in a Danish EMI setting from a teacher cognition paradigm. In my study I asked these NNS natural science lecturers to define their own teacher identity and their perceptions of any effects on their identity when shifting from Danish-medium instruction to EMI. The main findings of my study resulted in a model of teacher identity for lecturers in the natural sciences and documented evidence that experienced NNS lecturers of natural science EMI do not find that the identified challenges of teaching in a foreign language affect their personal sense of teacher identity. The lecturers highlighted teaching experience and pedagogic content knowledge as factors that are at the core of their teacher identity. While the lecturers expressed confidence and security in the EMI context, the results of my study also confirmed the instructional and linguistic challenges identified in other EMI research.

**MDC: You are a member of the Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education Association (ICLHE). Why is it called Integrating Content and Language, rather than EMI in Higher Education? What is the aim of this association? Can anyone join it? What does it take to become a member?**

**JK:** ICLHE is used as an umbrella term to encompass the movement beyond English-medium instruction, which typically does not include focused foreign language instruction. ICLHE pushes the focus beyond content focused EMI courses to include discussions related to student and teacher perceptions, teacher training (competence development) for supporting student English language development, staff effectiveness, learning effectiveness, and program development.

I am not only a member of the ICLHE Association ([iclhe.org](http://iclhe.org)). I have actually served on the Board of this young association since 2017. The ICLHE association provides opportunities for networking and serves as a clearing house for resources related to the integration of content and language in higher education. The aim of the association is to promote exchange of ideas and opinions, initiative, experiences and research in this realm.

The Association is open to individuals working in higher education with an interest in ICLHE – this include language professionals and disciplinary content teachers, as well as educational developers, policy makers and other stakeholders. ICLHE holds a series of webinars, symposia and conferences that are open to both members and non-members. The next conference is scheduled to be held at Maastricht University in the Netherland in October 2021. *The conference theme is EMI and Englishization: Reflecting on the changing university.* The call for papers will be announced soon on the website.

**MDC: You and Slobodanka Dimova have just published a book called *Integrating Content and Language in Multilingual Universities*. Can you tell us how this book can help professors who are willing to integrate content and language in their teaching practices in higher education?**

**JK:** Slobodanka and I are very excited about our recent publication. The book provides conceptual syntheses of diverging multilingual contexts, research findings, and practical applications of integrating content and language (ICL) in higher education in order to generate a new understanding of the cross-contextual variation. We are so pleased to be able to present contributions from leading authors from such a broad geographic spread. The volume offers comparison of contextualized overviews of

the status of ICL from Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. The chapters provide an overview of how context and educational culture play a role in EMI implementation and discuss considerations regarding ICLHE across the different contexts. In addition to contributions from EMI researcher, we have included two chapters written by disciplinary content teachers. These teachers provide their unique perspectives and reflections on experience teaching and supporting NNS in the EMI classroom.

**MDC: Would you recommend some key bibliography on the topics of English as a Medium of Instruction, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and teachers' development in this field?**

**JK:** A good place to find information about EMI and ICLHE is, of course, the Association for Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education (<http://iclhe.org>) The website offers updated information on research, conferences, and symposia around the world. The Association has a number of edited volumes with a broad range of articles of interest.

I can also recommend material developed from the Erasmus+ transnational project: Transnational Alignment of English Competences for University Lecturers (TAEC) (<https://cip.ku.dk/english/projects/taec/>). This project developed a common framework for EMI quality assurance and support and an EMI Handbook for lecturers.

Some of the recent volumes and articles of interest are:

Dafouz, E., & Smit, U. (2020). ROAD-MAPPING English-medium education in the internationalised university. Palgrave-Macmillan.

Dimova, S., Hultgren, A. K., & Jensen, C. (2015). English-medium instruction in European higher education: English in Europe. Berlin, Germany: De Gruyter Mouton.

Dimova, S., & Kling, J. (2020). Integrating Content and Language in Multilingual Universities. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.

Fenton-Smith, B., Humphreys, P., & Walkinshaw, I. (Eds.). (2017). English medium instruction in higher education in Asia-Pacific: From policy to pedagogy. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.

Henriksen, B., Holmen, A., & Kling, J. (2019). English medium instruction in multilingual and multicultural universities: Academics' voices from the Northern European context. Oxon, UK: Routledge/Taylor & Francis.

Kling, J. (2019) *English as a medium of instruction*. The International Research Foundation (TIRF) Language Education in Review Series (LEiR). TIRF: [https://www.tirfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/TIRF\\_LEiR\\_EMI\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.tirfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/TIRF_LEiR_EMI_FINAL.pdf)

Macaro, E. (2018). English medium instruction. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Pecorari, D., & Malmström, H. (Eds.). (2018). At the crossroads of TESOL and English medium instruction. TESOL Quarterly, 52(3). doi.or/10.1002/tesq.415