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Discourse Structuring Metadiscourse in EMI Lecturer Microteaching Test Performance

Alessandra Molino (Corresponding author)

Dipartimento di Lingue e Letterature Straniere e Culture Moderne, Università di Torino

Via Giuseppe Verdi, 10123 Torino, Italy

E-mail: alessandra.molino@unito.it

Slobodanka Dimova

Centre for Internationalisation and Parallel Language Use (CIP)

University of Copenhagen

Emil Holms Kanal 4 2300 København S., Denmark

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Abstract

Microteaching is frequently used in English-medium instruction (EMI) teacher education to provide a controlled environment for skill refinement and feedback (Deroey, 2023; Morell, 2020), but less frequently in EMI language testing (Dimova, 2017) due to concerns about its suitability. While some argue for its potential to standardize language assessment procedures, others question its ability to reflect classroom discourse (Molino et al., 2022). To address this issue, empirical evidence of the language features of microteaching is needed. So far, however, very limited language-focused research has been conducted. This paper takes a step in this direction by analyzing EMI lecturers' test performance in terms of discourse structuring metadiscourse, a key language function for enhancing clarity and coherence. The performances of 15 EMI lecturers on the Test of Oral English Proficiency for Academic Staff (TOEPAS) are examined to identify the most commonly used personal and impersonal metadiscourse markers, as well as differences in lecturers' use of these markers across proficiency levels. Following Ädel's (2010) reflexive model, quantitative and qualitative insights into metadiscourse are provided. Results suggest that simulated lectures elicit a range of forms and functions of metadiscourse that have been documented in the literature on classroom discourse in English-dominant and non-English-dominant settings. While more

research is needed to elucidate the frequency distributions of these forms and how they reflect actual classroom practices, the qualitative analysis across proficiency levels provides insights into the degree of lexico-grammatical variation in the articulation of metadiscourse, which has implications for the widespread use of microteaching in testing and training.

Keywords: Microteaching, Metadiscourse, Language testing, EMI, TOEPAS

1. Introduction

Since the late 1960s, microteaching (also, micro-lessons or simulated teaching/lecturing) has been incorporated into teacher education programs, especially at the pre-service level (Note 1). Kroeger et al. (2024) define microteaching as "a structured approach of bounded practice that makes it possible to focus on specific teaching behaviors" (p. 463). It is embedded in evidence-based practices and thus contributes to the improvement of the quality of teacher instructional strategies and behavior (Hattie, 2009).

Microteaching has become quite popular in training programs for EMI lecturers in non-English-dominant university contexts, i.e., universities that have traditionally offered instruction in languages other than English (Chen & Peng, 2019; Drljača Margić & Vodopija-Krstanović, 2018; Maíz-Arevalo & Orduna-Nocito, 2021; Martinez & Fernandes, 2020; Volchenkova et al., 2022). The application of microteaching as an assessment method tends to occur within larger teacher education programs, where the assessment is conducted by teacher trainers or peers (Morell, 2020; Tsui, 2017), and not much information is provided regarding the actual procedures for its administration, including the assessment criteria and the training of raters.

Literature on microteaching for EMI lecturer certification is scarce also because its utility for EMI lecturer assessment has been viewed with a degree of skepticism among EMI scholars and practitioners, especially in European higher education (Molino et al., 2022, p. 139). Critics of microteaching as an assessment method have argued that it fails to elicit relevant language use because of a lack of authenticity and propose assessment based on EMI lecturers' classroom performance.

Despite the purported authenticity associated with assessing EMI lecturers during their actual teaching in the classroom, this method introduces several potential inconsistencies in the assessment process, which may compromize raters' perceptions of EMI lecturers' abilities (Dimova, 2021). For instance, contextual variables (e.g., room, class size, type of class) and lecturers' familiarity with students (e.g., beginning or end of semester, semester-long instruction or one lecture) can affect the assessment procedure and lead to raters' inability to interpret and use rating criteria consistently. Planning and administering such assessments may also pose a challenge in administrative logistics (e.g., cancelled classes, lecturers on leave/sabbatical) (Kling & Hjulmand, 2008).

Taking into consideration these challenges, including the increased need for remote test administration, microteaching in assessment deserves more attention. More specifically, concerns about whether microteaching elicits 'authentic' language for the EMI classroom can be addressed by analyzing lecturers' test performance. The need for empirical evidence on

the potential of microteaching to make assumptions about lecturers' language use during their teaching practices is one of the motivations behind the *EMI Lecturer Certification (EMILC): New Horizons for Quality Assurance and Capacity Building* project (Note 2). Running from September 2022 to December 2023 and funded by the University of Turin (Italy), the EMILC project involved, in addition to this university, three other European institutions, i.e., the University of Copenhagen (Denmark), Universitat Jaume I (Spain) and Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour (France). The project's overall aim was to identify best practices in quality assurance and capacity building that could be applied across different contexts. Among its objectives was to collect data for the analysis of face-to-face teaching in English and its comparison with microteaching, particularly the simulated performance of EMI lecturers in the Test of Oral English Proficiency for Academic Staff (TOEPAS). Developed in 2009 at the University of Copenhagen, TOEPAS was originally designed to assess face-to-face interaction in a physical classroom. To provide greater flexibility in test administration — especially in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to reduce time and costs for both test takers and institutions — the project also aimed to determine whether remote administration of TOEPAS would yield valid results.

Based on the data collected within the EMILC project, we focus on the use of metadiscourse (e.g., see Ädel, 2006; Hyland, 2005) by EMI lecturers who took the TOEPAS online, and how its articulation varies according to the proficiency level of each participant. The TOEPAS performances have been fully transcribed, and for this reason, it is possible to analyze language output using corpus-based techniques to ensure systematicity. In so doing, this paper will hopefully pave the way for greater attention to the empirical study of microteaching and offer insights for language-informed teacher education programs.

Metadiscourse is a topic that has received considerable attention in the study of academic communication. It is a function of language that is considered important for its ability to make content explicit, to guide the audience through the unfolding discourse, to orient their interpretation of the message, and to enhance comprehension. In particular, the contribution of metadiscourse to structuring the message has been emphasized (e.g., Thompson, 2003). The discourse-organizing function of metadiscourse is the aspect that we investigate in this paper, exploring how EMI lecturers use language to structure their online TOEPAS performances and how their proficiency level affects their practices.

The current study is therefore guided by the following research questions:

1) What are the most commonly-used personal metadiscourse markers for discourse structuring in online TOEPAS performances?

2) What are the most commonly-used impersonal metadiscourse markers for discourse structuring in online TOEPAS performances?

3) What are the differences in EMI lecturers' use of personal and impersonal metadiscourse markers in online TOEPAS performances across different proficiency levels?

2. Metadiscourse in University Teaching

Metadiscourse is the ability of natural languages to refer to themselves, providing speakers with resources to comment on the linguistic code and its use, the communicative situation, and their role as discourse participants. Metadiscourse in university-level spoken genres has been widely explored. On the one hand, interest has been motivated by the fact that academic genres, such as lectures, can be cognitively demanding for students and complex for lecturers to produce (Crawford-Camiciottoli & Querol-Julián, 2016). Hence, studies on metadiscourse can shed light on how to improve listening comprehension and clarity in teaching. On the other hand, and perhaps most crucially, the ever-increasing number of foreign students taking courses in English-dominant university settings (e.g., North America) and the expansion of EMI in non-English-dominant contexts (e.g., Europe, Asia) means that more and more non-native-speaking students and teachers are attending and delivering lectures in English. This development has led to an interest in how academic listening and teaching in a second language (L2) can be supported and how content learning and disciplinary literacy can be scaffolded. Metadiscourse is a key resource to these goals because it functions as a tool for lecturers to guide and shape the ongoing classroom discourse, according to the practices that are typical of any given disciplinary field. Experimental studies aimed at exploring the effectiveness of metadiscourse on lecture comprehension have provided evidence that it does indeed improve understanding (Kuhi et al., 2014), with a more significant impact on students with lower levels of English proficiency (Aguilar Pérez & Arnó Macià, 2002, p. 19). Not surprisingly, metadiscourse is an increasingly recommended focus for teacher education (e.g., Aguilar-Pérez & Khan, 2022; Carrió-Pastor, 2022; Molino, 2018; Zhang & Lo, 2021).

The metadiscourse features in lectures that have mostly received attention are discourse structuring devices (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2022; Morell, 2004; Thompson, 2003; Zhang & Lo, 2021) and relevance markers (Deroey & Taverniers, 2012; Zare & Keivanloo-Shahrestanaki, 2017) because of their significance in classroom discourse. For example, Zare and Tavakoli (2016) analyze monologic lectures and dialogic academic discussions by non-native PhD students specializing in Teaching English as a Foreign Language. They show that, compared to discussions, lectures emphasize terminology and discourse organization, with frequent use of phorics markers, namely items that refer to different points within the discourse and guide listeners' understanding. Among recent studies, Wu and Yang (2022) focus on metadiscourse in EAP (English for Academic Purposes) teaching in the UK and China. They report that irrespective of the context, "teachers attach much importance to organizing and guiding students through the classroom discourse at both local (realized by transition markers) and global (realized by frame markers) levels" (Wu & Yang, 2022, p. 11). Overall, these studies indicate the centrality of discourse structuring devices in university teaching, which motivates the focus on this function in our exploratory study of the linguistic features of microteaching.

The review of the literature on metadiscourse in university teaching reveals a paucity of research on this topic in EMI settings. The studies that do exist provide preliminary findings that partly converge, although they are based on very small samples and need more robust empirical validation. The functions of metadiscourse recorded in EMI classes seem to be

quite similar in lecturers' L1 and L2 teaching (Aguilar-Pérez & Khan, 2022) as well as across geographical contexts and lecturers' L1s (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2022). For instance, Doiz and Lasagabaster state that compared to their Chinese colleagues, the Spanish-speaking lecturers in their study "tend to focus on the same aspects of the organization of the discourse and with similar intensity" (2022, p. 9). Despite this overall similarity in distribution, some investigations have suggested a possible underuse of specific functions (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2022 on frame markers; Molino, 2018 on topic management).

Concerning markers, personal metadiscourse forms are very much employed in EMI, especially inclusive *we* (Broggini & Murphy, 2017), for a range of discourse organizational purposes, from previewing what comes next in discourse to reviewing what has been said, from enumerating to managing topics. To what extent this form of discourse inclusivity is marked in EMI or how it varies across lecturers' proficiency levels or disciplines remains to be verified. By contrast, a feature that seems to characterize EMI lectures quite clearly is the narrow range of metadiscourse expressions used (Zhang & Lo, 2021), a finding that could be related to the impact of L2 usage on lexico-grammatical variety (see also Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2022). The lecturers' level of competence in English may also determine the presence of dysfluency phenomena and non-standard forms (Molino, 2018, pp. 948-950) although functionally speaking, metadiscourse units may still work despite these inaccuracies. This is an aspect that also needs to be further verified, using methodologies that complement and go beyond discourse analysis, such as interviews or comprehension tests.

No study to date has explored metadiscourse in microteaching. Yet, considering the widespread use of simulated lectures for developmental purposes in EMI teacher education programs (Deroey, 2023), and the concerns about the extent to which microteaching prompts genuine classroom interaction, attention to the documentation of language practices in this context is a rather compelling need.

3. Materials

The microteaching performances examined in this paper were delivered by 15 volunteer EMI content teachers as part of the EMILC project. They were first required to teach a full lesson in a traditional classroom setting with students. Then they were asked to deliver a mini-lecture during the TOEPAS test online based on the original lesson in person. Both performances were video recorded. Sections 2.1 and 2.2 describe the test and offer details of the video recorded microteaching performances.

3.1 TOEPAS

TOEPAS was designed at the University of Copenhagen (UCPH) in 2009 to address the university's management concerns about lecturers' English proficiency for teaching in the EMI classroom. Given its embeddedness in the local university context, TOEPAS was developed with a dual purpose in mind: lecturer certification for oral English proficiency for teaching purposes that also allows for diagnosing lecturers' communicative needs (Kling & Stæhr, 2011).

TOEPAS is based on a simulated lecture session, where three EMI lecturers from the same

disciplinary field are scheduled to take the test in one session, which consists of three parts: warm-up (5-10 minutes), lecture (20 minutes), and question and answer (Q&A) (5-7 minutes). During the session, each lecturer gives a lecture while the other two take the role of students and ask questions during the Q&A part (Kling & Dimova, 2015). Two raters are present during the session and rate the performance of each lecturer live, but they do not participate in the Q&A session. The session is video recorded to support the feedback procedure, but the video recordings are also used for validation and rater training purposes.

In the first version of TOEPAS, raters scored the performances using a hybrid scale from 1-5 including criteria related to fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and interaction (Dimova, 2017; Kling & Stæhr, 2011). The TOEPAS scale was revised in 2015. It remains a hybrid scale with five levels, 20-60 (in increments of 10), and criteria associated with several categories: audience awareness, fluency, intelligibility, organization and coherence, vocabulary, and grammar (Dimova, 2020). The TOEPAS scale has been aligned with the levels on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2020): 60 corresponds to C2, 50 to C2-/C1+, 40 to C1, 30 to C1-/B2+, 20 to B2 and below. Alongside the TOEPAS score, lecturers receive a video recording and written feedback, followed by oral feedback.

3.2 TOEPAS Online Performances

The 15 TOEPAS online performances are quite balanced in terms of degree level, with eight participants teaching the video recorded class in a post-graduate (PG) course and seven in an undergraduate (UG) one. By contrast, performances cover a wide range of disciplinary areas in the Physical Sciences and Engineering (PE) and the Social Sciences and Humanities (SH), including law, mathematics, economics, marketing and language studies. Performance scores were also spread out across the TOEPAS scale, i.e., levels 20 and 30 (n=3), level 40 (n=4), level 50 (n=5), and level 60 (n=3). Table 1 provides the details of the resulting corpus. The quantitative data refer to the transcriptions of the entire TOEPAS performances per participant, i.e., they include both the simulated lecture proper and the following Q&A session.

Table 1. Corpus of transcribed TOEPAS online performances

Mini-lecture ID	Level	No. of words
L01_PE	UG	2,195
L02_PE	PG	2,448
L03_PE	UG	2,837
L04_SH	PG	2,790
L05_SH	UG	2,889

L06_SH	PG	3,215
L07_SH	PG	3,750
L08_SH	UG	3,968
L08_SH	UG	4,331
L10_SH	PG	3,197
L11_SH	PG	3,331
L12_SH	UG	3,513
L13_SH	PG	3,523
L14_SH	UG	3,701
L15_SH	PG	3,929
Total		**49,617**

The performances were anonymized and transcribed orthographically. No special annotation or markup was added, as aspects such as pauses, prosodic features or contextual information are not relevant since the focus of the analysis is on words. The corpus consists of approximately 50,000 words, with performances ranging from 2,195 to 4,331 words and counting on average 3,308 words (Note 3).

4. Analytical Framework and Procedures

4.1 Metadiscourse Taxonomy

This study follows a reflexive model of metadiscourse based on Roman Jakobson's metalinguistic, expressive and directive functions of language. We adopt the framework proposed by Ädel in her study of written learner language (2006) and elaborated in subsequent research on spoken and written academic discourse (2010), audience orientation in monologic academic genres (2012), and spoken student presentations (2023). Ädel identifies two categories of metadiscourse: "metatext" (2006; 2010; 2012; 2023) and "audience interaction" (2010; 2012; 2023). Metatext organizes the message, explicitly indicating the discourse actions of the speakers, referring to elements of the spoken or written text, such as its structure, wording or production characteristics. Metatext can be conveyed through personal (e.g., *I, you*) and impersonal (e.g., *first, here, previous*) forms. Conversely, audience interaction concerns the relationship between the speaker and the audience within the communicative situation and is only realized through personal markers. This study concentrates on metatext and, in particular, on the discourse structuring functions of personal and impersonal markers (Table 2).

Table 2. A taxonomy of personal and impersonal metatext functions for discourse organization (adapted from Ädel, 2010)

Categories	Description
Topics	
introducing topic	used to announce, introduce, or open a topic
delimiting topic	used to state the scope of a topic
adding to topic	used to comment on the expansion of a topic or the addition of a subtopic
concluding topic	used to close a topic
shifting topic	used to mark a shift in topic
marking asides	used to open or close a digression
Phorics	
enumerating	used to state how discourse parts are ordered
endophoric marking	used to indicate a specific location in the discourse (e.g., a table or a specific point on a slide)
previewing	used to point forward in the discourse and announce what will follow
reviewing	used to point backwards in the discourse or to remind the audience about something already been said
marking current point/discourse	used to draw attention to the current point in the discourse or the current discourse as a whole
contextualizing	used to comment on the situation of speaking, to justify choices made in organizing and delivering the discourse

The taxonomy of functions adopted for this analysis is based on Ädel's (2010) classification with some adjustments. More specifically, in her 2010 study of personal metadiscourse in lectures from the MICASE corpus, Ädel proposed the subdivision of categories into topic management and phorics. Molino (2018) tested this framework with EMI lectures and found that it could be applied to impersonal forms, too, with the addition of the function of *marking current point/current discourse*. This function was already present in an earlier taxonomy discussed by Ädel (2006) in relation to impersonal markers in learner writing but was found

to be relevant also in the case of lectures. Finally, in terms of topic management, the function of *shifting topic* was included in this study because some instances of personal and impersonal markers seemed to be used to indicate progression or a change of focus (e.g., *If is it clear, I'll move on*) without necessarily announcing a new topic in detail.

4.2 Identifying and Quantifying Metadiscourse

This study uses corpus-based techniques for the identification of metadiscourse. Consequently, a list of potential markers is necessary to search for occurrences in the corpus of the transcribed TOEPAS performances. In the case of personal forms, all instances of the first-person pronouns *I* and *we*, and the second-person pronoun *you* in subject position were retrieved. Additionally, their oblique forms (e.g., *my*, *our*, and *your*) and the terms *one* and *speaker* were also used as search words. In the case of impersonal metadiscourse, the approach described in Molino (2018) was employed. The method involves the creation of a list of potential metadiscourse items based on the existing literature which is checked upon the lemmatized wordlist to identify which items feature in the corpus. The analysis of the lemmatized wordlist also serves to complement the inventory of potential markers with additional search words that may not be covered on the lists from previous studies due to the disciplinary specificity of the corpus or the L2 status of lecturers. Table 3 shows the potential markers of personal and impersonal discourse structuring metadiscourse used as search words.

Table 3. Potential markers of personal and impersonal discourse structuring metadiscourse

Personal metadiscourse	*I, we, you* (subj.)*; me, my, mine, us/'s, our, ours, you* (obj.), *your, yours; one; speaker*
Impersonal metadiscourse	*above, after, again, already, back, before, begin*, below, conclu*, end*, final*, first*, following, here, interrupt*, introduc*, last, later, next, now, plan*, previous*, second*, so far, start*, subsequent*, third**

Once the occurrences were obtained, it was necessary to establish the criteria for the inclusion of instances distinguishing metadiscursive uses from non-metadiscursive ones. In her 2006 study, Ädel proposes five properties of metadiscourse (Table 4). The first is explicitness, that is, language items should overtly refer to the unfolding discourse and/or its participants. The second is that the action occurs in the 'world of discourse' (e.g., *In this lecture I will talk about*) rather than the 'real world' (e.g., *In this course I will evaluate your participation*). The third property is that language forms should refer to the current discourse, otherwise they would index intertextuality. The fourth and fifth properties pertain to personal forms and entail that items are metadiscursive when they refer to the speaker-*qua*-speaker and audience-*qua*-audience, and not to other roles (e.g., the speaker as a researcher or generic *you*). In light of these guidelines, all the retrieved concordance lines were examined and uses that did not meet these criteria were excluded. Instances found in the utterances by test administrators or other lecturers taking the TOEPAS were also excluded, while those found

in the utterances by the test takers in the Q&A sessions were included because they reveal how lecturers would manage interaction with students if asked a question.

Table 4. Personal and impersonal metadiscourse (adapted from Ädel, 2006)

	Personal metadiscourse			Impersonal metadiscourse
	Participant-oriented	Speaker-oriented	Audience-oriented	
Explicitness	+	+	+	+
World of discourse	+	+	+	+
Current discourse	+	+	+	+
Speaker *qua* speaker	+	+	-	-
Audience *qua* audience	+	-	+	-

Subsequently, the items identified as metadiscursive had to be quantified according to their function. The processes of quantification of metadiscourse and its functional classification are complex because there is no straightforward correlation between form and function. First, some functions are performed through a combination of forms or varying lengths, while others are fulfilled through single words (Hyland, 2017, p. 18). Second, metadiscourse is multifunctional, meaning that a single unit may express multiple meanings in context (Ädel, 2010, pp. 23-25). A careful examination of concordance lines containing personal and impersonal metatext markers was thus conducted to identify units, assign them a core function and count instances accordingly. One of the authors of this paper performed the overall count and classification, and the other author performed a second coding of 10% of the retrieved concordance lines. The percentage of agreement was 75.51, which was considered good for this study, also taking into account the classification challenges mentioned above.

Specifically, a micro-level approach, as outlined by Ädel (2006, pp. 48-52), was used. Example 1, where square brackets delimit units, illustrates its principles.

Example 1

And [as you can see] [here], [I will deal with] the two main areas of this regulation… [L06_SH]

The unit [as you can see] is an example of personal metadiscourse, specifically audience-oriented endophoric metatext. The string directs the students' attention to relevant information to support their understanding of the unfolding lecture. The adverb [here], too, can be classified as serving an endophoric function by making "additional ideational material salient and therefore available to the [audience] in aiding the recovery of the [speaker]'s

meanings" (Hyland, 2005, p. 51); in this case, however, this meaning is conveyed through an impersonal marker. Finally, [I will deal with] is another example of personal metadiscourse, but in this unit, we can recognize a speaker-oriented sequence that announces what will follow in the lecture (*previewing*).

A micro-level functional approach, as opposed to a macro-level one (which would, for example, group the two endophoric units together because the string has one overall function), allows for a more detailed and accurate description of the different forms of metadiscourse. There are convincing arguments in the literature for either a micro-level (e.g., Ädel, 2006) or a macro-level approach (e.g., Ädel, 2023). Neither is the most valid in absolute terms, and the choice depends on the strategy that best suits the purpose of the study. We believe that, for the current investigation, a micro-level functional approach allows for more precise comparisons between spoken academic genres and for a clearer understanding of differences in the articulation of metadiscourse by non-native speakers across proficiency levels.

5. Results

5.1 Discourse Structuring Personal Metatext

Table 5 shows the occurrences of personal metatext marked through the subject pronouns *I*, *we*, and *you*. Oblique forms are not reported in the table because they only provided a few examples per type. Of the 36 total occurrences of *me*, *my*, *our*, *us* and *you* (obj.), the most frequent form is *our* (18 hits) mainly used for phorics (e.g., *…which you are familiar with from our previous sessions*; *…in our example before*). Following are *me* (6 occurrences) and *my* (5 occurrences), the former used for topic management (e.g., *Before exploiting this, let me just discuss briefly some properties…*) and the latter for phorics (e.g., *My lesson of today will deal with market abuse regulation*).

As regards subject pronouns, the most recurrent form across functions is inclusive *we*. *I* scores second (used by 14 participants), but it occurs less than half the frequency of *we* (used repeatedly by all 15 participants). The pronoun *you* is found in 10 TOEPAS performances and is considerably less frequent than *we* or *I*. The prevalence of inclusive *we* appears in line with Broggini and Murphy (2017) and Molino (2018), both exploring EMI lectures in Italian university settings. On the other hand, this result is in contrast with various studies of academic lectures in the UK and the US (e.g., Ädel, 2018; Fortanet, 2004; Lee & Subtirelu, 2015). While in these analyses inclusive *we* is rather frequent, it is not as recurrent as *I* or *you*.

This discrepancy might be due to various reasons: a divergence between English-dominant and non-English-dominant discourse practices; a cultural preference (the TOPEAS performances were by lecturers from Mediterranean countries); a difference between simulated lectures and authentic classes. Being metadiscourse highly context-dependent, all these hypotheses warrant attention. However, it must be pointed out that comparisons with other studies should be taken with extreme caution because several other variables might have had an impact on the results. For instance, some of the previous studies did not exclusively focus on metadiscourse but also non-metadiscursive uses of subject pronouns

(e.g., Fortanet, 2004); or if they did concentrate on metadiscourse, they covered a wider range of functions than just discourse structuring (e.g., Lee & Subtirelu, 2015). Therefore, the issue of marker distribution remains a topic to be further elucidated.

Table 5. Personal metatext: subject pronouns

Discourse organization categories	**Discourse function**	**Occurrences**			**Total**
		I	**we**	***you***	
Managing topics	introducing topic	5	11	0	**16**
	delimiting topic	5	8	0	**13**
	adding to topic	0	0	0	**0**
	concluding topic	1	0	0	**1**
	shifting topic	2	7	0	**9**
	making asides	0	0	0	**0**
	Total	13	26	0	**39**
Managing phorics	enumerating	0	0	0	**0**
	endophoric marking	0	0	18	**18**
	previewing	22	65	4	**91**
	reviewing	38	80	6	**124**
	marking current point/discourse	1	0	0	**1**
	contextualizing	6	15	0	**21**
	Total	67	160	28	**255**
Total		**80**	**186**	**28**	**294**

Moving to discourse functions, those performed by *we* and *I* are substantially the same and their relative distribution is also quite similar. To illustrate these uses, Example 2 reports concordance lines featuring the pronoun *we* employed for *previewing* (Example 2a), *reviewing* (Example 2b) and *contextualizing* (Example 2c). *We* is also used to *introduce* (Example 2d) and *delimit* (Example 2e) a topic, and to mark *a topic shift* (Example 2f).

Example 2

a. So today's agenda for us will be_ so we're going to see together what a crisis is… [L07_SH]

b. They can be, as we said before, a distraction in the classroom. [L14_SH]

c. We don't have much time to go through this… [L14_SH]

d. So now we are going to see the different elements of the environment [L11_SH]

e. So dynamics is not an aspect we are going to investigate too much into this lecture [L04_SH]

f. If no questions, we can move on to the next, and I will give you the floor after that for questions later on. [L08_SH]

A different behavior is displayed by *you*. In the TOEPAS data, *you* is almost exclusively associated with *endophoric marking*. Therefore, while *I* and *we* appear in a wider range of semantic contexts, *you* seems to perform a specialized discourse structuring function. This finding is consistent with previous studies of EMI classroom interaction (Molino, 2018), where discourse structuring *you* appeared in the context of directing the audience to specific locations in discourse for further information. Example 3 illustrates this use.

Example 3

As you can see here, database design is just one of the many activities we follow when we develop programs… [L02_PE]

Overall, it seems that while there is some variation in TOEPAS performances in terms of the discourse functions realized by personal metadiscourse, the vast majority of instances are used in previews and reviews. On the one hand, this suggests that the participants can organize their delivery on a global level, by announcing discourse goals, summarizing content and marking reiteration. On the other hand, the result might also suggest that simulated lectures tend to emphasize core functional features of teaching.

5.2 Discourse Structuring Impersonal Metatext

Table 6 shows the frequencies of discourse functions performed by impersonal metatext. Although a few instances were observed for topic management, impersonal markers mostly occur in connection with phorics. The top three functions, respectively *marking current point*, *enumerating*, and *reviewing*, account for 82% of the total. Comparing these data with those obtained for personal metatext, we may notice that *enumerating* and *marking current point* strongly associate with impersonal forms. The top three functions are also the most cross-cutting across TOEPAS performances. *Marking current point in discourse* and *enumerating* were used by 14 participants out of 15, whereas *reviewing* was employed by 11 lecturers.

Table 6. Impersonal metatext: discourse functions

Discourse organization categories	Discourse function	Raw frequencies
Managing topics	introducing topic (*start**, *introduce**)	**4**
	delimiting topic	**0**
	adding to topic (*following with…*)	**1**
	concluding topic	**0**
	shifting topic (*back to*)	**7**
	making asides	**0**
	Total	**12**
Managing phorics	enumerating (*final**, *first**, *second**, *third**)	**49**
	endophoric marking (*at the beginning, following* + noun, *next* + noun)	**15**
	previewing (*later, next*)	**6**
	reviewing (*again, already, before, previously*)	**46**
	marking current point/discourse (*here, now, so far*)	**55**
	contextualizing	**0**
	Total	**171**
Total		**183**

The most prevalent marker of *current point in discourse* is *now* (40 hits). This adverb can serve a cataphoric function, indicating 'from now on', or an anaphoric one, indicating 'up to now' (Ädel, 2006, pp. 104-107). The cataphoric function is by far the most recurrent in the data, with *now* co-occurring with personal markers (inclusive *we* and its oblique variant *us*) when announcing a new topic or previewing what comes next (Examples 4a and 4b respectively).

Example 4

a. Let's now move, generally speaking, to the contents and the goals of this new regulation of 2014. [L06_SH]

b. We are going to see now better. [L11_SH]

Rather than being anaphoric, the other occurrences of *now* in our data seem to indicate the idea of 'here and now' and are used to mark a shift of focus in the discussion, capturing the students' attention and conveying the idea that something significant will follow. In these contexts, *now* occurs in combination with lexis that marks importance or relevance (e.g., *highlight* in Example 5a and *big* in 5b).

Example 5

a. Now before moving on, I want to highlight one concept, which is digital divide. [L14_SH]

b. Now the big question you might ask is how do we identify the field of a text. [L08_SH]

As regards the function of *enumerating*, the markers used are *finally, first, first of all*, *second*, and *third*. *First of all* and *finally* are the most frequent forms and they tend to be associated with personal metadiscourse in previews or for topic introduction (Examples 6a and 6b respectively).

Example 6

a. And finally, we will see also the internal analysis to know the weaknesses and the strengths. [L11_SH]

b. So, first of all, we are going to talk about counterfactuals. So, are you aware about what are counterfactuals? No, not really. Okay, the counterfactual is… [L15_SH]

Moving to *reviewing*, the markers identified are *again* (19 occurrences), *before* (14 occurrences), *already* (12 occurrences), and *previously* (1 occurrence). These items appear in contexts in which lecturers refer back to something mentioned earlier (Example 7a); when they are summarizing specific points or topics (Example 7b); or when they are marking reiteration (Example 7c). This use, in particular, is significant as it also allows the teacher to suggest that because points are repeated, they are especially important.

Example 7

a. In the case I gave you before…[L05_SH]

b. In the previous lessons, we have already introduced the notion of text, and we classified various categories of text and we saw a text means… [L08_SH]

c. So let me repeat it again briefly. Television doesn't reflect what is happening outside of the world, but it presents an artificial world that focuses on certain issues. [L10_SH]

Compared to personal metadiscourse, impersonal uses are less frequent and more clearly associated with phorics, serving a wider range of sub-functions. The distribution of markers was not explored in depth in this section because it is an aspect which is more interesting to analyze from the point of view of proficiency and how it affects lexical variety.

5.3 Discourse Structuring Metatext Across TOEPAS Levels

In order to gain an improved perspective on the validity of using simulated teaching as an assessment method in EMI lecturer certification, it is important to analyze the occurrences of personal and impersonal metatext for discourse organization across the different proficiency levels on the TOEPAS scale.

Based on raw frequencies of topic and phorics markers, it can be concluded that the number of occurrences per lecturer varies at the individual level, regardless of their proficiency. For example, the frequency of personal markers with a reviewing function ranged 3-23, median of 7, while markers with a previewing function ranged 0-18, median of 5.

In order to identify possible differences among TOEPAS levels, the data were further analyzed in terms of the proportion of each metatext category occurrence per lecturer (number of metatext category occurrences divided by the total number of metatext occurrences) (Table 7) and then in terms of language forms used in metadiscourse units across TOEPAS proficiency levels. More specifically, the comparative analysis across the TOEPAS levels seemed most reasonable in relation to lecturers' use of phorics markers to point forward and backward, i.e., *previewing* and *reviewing*, two functions which emerged as the most frequent personal metatext meanings.

Table 7. Proportions of personal metatext categories per lecturer across TOEPAS levels (only the functions with ≥ 2 raw occurrences)

	Topics			**Phorics**				
Toepas score	**introducing**	**shifting**	**delimiting**	**preview**	**review**	**endophoric**	**contextualizing**	**Tot.**
20	0.12	0.00	0.00	0.48	0.24	0.08	0.08	**25**
30	0.08	0.00	0.08	0.42	0.42	0.00	0.00	**12**
30	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.58	0.33	0.08	0.00	**12**
40	0.12	0.19	0.00	0.08	0.46	0.00	0.15	**26**
40	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.15	0.69	0.08	0.00	**13**
40	0.25	0.17	0.08	0.00	0.50	0.00	0.00	**12**
40	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.38	0.50	0.13	0.00	**8**

50	0.14	0.00	0.14	0.21	0.43	0.00	0.00	**28**
50	0.08	0.00	0.03	0.36	0.21	0.21	0.08	**39**
50	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.42	0.53	0.00	0.02	**43**
50	0.20	0.00	0.00	0.20	0.30	0.00	0.20	**10**
50	0.05	0.00	0.05	0.26	0.42	0.21	0.00	**19**
60	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.27	0.41	0.00	0.00	**22**
60	0.10	0.12	0.02	0.29	0.38	0.05	0.02	**42**
60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.22	0.56	0.22	0.00	**9**

The most salient difference between the higher and the lower TOEPAS levels from a quantitative perspective is in the type of personal metatext function prevalent in their discourse. Lecturers at the lowest proficiency levels (i.e., levels 20 and 30) tended to utilize a higher proportion of markers with a *previewing* function than those for *reviewing*. Lecturers at level 40 used a very small proportion of personal metatext for *previewing*, while their *reviewing* metatext was substantial, and those at levels 50 and 60 had a more balanced occurrence of personal metatext for *previewing* and *reviewing*, although *reviewing* was more prevalent. In other words, lower proficiency lecturers tended to orient the audience more towards information that follows, while higher proficiency lecturers' performances included more frequent references to previous topics in order to provide explicit links to the current and upcoming topics.

The most obvious differences in EMI lecturers' use of personal metatext for discourse organization were observed through the analysis of the actual metadiscourse units. This analysis suggests that it is not so much the prevalence, but the level of variation of terms within the unit that is discrepant across the different TOEPAS levels. More specifically, EMI lecturers at the lower end of the TOEPAS scale tended to use repetitive discourse units for the same functional category. In the following example from a lecture at TOEPAS level 20 (Table 8), out of 12 occurrences of personal metatext with a previewing function, the pronoun *we* occurred in all of them, while the verb *see* was found in eight, *focus* in two, and *continue* and *explain* in one each (L11_SH). Similarly, another lecturer at TOEPAS level 30 (Table 9), consistently used the pronouns *I* and *we* in combination with *talk about* across all instances of *previewing* (L10_SH). A similar pattern is observed in personal metatext with a *reviewing* function, where the verb *saw* was used repetitively at level 20 (Table 10).

Table 8. TOEPAS 20: Personal metatext – *previewing*

Right context	Hit	Left context	Lecture
First of all, sorry for my voice. But	**we**	are going to continue with our business	L11_SH
points also in the next class. Today,	**we**	are going to focus in the first part that	
of the business idea. And today	**we**	are going to focus our attention in the	
opportunities, answers. And	**we**	are going to see each one step by step.	
political things, the economical things.	**We**	are going to see now better. And the s	
And in the next classes,	**we**	are going to see the production plan, the	
or pestel analysis. In the next class,	**we**	are going to see the specific	
vulnerable to other competitors.	**We**	are going to see these two points also in	
have an image where you can see that	**we**	will explain in more detail next class	
methodology. Okay. And finally,	**we**	will see also the internal analysis to	
therefore, with the best analysis that	**we**	will see now, you analyze the sector.	
the internal things of the company.	**We'**	re going to see the strengths, the	

Table 9. TOEPAS 30: Personal metatext – *previewing*

Right context	Hit	Left context	Lecture
And for example, after watching,	**I**	will talk about that, after watching, for	L10_SH
researches were conducted in USA. And	**I**	will talk about the criticism of the theories	
has some key assumptions. First,	**I**	would like to talk about them, so then we	
is mainstreaming and stereotyping.	**I**	will talk about them briefly.	
Gardner's Cultivation Theory. And	**we**	will talk about Gardner's concepts and fin	
feel the world is a very dangerous place.	**We**	will talk about that in detail in coming	

Table 10. TOEPAS 20: Personal metatext – *reviewing* (sample concordance lines)

Right context	Hit	Left context	Lecture
to assess external environment. As	**I**	said, we have two analysis that we have to	L11_SH
any questions about the things that	**we**	saw in the last class? [No.] No? I'm	
So here you have the content, but	**we**	saw that in the last class, the presentation	
In the last class, do you remember?	**We**	saw the index for the business plan. We	
see the viability of your project. So,	**we**	saw the project summary in the last class,	
We saw the index for the business plan.	**We**	saw the project summary, the presentation	

Lecturers who scored at TOEPAS levels 50 or 60, on the other hand, showed variation in the discourse units for *previewing* and *reviewing* (Tables 11 and 12). In the following examples, the EMI lecturers used the personal pronouns *I*, *you*, and *we* with a range of verbs, such as *give*, *specify*, *refer*, *talk*, *discuss*, *focus*, *go*, and *see*. Regarding reviewing discourse units, although participants tended to use the personal pronoun *we*, several different verbs, i.e., *deal*, *see*, *mention*, and *say*, occurred in different grammatical forms.

Table 11. TOEPAS 60: Personal metatext – *previewing* (sample concordance lines)

Right context	Hit	Left context	Lecture
dramatizing and so on and so forth.	**I**	will give you an example of each of that.	L08_SH
we move to the next slides, when	**we**	further specify field in terms of fields of	
of context here quite flexibly, because	**we**	will be referring to notions like the	
extract the features yourselves but then	**we**	will discuss that together that's why we're	
But then throughout the lessons,	**we**	will focus on one variable, or one type at	

for the moment, but please bear with me.	**We**	will go through all of these, step by step.
term and that's why we um in the future	**we**	will see that field itself and this is perhaps
together did I answer your question yeah	**we'**	ll actually see that as we move to the
simplify it as much as possible because	**you**	will see it makes a lot of sense when we

Table 12. TOEPAS 60: Personal metatext – *reviewing* (sample concordance lines)

Right context	Hit	Left context	Lecture
I told you this the other days. So	**we**	have already dealt with art one. If you	L14_SH
Okay? And as	**we**	have seen, the correlation also usually has	
must also be considered. They can be, as	**we**	said before, a distraction in the classroom.	
the first session that we had together,	**we**	said that 60% of your grade is going to be	
in the first part of the unit, we saw,	**we**	saw a definition of ICTs. And we saw	
Regarding the second part of the unit,	**we**	saw how ICTs were quickly integrated in	
we saw a definition of ICTs. And	**we**	saw together a brief historical overview	
For instance, what	**you**	were mentioning, Kahoot is a very good	

Impersonal metatext was present across all lecturers' performances, regardless of TOEPAS proficiency level. The most common functions of impersonal metatext were *marking current point in discourse*, *enumerating*, and *reviewing* (see Table 6), but just like with personal metatext, the main difference between the higher and the lower proficiency TOEPAS levels was in the variation of terms within the category units. For instance, while *first*, *finally*, and *now* were dominant in the lectures at levels 20 and 30 (Table 13), a number of different forms were observed at level 60 (Table 14).

Table 13. TOEPAS 20 and 30: Impersonal metatext (sample concordance lines)

Right context	Hit	Left context	Lecture
So let's continue with this exercise. Okay?	**Here,**	we have to think that your company is in a tourism sector.	L11_SH
We are going to see	**now**	better. And the specific competitive environment,	
The general environment through best analysis.	**Now**	I will go to, I'm going to explain the difference between pest and pestel	
Okay.	**Now**	we are going to assess external environment.	
Yeah? Of the company. But	**now**	we are going to see in detail all of these dimensions.	
Very good. So	**now**	we are going to see the different elements of the environment.	
And we will talk about Gardner's concepts and	**finally**	assignments.	L10_SH
and specific goals from television programs. And	**finally,**	what to do? These are stories of value, choice	
And, he has some key assumptions.	**First,**	I would like to talk about them, so then we can go into details.	
the theories still exist, but there are some critics about it.	**First,**	it focuses more on the effects or what is being influenced.	
Good morning.	**First**	of all, sorry for my voice.	

Table 14. TOEPAS 60: Impersonal metatext (sample concordance lines)

Right context	Hit	Left context	Lecture
So, let's have a look	**again**	at this figure that we introduced in the previous lessons.	L08_SH
In the previous lessons, we have	**already**	introduced the notion of text, and we classified various	
remember that in the lectures we proceed in two ways the	**first**	is that we introduce some very general theoretical notions	
okay thank you we can stop	**here**	right thank you thank you	
I will give you the floor after that for questions	**later**	on. But let me finish with this	
And this is this will make sense more when we move to the	**next**	slides, when we further specify field in terms of fields of activity.	
you will find details about it on Moodle. As of	**now**	I wanted to look at these two very brief extracts	
It's the text as we defined it	**previously**	that involves language and doing while talking.	
But let me finish with this because it's completely related to what we've said	**so far,**	that is to say the notion of fields of activities and text types	

In summary, all EMI lecturers used topic and phorics markers to structure their discourse, regardless of their TOEPAS proficiency level. This means that they were able to organize their lectures and guide their audience through the disciplinary material, which is a central aspect of the pedagogical function of language use. The key difference between the lower and the higher proficiency levels was mainly in the 'degree of sophistication'. The variety of discourse functions of personal and impersonal metatext tended to be more limited at the lower proficiency levels and the terms that occur in the discourse units were more repetitive than those in higher proficiency levels. Lectures at higher proficiency levels displayed a wider range of discourse functions and a much more diversified set of terms and expressions.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, 15 TOEPAS online performances were analyzed in terms of the use of personal

and impersonal metatext employed for discourse structuring purposes. Personal metatext was mostly marked by subject pronouns *I*, *we*, and *you*, whereas impersonal metatext was expressed through a wider inventory of forms, which often combined with personal metatext markers to convey a diversified range of meanings, including *enumerating, pointing to current discourse, reviewing, endophoric marking*, and *previewing*. These uses contribute to discourse organization and show the lectures' overall awareness of the comprehension and guidance needs of their audience.

Regarding the frequency of personal metatext markers, inclusive *we* was the most recurrent item in absolute terms and the most common pronoun among participants (found in all 15 TOEPAS performances). This distribution is difficult to relate to findings from existing studies of pronoun use in lectures in English-dominant and non-English-dominant settings because of the many variables that may affect the results. These variables include differences in the framework used to analyze the items, as well as contextual aspects such as discrepancies between EMI and non-EMI settings and cultural preferences. The impact of the simulated lecture online context may also have influenced the results.

Further studies are therefore needed to clarify these aspects and how microteaching affects metatext. During TOEPAS online, instructors could quite easily pretend to be in front of a 'real' audience and employ metadiscourse in ways that do not seem inauthentic from a qualitative perspective, as the examples included in this paper demonstrate. Participants were indeed instructed to act as naturally as possible and to behave on the test as they would do in class, and they met this requirement without major apparent obstacles. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that a change in the conditions of teaching will leave its mark in some way. Considering the predominant use of *previewing* and *reviewing* with personal metatext and the relatively low use of other functions, for example, one hypothesis is that due to the limited time available for the simulated lecture, i.e., 20 minutes, participants concentrate on the most salient interpersonal aspects of their teaching. In other words, simulated lectures may encourage the emphasis on core language functions. To elucidate this point, more language-oriented empirical research is needed, especially comparing simulated and real classroom performance, ideally complementing such studies with participant interviews.

Regarding the pedagogical implications of the current study, it emerged quite clearly that the ability to convey metadiscourse meanings ensuring lexico-grammatical as well as functional variation is associated with language proficiency. Reduced variety in the articulation of metadiscourse in EMI lectures was also observed in other studies (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2022; Zhang & Lo 2021) and attributed to L2 usage in general; the data discussed here further documented this aspect. In particular, at lower TOEPAS levels (especially, at level 20=B2), not only did participants recur to a more restricted repertoire of forms and syntactic structures, often reiterated verbatim, but they also seemed less comfortable with the anaphoric function of metatext. This aspect can constrain their delivery in significant ways, as we saw that *reviewing* is a more diversified function than *previewing*, which implies the ability to summarize, remind, reiterate, and also mark importance. These competencies are essential for teaching, and these results suggest that teacher education programs should take into account the complex but crucial relation between language skills and teaching practices,

proposing activities that raise awareness of such interplay and offer opportunities for language development when needed.

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Notes

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Note 2. Further information about the EMILC project can be found here: https://www.dipartimentolingue.unito.it/do/progetti.pl/Show?_id=gzpk

Note 3. The number of words was counted using Sketch Engine's 'Manage Corpus' function. Different corpus tools may count words differently depending on how they define this unit. For more details, see: https://www.sketchengine.eu/my_keywords/word/

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