

## Language Alternation to Scaffold Learning in EMI Classrooms

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Research on English as a medium of instruction (EMI) has shown that students draw on their first language, (L1), to scaffold learning. Although some research has investigated the use of L1 to scaffold learning in EMI context in many non- anglophone countries (e.g. Mazak & Donoso, 2015; Trodson & Dashwood, 2018), little is known about the use of L1 to scaffold learning in higher education institutions in Bangladesh. The country has also implemented EMI in some of its higher education institutions, although most students attending them are not being adequately prepared to learn through EMI, because their previous education was in the medium of Bangla (emergent bilinguals). Therefore, this research aims to investigate whether, in this context, Bangla, the students' and teachers' native language, is used as a scaffolding strategy to ensure the comprehensibility of lectures, and whether this strategy is helpful.

Data were collected in two phases. In the first phase, 25 classrooms at North South University (the first private EMI university in Bangladesh) were observed online due to Covid restrictions and both audio- and video-recorded over a three-month period in 2021. There was a total of three teachers and 95 emergent bilingual students. To analyze classroom recordings, a conversation-analytic approach was taken to code- switching (Auer,1984; Li Wei, 2002; Gafaranga, 2009; Bonacina and Gafaranga, 2011). To reveal instances of scaffolding in bilingual classroom interactions, sequential analysis was conducted. Namely, a teaching focused episode was identified to reveal the scaffolding pattern. Then the medium of the episode (overall order Gafaranga, 1998) was determined, drawing on the notion of medium of classroom interaction (Gafaranga and Bonacina, 2011).

In the second phase of data collection, 23 semi-structured retrospective interviews (drawing on an interactional sociolinguistics framework) were conducted with the participants drawn from the observed classes to reveal if they find this strategy useful. Out of 95 students, 23 students voluntarily took part in the interview. Moreover, 23- recorded interviews were translated and transcribed verbatim. Interview data were analysed thematically.

Two major patterns of language alternation were identified: presentation explanations and word clarification repairs (Gafaranga, 2021) to scaffold learning. At the overall level (Gafaranga,

1998), language alternation took the form of presenting lectures in English and explaining lecture content by using L1 to ensure the comprehensibility of lectures. At the local level (Auer, 1984), alternation between English and Bangla accomplished the interactional task of content clarification. This was further confirmed by interview data. Such language alternation is referred to in the literature as word clarification repair (Gafaranga, 2021).

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