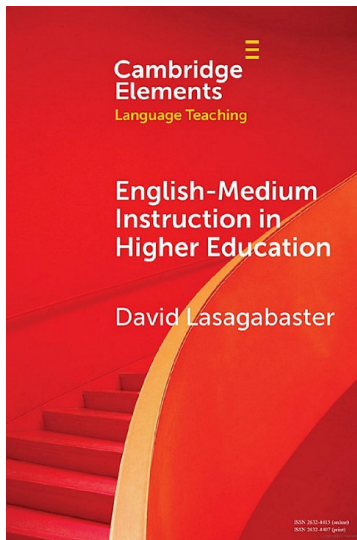


BOOK REVIEW



Title:	English-Medium Instruction in Higher Education
Author:	David Lasagabaster
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Teaching content subjects in English to students whose first language (L1) is not English, as well as introducing English-taught programs, has gained a timely momentum following the exponential growth of the internationalization of higher education (HE). De Wit et al. (2015) defines the internationalization of HE as “the *intentional process* of integrating an *international*, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to *enhance the quality of education and research* for all students and staff, and to make *a meaningful contribution to society*.” (p. 29. *italics added*). Higher education institutions across different regions continue to provide English-medium instruction (EMI) programs as part of their internationalization strategies. In response to such growing interests in EMI, David Lasagabaster, in his recent book entitled “**English-medium Instruction in Higher Education**”, articulates critical insights regarding EMI implementation, debates and critiques, and provides recommendations for teachers, researchers, and policymakers as to how to view, research and design EMI programs.

The book consists of nine chapters, including a brief introduction (Chapter 1) and a significant conclusion (Chapter 9). The key contents of the book focus on stakeholders’ views (Chapter 4) toward EMI, the impact of EMI on teaching and learning (Chapters 5 and 6), and assessment in EMI (Chapter 7). In addition, the author also discusses the debate on EMI, its definition, and other terms related to EMI such as Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and Integrated Content and Language in Higher Education (ICLHE), and how EMI differs or may be equal to them (Chapters 2 and 3). Specifically in Chapter 2, the author substantiates EMI’s definition by Macaro et al. (2018) and disagrees with equating EMI to CLIL, because there is a lack of integration between language and content, which thus “led many researchers to disregard the CLIL acronym and use the label EMI at tertiary level” (p. 3). Lasagabaster also suggests some key readings (Chapter 8) that may be helpful and relevant to EMI researchers, including the ROAD-MAPPING (Role of English in relation to Other languages, Academic Discipline, (Language) Management, Practices and Processes, and Internationalization and Globalization) framework

by Dafouz and Smit (2020) to shed light on EMI processes and practices, and the edited volume by Wilkinson and Gabriëls (2021), which discusses the impact of EMI on European universities. I find these readings relevant and helpful especially for novice researchers to avoid contributing repetitions of what EMI literature has abundantly examined and focused on.

The book starts with Chapter 1 in which the author discusses the rationale and motivation behind the adoption of EMI by many universities in both English and non-English speaking countries. In Chapter 2, the author illuminates the ongoing trends of EMI along with the push for the internationalization of HE and heated debates about EMI, particularly with regards to the phrase “the English” in Macaro et al.’s (2018) definition: “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” (p. 37), and the contexts in which EMI is implemented. In Chapter 3, Lasagabaster (2022) further foregrounds the notion of multilingualism and the increasing diversity of HE across continents. He evokes that the provision of EMI “has provoked controversy,” including “its detrimental effect on multilingualism and language ecology” (p. 9). However, it is also worth noting that EMI also enables universities in non-English speaking countries to improve their international rankings and reputations (see Liu & Phan, 2021; Sahan et al., 2021). In response to the threat that EMI may bring with it, Lasagabaster (2022) suggests that policymakers establish a language-in-education policy which would show a commitment towards multilingualism. By doing so, it will help speakers (of national and local languages) retain their linguistic rights, and, to another extent, “stop EMI from being seen as a Trojan horse” (p. 13).

In Chapter 4, Lasagabaster synthesizes current research findings regarding stakeholders’ perspectives towards EMI. He acknowledges that teachers and students are highly cited when discussing the beliefs and ideologies of EMI implemented in HE, but administrative personnel remain scarcely discussed, even though they are often the first group to be in contact with international students. In general, teachers perceive EMI as being essential for the development of language and content comprehension. But, at the same time, there is a consistent string of EMI studies that report that teachers (and students) involved in EMI programs often have limited language commands and inadequate pedagogical trainings. As a result, instead of being dialogic, the teaching tends to emphasize teachers’ authority and lack interaction. For this reason, a few scholars who are proponents of English as a lingua franca (ELF) and translanguaging propose that English should not be viewed from a monolithic perspective and that teachers should be aware of existing linguistic repertoire in the classroom that can be used as assets for teaching and learning (Sah & Kubota, 2022). However, what Lasagabaster and these ELF and translanguaging scholars seem to fail to elaborate is the fact that EMI teaching may not always necessarily be as interactive as, and perhaps should not be referred to as, that of EMI in English-speaking contexts. In my humble opinion, the choice of students to be silent in EMI classes should therefore not be regarded as a failure, or associated with not learning. Such silence may occur due to the students’ a) discomfort of speaking before peers, b) lack of confidence, and c) unfamiliarity with the topic.

The author further reiterates the impact of EMI on teaching in Chapter 5. Lasagabaster argues that EMI teachers are mostly not pedagogically prepared, but they are often situated in

a position where they have no choice but to teach their subjects in English in order to satisfy the demands of the institution. Moreover, the literature has not been conclusive as to which level the English competence of EMI teachers should be at (whether it is B2, C1, or C2), or if there is another way to properly assign EMI teachers. As a result, EMI teachers are often caught with not being confident with their language skills and being reluctant to interact with students. Lasagabaster further foregrounds the idea of collaboration or a team-teaching model for EMI, in which language specialists work in tandem with content specialists in designing, implementing, and assessing EMI courses. This call for collaboration echoes recent recommendations in EMI research (e.g., Sahan et al., 2021) to tackle language-related issues that are commonly shared among published EMI works. In Chapter 6, Lasagabaster further highlights another problem with EMI, which has to do with the limited professional development of EMI teachers. Most institutions implementing EMI tend to ignore the importance of this aspect, despite the fact EMI teachers from a few publications have reported the importance of professional development because it offers them spaces to reflect on their teaching and be aware of the role of other languages in EMI classrooms.

Questions and debates on assessment in EMI are discussed in Chapter 7. The author posits that studies on aspects of assessment for EMI teaching practices are still limited. In addition, he also encourages readers and EMI researchers to think about which English should be promoted in EMI classrooms, how international students would view the use of L1 in, for instance, an exam, or “whether multilingual practices are viable in classes where many different L1s coexist” (p. 47). Lasagabaster closes the discussion with suggested readings and a significant conclusion in Chapters 8 and 9 respectively. In the conclusion, he reassures that the provision of EMI is not necessarily driven by market forces; although, this can be the case in some EMI cases. EMI implementation may also arise along with potential social, political, or linguistic conflicts. Therefore, research should always consider the interconnected layers of EMI practices, i.e., at the individual, classroom, institutional, and government levels. Ultimately, Lasagabaster’s book has raised awareness with regards to potential problems associated to EMI and added a nuanced understanding for designing and implementing EMI to fit any given context.

As a novice researcher in EMI myself, I confidently believe that this book should be on any list of EMI readings, because it is written in a very reader-friendly, concise, and informative manner. More importantly, it offers readers an updated overall picture of EMI practice and its implementation based on new and updated literature. Given the nature of the Cambridge Element Series, in which the book was published, the book also provides readers with succinct and synthesized arguments regarding the history of EMI, its understanding, how it impacts teaching and learning, and how EMI assessment should be conducted. Therefore, the book is a must-read resource for university students and EMI researchers who aim to capture the essence of EMI from an Applied Linguistics, Education, or Sociolinguistics standpoint. For those interested in language policies or the relationship between EMI and internationalization, this book may not be significantly relevant, although Lasagabaster does provide a few noteworthy discussions of implementing a language-in-education policy when substantiating notions of multilingualism, diversity, and language ecology in HE.

THE REVIEWER

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