English-medium instruction (EMI) has become a growing phenomenon in higher education. Although the EMI studies have shed light on identity-practice relations (Tange, 2010) and conceptualization of teacher identity (Preisler, 2008; Soren, 2013), they may focus on hard science rather than soft science. In response to Neumann’s (2001) call for research on the influence of disciplinary difference on teaching practice (see also Kuteeva & Airey, 2014), this paper aims to reveal the complexity of teacher identity in soft science by drawing on partial data from an on-going project on university instructors’ construction of teacher identity and EMI practices. Participants were 8 nonnative English-speaking (NNES) university instructors in humanities and social science in Taiwan. Data were collected through individual interviews and card-sorting activities and analyzed through Constant Comparison Method (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The initial categories and codes were then reorganized based on Pennington’s (2015) frames in TESOL and van Leeuween’s (2008) types of legitimization. The results showed that university instructors used four frames to self-position in the EMI context: personality frames attenuated the individual, vocational or ideal aspect of identity justified by moral evaluation; practice-related frames referred to the commitment to transmitting pedagogical content knowledge via English legitimatized by rewarding narrative; management-related frames referred to instructors’ roles and dilemmas in institutions justified by authorization; and profession-related frames stressed the importance of dissemination and transformation of knowledge in professional, local, and global contexts legitimatized by rationalization. Unlike the positive or negative self-images presented in Soren (2013) or Tange (2010), this study suggests an ambiguous attitude toward the use of EMI and hence diversity in content and frames of teacher identity in the EMI context. The frames perspective contributes to an understanding of teacher identity in response to internationalization of higher education and points out directions for future research, policy making, and pedagogy.

Keywords: teacher identity, English-medium instruction (EMI).