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English Medium Instruction

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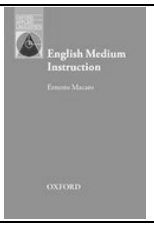
Author:	Ernesto Macaro (2018)		
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Ernesto Macaro's (2018) English Medium Instruction provides one of the most comprehensive reviews of English Medium Instruction (EMI) literature to date, highlighting both what we currently know about EMI and gaps for future research to address. Macaro defines EMI as "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, 2018, p. 1). The book is comprised of an introduction and ten chapters, extensively covering topics such as the nature, costs, and benefits of EMI in addition to language policy, stakeholder attitudes, and classroom strategies for instructors and students. This volume is ideal for researchers, policy makers, EMI instructors, and anyone else who may be interested in this educational phenomenon.

After a brief introduction on the rapid growth of EMI, the factors driving its growth, and the controversies surrounding it, Macaro dives into the nebulous area of terminology in Chapter One. Anyone who has spent time looking at the second/foreign language literature knows that acronyms describing the teaching of content are abundant, confusing, and often misused. Macaro does a thorough job of deconstructing previously used definitions and providing new ones that clearly differentiate the many variations of the terminology including EMI, immersion, content and language integrated learning (CLIL), content-based instruction (CBI), and content-based language teaching (CBLT). While much of his discussion provides clarity to the various conceptualizations, Macaro gravitates away from convention by suggesting the term 'EMI' be used as the overarching term for all the terms above. Given that EMI has traditionally been seen on the far end of the spectrum (see van Lier's, 2005 Scale of Language and Content as cited in Brinton & Snow, 2017), EMI's adoption as an umbrella term seems unlikely with Brinton and Snow's (2017) use of CBI as a seemingly more suitable superordinate term.

Chapter Two provides an overview of language policies around the world. For those new to language policy, this chapter is the perfect primer for future reading and research. However,

anyone knowledgeable on the policies of the countries discussed will likely feel underwhelmed. An example of this is the section on Qatar, which briefly discusses recent education reforms influencing EMI, but leaves absent the establishment and policies of Qatar's Education City, a conglomerate of international branch campuses. Beyond the shortcomings of some individual sections, this chapter provides much value in its cross-contextual approach to EMI language policy analysis.

Chapters Three and Four explore the attitudes and beliefs of instructors and students, respectively. In general, this area of EMI is the most researched, and these two chapters provide a comprehensive overview of the current literature. Together, the two chapters present how the beliefs of instructors and students overlap with respect to EMI, with both instructors and students believing that EMI offers benefits, yet, at the same time, also causes academic difficulties due to language proficiency barriers. In addition to student attitudes, Chapter Four also includes a discussion on how EMI affects social class divisiveness, though I believe this topic is deserving of a chapter on its own, perhaps under the header of social justice issues of EMI.

In Chapter Five, Macaro asks an important question: Which English variety should be used for EMI? Macaro briefly describes the current discussions surrounding English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and World Englishes (WE) and notes that, while these debates have not seemed to penetrate the EMI literature, they eventually will. The chapter does not provide a definitive answer about "which English," but does end with a long list of questions that will help both the research and teaching communities reflect on the varieties of English that are and could be used in EMI. Anyone looking for a research agenda in the area of ELF or WE would be wise to read this chapter.

With any new method of teaching, evaluating the costs and benefits is one of the key concerns for policy makers and stakeholders. Macaro suggests in Chapter Six that the cost-benefit of EMI be measured by its ability to (1) improve language outcomes better than traditional language classes and (2) provide content instruction as well as content courses in the first language. This measurement proposal may be too unidimensional (exclusively focused on academic outcomes) and the cost-benefit of EMI requires a more multi-dimensional framework such as Dafouz and Smit's (2016). Nonetheless, one of the major takeaways of this chapter is that EMI is currently being implemented globally with little evidence of its effectiveness, multi-dimensional or otherwise.

Interaction in the EMI classroom is discussed in Chapter Seven, and, once again, the reader is faced with a sparse literature. To compensate, Macaro incorporates his own previously unpublished data, using transcripts of long interaction segments as the basis for in-depth discussion on interactions in the EMI classroom. Additionally, this chapter outlines codeswitching/translanguaging in the EMI classroom. Macaro proposes that guidelines must be researched and set for when and how much a first language should be used, a proposal that may prove contentious for proponents of codeswitching/translanguaging.

Chapter Eight returns to instructors, exploring professional development and the evolving roles of instructors in EMI for both content and language. It begins with presenting five instructional models used for EMI: the selection model, the preparatory year model, the concurrent support model, the multilingual model, and the ostrich model. Each of these models has implications for the many instructor roles. For researchers, these models may also prove helpful for defining

EMI research settings. The chapter also touches on instructor identity (an issue raised in Chapter Six), which is an important topic as the roles of instructors in EMI shifts. Unfortunately, Macaro points out that the current literature offers very little in regard to EMI professional development, which seems to be true for many topics throughout the volume. Given this, the chapter offers more for the reader in terms of possible directions rather than a review of literature.

The final chapter, on learning strategies, forces Macaro to discuss research outside of the current EMI literature due to the little that exists. This leads Macaro to suggest bridges between education theory, practice, and applied linguistics. Interestingly, the chapter leans more toward language learning strategies, namely listening and vocabulary, rather than content learning strategies. This may be due to the struggle students have with language in EMI, but I believe the field will also need to give equal attention to general content learning strategies in the future, possibly drawing on general education research.

Macaro's English Medium Instruction is the perfect volume for researchers, policymakers, and instructors. The book concludes with an overview of the chapters' discussions and a look at questions for the future, providing a research agenda both for those new to EMI research, as well as veteran researchers. For policy makers and other stakeholders who are charged with education decision-making, Macaro outlines various issues worth considering to enhance existing and future EMI programs. Finally, for instructors, this work offers many directions for reflecting on EMI as an instructional practice and possible avenues for professional development. For anyone who has interest in EMI, English Medium Instruction is a must read.

References

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Reviewed by

Keith M. Graham
Texas A&M University
<keith@keithmgraham.com>