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**Challenges in English Medium of Instruction
from the Teachers and Students' Eyes**

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ABSTRACT

The main concern of the current paper is to discuss English medium of instruction (EMI, henceforth) in all aspects with a particular focus on its challenges and difficulties reported by both students and teachers by discussing the relevant research studies. As EMI is gaining the greatest importance among the researchers, policy makers and educators; it is of crucial importance to clarify the main instructional problems during the implementation process in order to reach a clear understanding. Within this purpose, an integrative research study was undertaken by selecting five major works on the challenges of EMI within various contexts. Accordingly, these fundamental research studies were analyzed through document analysis in order to answer the main questions in this integrative research study which attempted to provide a comprehensive picture of EMI in Turkish context. As the interpretation of the qualitative data revealed the EMI policy had not only instructional challenges but also language related difficulties both for students and teaching staff.

Key Words: English medium instruction (EMI), instructional challenges.

1. Introduction

English being a lingua franca makes it necessary to implement EMI in universities as a result of globalization, internationalization and competitiveness (British Council, 2014). Other driving forces for EMI policy can be noted as staff mobility, student exchange (Coleman, 2006). Likewise, as stated by Wilkinson (2013), economic, social, political and educational factors have some sort of impact on the EMI expansion (Poyung & Hang-Yue, 2014). The effects of globalization and internationalization in addition to 'the development of a competitive market in higher education' have led the growth of EMI expansion (Doiz et al., 2013; Suviniity, 2012; Ament & Vidal, 2015). As Richard and Rodgers (2014) pinpointed, there is a shift from formal instruction towards 'more communicative, innovative, immersion and content based methods which lay the suitable ground for EMI expansion.

The body of the current integrative research review is going to be organized around three basic sections. The first section provides a background to EMI with regards to its roots and expansion in which Content Integrated Language Learning (CLIL) is also discussed in general terms. Following this, the rationale of EMI and its development in Turkish context is detailed leading to a comprehensive picture involving both the policy behind it and implementation process based on the literature review. Finally, the study highlights the challenges and problems one faces during EMI process with the light of some selected studies which produce the core body of data in this research.

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1.1. EMI Policy: its roots, expansion and current position

In an attempt to serve as background to the discussion of EMI, it is a must to have a look into the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). CLIL “refers to situations where subjects, or parts of subjects, are taught through a foreign language with dual-focused aims, namely the learning of content, and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language” (Marsh, 2000; Morell et al., 2014). EMI, as claimed to be more than a subset of CLIL, has been emerged from ideological, social, pedagogical and professional forces which have a significant impact on the language policies (Doiz et al., 2013; Wilkinson, 2013).

EMI is considered as a more sensitive issue because some believe that it is a threat to home culture (Po-yung & Hang-yue, 2014), some other scholars think that it is necessary to keep up with the competitiveness of the world (Coleman, 2006; Wilkinson, 2013). For example Israel, Senegal and Venezuela resisted to the EMI expansion for their wish to protect home culture, language and education system (British Council, 2014). For this reason, concerning classroom considerations, some core questions need to be clarified such as the complex processes of EMI, the impact of EMI on academic success and the language proficiency, and EMI practices alongside with its challenges in real classroom settings. Not only classroom applications of EMI but also the assessment of the success of an EMI program is worth discussion. Accordingly, to what extent academic success improves, what strategies are employed by the learners in EMI classrooms are other issues which arise in the discussions of EMI among various contexts.

As the main focus of the paper is on challenges and difficulties with regards to EMI, some negative concerns can be listed as low levels of knowledge of the subject studied, too much time to teach the curriculum through EMI (Kırkgöz, 2009; Kılıçkaya, 2006). Moreover, the challenges reported by the studies discussed all through the large scale study done by British Council touched on the following areas: a lack of clear guidelines for teaching through EMI and assessing, a lack of EMI teachers, the teacher language requirements with regards to competences (2014). Building on the mentioned position of EMI in the world, it is utmost importance to have a look at the historical overview of EMI in Turkish context with its policy benchmarks, perceptions of the stakeholders and challenges in mind as well.

1.2 Historical development of EMI in Turkey

In Turkey, with the major driving forces such as globalization, economics, politics, technology, English as a foreign language has gained great importance (Kırkgöz, 2007). In this regard, English is notably important in the context of educational settings from the primary level to the university level. That’s why many leading universities started to offer EMI in Turkey, to name Boğaziçi University, Middle East Technical University (Kırkgöz, 2007). The 1980s saw a need to implement an efficient foreign language policy as a result of the economic factors and globalization (Başibek, et al. 2014). As a consequence, Turkey gave the biggest importance to English because it is accepted as the lingua franca of the world. Similarly, during the mid 1980s the institutions offering EMI were popular. As reported by the Ministry of National Education, 193 English-medium secondary schools were present in the 1987-1988 academic years (Başibek, et al. 2014). In 2006-2007 academic years, a huge increase was observed in the number of schools offering EMI (717 private secondary schools and 415 Anatolian

high schools). Concerning universities, Coşkun (2013) noted that, of the 53 state universities in Turkey, 23 universities have EMI based courses. The language policy until 2002 was to perform an extensive language teaching in the state Anatolian High Schools; however it was abolished in 2003 since learners' poor performance in science and mathematics. After that the school subjects were started to be taught in Turkish. Therefore, the number of EMI programs at universities is increasing day by day (Gökmenoğlu & Gelmez-Burakgazi, 2013). These universities are considered as favourable by students who wish to get a higher career and study abroad (Gökmenoğlu & Gelmez-Burakgazi, 2013).

In terms of classroom considerations, identifying the problems and difficulties learners and teachers encounter during EMI in Turkish context is of worth discussion. As Kırkgöz (2009) noted, students were found to have difficulty in understanding main concepts in their subject area. Accordingly, the Turkish students stated a lack of understanding subject matter through EMI courses as challenges (Kırkgöz, 2005). There have been ongoing debates about the EMI with regards to its pros and cons all through the world. Some scholars regard themselves as against the EMI for the reasons as follows:

- 1) Reduced ability to understand concepts,
- 2) Low-level of knowledge about the subject studied,
- 3) Excessive consumption of time,
- 4) Feelings of alienation and separation,
- 5) The least amount of participation in the classes due to low level proficiency in English (Wächter & Maiworm, 2008; Mauranen, 2010 cited in Başıbek, et al. 2014).

Similarly, Kırkgöz (2009) highlighted in her study that students did not favour EMI courses as they considered these courses inadequate to learn academic subjects. Moreover, students' academic success decreases in EMI courses (Sert, 2008). Therefore, some teachers supported Turkish medium instruction (Kılıçkaya, 2006). Although a great number of studies mostly reveal negative sides of the EMI, still some fundamental figures from the field pay more attention to the positive sides of EMI with reference to "cross-cultural and mental development of the learners" (Alptekin, 2003 cited in Sert, 2008). Further, Macaro et al (2016) indicated that state universities offering EMI are regarded as more "prestigious" than the others.

In sum, significant number of studies has been devoted to the attitudes of different stakeholders towards EMI (Kılıçkaya, 2006) and the challenges and problems faced in EMI (Kırkgöz, 2014). The current study is quite fundamental as it provides a comprehensive picture showing the main instructional challenges encountered by teachers and language related problems of learners across different contexts through an integrative research design. Accordingly, the next part is devoted to discuss the basic identifying qualities of integrative research to reach a clear understanding of it.

2. Methodology

The researchers taking the integrative research study as the basis of their research evaluate selected studies with their major findings with an aim to reach a full picture on the issue under investigation by identifying the gaps for future research (Russel, 2011). As noted by Cooper (1998, cited in Russel, 2011) five stages can be listed in an integrative review process as follows: (1) problem formulation, (2) data collection or literature search, (3) evaluation of data, (4) data analysis, and (5) interpretation and

presentation of results (p.3). As a researcher, the integrative research reviewer should define a problem and research questions. Cooper (1998) notably states that the problem identification process leads to the definitions of variables. Secondly, the review process is handled in data collection and literature search. As a whole, at the core of the integrative research are two premises, one is focusing on the problem formulation while the second one is covering the literature search for the related problem in order to answer the research questions.

In this current integrative research study, so as to overcome one of the threats to validity which is inadequate sampling, some steps are taken such as involving detailed and comprehensive selection of the works in order to support the body of knowledge in this current paper. Moreover, this comprehensive selection for the basis of the study includes five articles conducted at different times with different group of participants employing different research methodologies which increases the external and internal validity, as well.

2.1. Materials

By sketching the recent body of cases and coverage, I cite only the selected works which took place in Turkish context below in order to shed light on the issue under investigation in this current paper.

Researcher	Data Sources	Research Questions	Main Findings
Yasemin Kırkgöz (2014) Students' Perceptions of English Language Versus Turkish Language Used As The Medium of Instruction in Higher Education in Turkey	Students	1. What challenges, if any, does the language used as the medium of instruction --EMI or TMI- pose for the final-year undergraduate engineering students' acquisition of disciplinary knowledge?	*The difficulty in understanding disciplinary knowledge * The difficulty in understanding specific details * Time consuming nature of EMI * The difficulty in understanding examination questions
Tuba Gökmenoğlu & Sevinç Gelmez-Burakgazi (2013) Designing English-Medium Classroom Management Course for Non-Natives	Instructors	1. What are the basic problems of the existing instructional processes of English-medium classroom management course?	* Finding cultural course materials * Lack of confidence among local students * Inconsistency between course content, * Unmotivated students
Nehir Sert (2008) The language of instruction dilemma in the Turkish context	Students Lecturers	1. How effectively do students think they acquire English language skills through EMI/formal English instruction?	* The difficulty in comprehending the meaning of the materials in English, * The difficulty in transferring it to the classroom activities through Turkish, * The difficulty in expressing their ideas in the exams in English.
Ferit Kılıçkaya (2006) Instructors' attitudes towards English-medium instruction in Turkey.	Instructors	1. What are the instructors' views as regards the English-medium instruction in Turkey? 2. What are the instructors' suggestions/alternatives as regards the English-medium instruction in Turkey?	*Instructors value Turkish-medium instruction over English medium one * Turkish as an instructional medium enhances student learning, in that they can cover the materials of the course faster and in greater depth. * Turkish-medium instruction is considered as having some problems related with the translation of special terms. * Mixing Turkish and English is also reported as beneficial while lecturing.
Yasemin Kırkgöz (2005) Motivation and Student Perception of Studying in an English-medium University	Students	1. How do first and final year students in an English medium university appraise their general English and specific purpose	*As for problems, nine themes were identified, including difficulty in understanding the general concepts and specific details in addition to the lack of ability for expressing ideas. The time

	language skills? 2. What problems do first and final year students perceive in studying through the medium of English?	consuming nature of EMI was also reported.
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In order to ensure internal and external validity, the rationale of choosing these research studies as the basis of the current paper is of utmost importance to note here. In this sense, as the selected studies suggest, they cover the EMI implementations in Turkish context with a greatest focus on language related problems learners face and further instructional challenges teachers encounter. This also provides a preliminary ground to establish the primary research questions of this study. For this integrative research study, the following research questions are formulated:

1. What are the language problems that students encounter during EMI?
2. What are the instructional challenges that teacher face during EMI?

The publications served as the core data of this study will be detailed in the following section.

2.2 Research Studies on EMI

Generally speaking, the main foci of the research studies in EMI lie in the perceptions of students (Kırkgöz, 2005) and teachers (Kılıçkaya, 2006), in addition to the problems during the implementation process (Gökmenoğlu & Gelmez- Burakgazi, 2013; Sert, 2008). However, up till now, there has been no integrative research study in Turkish context which analyzes the language related problems of students and instructional challenges faced by teachers as a general overview. For this reason, the central focus of this research paper is to serve as an overview covering the challenges in EMI within Turkish context through analyzing some selected studies in a historical order.

To start, the driving force of the study carried out by Kırkgöz (2005) with the participation of 203 students was to investigate the motivational factors of students for their EMI choices and language-related challenges. The negative-oriented perceptions of students with regards to EMI included 'reduced ability to understand specific details' (60 students), 'superficial learning rather than deep learning' (24 students), 'reduced ability to understand general concepts (20 students), and 'distance from their native language and culture' (17 students).

A year later, another study was conducted by Kılıçkaya (2006). But now the central argument was built on the attitudes of 100 instructors from universities in Ankara towards the use of English as a medium of instruction through a survey. The results highlighted the pros and cons of EMI in the eyes of instructors. The most eye-catching result of this study can be noted as the opposing idea of the participants towards EMI for its causing a difficulty in understanding the concepts, having inadequate knowledge of the content. It was also criticized as being time consuming and a reason for students' low level of participation in the classes due to their low level of English proficiency (Boztaş, 1995 cited in Kılıçkaya, 2006). In general terms, the participants in Kılıçkaya's study were found to be in favour of using Turkish-medium instruction as they believed that it would increase learning and help to cover the content in a fast and deep manner.

Having identified the perceptions of both students and teachers about the EMI in general terms and challenges in particular through two prominent studies reported above, it is remarkably notable to evaluate the effectiveness of EMI on mastering language and academic content. With this aim, in a more detailed study Sert (2008) employed three approaches including English medium instruction, English aided instruction, and Turkish medium instruction seeking to get an in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of the use of English in terms of mastering the language skills and the academic content. The core body of data was collected through questionnaires and interviews in the 2003–2004 academic years with the participation of 527 fourth-year students and 87 teaching staff in order to elicit their answers for the questions below: “What sort of difficulties do you experience while lecturing?”, “What sort of difficulties do your students experience during the lessons?”. The 84% of the teaching staff self-reported that they did not face any difficulties in explaining their ideas when lecturing in English. However, they still indicated that one of the problems in an EMI course was the lack of humour which caused a colourless and unenthusiastic environment.

In a more recent study carried by Gökmenoğlu and Gelmez-Burakgazi (2013), the practices of instructors teaching through EMI in classroom management course were examined in a qualitative phenomenological research design based on the data coming from semi-structured interviews and the course syllabi. According to the results, ‘lack of confidence among local students’, ‘adaptation of international students’ were cited as challenges by the participants.

As the mentioned studies showed that, the central arguments of them lie on the perceptions of students and lecturers on EMI (Kırkgöz, 2005; Kılıçkaya, 2006), and the impact of EMI on students’ academic knowledge mastering (Sert, 2008). But the significance of the most recent study by Kırkgöz (2014) is that it focuses on comparing the perspectives of learners about EMI versus Turkish medium of instruction (TMI). She used a mixed research design involving a questionnaire and focus-group interviews to elicit their opinions on both benefits and challenges in learning disciplinary knowledge regarding with EMI and TMI with a group of 130 students (EMI- 66; TMI-64). Additionally, examination papers were also used in order to get some idea on learners’ acquisition of disciplinary knowledge. As the findings showed, EMI students self-reported that acquisition of disciplinary knowledge was low while TMI students were reported to be successful. This is in accordance with Kılıçkaya’s findings in that instructors valued TMI over EMI as EMI makes subject learning more challenging for students (2006). In similar vein, Sert (2008) reported that EMI was considered as “effective in language skill development”, but “ineffective in acquisition of the academic content” in her study in which both learners and lecturers’ opinions about the effectiveness of the use of English/Turkish in the acquisition of disciplinary knowledge were questioned.

According to Kırkgöz (2014), EMI was reported to have such benefits as “enhancing English language skills, access to primary sources in English, better employment prospects, keeping up with global developments”. TMI, on the other hand was found to have such benefits as “easy comprehension of disciplinary knowledge, detailed acquisition of disciplinary knowledge, longer retention of knowledge, productivity in written and spoken modes of communication”. In terms of challenges, such themes were emerged for EMI: “the difficulty in understanding disciplinary knowledge, the difficulty in understanding specific details, time consuming nature, understanding examination questions. The negative-oriented opinions of TMI students included “the difficulty in understanding English texts, future concern over finding jobs, the difficulty in coping with technical terms.” The next

part provides a discussion of the commonalities and differences among the studies in addition to the other studies within various contexts.

3. Findings & Discussion

Despite its benefits, EMI has many drawbacks in terms of language and instructional concerns as the studies suggested above. Still then, Alptekin (2003, cited in Sert, 2008) takes a more positive position stating the benefits of EMI on cross-cultural and mental development of the learners. Concerning the first research question covering the language problems that the students face in an EMI classroom, Kırkgöz (2005) reported that the students had difficulty in acquiring the academic content which is very similar to Sert's study (2008). In accordance with the other studies, Dalkız (2002, cited in Sert, 2008) also emphasized the language related problems in EMI including difficulties in grasping the questions, giving appropriate answers.

Notably, it can be said that without considering its benefits, EMI is not without its challenges in other contexts as well. Building on this argument, the workload of students and instructors, the decrease in the quality of education are noted by Gao in Chinese settings (2008, cited in Gökmenoğlu & Gelmez-Burakgazi, 2013). In line with this argument, Smith also highlighted "lack of interest of non-native speaking students toward EMI courses, loss of confidence and failure of students in EMI courses" are among the cited challenges, but a few (2004, cited in Gökmenoğlu & Gelmez-Burakgazi, 2013). Similarly, in a Hong Kong university "the risks of traditional language attrition and culture loss" were the central arguments in terms of EMI policy reported by Poyung and Hang- Yue (2014). The language-related challenges in EMI at a Hong Kong University were also investigated in a longitudinal study carried by Evans and Morrison (2011). 3 000 students completed a questionnaire in which the challenges were detailed as skills "planning written assignments", "following a discussion", "using appropriate academic style", "expressing ideas in correct English", "understanding specialist vocabulary", "understanding key vocabulary" "taking brief, clear notes" in an EMI classroom.

When it comes to the second research question dealing with the instructional challenges teachers encounter, Sert (2008) highlighted the lack of humour and colourless classroom environment. Surprisingly in her study the teachers did not mention any language or instructional related problems they faced. On the contrary, Kılıçkaya (2006) indicated that covering the materials faster and deeper was challenging in EMI in accordance with the Gökmenoğlu and Gelmez-Burakgazi's study (2013) in which finding course materials and inconsistency between course contents were stated as instructional problems by the participant teachers.

4. Conclusions and Future Directions

Despite its inevitable growth all around the world, there are still many critical views to EMI involving the challenges and problems faced during the implementation process (Suviniity, 2012). So as to provide some solutions to the problems, it is of crucial importance to identify stakeholders' attitudes, experiences and challenges regarding EMI (Tatzi, 2012). The discussions from the current study have illuminated the broad outlines in terms of instructional challenges and language related problems in

Turkish context by analyzing both the perceptions of students and teachers. Accordingly, as the studies indicated, the reduced level of understanding the subject matter is the most frequently encountered problem in terms of learners' language related abilities. Concerning teachers' instructional challenges, time-consuming nature of EMI and a much more demanding aspect of it can be noted.

As stated by Tatzi (2012), EMI is based on three main pillars: "language proficiency, effective lecturing behaviour and personal attitude". For this reason, Andrade (2009) supported that the challenges are undoubtedly stemmed from the learners' limited competence and confidence in English (cited in Evans & Morrison, 2011). Therefore, these perspectives need to be investigated in future research studies in order to illuminate the effectiveness of EMI and possible reasons for its failure.

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