



English Medium Instruction Practices in Higher Education: Introduction

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With the exponential growth of English Medium Instruction (EMI) in higher education on a global scale, so too do we see exponential growth of EMI research. EMI has become one of the most significant global phenomena in higher education in non-Anglophone contexts this century. Growing EMI research reveals, however, that policy implementation, and the driving forces behind this, are certainly not uniform across the globe. Given the diversity of EMI contexts, this is both unsurprising and a welcome endeavour given the complexities of educational contexts, sociolinguistic landscapes, and the different disciplines of EMI. While some contexts have witnessed a backlash against EMI and a return to national languages, overall, EMI provision is growing globally. Provision continues to outpace research, but as a growing field of study, EMI research is providing increasing insights into EMI policy implementation, or EMI *practices*, and revealing how these vary at the national or regional (macro), institutional (meso) and classroom (micro) levels.

Our edited volume responds to the need for a global exploration of EMI *practices*. In a sense, it responds to the need for large-scale needs analysis of EMI in different contexts, to showcase differences, and some commonalities of course, in policy implementation. In doing so, we provide insights into various driving forces, perceived benefits, approaches to policy implementation, challenges, and responses to EMI in various contexts around the globe via different levels of analysis.

EMI has become commonplace in many educational policies around the world and subject to mass government funding. Dedicated research centres (<http://www.emi.network/>) and online communities of practice (<https://globalenglishes-emi.network/>), journals (*Journal of English Medium Instruction* publishing from 2022) and a quickly growing number of full-length books and edited volumes also demonstrate both the status of this phenomenon/interest and growing interest in this field. While EMI, by definition, might be expected to primarily involve educational policy researchers, the majority of research has fallen within the broad field of Applied Linguistics (and recent publications have also examined the impact of EMI on the field – see e.g., Galloway and Rose, 2021). The use of English to teach university subjects across various disciplines means that there are implications for the entire university as the issues surrounding it (politics, pedagogy, etc.) are interdisciplinary.

The growth of EMI research and provision has seen the development of EMI as a research paradigm, both in its own right and one that has implications for several paradigms. English, the global lingua franca of academia, the dominant language of the academy taking the lion's share of academic outputs, and now a language increasingly replacing national languages as a

medium of instruction, has very much become synonymous with internationalization, sometimes referred to as Englishization, in higher education. As evidenced by the range of chapters in this volume, EMI practices have educational, political, societal, economic and cultural consequences, impacts, and implications.

Approaches to EMI policy implementation (i.e., EMI in practice)

Given the differences in definitions, conceptualizations, and driving forces of EMI, it is unsurprising that policy implementation varies widely. EMI provision is growing (backlash and a return to national languages does exist), but this growth, or policy implementation rather, is not universal. As Curle et al. (2020: 11) note:

Factors which influence the implementation of EMI include the driving forces behind its introduction, language education policies, provisions for language support, and language proficiency requirements for students and staff. EMI programmes can also vary in terms of how much English is used for teaching and learning in the curriculum.

Some key driving forces behind EMI policy, including policies and language-use, have been kindled by (post-)colonialism and globalization. As the teaching of content in English in response to bottom-up EMI initiatives (such as in the Netherlands and northern Europe) or top-down EMI policy (much of the rest of the world) it takes on different forms. EMI practices have been decontextualized from the Anglophone sphere and recontextualized in regions sometimes both socio-historically and socio-politically far removed from that sphere. As the influence of English as a global lingua franca persists, governments and educational institutions alike will continue to encourage younger generations to improve their English proficiency through EMI for competition in a global market (Rose and McKinley, 2018). It is important, then, to explore what this encouragement means for putting EMI into practice in different regional contexts.

EMI practice relates to the goals of a programme. However, these are not always clear, nor do explicit policy implementation guidelines always exist. Language learning objectives are also often implicit, making EMI appear, at the outset at least, different from other content-based approaches to teaching English such as Content and Language Integrated Learning, or CLIL (Rose and Galloway, 2019). EMI programmes also often require specific English proficiency levels for admission (e.g., McKinley, Rose, and Zhou, 2021), whereas CLIL programmes typically specify a requisite language proficiency level for graduation (e.g., Arno-Macia and Mancho-Bares, 2015). However, many EMI programmes, such as those in Southeast Asia (Galloway and Sahan, forthcoming) also have such graduation requirements. It is a complex situation. Some universities are explicit with their goals, others appear to assume that language skills are a “by-product” of studying content in English (Taguchi, 2014).

Several researchers have discussed EMI practice using Macaro’s (2018) three models of EMI: the preparatory year, the institutional support and the pre-institutional selection model. In the preparatory year model, students take long intensive EAP courses before studying through the medium of English. In universities where language proficiency is assumed to be higher, the institutional support model offers modified content courses at the start, supported with EAP or ESP courses. Language support is reduced over time as students start to take more content courses in English. The pre-institutional selection model provides limited language support, using English language entrance requirements to select students. More

recently, Sahan, Rose, and Macaro (2021) discovered four variations of EMI implementation, based on a study in Turkey, with varying levels of L1 and English language use and interaction.

Other scholars have provided categorizations of types of EMI provision, such as Brown's (2014) six types of EMI programs (based on how the programs were organized and implemented), Kudo and Hashimoto's (2011) categorization of EMI programs based on the university's approach to internationalization, Richards and Pun's (2021) typology of EMI (based on 51 features across ten EMI curriculum categories), and Shimauchi's (2012, 2016) categorization of EMI implementation based on the students served by the programs. Others place EMI programmes on a continuum from English language teaching to content instruction in English (Met, 1998; Thompson and McKinley, 2018; Rose and Galloway, 2021; and others), which problematize definitions of EMI and the implementation of top-down EMI policy in different contexts. These continuums are helpful to see how EMI policy is conceptualized in different ways: as a pedagogical approach to delivering subject matter in some contexts, and closely linked with goals to improve English proficiency in others.

These categorization schemes highlight diversity in EMI practice as to how EMI policy is being implemented, to exemplify different interpretations of implementing EMI in higher education. EMI policy implementation may be explored at the national or regional, institutional or classroom level, using a variety of research tools (policy analysis, stakeholders' conceptualizations of EMI, observations of EMI in practice, context analysis). But there is an imbalance of research at these levels. The 21 chapters in this volume respond to this need for an equal examination of macro-, meso- and micro-level EMI implementation in different contexts. EMI policy implementation has struggled to avoid unrealistic expectations and disappointment. It is hoped that this volume will provide insights into context-specific problems that can inspire potential solutions.

Book organization

It is unsurprising that EMI policies and practices vary significantly given the global scale of EMI. We acknowledge that *EMI practice* is very context-dependent and, as Macaro, Sahan and Rose (2021: 2) point out, this diversity in policy and practice is “potentially a welcome situation given the complexity of the different contexts in which EMI is being promoted”. In this edited volume, our authors do highlight some commonalities in policy implementation, but the chapters mostly provide an in-depth understanding of evolving interpretations and current policies regarding EMI in higher education, showcasing how EMI practices vary widely.

Chapters focus on Europe (EMI strongholds Denmark and the Netherlands, but also Austria, Estonia, Italy, and Poland), as well as growth areas in South, Southeast, Central and East Asia (Bangladesh, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Nepal, the South Caucasus, and Vietnam), the Middle East and Africa (Ethiopia, Kuwait, South Africa, Tunisia, and Turkey), and Latin America (Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico). With seven chapters at each level, we cover a broad range of regional contexts. Each chapter includes an introduction to frame the chapter, an overview of EMI policy in context to highlight extant EMI research on the region, and a focused analysis, which in the meso and micro chapters present the studies conducted by the contributor(s). These chapters comprise a comprehensive volume of EMI in practice in different contexts, and each chapter ends with a discussion of implications for researchers and practitioners to consider in light of the whole volume.

Macro-level analysis

The macro-level chapters provide insights into moves towards EMI in diverse contexts considering English/foreign language policies and national-level EMI—or English taught programmes (ETP) and English medium education (EME)—initiatives through policy scans, questionnaires, and interviews with senior management and Ministries of Education.

Hamid and Al Amin explore the dominance of EMI in higher education in Bangladesh, a context where EMI has been associated with colonial rule but has expanded in the past three decades with implementation in private universities. Through an overview of the implementation of EMI across public and private higher education sectors, they highlight educational, social and socio-cultural consequences of EMI. The next two chapters are more recent EMI contexts in the largest countries in their regions, but they are starkly different. Martinez and Cibele Palma examine rapidly growing EMI in Brazil. They provide a synthesis of EMI driving forces, and posit what directions it may take, and why, based on existing policy, current demographics and emerging trends. Next, Zhou and Rose deliver a helpful overview of the vast EMI implementation in Mainland China, providing clarity around the issues associated with its exponential growth of EMI programs, specifically learner development, needs and agency.

We then shift to the first of the two EMI stronghold contexts in our volume: Denmark. Hultgren explores the rise of EMI at Danish universities in Denmark, clarifying its position as a pioneer of EMI practices. But Hultgren also argues that the rise of EMI in Denmark has been accidental, as a result of performance-based funding systems and the European harmonization project. It is an important note for emerging EMI contexts not to attempt to model EMI practices on such origin contexts as Denmark.

The next two contexts are infrequently mentioned in EMI literature, but they provide important bases for arguments around injustices of EMI. Simie, having grown up and been educated in Ethiopia, describes a complex, highly multilingual context where, although never colonized, English has been the medium of instruction since the first higher education institution was opened just over 70 years ago. Despite wide expansion of universities, poor proficiency continues to weaken the quality of education. Next, Sah, originally from and educated in Nepal, provides an overview of EMI of the South Asian country with a very similar timeline to Ethiopia for EMI in higher education. But as a post-colonial context, EMI expansion has led to different concerns. Through a sociohistorical contextualization, Sah explains that neoliberal forces weigh heavily on EMI policy and practices with significant implications for local language ecology.

The macro section closes with the only national context outside of East Asia that has seen considerable investigation into EMI policy, and more recently, EMI practices. Sahan evaluates partial EMI programs in Turkish higher education with consideration given to English proficiency and language support for teachers and students, comparing this with all-English EMI programs. The implications for the two different models may be far-reaching, particularly for emerging EMI contexts.

Meso-analysis of EMI

Our meso-level analysis includes chapters focusing on EMI programme offerings at the institutional level in Austria, Colombia, Estonia, Italy, Poland, South Africa, and Vietnam. Meso-level analysis may also include policy scans, website analysis, questionnaires, and

interviews (and other qualitative data collection techniques), but not only with senior managers – also EMI programme coordinators and directors, as well as teachers and students.

The first two chapters in this section take critical perspectives of institutional-level EMI to reveal valuable insights. Starting in the ‘heart of Europe’, Smit and Komori-Glatz explore EMI policy at the institution level in Austria. Critical of a ‘laissez-faire approach’ of EMI in Austria at the macro-level, that sees the presence of English as an unquestioned reality, they highlight key examples in a range of institutions taking pro-active approaches to EMI implementation. Next is the second of our three Latin American countries in the volume, the relatively underexplored context of Colombia. Miranda and Molina-Naar profile growing trends for EMI in Colombian universities. They explore EMI initiatives in public and private universities across four main cities in the country to provide a critical appraisal of the appropriateness of EMI in the Colombian higher education context.

Three diverse European contexts make up the next three chapters. Soler delves into the ideological critiques of EMI to arrive at a more positive outlook for EMI in Estonia. By analysing the linguistic representations in recent public exchanges in different media on the question of language in Estonian higher education, he draws on the ongoing polarization of Estonian and English to reveal an evolution of the debates since 2012. Now aligning more with Nordic countries, developments in EMI in Estonia are in tandem with socio-political changes. We move then to Italy, where Costa and Grassi present their study of lecturer needs by exploring their perspectives before and after a n EMI teacher training program at an Italian university. Lecturer experiences highlighted in the chapter are illustrative of the context, offering potential insights for similar contexts. Onto Poland, Mikolajewska and Mikolajewska emphasize in their chapter the scarcity of research on EMI in Polish higher education. As such, they provide a useful overview of the current situation in Poland. Maintaining a focus on EMI practices, they illustrate the understanding and implementation of EMI at the institutional level.

Next, van der Walt explores the effectiveness of EMI at the institutional level in South Africa for preparing higher education students for their professions. She argues for the need to include African languages against the dominance of English, but acknowledges considerable challenges, notably presented by students’ negative attitudes toward other languages, although attitudes are known to improve in professional environments. She presents a strong argument for the inclusion of additional languages in EMI.

Closing out the section, Nguyen provides a systematic historical overview of EMI policy and practice in Vietnam. Although English has been the medium of instruction for some postgraduate degrees since the 1990s and undergraduate degrees since the 2000s, regulations in government legislation has lacked the specificity to inform practices. Examples of university responses to EMI policies show a range of approaches, with potential applications to contexts outside ASEAN.

Micro-analysis of EMI:

In our final section, the authors analyse EMI as it is implemented in classrooms in the South Caucasus, Hong Kong, Japan, Kuwait, Mexico, the Netherlands, and Tunisia.

The first three chapters in this section provide optimism towards EMI in rather different contexts. Covering Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, Linn first outlines the relevant South

Caucasus higher education context before providing an overview of his team's research into students', teachers', university administrators' and Ministry colleagues' experiences of EMI. The focus of the study is on the voices of students, recorded via free text questionnaire responses. The positive voices counter the often-negative tone of EMI research. Next, Siu and Lin highlight EMI students' and teachers' creativity and trans-semiotic agency in Hong Kong, thanks to allowances for translanguaging, drawing on multiple semiotic resources. We then move onto EMI success stories from Japan. Aizawa, Curle and Thompson provide evidence through student interviews of not only their EMI challenges, but also their ability to gain content knowledge through EMI.

Concerns about content knowledge acquisition in EMI raise both problems and solutions. Alazemi and Alenezi establish an important argument concerning top-down EMI policy in Kuwait with directly transferable findings for similar contexts. In their investigation of EMI classrooms, they conclude that the policy fails to recognize students' limited comprehension in English lectures having studied solely in Arabic until entering university, limiting their acquisition of content knowledge. Offering a potential solution to such a problem, Escalona Sibaja and Zamarrón Pérez highlight the effectiveness of an immersion course developed for pre-sessional students at a bilingual international and sustainable university in Mexico. They conclude their study with recommendations for improving the EMI program with implications for similar contexts.

Next, we move to the second of our two stronghold countries. In their study at a university in the Netherlands, Wilkinson and Gabriëls explore EMI glocalization, noting the Englishization of Dutch higher education as a result of the quick expansion of EMI. They argue that this Englishization reflects the impact of neoliberalism on higher education, particularly due to the commodification of education and research.

The final chapter of the volume considers the impact of EMI in Tunisia on employability. Badwan argues that EMI has many perceived benefits, but there are also uncertain consequences as it is unclear whether the skills developed are actually needed or valued in the job market, where Arabic and French are the dominant languages.

Final thoughts

This book stems out of our own first-hand experience working in EMI universities in Japan and our identification of the need for more research to strike a better balance of all three levels of analysis with key stakeholders. EMI growth worldwide is truly phenomenal, and our aim with this volume is to respond to the need for evolving understanding of current practices and conceptualizations, of EMI policy in global contexts. The authors utilize a variety of methods in their studies and as such, this volume also aims to foster research. EMI is a complex, interdisciplinary field, and while the authors are all operating in the field of Applied Linguistics, it is also hoped that the volume will foster future essential interdisciplinary research on this growing global phenomenon. While provision is still outpacing research, the field of EMI continues to grow, with very different outcomes. Our book aims to highlight the complexities across contexts, but also any common denominators in *EMI in practice*. We hope this volume can be a useful resource for the growing body of EMI researchers and to those operating in the fields of Applied Linguistics, EMI and the internationalization of higher education and language policy.

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