



**EMI TEACHER
DEVELOPMENT:
EVIDENCE FROM A
GLOBAL STUDY**

Dr. Kari Sahan

Workshop I: Teacher
Development

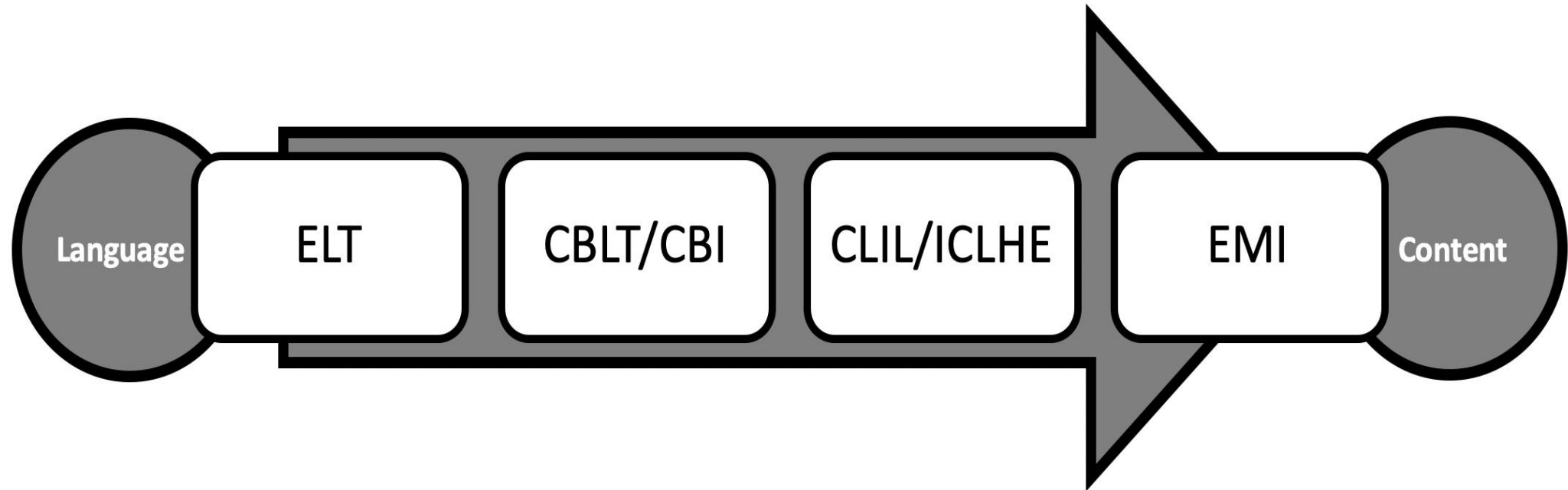
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BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

What is English medium instruction?

- EMI refers to **“the use of the English language to teach academic subjects (other than English itself) in countries or jurisdictions where the first language of the majority of the population is not English.”** (Macaro et al., 2018, p. 37)
 - Ex: Physics in Japan; Psychology in Turkey; International relations in China
- EMI is similar to other types of content & language educational approaches but with a key difference:
 - Main focus = content subject

Continuum of approaches to language and content teaching (Galloway & Rose, 2020)



"In EMI courses English is the conduit through which content subjects are delivered: students acquire knowledge of content material while, ideally, also improving their English language proficiency. **Key to distinguishing EMI from other methods is the ancillary role of English language development—a side effect of instruction rather than an explicit pedagogical target.**" (Briggs & Smith, 2017, p. 28)

A GLOBAL LOOK AT EMI

- Growth of EMI worldwide has been called an **‘unstoppable train’** (Macaro, 2015)
- Much of what we understand about EMI is at the national level, with **little research exploring EMI across global regions** (see Wächter & Maiworm, 2014; Sandstrom & Neghina, 2017 in Europe)
- Research has largely overlooked low- and middle-income nations, especially those of the **Global South**

EMI TEACHERS

EMI comes with **challenges** for both teachers and students:

- Often have little say in **the decision to teach through English** or develop EMI policies (Hu & Lei, 2014; Soren, 2013)
- Many EMI teachers do not feel **linguistically confident** to teach their subjects through English – teaching requires different competencies than reading or writing about an academic subject in English (Macaro et al., 2021)

Support structures: teacher requirements & professional development??

DISCUSSION QUESTION

What **requirements** (e.g., language proficiency or professional criteria) are in place for EMI teachers in your university context?

STEPS:

1

Think and make notes on your own

2

Talk to a partner or in a group of 3

3

Share your ideas in the chat

THE STUDY: AIMS & OVERVIEW



TeachingEnglish

Global mapping of English as a medium of instruction in higher education: 2020 and beyond

Kari Sahan, Agata Mikolajewska, Heath Rose, Ernesto Macaro, Mark Searle, Ikuya Aizawa, Siyang Zhou and Ann Veitch



- Main aim: to investigate the current situation with regards to **the introduction and expansion of EMI in HE**
- Focus on emerging contexts: included **52 countries** designated as recipient countries on the Official Development Assistance (ODA) list
- Today: **focus on EMI university teachers**

THE STUDY: METHODS

Stage 1

Country responses

- Open-ended questionnaires distributed to 'informed respondents' of 52 ODA countries – Responses from 45 countries

Stage 2

Website analysis

- Content analysis conducted on HEI websites, with a sample of two HEIs per country – in total, 104 HEI websites from 52 countries

Stage 3

Survey of key players analysis

- Online survey distributed to key institutional players at HEIs in the 52 ODA countries – Responses from 227 universities in 42 countries

FINDINGS: MAIN THEMES

Profile of EMI
teachers

Language
proficiency
requirements

Professional
requirements
& hiring
criteria

Teacher
professional
development
(TPD) and
support

FINDINGS: STAGE I (COUNTRY RESPONSES)

- **EMI Teacher Profile: Mostly local, bilingual staff** who speak the dominant language of the students.
 - In 19 countries (42.2%): +90% of teaching staff were local/bilingual teachers
 - In another 16 countries (35.6%): >50% of teaching staff were local/bilingual teachers
- **English language proficiency requirements: not common**
 - Only 11 respondents reported proficiency requirements in their country
 - Typically assessed through an international (e.g. IELTS or TOEFL), national or in-house exam.
 - Level: sometimes min. B2; sometimes each HEI set its own criteria.

FINDINGS: STAGE I (COUNTRY RESPONSES, CONT.)

- **Professional requirements:** primary requirement was **academic content knowledge**, e.g., a postgraduate degree in the subject area.
 - *For example:* In China, EMI teachers are often required to have study or work experience overseas
- **Teacher professional development: not common**
 - Only 12 respondents knew of TPD provisions for EMI teachers in their country
 - *Examples:* in-house training sessions, English language support courses, opportunities to go abroad

FINDINGS: STAGE 2 (WEBSITE ANALYSIS)


- **English language proficiency requirements: limited information**
 - 46.2% of HEI websites had info on hiring criteria
 - Only 16 HEI websites (15.4%) had info on teacher English language proficiency requirements
 - Often vague, e.g., *‘excellent command of English’*, *‘degree from abroad’*
 - Some HEIs stated a preference for teachers with degrees from *‘English-language universities’* overseas (e.g., Iraq, Morocco)
 - Only one HEI requested specific exam scores for teaching staff on its website (**Hanoi University of Science and Technology in Vietnam, IELTS 5.5+/IELTS 6.0+**)
 - Admin staff: info on only 15 HEI websites (14.4%)

FINDINGS: STAGE 2 (WEBSITE ANALYSIS, CONT.)

- **TPD & Support: limited information**
 - *TPD*: 37 HEI websites (35.6%), generally not specific to EMI, e.g., language support or pedagogy courses
 - *English language support*: 16 HEI websites (15.4%), aimed at improving teachers' general English proficiency through language courses or in-service training
 - Some HEI websites indicated a TPD unit existed but did not provide information on training offered
 - **Only one HEI website reported TPD specific to EMI lecturers** (University of Colombo, Sri Lanka)

FINDINGS: STAGE 3 (SURVEY)

- **TPD and Support:** the most common forms of support for EMI teachers were
 - External courses (63.0%)
 - Online training materials (51.5%)
 - In-house training (49.3%)
 - Mentoring (45.8%)
 - EMI teacher certification (37.0%) (e.g., **Universidad del Pacifico in Peru**)
- **Focus on English language proficiency:**
 - Support consisted of General English courses (e.g., Uzbekistan, Peru, Malaysia)
 - In-house training offered by English language centres (e.g., Kazakhstan, Brazil, Philippines)
 - Funding for faculty members to improve language/teaching skills (e.g., Thailand, Nigeria)



FINDINGS: STAGE 3 (SURVEY)

- **English language proficiency:** a challenge to EMI
 - The highest ranked difficulties include the **English language proficiency of teaching staff** (M=2.4), students (M=2.4), and administrative staff (M=2.5)
 - Regional comparisons: Latin America was more likely to report challenges related to teaching and administrative staff proficiency

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS



Teacher profile:

Most EMI teachers are local, bilingual teachers



Language proficiency requirements:

Not commonly reported, often in hiring criteria (e.g., good English). May be a potential challenge



Professional requirements:

Primarily focused on academic content knowledge, e.g., postgraduate degree – from a university abroad



TPD and support:

Primarily focused on English language skills rather than competencies needed to teach in English

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- *Teacher training and TPD opportunities* with respect to **the competencies needed to teach through English** were found to be limited.
- The hiring criteria for EMI teachers appeared to be similar to that required for lecturers teaching in the local language (e.g., a postgraduate degree in the subject area). This suggests that most HEIs do not consider **qualifications specific to teaching in English when appointing EMI lecturers**.
- While an adequate command of English is certainly necessary for teaching on EMI courses, **the professional needs of EMI teachers encompass more than general language proficiency** (de Diezmas and Barrera, 2021; Macaro, 2019), and EMI teachers would benefit from training or certification appropriate for EMI

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- *English language proficiency requirements* for teachers appeared less common than for students and were often vague or not clearly reported by HEIs. Teachers' English proficiency might also be a challenge to EMI implementation in some contexts.
- However, when setting teacher proficiency requirements, consider:
 - The **appropriateness of the threshold**: Do teachers still experience language-related challenges above the threshold? (research on students: see Aizawa & Rose, 2019; Aizawa et al., 2020)
 - And the **appropriateness of the assessment type**: Do international exams reflect teachers' language needs in EMI? (research on students: see Dimova, 2020)
- Teaching in English is different from reading, writing, or presenting at a conference in English (see Macaro et al., 2021)

DISCUSSION QUESTION

How do these findings relate to your university contexts? What is similar? What is different?

STEPS:

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CONCLUSION

- In terms of TPD and staff support, universities seem to prioritize language support but less has been done in terms of EMI pedagogy and pedagogical support. This suggests that **there is a need to consider TPD beyond language proficiency.**
- EMI is context specific, and EMI provision – including TPD – should be designed to match the local context
- To increase the visibility of EMI programmes, there is a need for **increased clarity of EMI provision**, including greater transparency of information on HEI websites



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THANK YOU
FOR LISTENING

Kari Sahan

kari.sahan@education.ox.ac.uk