An Evidence-based Approach to EMI: Where Are We, What Do We Know, and What Can We Do?

谢承諭助理研究員
Chen-Yu Chester Hsieh, Ph.D.
Research Center for Translation, Compilation and Language Education
National Academy for Educational Research

Overview

- Basics of EMI
- An Evidence-based Approach
- An Evidence-generating Approach
- Resources
Basics of EMI
Where Are We?

What is EMI?

• English Medium Instruction; English Mediated Instruction; English as the Medium of Instruction; English as a Medium of Instruction

• “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: 37)
Why do we need EMI?

For the students
- To improve the learning of English
- To promote economic competitiveness
- To produce graduates with global literacy skills
- To develop students’ intercultural communication skills

For the university
- To enable institutions to attract international students
- To raise university rankings
- To increase the prestige of an institution
- To promote the competitiveness of universities

For communication
- To provide a common language of instruction
- To facilitate regional and international communication

The Current Policy

Preparation for the future

Status Quo

- EMI courses are conducted similarly to CMI courses, only different in the working language.
- There is only one correct way or a one-size-fits-all model to implement EMI.
- English should be the only language used in an EMI class.
- EMI courses are usually designed and implemented based on rules of thumb.
- Most EMI research was done by applied linguists or TESOL experts.
Goals of this talk

• To bridge the gap between research and practices
• To promote evidence-based and evidence-generating approaches
• To call for interdisciplinary collaboration

An Evidence-based Approach
What We Know
Topics

- Models of EMI
- Teaching methods
- Assessments
- Predictors for success
- Teachers’ Agency and Professional Development

Findings

• L1 was commonly incorporated in EMI engineering classes
• Elite universities tend to do EMI differently (less L1).
• L1 can be useful in encouraging student participation and engagement in EMI classes (e.g., asking higher-order questions (Pun & Macaro, 2019)).
• Translanguaging
• Student-centered learning can be an effective approach.

Teaching methods

“[T]ransforming monolingual disciplinary classes into EMI is not simply about changing the language of instruction; instead, it requires teachers to re-evaluate their existing pedagogy and change it to a learner-centered approach.” (Prabjandee & Nilpirom, 2022: 424)

Multimodal and interactive strategies are effective tools for EMI.
Assessments

- Assessment for learning is key (grading criteria, dynamic assessment, self/peer assessment, etc.) (Li & Wu, 2018; Hultgren et al., 2022)
- Assessments should be aligned with learning objectives (Li & Wu, 2018).
- Is English one of the learning objectives (Li & Wu, 2018)?
- Multilingual and multimodal practices can and should be used (Hultgren et al., 2022).
Predictors of EMI Success

- **Language learning motivation** → not so much (Rose et al., 2019; Xie & Curle, 2022)
- **General English proficiency** → mostly yes, but sometimes mixed (disciplines matter) (Altay et al., 2022; Rose et al., 2019; Soruç et al., 2022)
- **Academic or discipline-specific English skills** → yes (Xie & Curle, 2022)
- **Academic success in L1** → mostly yes (Altay et al., 2022; Curle et al., 2020)
- **Self-efficacy** (Soruç et al., 2022)
- **Self-regulation skills** (Soruç et al., 2022)

Implications

- Provide students the language support that they need.
- Focus on EAP or ESP education.
- Some previous learning experience in L1 can be helpful, especially for STEM students.
- Enhance students’ sense of self-efficacy.
- Teach or share self-regulation skills.
EMI Teacher Professional Development

- Support teacher agency (Dang et al., 2021)
- Seek opportunities to improve linguistic and pedagogical competencies (Dang & Vu, 2020)
- Engage in reflective practice (Farrell, 2020)
- Involve in both formal and informal professional learning (Dang et al., 2021)
- Collaborate with language specialists (Chen & Peng, 2019; Macaro & Tian, 2020) or mentors (Chen, 2018)
- Participate in university teacher learning community (Yu et al, 2020)

An Evidence-generating Approach
What We Can Do
Research Methods

• Class data (pre- and post-assessments, assignments, presentations, etc.)
• Questionnaire surveys
• Interviews (individuals, focus groups)
• Discourse analysis (lectures, activities, group discussions, etc.)
• Narrative analysis (teacher/student reflections, journals, etc.)

Integrating BOPPPS with EMI

• A Teacher Professional Development Program in collaboration with National Yilan University

• Bridge-in
• Objective
• Pre-assessment
• Participatory learning
• Post-assessment
• Summary
Surveys about Student Emotions and EMI

- EMI research in collaboration with National Tsing Hua University

- Motivation
- Curiosity
- Self-efficacy
- Performance in EMI

Resources

What Can We Do?
Oxford research group

- [http://www.emi.network/](http://www.emi.network/)

**Introduction to the EMI Oxford Research Network**

EMI Oxford Research Network is an international network run by the EMI Oxford research group within the Department of Education of the University of Oxford. The group explores the educational and linguistic implications of the spread of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) within communities where English is not the primary language of communication.

Currently, the world is seeing a boom in EMI as an educational model, but the implications this growing trend is severely under-researched. Thus, the research group aims to fill this void in its exploration of the effects of EMI on language learning, content learning, teaching, learning, quality of education, inequalities of access, and other multi-faceted aspects of EMI.

This website is independently maintained by the EMI Oxford Research Group to consolidate our activities across our network which extends beyond the university.

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**EMI journals**

- [Journal of English-Medium Instruction](#)
- [Teaching in Higher Education](#)
- [International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism](#)
- [Review of Educational Research](#)
EMI books

To wrap up

- EMI is difficult but not impossible.
- There are many reasons for conducting EMI.
- There are always choices. It’s not either-or or all-or-none.
- EMI is not only about the change in language but also about the change in ways of teaching and learning.
- Empirical findings can and should inform EMI practices.
- EMI practices can in turn support EMI research.
- Collaboration is desperately needed in both teaching, research and teacher professional development.
Selected References


Thank you!

Chen-Yu Chester Hsieh
謝承諭
chesterhsieh@mail.naer.edu.tw
chesterhugues@gmail.com