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Book review: Sánchez-García, D., Sánchez-Hernández, A., & Dafouz, E. (Eds.). (2026). *Navigating disciplinary literacies in English-medium higher education. Insights from lecturers, students, and professional developers.* Routledge

Marta Aguilar-Pérez

Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain

This book is a long-awaited volume on disciplinary literacies in English-Medium higher education (EME), showcasing findings from the research project SHIFT[1] and the fruitful collaboration of its members with other researchers. As stated by the editors, the volume fills the gap of addressing students' experiences and languages needs in EME research, in particular the study of disciplinary literacies, which are defined as "the set of discipline-specific skills and communication practices that students require to navigate and engage effectively with disciplinary practices in both global and local contexts" (Dafouz et al., 2023: 3). Connected to this need, professional developers are also placed center stage, given their facilitating role in helping EME lecturers become aware of students' needs. Framing disciplinary literacy within the dimensions embraced in English-medium education in multilingual university settings (EMEMUS) (Dafouz & Smit, 2016, 2020) effectively allows to tackle the multilingual university settings and the role of languages in education, particularly English, when language learning occurs incidentally. Disciplinary literacy is studied from both the lens of a final product text and as the process of all teaching and learning activities that are quintessential in the development of disciplinary knowledge.

The volume is divided into three parts. The first part sets the scene with two opening chapters; the former (authored by Sánchez-García and Sánchez-Hernandez) provides a very well supported and updated context and introduction to disciplinary literacy in EME, a necessary chapter for all readers, regardless of their expertise. The latter (Chapter 2) offers a three-pronged conceptual model for approaching disciplinary literacy in EME

[1] The SHIFT project (*Understanding the Internationalisation of Higher Education from the Student Perspective: A Longitudinal Examination of Disciplinary Literacies in English- medium Education*) is an international collaborative initiative that unites researchers from five different universities in Austria and Spain. The project was funded by the Spanish Ministry of Research, Development and Innovation (Grant Reference: PID2019- 103862RB- 100).

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Corresponding author: marta.aguilar@upc.edu

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settings, as summarized below. The second part revolves around disciplinary literacy in the classroom (Chapters 3 to 10), and finally the third part deals with teacher development in disciplinary literacy (Chapters 11 to 15). The chapters in the volume are authored by well-known researchers within EME as well as by early- and mid-career authors, thus connecting researchers from the SHIFT research project with other experts in disciplinary literacy from different places, with Europe and the global north being clearly represented.

I would like to begin by pointing to the three-strand conceptual model outlined in Chapter 2 written by Dafouz, Hüttner and Smit. The model comprehensively caters for those language practices that feature relevant aspects in disciplinary literacies in EME, identifying three main strands. The first strand refers to the linguistic or multimodal expressions of thought patterns as appropriate for a specific discipline that students need to access to acculturate to the discipline. The second embraces those language practices used to develop knowledge, that aspect of disciplinary literacy that students learn while learning disciplinary knowledge, among which we find multimodal expressions, discourse functions or all linguistic practices present in classroom interaction. The third relates to those "language practices to display expertise, which represent the targeted expert communicative practices" (page 24) and which display the disciplinary literacy and genre knowledge (Tardy et al., 2020) of students when they convey (write or speak) the contents they have learnt, more often than not, productions in class or to be assessed. The three types of language practices embody the layers involved in the process of disciplinary literacy development and socialization that students undergo and, for this reason, the tripartite model clearly has the potential of becoming an indispensable tool for EME teachers, researchers, and professional developers to enhance students' development of subject matter together with linguistic, genre or vocabulary learning. Ultimately, the outcome is expected to positively impact the quality of EME given the direct impact that mastery of disciplinary literacy seems to have on academic achievement (McQuillan, 2016).

In the second part, *DLs in the classroom: Lecturer and student perspectives and practices*, a wide range of studies using different research and pedagogical methodologies can be found. Here chapters sharing similar content will be presented together. In Chapter 3, for instance, Dafouz, Komori-Glatz and Moore illustrate the accurate methodological process the researchers followed in a step-by-step manner to elicit EME teachers and students' views on their skills and practices as well as on their understanding of disciplinary literacies. Business and economics, different soft and hard science disciplines, different conceptualizations, skills and genres emerge across different courses. Interestingly, some teachers expect students to automatically transfer their literacy from their mother tongue and mostly aim at developing their students' higher-level and critical thinking whereas students' ordeal resides in meeting basic task-based learning outcomes rather than developing a specific skill.

A mixed-methods design is used in Chapter 4 by Birch-Becaas and Pagèze to delve into how French students develop their disciplinary literacy in English for specific purposes (ESP) and EME learning environments. This is done by examining students, ESP specialists,

and disciplinary teachers. Worth mentioning is their proposal of ESP and disciplinary teachers co-teaching and how they identify the risk that language learning models (LLMs) and Artificial Intelligence are pushing universities toward "simplistic solutions that pitch EME against ESP (…) in an either/or approach" (page 86).

Apart from providing findings that point to the need to make the implicit explicit, chapters suggest that attention to disciplinary literacy should also combine awareness of various practices, registers and genres in order to develop resourceful and capable speakers. In this way, performing a discipline-based needs analysis is proposed in Chapter 9. Here, Yuksel and Altay analyze the language needs and challenges of Turkish students with different English language skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening), comparing English-medium instruction (EMI) engineering students with EMI international relations students. This chapter reveals that speaking is the most challenging skill, followed by writing. Productive skills, therefore, remain a common area of difficulty, hinting that EMI programs need to address these challenges through targeted support, regardless of students' level of English proficiency.

The lack of impact of academic year on the students' view of disciplinary literacy development (Chapter 6) is an interesting and surprising finding as well, pointing to the need to pay more attention to disciplinary literacy to gain an eagle's view of students' perceptions from beginning to end of their studies. In this chapter, Orduna Nocito suggests that older students do not perceive to have improved their communicative practices in English as they advanced in their studies and unveils, again, that speaking skills remain one of the skills students feel they have improved the least. Since findings show the low impact of the academic year, the author recommends that EME programs focus more explicitly on increasing students' awareness of disciplinary literacy and providing students with more cognitively demanding practices.

The role of language is paramount in almost all chapters. Chapter 5 by Soriano-Flórez explores, from a translanguaging perspective, the participants' subject literacy needs, beliefs and reported learning and practices, highlighting the need to foreground language and enhance disciplinary understanding by making it more explicit. Translanguaging is also analyzed in a Hispanic university in the Mexico-US border by Esquinca and Herrera-Rocha in Chapter 10, where Mexican-American engineering students are seen to develop multilingual language ecologies in the context of existing language policy, including disciplinary practices that draw on the full range of students' repertoires, in particular bi-literacy Hispanic-US. On another note, Chapter 7 examines the role of extramural English in two EME contexts (Spain and Austria), i.e., the role of the English that learners come in contact with outside the classroom. Departing from the assumption that extracurricular English also facilitates informal, incidental language learning in both productive and reception skills in similar ways to EME, Ghamarian-Krenn, Grau and Smit examine whether and how using English with parents or friends, watching TV or English movies, and reading papers in English exerts any influence on students' perception of belonging to an international group and their disciplinary practices. This chapter suggests that the

international profile and use of English students make in their personal life does have some effect because participants in both countries reveal a similar readiness to watch, read and play computer games in English at their own volition. Using English with friends has a slight positive effect on the perception of being part of an international but no other important correlations were identified, thus disproving the hypothesis of a dependency between extramural English and disciplinary literacy. Regarding the international profile development, the results resonate with Soria and Troisi's (2014) study on internationalization at home activities which seemed to positively influence students' development of global, intercultural and international competencies.

Chapter 8, another interesting and novel contribution in the volume, examines group work. More specifically, Kuteeva and Kaufhold explore the kind of English that is seen as appropriate, acceptable and functional in lingua-culturally diverse peer collaboration in Sweden. Because group work in an EME setting is expected to develop disciplinary literacy among students, those group work activities aiming at producing assignment texts require and entail discussions and recontextualization of content into a written assignment. These peer interaction and discussions do not exist without tensions around regulating language, making the connection between intercultural communicative competence and groupwork in EME discernible. Indeed, such peer interaction and negotiation usually allow for more diversity in language uses and yet the eventual written assignment is likely to be written in a standard variety of academic English. Among the strategies deployed by students to solve communicative problems in these EME group work activities, the authors identify solving disagreements, negotiating relationships, navigating roles (leadership roles) or workload.

Finally, the third and last part on *teacher professional development and disciplinary literacies in English-medium education* is made up of five chapters which, roughly speaking, advocate for disciplinary oracy as an important part of disciplinary literacy, claiming for the adoption of a plurilingual genre-based approach to academic writing and for an informed writing practice toward genre knowledge. This second part thus seeks to provide EME lecturers and professional developers with insights that help them "see their roles as one of socialising students into the discourse of their discipline" (Airey, 2011: 50).

More specifically, a point is made in Chapter 11 in order to accommodate disciplinary oracy and feedback to disciplinary literacy at a Swiss bi- and multi-lingual university. The chapter is a narrative account of the author's personal experience when teaching an elective professional development module to EME lecturers. Schaller-Schwaner documents EME lecturers' apprehension of focusing on language and reluctance toward the need to focus on the *E* (i.e., English). Highlighting that language is always present in teaching and learning, this author also argues for the need to raise awareness of recognizing oral class discussion as a form of teaching and source of learning. The chapter seeks to help lecturers improve their skills in order to engage in discussions in a more informal and

conversational register, grab attention, reduce speed, create redundancy, explicitness, and predictability, and emphasize key concepts among other strategies inherent to good teaching.

In Chapter 12, Zhang describes how synergy between English for academic purposes (EAP) and EME lectures can be created in Australian teacher education, making the case for the ideal position EME lecturers are in to teach disciplinary literacies. The step-by step explanation of how disciplinary literacy and numeracy can be taught in a genre by EME content teachers is worth highlighting. Disciplinary teachers' frequent complaints about the lack of time and priority of covering disciplinary content first are taken into account but the difficulty in establishing a collaboration between EME-EAP in some institutions may need to be acknowledged.

Genres are an excellent site for teaching disciplinary literacy in a professional development course, as Mancho-Barés, Khan and Vraciu illustrate. Adding a plurilingual layer to the previous chapters, this rigorous study takes a plurilingual genre-based approach to academic writing and pinpoints some useful guidelines for disciplinary literacy-oriented teacher training. Exploring the centrality of disciplinary genres in higher education discourse communities and the role of plurilingualism in fostering students' plurilingual genre-based literacy, this chapter argues for an EMI teacher training geared towards raising lecturers' awareness of plurilingual disciplinary literacy. The analysis of three out of the four years in a Bachelor's program reveals missed opportunities to cater for students' plurilingual disciplinary literacy, possibly due to lack of coordination and communication across the whole Bachelor's program. The lack of a sequence genre chain across subjects, with no progression from first to final year, results in some genres being over- or underrepresented.

Chapter 14 *had to* appear at the end of the volume. It is after the knowledge accrued about disciplinary literacies in the volume that we are ready to process the deep epistemological, ontological and linguistic discussion about the extent to which we teach cross- and transdisciplinary literacies to our students in our current higher education institutions. In this chapter, Gustafsson gives food for thought when we are made to realize that forward-looking academics will need to be prepared to think beyond one's own professional specialization. Indeed, readers are pushed to reflect on how lecturers teaching cross-disciplinary literacies in double degrees on, for example, medicine and mechanics, should deeply understand and embrace cross-disciplinary literacy. The author reinstates the idea that we need to let our students know that, as active agents in generating new discourses, they may need to be ready to work with uncertainty and imprecision temporarily. This is a stimulating chapter where the elusive notion of disciplinary literacy in a cross-disciplinary context is discussed.

Finally, the volume wraps up with an excellent review itself, Chapter 15. This last chapter summarizes and weaves an excellent discursive thread that binds the volume, streamlining its main strength and value, a coda for navigating disciplinary literacies. Its author, Dalton-Puffer, points to the fact that the written genre remains the most studied

aspect of disciplinary literacy, followed by oracy. Lamenting that the volume reflects this reality, the author also points to the fact that the semiotic nature of disciplinary literacies "does not surface to a significant degree in EME participants' verbalizations about their practices" (page 318) and that the instructors in the studies tend to disregard and relegate the role of educational genres because their professional identity of academics and researchers drives them to prioritize what is important for their students to develop. Chapter 15 particularly highlights the contribution made by Dafouz, Huettner and Smit in Chapter 2 when proposing a model that embraces the basic purposes that disciplinary literacy language practices may have in EME: i) accessing the disciplinary community; ii) developing knowledge structures/constructing disciplinary content; and iii) displaying expertise. The model complements other disciplinary models and can be applicable in many areas.

As Dalton-Puffer rightly says, the volume serves as an agenda of improving the teaching and learning experience in EMEMUS and points to avenues for action. The volume evidences how vibrant disciplinary literacy research is within English-medium education in higher education and identifies contradictions, needs, and limitations to address in disciplinary literacy in EME, steppingstones toward an inclusive and quality EME. For these reasons, the volume is a necessary read for researchers in the fields of disciplinary literacies, EME and bilingual education, as well as for professional developers interested in literacy and English-medium instruction. Among the future avenues, I would like to underline the following paths: the need to research oral disciplinary literacies (Chapters 6 and 9 identified speaking as the most difficult skills for students), the impact of Artificial Intelligence on disciplinary literacy in EME (only mentioned in Chapter 4), and recent developments in higher education around digital teaching modalities in EME now on the rise, like COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) and Virtual Exchange (Hackett et al., 2024). The last two were incipient when the volume was being developed but they emerge as future directions within disciplinary literacy in EME research.

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