

Book review: The practice of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) around the world

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1. Introduction

The Practice of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) around the World examines the international application of EMI, emphasizing its adoption in diverse locations such as Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The book analyzes the motives, advantages, obstacles, and solutions associated with EMI from the viewpoints of both teachers and students. Every chapter offers a summary of regional settings, policies, and practices, highlighting the necessity for efficient planning, teacher training, and student assistance. Regardless of varied cultural and linguistic contexts, shared objectives encompass the enhancement of English proficiency, the improvement of employability, and the augmentation of global competitiveness. The book globally finishes with suggestions for enhancing EMI application internationally.

2. Summary of the book

In the introduction of the book, Griffiths (2023) noted that “The Practice of EMI around the World,” features 11 chapters that discuss the application of EMI in various locations worldwide, such as Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Specifically, every chapter critically examines previous research and presents new investigations conducted in various

settings. Moreover, the book focuses on the lack of extensive research on the efficacy and difficulties of EMI. Its goal, therefore, is to achieve theoretical rigor and clarity in defining EMI in connection with ideas such as Content-Based Instruction and Content and Language Integrated Learning. In addition, every chapter comprises a comprehensive examination of existing literature, a thorough presentation of the study, the obtained results, a detailed discussion, the potential ramifications, and recommendations for future research. Furthermore, the research employs different methods to investigate the motivations, benefits, challenges, and suggestions associated with EMI from both instructors and students. Notably, the regional studies offer valuable perspectives on the distinct contexts and difficulties related to EMI. In terms of coverage, the book concentrates on various regions, including Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), the Middle East, North Africa, Western and Southern Europe, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, Latin America, Central and Eastern Europe, East Asia, South Asia, and the Nordic and Baltic States. Finally, the book ends with a comparative meta-analysis of data from different areas. As a result, catering to policymakers, institutional leaders, graduate students, and academics, this collection provides significant insights into the practices of EMI and contributes to the development of educational policy and practice.

In the next chapter, Griffiths (2023) reviewed the practice of EMI around the world. Specifically, the author notes that the chapter explores the utilization of EMI in all the aforementioned domains and analyzes the commonalities and distinctions. This inquiry, therefore, aims to propose a comprehensive definition of EMI that is applicable in many circumstances and to explore the reasons for its adoption. Additionally, it seeks to identify the perceived benefits of EMI, provide advice for its effective implementation, and address the obstacles associated with it.

In line with this, Nel and Ssentanda (2023) authored an EMI chapter in SSA. In particular, this chapter provides a concise definition and a concise history of the evolution of the medium of instruction in SSA, a comprehensive overview of the policies that govern the language of instruction in selected SSA countries, and a detailed explanation of their implementation in teacher preparation. Moreover, the chapter highlights the EMI disputes in higher education and the education sector by drawing on systematic studies and scholarly research conducted within SSA contexts. To deepen the analysis, the authors also conducted a paper on a multi-site case study to further investigate EMI problems in SSA.

Similarly, Kırkgöz et al. (2023) noted that the Middle East has also seen the EMI trend, which is consistent with worldwide trends. Using educators' and students' perspectives on EMI use, this chapter provides a thorough summary of research on Middle Eastern nations' EMI policies. Specifically, in the Turkish settings, research is also carried out in a public institution to verify the results obtained locally and regionally. Furthermore, a discourse on the perspectives of educators and students, the perceived obstacles, and suggested approaches to address those obstacles is showcased.

In a related context, Salama (2023) highlighted that the assumption that English is the international language and that EMI would improve students' English proficiency and give them better opportunities in today's competitive job market has led to rapid changes in EMI implementation in the North African region, which is the subject of this chapter. However, this chapter underscores that there is currently a dearth of empirical research demonstrating the efficacy of EMI in this setting, and this quick acceptance of EMI is frequently unfounded in theory or beneficial pedagogical practice. To address this, the chapter describes research that was carried out at one Egyptian university to investigate instructors' and students' perceptions of its importance and use in the classroom.

Meanwhile, Gavriilidou and Mitits (2023) noted that certain nations in Western and Southern Europe, including Italy, Spain, and France, have a long history of using EMI, while other countries, such as Croatia, Serbia, and North Macedonia, seem to have fewer studies about this topic. Following this, a small-scale qualitative case study of EMI practices in Greek public universities is presented after the chapter's comprehensive review of the relevant literature. As a result, the authors offer recommendations for further field study and some initial conclusions for the area.

According to another perspective, Hajar et al. (2023) noted that despite their parents enrolling them in an EMI school, the students gradually recognized that this experience facilitated their development as English language users and simplified the visualization of their aspirational future selves concerning academic, professional, and intercultural achievements. Simultaneously, the educators derive considerable satisfaction from engaging with clever and self-motivated students in an EMI setting, facilitating their development into the individuals they aim to become.

Correspondingly, Siregar et al. (2023) noted that Southeast Asia has witnessed a surge in the popularity of EMI. In this chapter, the perspectives and behaviors of EMI students and instructors within the context of Indonesian higher education are examined. It is found that both overt and covert rules at their schools addressed the requirement for English usage, the difficulties associated with EMI teaching and learning in both online and in-person settings, and the various, situation-specific solutions to those difficulties. The findings thus indicate that to provide instructors with the tools they need to teach English successfully, there is a need for professional development on EMI.

Similarly, Aliaga-Salas and Pérez-Andrade (2023) examined how EMI is being implemented in Latin America from the viewpoints of educators and learners. Although Latin American EMI is still relatively new and is not widely used, there seems to be an increasing enthusiasm in these nations to apply this strategy. In support of this, participants provide information on their experiences in EMI courses, as well as the possibilities and problems they faced and how they overcame them, using an open-ended questionnaire. Nevertheless, although EMI is seen by both groups as a strategy that increases mobility and cooperation opportunities, students' limited English proficiency may have a detrimental impact on its implementation.

In terms of Central and Eastern Europe, Pawlak and Papaja (2023) identified the following countries as part of the region: Austria, Belarus, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Kosovo, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Moldova, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, Switzerland, and Ukraine. To elaborate, this chapter provides an overview of key issues related to EMI in the region. The first section, therefore, addresses contextual factors and briefly outlines selected policies and research findings. Subsequently, the second section presents the results of a study exploring the perceptions of Polish university students and instructors regarding EMI.

Turning to East Asia, Sano et al. (2023) revealed that this region is home to a sizable and diversified population as well as a vast geographical area. In this chapter, the EMI situation is reviewed in the context of this larger region, unique research undertaken in Japan is presented, and its implications are addressed. The results suggest that students enroll in EMI courses to enhance their employability and English skills, while instructors' most common response when asked the same question was that they did not "choose" the courses; rather, their institution needed them. Consequently, numerous challenges are identified, and some suggestions are made for resolving those challenges.

Concerning South Asia, Padwad et al. (2023) presented an overview of EMI in several South Asian nations: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. Although these nations have distinct socio-cultural traits, they also share historical, cultural, and social aspects. As a result, the EMI scenario in these nations reflects both shared and distinctive characteristics. The chapter, therefore, begins with a national overview of EMI before discussing the results of two small-scale studies on instructors' and students' opinions regarding EMI conducted in Sri Lanka and India.

In another regional analysis, Dikilitaş and Griffiths (2023) reviewed existing literature on the use of English-Medium Instruction (EMI) in the Nordic countries (e.g., Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and Iceland) and the Baltic states (e.g., Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania). In addition, they presented findings from a small-scale study conducted at a Norwegian university involving both instructors and students. Specifically, the study explored motivations for choosing to work or study in an EMI environment, perceived benefits and drawbacks, and strategies for addressing the challenges. The chapter, finally, concludes with a discussion of the implications and offers recommendations for future research.

To synthesize the findings, Kök (2023) aimed to compile the knowledge from other chapters about the condition of EMI in various global areas. Interestingly, findings seem to be very consistent, despite the geographic, cultural, and linguistic differences across these regions. That is, EMI is prized as a way to advance English as the world's language franca, to get worldwide recognition, and to profit from the money it brings in. However, the issues are also acknowledged concerning how they affect regional languages and cultures, as well as the issues brought about by insufficient planning, lack of assistance, and typically poor skill levels on the side of both instructors and students. Accordingly, the chapter ends with recommendations for providing better support to instructors and students.

3. Analysis and evaluation

The book *The Practice of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) around the World* offers a comprehensive analysis of EMI across various regions. It highlights common goals like improving English proficiency and global competitiveness while addressing challenges such as inadequate planning, limited research, and cultural impacts. Each chapter presents regional perspectives, emphasizing teacher training, student support, and policy development. Despite diverse contexts, consistent themes include the need for stronger institutional support and more research on EMI's effectiveness.

3.1. Themes and style

The book explores themes of global competitiveness, English proficiency, cultural impacts, teacher training, and policy development. Its style is analytical and comparative, combining regional case studies with critical insights to highlight both common challenges and diverse approaches to EMI implementation worldwide.

3.2. Contributions

The book contributes to understanding global EMI practices by offering regional insights, highlighting shared challenges and benefits, and providing practical recommendations for policymakers, educators, and researchers to enhance EMI implementation and effectiveness.

3.3. Cohesion and structure

The book is well-structured, with cohesive chapters that follow a consistent format, literature review, research findings, and recommendations, allowing for easy comparison of EMI practices across regions while maintaining a clear, logical flow throughout.

4. Personal reflection

Reading the book has broadened our understanding of the complexities and multifaceted nature of EMI implementation across diverse contexts. The book highlights the importance of considering institutional policies, teacher preparedness, student needs, and cultural factors when implementing EMI. It has deepened our appreciation for the necessity of adequate planning, ongoing support for educators, and the balance between promoting English proficiency and preserving local languages and identities. This reflection encourages us to critically examine EMI practices in Cambodia's higher education system and explore how best to address context-specific challenges.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the book provides a comprehensive and insightful exploration of EMI practices across various global contexts. It emphasizes the need for effective policies, teacher training, and contextual adaptation to ensure successful implementation. The book highlights both the benefits and challenges of EMI, urging a balanced approach that respects local languages and cultures while enhancing global competitiveness. This collection serves as a valuable resource for educators, policymakers, and researchers looking to deepen their understanding of EMI and contribute to its improvement in diverse educational settings.

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Keywords and definitions

English medium instruction (EMI) refers to the practice of using the English language to teach academic subjects in countries or regions where the majority language is not English.

Higher education is third-level education after you leave school. It takes place at universities and Further Education colleges and normally includes undergraduate and postgraduate study. Higher education gives you the chance to study a subject you are interested in and can boost your career prospects and earning potential.

Global competitiveness refers to a nation's or a company's ability to successfully compete in the international marketplace, characterized by producing high-quality goods and services at reasonable costs and achieving satisfactory returns.

Teacher training encompasses the structured programs and processes designed to equip individuals with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to become effective educators. It involves both pre-service (before entering the profession) and in-service (ongoing professional development) training.

Educational policies are the rules, guidelines, and strategies governments and educational organizations implement to manage and improve education systems, encompassing everything from curriculum to funding and teacher training.