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COMMUNICATION IN ENGLISH MEDIUM INSTRUCTION (EMI) CLASSES: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE USE OF REPETITION STRATEGY FOR MEANING CO-CONSTRUCTION

Huong Thi Lien Ngo, Phuong Le Hoang Ngo, Huy Van Nguyen

University of Foreign Language, Hue University, 57 Nguyen Khoa Chiem St., Hue, Vietnam

* Correspondence to **Le Phuong Hoang Ngo** < nlhphuong@hueuni.edu.vn>

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Abstract. The rising popularity of English-Medium Instruction (EMI) programs around the world has brought people of different linguacultural backgrounds into the same classroom. In such diverse settings, English is employed as a lingua franca (ELF) for academic communication. However, given the disparate levels of English and the academically demanding nature of higher education, many challenges exist that might hinder comprehension and cooperation in the classroom. For this reason, this paper seeks to investigate the use of repetition as a pragmatic strategy to facilitate ELF communication in EMI classes. The data was gathered from six lectures of a Business Administration course taught by an American lecturer to a class of third-year Economics-majored students, all of whom were Vietnamese. The resulting eighteen hours of classroom recording data were then transcribed and analyzed qualitatively. Findings reveal that various types of repetition were employed to realize seven specific means: highlight key information, organize discourse, elaborate on problematic terms, enhance clarity, show solidarity and alignment, improve mutual intelligibility, and show encouragement. This has pedagogical implications for training programs of both pre-service and in-service EMI lecturers.

Keywords: English as a medium of instruction (EMI), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), pragmatic strategies, repetition, Vietnam

1. Introduction: EMI in Vietnamese higher education

In an attempt to internationalize Higher Education (HE), English-medium instruction (EMI) programs have been increasingly introduced in universities around the world, including Vietnam. Since its first introduction in the 1990s, EMI has become a growing phenomenon in Vietnamese universities, with the number of programs rising sharply during the last few

decades under the support of recent governmental policies for HE internationalization [1]. For example, in 2018, there were more than 350 EMI programs nationwide officially registered with the Ministry of Education and Training [2]. In the Central area, Hue in particular, a current list of around 10 joint training programs can be found on the official website of Hue University (hueuni.edu.vn). These are all aimed at the shared goals of enhancing regional prestige, attracting international students and research support, boosting the college ranks, and ultimately improving the employability of local students.

In line with its popularity, EMI in Vietnam has attracted great attention from researchers, who have mainly investigated issues related to its implementation at macro-, meso-, and micro-levels. One of the prominent themes in existing studies is the linguistic challenges that lecturers and students face in their EMI engagement. In the race to attract both domestic and international students whose language levels certainly vary, many universities have set the language requirement bar low, compromising quality (students' learning outcomes) for quantity [3], [4]. Some universities do not even include English as a prerequisite for acceptance into their programs [5]. All of these factors have led to students' reported difficulties in comprehending lectures and learning materials, completing writing assignments, and exchanging ideas with classmates and instructors. Similarly, not all content lecturers could attain the linguistic and pedagogical competence required to become successful EMI instructors [6]. The inadequate English level, as well as professional knowledge among domestic lecturers, could impact the clarity and quality of the delivered content and hence, make lecturers struggle in their EMI lessons [7]. Accordingly, ensuring students' understanding of content knowledge, translanguaging, or the employment of all linguistic resources available in an EMI class has been found to be used quite often in EMI classes where both lecturers and students are Vietnamese. Previous studies [1], [8], [9] have presented evidence of translanguaging collected from lecturers' and students' interviews and classroom observation, showing the significant presence of Vietnamese. This, however, underlines the gap in the literature regarding communication in EMI classes where lecturers are not Vietnamese and students' language proficiency is not high enough for content comprehension. English in such a situation is used as a lingua franca, and without the aid of Vietnamese, both lecturers and students are supposed to employ different communicative and pedagogical strategies for lesson delivery.

Against that backdrop, the current study focuses on investigating repetition, a pragmatic strategy, employed in an EMI course from the perspective of English as a lingua franca (ELF). To be more specific, it aims to explore the frequency of repetition and how it supports ELF communication between an American lecturer and his Vietnamese students in a Business Administration course.

2. English as a lingua franca (ELF) communication and EMI settings

In general, ELF is defined as a "contact language" between interlocutors who do not share a native tongue or national culture, and thus English is employed as a bridge for international communication [10, p.240]. This should not be translated into the extreme exclusion of native speakers' (NS) presence, as suggested by earlier researchers such as House (1999) [11] and Mauranen (2003) [12]. Indeed, recent ELF linguists, notably Seidlhofer (2001, 2013) [13], [14], Ute (2010) [15], Suviniitty (2012) [16], Hynninen (2013) [17], and Kecskes (2019) [18] all have regarded NS as legitimate participants in ELF interaction. After all, they also use English as an instrument to communicate with other groups and thus their involvement in NS-NNS communication does reflect part of ELF nature.

The manifestation of ELF can be clearly seen in EMI contexts due to the international nature of both trends [18]. As mentioned above, due to the usually inadequate and disparate level of English proficiency within a class, ELF students often grapple with lecture comprehension and communication. Airey in her 2010 study on science-majored Swedish students similarly remarked that those with insufficient proficiency (below an initial threshold of competence in English) had difficulties following the lessons and carrying out the required tasks [19]. Even those with an adequate understanding of the content knowledge were, most of the time, not successful in getting themselves across or interacting with teachers and their international peers. This necessitates additional support from EMI lecturers in terms of language use, planning, delivery, and learner support so as to deliver the lecture in a comprehensible format [20]. However, not all teachers are aware of this. For example, six L2 EMI instructors in Griffiths and Beretta (1991) [21] study showed little or no adjustment when addressing their ELF learners who ranged from NS, high-proficiency L2 English users to low L2 English proficiency group.

This is understandable, as the main job of EMI instructors is to deliver disciplinary knowledge in English, and they are not language teachers per se. Therefore, they are typically not trained in English language teaching or applied linguistics to be aware of the struggle L2 learners might experience [7], [22]. Thus, it is suggested that in ELF academic lectures, both lecturers and students should be equipped with the ability to negotiate meaning and accommodate each other. However, this reality only slowly comes to the attention of academic communities and language professionals [23]. Therefore, more research focus should be directed to the accommodation strategies used in ELF lectures, i.e, how EMI instructors and learners facilitate information transfer and further, build rapport within their class. Among those, repetition plays an important role [23].

3. Repetition as an ELF pragmatic strategy in EMI settings

Repetition is generally regarded as an inefficient and redundant linguistic element employed when speakers stumble over words or fail to articulate their ideas. However, in ELF interactions, repetition has proved to be one of the salient and most powerful pragmatic strategies to ensure successful communication [24].

3.1. Forms and functions of repetition in ELF

Traditionally, in spoken language, repetition can be described as either immediate or delayed, depending on its time-lapsed relation to the original within a text [25]. Alternatively, based on the level of exactness [26], repetition can take the forms of: i) full repetition, or verbatim, where the exact form and meaning are preserved, ii) "repetition with variation" [25, p.54] or partial repetition where there might be some minor changes to the original utterances and iii) phrasing or reformulation which denotes the lexical replacement to express the same concept. For ELF interactions in particular, Lichtkoppler (2007) and Anesa (2020) [27], among others, have taken into account the participants and positioned repetition into: first, self-repetition, or same-speaker which is found to be predominant in lectures; and second, other-repetition, also referred to as allo-repetition which shows shared cooperation between the interactants. In the past, Anesa (2020) notices that more attention had been placed on dialogic repetition [28], [29], [30]. Not until recently has monologic reiteration been investigated more intensively in the studies of Kaur (2012) [31], Bjorkman (2014) [32], Lee (2016) [33] and Anesa (2020) [27]. It should be noted that though less evidently verbalized, self-repetition is dominant and contributes significantly to the co-construction of meaning [27]. Therefore, in this study, both types will be examined.

No matter what forms it takes, repetition assumes the proactive role in ELF to disambiguate a possible non-understanding, contributing to the co-construction of meaning. This revolves around three macro-functions of repetition, as suggested by Lichtkoppler (2007) [24], namely: production-oriented which facilitates the accomplishment of utterances; comprehension oriented which achieves mutual understanding; and interaction-oriented to show solidarity and participation. However, under these umbrella goals, multiple more specific functions have been discovered in ELF communication. It should be noted that the functions of repetition are innumerable [25] and the same instance of repetition can certainly fulfill many roles simultaneously.

3.2. Previous research of repetition in ELF academic settings

One of the earliest to look at this technique is Mauranen (2006) [28] who observed that repetition was used to signal and prevent misunderstandings. Her data is 5 hours of seminars

and conference recordings, taken out from the ELFA corpus (English as Lingua Franca in Academic settings). The speakers are mostly lecturers and senior students whose English proficiency is "adequate" with previous learning experience in ELF settings (p.153).

Example 1 (Mauranen, 2006):

1 S1: mean the Turkish immigrant community would naturally congregate and that's
2 the whole cause is that right?
3 S2: **eh congregate?**
4 S1: they would naturally form some of the groups and that's the only requirement
5 S2: oh that that that is another contradiction actually

Here, S2 repeats the problematic lexical item with a raised tone (line 3), insinuating S1 to paraphrase the term (line 4). Repetition is also used to buy interlocutors some time to ponder the question, and even the seemingly redundant repetition like *yeah*, as Mauranen pointed out, allows speakers some more time to consider the answer.

In a more detailed analysis of repetition, Lichtkoppler (2007) [24] scrutinized the conversations between faculty members and students about accommodation at an Austrian student exchange office, the data being compressed into a one-hour recording. She found out that repetition assumes six main roles, including time-gaining, utterance-developing, prominence-providing, ensuring accuracy of understanding, showing listenership, cohesion and borrowing. These findings were later corroborated by Watterson (2008) [29] whose research indicates that most ELF speakers relied on repetition to facilitate the production of language and show support and shared understanding with other interlocutors. This desire to cooperate and maintain rhythm with other speakers has also been noticed in Cogo's Ph.D. research (2009) [30] on the interaction of the university lecturers at a language center of London University.

Example 2 (Cogo, 2009):

1 K: actually…I didn't like Salzburg a lot… I think
2 it's very…very traditional
3 D: @@
4 K: it was nice to be there….[two days
5 D: [one day
6 K: **yeah**
7 D: **=it's small=**
8 K: **yeah it's small** and…people are very unfriendly there

When K mentions that 2 days is enough in Salzburg, D shows agreement by further suggesting that 1 day is already adequate. The repetition of "yeah" and "it's small" (line 8) from

K is a way to express her wish to align with D, which serves as a solidarity tool. There are multiple examples in which speakers keep repeating chunks of language produced by the other as a way to show their agreement and suggest affiliation. Interestingly, Cogo observes that one lecturer deliberately omits the preposition *the* and imitates the original utterance of her colleague "because of revolution", changing the speech style to show her intention to converge with the other.

The prominence-providing role is also observed in Bjorkman's study (2014) [32] on students' group work sessions in a Swedish university. Here, self-repetition acted as an explicitness strategy, making the meaning and intentions of speakers clearer (as illustrated in Example 3). Meanwhile, other repetition was deployed to achieve collaboration.

Example 3 (Bjorkman, 2014) [32]:

1 S1: So **how about your feeling about the last trip trip to the waste water**
2 **plant**
3 <NAME OF PLACE>
4 S4: Sorry
5 S1: **I mean we have already visited waster water plant of** <NAME OF
6 PLACE> **and how do you think it I mean do you have any feeling?**

In the above example, S4 "Sorry" (line 4) can be due to mishearing or not paying attention, after which S1 goes to length interpreting his question albeit the non-standard language. It can be seen that rephrasing is a more sophisticated form of repetition.

Turning the focus to Asian academic contexts, a few attempts can be found. One prominent research is from Kaur (2012) [31] intensive and exclusive investigation into repetition among students at a university in Malaysia. She found out that ELF postgraduates made use of both full-repetition and paraphrasing to reach a relative mutual understanding that allows the talk to move forward.

Example 4 (Kaur, 2012):

1 V: wherever their target groups are: located *it is no longer*
2 S: uhhuh
3 V: er distance is **no longer a barrier**,
4 S: yeah
5 V: distance is **no longer an impedi[ment**,
6 S: [yes
7 V: it is **no longer an obstruction**,
8 S: uhhuh

Here, self-repetition takes the form of listing, combined with paraphrasing and repeated structure (as in line 3,5,7). Besides the effect of intensification, this kind of keyword repetition also helps to draw listeners' attention to and familiarity with a specific item or piece of information. In addition, Kaur proposes that this parallel repetition and phrasing help accentuate clarity and comprehension for the recipients. Similarly, Ji (2022) [34] observes that Asian ELF speakers tend to elaborate on an abstract expression by providing more details after "I mean". Moreover, another highly sophisticated form of self-rephrasing is adding additional context so as to make the messages more explicit, thus allowing listeners to give a more focused answer. The two prominent roles, repetition for solidarity and clarification, are also reported among East Asian speakers, as seen in Lee doctoral dissertation [33].

It is worth noting that most repetition ELF research clusters in European areas, with a few prominent examples in Asian countries. More importantly, no attempt to investigate this phenomenon in Vietnam EMI classes has been recorded until now, at least to the knowledge of the researchers. Furthermore, even though previous studies are said to take place in academic settings, they do not involve conventional lectures, but rather focus on casual talks, seminars, conferences, and groupwork sessions. Given the EMI emergence in Vietnam where lectures play a central role on campus, this research is a timely response to further understanding into the nature of repetition, and at the same time shed light on its role in Vietnam's EMI lessons.

4. Methodology

The data used for the present study consist of six audio-recorded lectures spanning the first three weeks of June 2022 which resulted in 18 hours of naturally-occurring speech. The participants include an American professor with broad experiences in ELF interactions who came to teach the Strategic Management course at a University in Hue; and a total of 27 third-year students whose English proficiency ranges from A1-B1 according to the CEFR framework. Both the lecturer and students were informed of the researcher's presence and the data collection process. The lectures were delivered in an interactive mode rather than in monologues. The lessons often began with the lecturer reviewing any difficult concepts or clarifying any difficult parts in the reading materials. Besides, students were constantly encouraged to work in groups. The high level of interaction in this class reflects the nature of ELF [35].

The audio recordings were then manually transcribed with a focus on repetition strategies. That means, upon coming across an instance of repetition, the researchers carefully transcribed the whole text involving this strategy. All details such as pauses, overlapping speech, laughters, and hesitation markers like *er, ehm* were reported following the transcription

conventions. However, rather than attempting to examine all possible functions of repetition, only the recurrent themes that have significant contributions to communicative success were further analyzed [27]. Some functions of repetition in this study were congruent with those described earlier, whereas new roles also emerged. The crucial point at this stage is to identify "patterns and regularities before trying to categorize them in an interplay between existing descriptions and new interpretations" [24, p.51]. A detailed analysis of the prominent functions of repetition is revealed in the following section.

5. Findings and discussion

In line with previous research (e.g. Lichtkoppler, 2007 [24]; Kaur, 2012 [31]; Matsumoto, 2018 [36]), repetition has also been one of the most rigorously applied by ELF users in this study. Six main functions have been identified: to accentuate key information, organize discourse, elaborate on disciplinary concepts, (employed mostly by teachers), enhance clarity, show alignment and synchronicity, and improve mutual intelligibility (employed by both teacher and students). However, I would add that the lecturer subject here also adopted repetition to show encouragement to his students. This aspect of repetition has rarely been recorded in existing ELF literature, and hence will be explained further in the sub-section 5.7 below.

5.1. Repetition to highlight key information

This can be in two forms: keyword repetition (Extract 1,2) and parallel phrasing (Extract 3,4).

Extract 1:

L: Ehm, let me show you this example. The whole point of **viral marketing** is you have **zero advertise advertizing** budget xxx you want your customers to **spread words** out about the product. So let me give you an example that was 10 years ago *[search Google]* […] People send their friends that lead to their website, right? One friend to another friend to another friend, so we can **spread the products by word of mouth**. **Zero advertizing, zero advertizing model**. […] This is an example of **viral marketing**.

Extract 2:

1 L: So, this is a good example ehm, for this **interdependence business model**.
2 This **interdependence model** is very important in technical product […]
3 So, this is the 4 types of revenue streams, and I think the most important
4 one is **interdependence**.

In Extract 1, the lecturer was trying to exemplify one of the marketing tactics to the students. He repeated twice the phrases *viral marketing* (lines 1 & 8*)*, and *spread words* (lines 3 & 6*)*, and three times for *zero advertizing* (lines 2 & 7). In this way, the lecturer seems to draw students' attention to what he deems crucial in the concept of viral marketing and also register the idea longer in their memory. This 'prominence-providing' repetition [24, p.55] shows the highly accommodating skill of the lecturer in guiding hearers on what to focus.

Similarly, in Extract 2, the lecturer started by stating that "interdependence model is important..", and then went on giving explanations. He concluded by repeating the keywords, which points the hearers back to the initial message [26]. By providing another hearing of the phrases, especially abstract ones, L somewhat facilitates his students' access to the idea which might otherwise have been unfamiliar.

Extract 3:

1 L: […] **If you have 4**, *[draw on board]* 1,2,3,4,5,6. 6 people you can call. **If**
2 **you have 5**, I'm not gonna draw this, you have 10. I think it's (.) 10, yes.
3 And **if you have n people**, the equation would be n *[writes n (n+1)/2 on*
4 *board*.
5 […] **the more** customers you have, **the more** valuable your products
6 become
7 […] **the greater** the number of buyers, sellers, or users**, the greater** the
8 network effect—and **the greater** the value created by the offering.

Here, L repeated the grammatical structures, creating a patterned rhythm [25]. Especially, within just a short snippet (Extract 3), L made intensive use of the parallel comparison structure, showing his effort to explain the notion of network effect. Seeing that the traditional, textbook definition does not make a lot of sense, L put out constant effort to clarify the idea of network effect for students, using examples and parallel phrasing *If you have* and *the more*, *the*

greater. Tannen (1987) [25] comments that these similar structures, intonation and rhythm result in not only aesthetics and intensification, but also enhanced understanding of the recipients.

5.2. Repetition to organize discourse

This function of repetition usually takes the form of parallel phrasing and has also been observed in Anesa's research (2020) [27].

Extract 4:

1 L: I need you to put the information of the first competitor into the first

2 column, the second column competitor number 2, the third number 3.

3 Finance, marketing, everything that you know about the competitor

L in Extract 4 recycled the structures so as to economically draw the students on what to do with the task. This illustrates that repetition can take the form of listing, which allows students to keep track of the speech while making it more explicit for them to understand new concepts.

5.3. Repetition to elaborate on disciplinary concepts

Extract 5:

When breakdowns in communication are due to non-understanding, phrasing is a more effective way to deal with the issue as it enhances the clarity of the message [31]. Also, the frequent use of reformulation among lecturer and learners in this study also corroborates Watterson (2008) [29] finding that ELF speakers tend to rely on this technique for comprehension problems. As for the functions, Kaur observes that most other ELF participants also employ this explicitness strategy to improve mutual understanding in their interactions. These are also found in my study, in addition to elucidating problematic concepts.

1 L: […] Number 6 **common pitfall well the word pitfall. A pitfall is** a

2 danger, or a risk or a trap. If there's an English word that you don't

3 remember, feel free to ask or go to a translation or eh…So, common pitfalls

4 in industry analysis include […]

These examples show that L could pre-empt the problematic concepts for his students and offer an interpretation right after. As clearly seen in line 1, when checking the assignments with the class, L stopped at question 6 and the term "common pitfall". He instinctively

identified that this word could cause trouble of misunderstanding and thus paraphrased the term in simpler language "a trap, a risk". He even encouraged the students to "ask or go to a translation", making sure that they understood the concepts before moving on. This is in line with Ji's finding (2022) [34] that most self-phrased strategies are employed by Asian speakers to explain an abstract expression

5.4. Repetition to enhance clarity

Similarly, "utterance-developing" repetition, which is often intertwined with reformulation [24 p.53] was used by both the lecturer and students to make their intentions more intelligible. This clearly shows the pragmatic competence of both in the sense that they can predict the problematic source and modify their language accordingly.

Extract 6:

1 Ngan: Uh uhm in my opinion, I think that sometimes you need to **change the**

2 **products**, eh emh to **increase the products value**, eh so (2) that eh may

3 change the […]

4 L: […] and it's **not a long**, eh it's quite easy **it's pretty short** xxxx

Here, the lecturer was asking how firework manufacturers could improve their power, and Ngan, after some hesitation, replaced "change the products" with a more specific idea "increase the product value" (lines 2 and 3). This lexical substitute shows her attempt to make the message more explicit and avoid being too general; whereas in line 4, the Professor paraphrased "not a long" into "pretty short". This repetition of the message, albeit in different words, acts as a reassurance for students.

5.5. Repetition to show alignment and confirmation

This is the salient function and often takes the form of other repetition. Here, both the lecturer and students have been found to reiterate fully or partially of what the other said, showing a high degree of mutual collaboration to facilitate rhythm and synchronicity. This echoes the results of Lee (2013) [37] and Bjorkman (2014) [32] in which their ELF participants adopted this other-repetition, whereby converged to other interlocutors and enhanced explicitness.

Extract 7:

1 L: If you need any 5 or 10 minutes for the quiz, or if you have any questions,

2 now is the time to ask. Any questions? Ehm How long do you need to

3 complete the team assignment?

4 Ss: **10 minutes**

5 L: **10 minutes.** That's okay.

Similar instances to Extract 7 are dominant in this study, with the lecturer repeating the prior utterances of students before explaining further or giving comments. Here, when most students answered "10 minutes", L acknowledged and showed agreement by repeating "10 minutes", followed by clearer acceptance "That's okay".

Extract 8:

1 L: *[talking about competition in the firework industry*] ehm could you guess if
2 the competition in this case will be low or high or medium?
3 Tam: I think eh the competition is high eh eh (.) because there's no (.) *bằng sáng*
4 *chế là chi hè? {What is the English word for bằng sáng chế?}=*
5 Dung: =**patent**
6 Tam: er no patent. **There's no patent, patent** eh
7 Nhan: protection, **patent protection**
8 Tam: **There's no patent protection**.

This extract shows a successful communicative collaboration among the students which involves code-switching, utterance completion and a lot of repetition to help construct the answer. The class was discussing factors affecting the competition in the firework industry which was also part of their homework reading. Besides, at the beginning of the class, the professor had summarized several key elements including patents. In her attempt to answer the question, Tam stuttered to find the Vietnamese equivalent for 'patent'. Upon her request for a Vietnamese translation (lines 3,4), Dung immediately cued the wanted term (line 5), for which Tam accepted and used in her following utterance. Next, after Nhan gave the complete "patent protection" (line 7), Tam repeated the suggested phrase without any hesitation. This kind of repetition after a language problem has been resolved can boost consensus and solidary among all interlocutors [30].

5.6. Repetition to improve mutual intelligibility (other-rephrasing)

Extract 9:

1 Nga: *[working in groups]* We think we will need to work together, we work
2 more time
3 L: oh oh **so the discussion isn't over**, ok. That's fine, it's difficult to answer

4 the xxxx questions.

5 […]

6 Huan: I think this don't necessary the explanation because it's here

7 M: **You think it doesn't need an explanation because it's obvious?** I agree. I

8 agree, yes.

In line 1, Nga wanted to express that her team had not finished the discussion and thus needed more time to work on the assignment. Even though her expressions did not make the message very clear, L got her intent and rephrased that into "the discussion isn't over" to make sure he understood it right. In doing so, L confirmed the mutual understanding. Also in the group work, Huan wanted to express that it is not necessary to provide an explanation for the question. In line 7, L basically paraphrased Huan's prior utterance, from the "here" reference in the handout (line 6) to "obvious" (line 8), making it clearer and showing his agreement to the request. Plenty of examples of other-rephrasing can be found in my corpus. Typically, L would rephrase the students' idea, usually by beginning with "Oh, so you think…", "…Is that what you're saying?", "I'm not sure if I understand it right, so you mean that…", "Ehm so your point is….". These function as signs of active engagement in the conversation, rather than just assisting the speakers with lexical choices [34], highlighting a high level of mutual cooperation among participants.

5.7. Repetition to show encouragement

Not only that, the following examples are the most powerful evidence of L's effort to not only align with but also reassure and encourage his students. This function has rarely been mentioned in previous studies.

Extract 10:

1 L: *[asked which can be potential enterers to the firework industry]*

2 Duyen: Government manufacture?

3 L: Er I don't know. I mean **maybe** they want to, but **maybe, maybe**.

4 […]

5 L: *[stopped at one group's handout and pointed at their answer]* So this is this

6 **is an important player, so this is definitely one important player**.

7 My question is, do you consider them your buyers?

In Extract 10, even though Duyen provided an unlikely potential enterer, the Professor did not refute her argument immediately to avoid discouraging her (Duyen is a shy student who rarely gives answers in front of the class). Instead, he changed from "I don't know" to repeatedly saying "maybe" (line 3) to reassure her that this can be a possibility, thereby giving her more confidence to answer next time. This, I believe, is a high-level and timely pragmatic strategy to save face and show support for other interlocutors. Similarly, in line 5, L reassured the group of students that their choice is correct by repeating "an important player…definitely one important player" before shifting to another question. Again, this shows that the speakers want to signal their affiliation to the previous interlocutors [38].

In summary, it can be seen that repetition is a conspicuous feature, occuring in various forms in the data. More importantly, this strategy was employed much more frequently by the lecturer than his students. This is understandable as previously mentioned, the lecturer has had extensive experiences with ELF and thus is more likely to deploy repetition, along with other pragmatic strategies to ensure communicative success. Meanwhile, the low English level of the student participants, plus their limited talking time during classes, could explain for the far fewer instances of their repetition uses recorded in the data. Another point is that, while repetition is occasionally adopted as a way to keep the floor in political talks [39] and groupwork discussions [31], this function was not observed in our research. This can be due to the collaborative nature of academic lectures where participants work together towards a common goal of mutual understanding, rather than arguing and claiming turns [39]. In addition, the high frequency and variety of repetition used by the American lecturer in the current study also show that he was aware and made effort to accommodate his students. This is contrary to the observation of Jenkin in a UK university (2014) [40], that NS lecturers were less sympathetic and did not know how to accommodate. In this sense, it can be said that the NS lecturer in this research had positioned himself as an ELF user and thus could modify his speech to be more comprehensible to his audience.

6. Conclusion and implications

This paper sets out to observe the multifaceted role of repetition in EMI lectures. It has been found out that repetition does play an important role in not only the meaning co-construction process but also solidarity and encouragement. Specifically, the lecturer mostly employed self-repetition to enhance the explicitness of his instructions as well as pre-empt and modify any possible linguistic problems. In addition, both the lecturer and students could rely on repetition, particularly rephrasing to show their alignment and achieve mutual

understanding. In other words, repetition in this case has proved to be a highly pragmatic strategy to overcome and remedy the linguistic challenges in ELF communication. This highlights the importance and potential of repetition as it has the power to "facilitate the production and comprehension of language, and to provide interaction-oriented information" [24, p.61]. Strategies like repetition are what make ELF interaction successful, and thus should be upheld. This also has implications for EMI teacher trainers and lecturers to develop comparable skills of repetition when teaching international students, if they are to better accommodate and interact with their students [16]. Further studies could also develop the quantitative and contrastive analysis of repetition used in lectures of different disciplines where NNS lecturers are present and ELF communication occur. Last but not least, this study is hoped to contribute to the continuation and development of research into repetition.

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