

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

Carol Griffiths (Editor)

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Book Reviewers: Handan Erem Altın Kaya¹, and İsmail Yaman¹

¹ Ondokuz Mayıs University, Faculty of Education, Department of English Language Teaching, Türkiye

Correspondence Author: Handan Erem Altın Kaya, Körfez Mahallesi Kurupelit Kampüsü Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi, 55105, Samsun, Türkiye, e-mail: h.eraltn@gmail.com

1. Review

English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) can be described as a phenomenon used to teach the English language for academic purposes in countries where English is not the native language of the society. It is known that the course in which the EMI approach is used must be taught in English. The proficiency levels of the students are usually considered sufficient, and tertiary-level education is applied. For native-speaking countries such as the UK, USA, or Australia, it is easy to understand why EMI is a preferred term for their courses.

EMI has an essential position in non-native or post-colonial regions such as India, Hong Kong, etc., because they have strong bonds to the British model education system. The EMI method provides not only an opportunity to expose students to the English language but also fosters intercultural competence. While it has some benefits for both students and teachers, EMI also has some challenges and struggles for them to cope with.

The Practice of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) Around the World is a recent book that investigates the use of EMI in some parts of the world and examines similarities and differences. The book's target readership consists of students, teachers, researchers, and practitioners. The book was edited by Carol Griffiths and published in 2023 by Springer in Cham, Switzerland. It is 244 pages long and was written by 28 ELT researchers. This book is not designed chapter by chapter. It consists of studies that are conducted by different researchers all around the world. There are 11 studies that have used the same methods and instruments. Every study of the book presents an overview of the EMI in different parts of the world. Each of them belongs to one specific part of the world, and they focus on the attitudes toward English and the various practices of the EMI by investigating geographical, historical, and ideological factors. Therefore, this allows readers to make comparisons between sections easily. It can be clearly seen that the implications of the studies are discussed by the researchers of the studies, and they offer suggestions for further research and practice.

The book starts with an introduction and overview part to introduce the EMI and the organization of the book. This section was written by the editor of the book. The terminology and challenges of EMI have been expressed to the readers, and the aim of the book is also noted in this section.

There is a study belonging to the Sub-Saharan Africa part and another study that is conducted in North Africa. It can be clearly seen that the major factors in these areas are the lack of vocabulary knowledge, teacher training, and proficiency. In these regions, an EMI method is not based on its theory and successful pedagogical practice. Additionally, there is a need for evaluation of EMI programs to design appropriate and efficient frameworks that may help learners' academic achievements and performances. These studies also show the implications and suggestions for future research to adapt transformative and collaborative approaches.

In addition to Africa, there are other studies focused on some parts of Asia, such as Central Asia, East Asia, South Asia, and South East Asia. EMI has an essential approach for the parts of Asia. Students are interested in the EMI courses to improve their language skills. It can be inferred from the studies that the awareness of language education is increasing day by day, and the students in these regions have a high opinion of intercultural communication and employability. There is a government policy to increase international education standards and to gain proficiency. Although positive circumstances can be seen in these studies, there are some challenges and barriers to adapting the EMI. Teachers who apply the EMI do not have a chance to decide on the method because it is a mandatory system that they are not able to interfere or complain. Apart from that, cultural differences can be considered as a difficulty for both students and teachers.

In Europe, there are some studies related to EMI. In Western and Southern Europe, countries like Greece, Spain, and Italy are willing to adapt the EMI approach to their education system in order to attract international students and boost institutional reputation. In the other part of Europe, the Western-Southern side has emphasized the challenges of introducing EMI. Like the studies in Africa, it is possible to see both advantages and disadvantages of EMI in the European area. One of the main efforts is to enhance internationalization to make educational quality better. EMI offers not only educational benefits but also economic growth. The other focus of the region is increasing global competitiveness and accessing information more easily. Besides Western-Southern Europe, countries like Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, located in Eastern and Central Europe, have highlighted the importance of peer interaction while applying the EMI methods. Awareness and emotional development are other essential points to practice this approach. On the other hand, these studies show some disadvantages, such as lack of guidelines, cognitive overload, and financial resources. Despite these challenges, EMI has a crucial place in Europe to make a contribution to both academic excellence and social cohesion.

The combination of political, economic, and educational objectives affects the attitudes and adaptations to using the EMI approach in the Middle East. The studies in this part of the world are conducted in countries like Türkiye, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. Like in Europe, governments have some national policies to promote the EMI for internationalizing higher education.

Many universities in the region have collaborations or partnerships with Western institutes to develop EMI programs. However, English proficiency among students can be considered a significant challenge to apply the EMI. In addition to this, English language dominance raises concerns about the erosion of local languages and cultural identities.

The other study belongs to Nordic and Baltic countries, including Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Sweden, and concentrates on the effective integration of EMI into the language teaching process. One of the most essential implementations is that English is introduced at an early stage in the education system. As a result of this, the proficiency levels of the students are highly strong and acceptable. The active promotion of the government enhances global competitiveness, and their educational policies emphasize multilingualism. Like in the Middle East, the erosion of local language can be considered a challenge of the EMI. Apart from that, there is a need for continued investment in language support and curriculum to improve EMI programs in the region. It is crucial to make a balance between fulfilling the needs and sustaining success.

Last but not least, Latin American countries such as Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico have introduced EMI programs in prestigious public and private universities. Particularly in fields like business, engineering, and technology, perceive English as a valuable asset for international careers. Like in other studies, it can be clearly seen that the governments of these regions offer language policies based on the EMI to increase proficiency levels and employment rates. The major focus of the EMI method has a lot of advantages, but it also has some barriers and challenges to applying for this program. Socio-economic inequalities may cause a gap between students who can afford access to EMI education and those who cannot. Apart from that, cultural identities are affected by the increasing use of English in many fields. To maximize the benefits of EMI, Latin American countries must invest in language support and teacher training, and they offer equal opportunities for each student.

In the last part of the book, there is a meta-view section to compound the previous studies that have been included in the book. It can be considered a summary section to reflect the analysis and the understanding of the EMI programs and the different attitudes in multiple regions across the world. According to this book section, teachers' motivation can be considered a key figure in applying the EMI method properly. Additionally, government policies are crucial in utilizing this technique to increase intercultural awareness and facilitate collaboration. The section consists of the implications and suggestions for further research.

2. Conclusion

The Practice of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) Around the World apparently turns out to be a valuable resource for both ELT teachers and researchers. Firstly, it provides detailed data to analyze EMI programs in various parts of the world. It offers to make comparisons between countries to identify their policies and practices. Therefore, readers can clearly observe the advantages and disadvantages of the EMI. The book also enables readers to see practical studies that directly address the way EMI programs are practiced and their results. Alongside the rich study contents of the book, this prominent resource has one noticeable weak point: the practical and context-specific solutions to the challenges are limited. The book provides theoretical discussions and empirical studies on EMI. Still, it offers fewer actionable strategies and solutions that suggest overcoming challenges and barriers, such as teacher preparedness, student support, and linguistic equality. Additionally, it does not fully address the socio-economic inequalities that affect access to EMI, which may be of vital importance to policymakers and educators seeking more practical guidance on EMI.

Notwithstanding this justifiable weakness, the book presents strong aspects of the EMI, and it can be accepted as a valuable and helpful resource for ELT educators and researchers. To conclude, this worthy scientific work can undoubtedly be considered a handbook in the realm of language education.

Statement of Researchers

Researchers' contribution rate statement:	First Author: Conceptualization, Investigation, Methodology, Writing – original draft, Data curation, Formal analysis, Writing – review & editing, Visualization. Second Author: Supervision, Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing.
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Author Biographies

Handan Erem Altın Kaya is an MA student in the English Language Teaching Programme at Ondokuz Mayıs University. Born and raised in Ankara, she completed her primary and secondary education in the same city. She graduated from the Department of English Language and Literature at Karadeniz Technical University. Currently pursuing her MA, which she began in 2024, her research interests focus on language skills, pronunciation, mindfulness in ELT, and language anxiety, among other topics.

İsmail Yaman is an Assist. Prof. Dr. in the English Language Teaching Programme at Ondokuz Mayıs University. Born and raised in Samsun, the author received primary and secondary education in the same city; and then he graduated from the Department of Translation and Interpreting at Hacettepe University. He holds an MA degree from the ELT Programme at Ondokuz Mayıs University and a PhD degree from the ELT Programme at Gazi University. His research interests cover teaching language skills, the use of technology in the language classroom, and changing trends in language education.

3. References

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