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Teaching English

# 2019 International Symposium on EMI for Higher Education in the New Era: Selected Proceedings

Edited by Deborah Bullock

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## Special thanks to the editors of this book:



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**Alison Barrett MBE** is the British Council's Regional Director Education and Society in East Asia. Alison has held several senior management positions in the British Council leading large-scale English language teacher education programmes and partnerships designed to improve the quality of English language policy and practice. Alison previously spent over two decades working as an English teacher, teacher educator, academic manager and programme manager in London, Japan, South Korea, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. She has an MA in Teaching English as a Second Language from the Institute of Education, University of London, and specialises in teacher education and development, CPD and the role of English and languages as a medium of instruction.

## Foreword

Across East Asia and on a global scale, over the last 20 years Ministries of Education (MoEs) have identified the internationalisation of their tertiary education systems as critical to raising the quality and competitiveness of higher education (HE), in large part because they recognise that HE plays a vital role in providing high-level skills as well as driving research and innovation. Internationalisation is no longer regarded as a goal in itself, or as an income-generating strategy, but as a means to improving the quality of teaching and learning and employability, to supporting knowledge exchange and tech transfer, and to building greater intercultural understanding and competence.

A direct consequence of this has been the phenomenon of English-medium instruction (EMI) programmes in HE, which have expanded at a rapid pace across the globe (Macaro, 2018; Macaro et al., 2018; Wächter and Maiworm, 2014). English is becoming universal in many academic disciplines, and internationalisation is being realised via 'Englishisation' of the curriculum within many HE institutions (Galloway and McKinley, forthcoming). This switch in medium of instruction means that English has shifted from being taught as a foreign language alongside other disciplinary-focused courses, to becoming an important educational language used for learning and teaching non-language-related academic subjects (e.g. studying engineering content through English; studying business degrees through English).

Accompanying this rapid growth in EMI implementation, on every level, from key decision makers shaping policy to those at the sharp end – the stakeholders in the classroom, be they educators or students – there may be benefits, as well as demands and challenges.

Some of the benefits of EMI implementation could include, but are not limited to:

- English opening up opportunities for an increasingly mobile workforce of young people to enhance their employability
- English, as the global language of academia, being one of the means to engage with and contribute to global knowledge through research

- the simultaneous acquisition of content and second language proficiency for students.

However, EMI implementation carries risks that might affect students' academic potential and other countries' native languages if it is not undertaken well. Some specific demands and challenges of implementation, many shared across regions regardless of context, centre on the need for national and institutional language policy and pedagogical approach to be inclusive. This is because, for example:

- if students have difficulty with the language of instruction or the materials being used, there exists a possibility that teachers may need to dilute content to the level of their own or their students' language level
- if language ability is used as a barrier to entry for some courses, then it may exclude students with strong content knowledge but weaker language skills
- if courses are taught in one language, but assessed in another, the risk is run that only language competence, rather than content knowledge, is assessed.

All of these situations could limit a student's potential and fundamentally undermine the impact of a programme. A central objective of implementation, then, is to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is not hindered by the use of English as the medium of instruction for those students for whom it is a second, third or even fourth language.

With this in mind, the British Council over the past 80 years has been committed to supporting the raising of standards of teaching, learning and assessment in English and through English. As HE institutions have varying EMI-related requirements, there is a need for dialogue among EMI practitioners, providers, policy makers, assessment bodies and curriculum developers, and for partnerships and networks to be formed to find solutions to shared challenges within and across borders. The British Council has practical experience of designing and establishing institutional and national standards for tertiary programmes in Turkey, collaborating with UK organisations such as BALEAP, EAQUALS and UK universities, and facilitating continued professional development models at HE institutions in China. We also connect UK and overseas policy makers and researchers so that they can investigate specific questions relevant to different contexts at global, regional (e.g. East Asia) and country levels (e.g. Indonesia, China and Japan).

This symposium was another example of the way the British Council partners with national bodies and agencies such as CEAIE (China Education Association for International Exchange) to facilitate such dialogue and find solutions between countries. With over 74 organisations attending the Symposium from the UK, China and across the whole of the East Asia region, we hope that the Symposium and this conference report will provide fuel for conversations to continue, offer insights and knowledge to inform debates, and support efforts to improve the quality of EMI programmes.

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# Introduction

In October 2019, British Council China in partnership with China Education Association for International Exchange (CEAIE) hosted the ‘International Symposium on EMI for Higher Education in the New Era’ in Beijing, as part of the 20th China Annual Conference for International Education and Expo.

With EMI programmes expanding at a rapid pace in higher education sectors in East Asia and globally, the main objectives of the symposium were to explore challenges and solutions relating to both EMI policy and implementation. The symposium also served as a platform for universities from China and other regions to share best practices.

The symposium was split into two sessions, with the morning session entitled Global, regional and national contexts: challenges and solutions and the afternoon session, EMI implementation at the institutional level: case studies and challenges, exploring both global and China-specific case studies.

Key themes of the day included examining global trends in EMI provision, looking at continuing professional development systems for practitioners, investigating how quality assurance frameworks can be developed and applied to EMI programmes, and discussing student needs on this kind of course. Additionally, the key findings and recommendations of a piece of research into EMI in the China context, commissioned by the British Council in early 2019, was presented by the Oxford Research Group.

With interactive slots in both the morning and afternoon sessions, those attending were afforded opportunities to discuss critical issues and create questions for ensuing panel discussions. Giving the attendees a voice truly energised each session and ensured there was a connection between presenters and the audience.

The symposium set the stage for future collaboration between participating institutions in the rapidly evolving field of EMI. It is hoped that the papers contained in this publication, which are summaries of the presentations given on the day, will act as a record of what was discussed and will be found useful for those wishing to further shape best practices and policy in EMI in the future.

Finally, it should be noted that EMI is a developing field that can provoke contentious and controversial opinions, and while the diverse standpoints of the writers here all have validity, they do not necessarily reflect the views of the British Council.



# EMI: Driving forces, challenges, risks and benefits



**Matt Burney** is Director of the British Council in China and Minister (Culture and Education), British Embassy Beijing, where he oversees the United Kingdom's cultural relations and educational exchange work. He was appointed to the role in September 2019 to lead one of the largest country operations in the British Council's global network of 100+ offices.

In 2000, Matt spearheaded the British Council's expansion of cultural and education work in South West China. This included the establishment of a South West China office in Chongqing. From 2010 to 2015, he was Area Director East China, based in Shanghai. During this time he oversaw the growth of a dynamic and ambitious programme, driven through close collaboration and partnership with UK and Chinese cultural and educational organisations, culminating in the creation of the British Centre that brought together the UK's cultural actors in one place in China.

# 1 Opening remarks

The change China has undergone since I first came here, almost 20 years ago, has been phenomenal. The benefits of sustained economic growth and rapidly increasing social prosperity have created life-changing opportunities for people in life and work. This has been enabled in huge part by the extensive use of technology and flow of information and ideas, in which universities like those represented here today play a crucial role.

However, in my opinion, we are now at a critical juncture in global development. Today's world is being transformed by technology. The internet, cloud computing and social media have created a wealth of opportunities and challenges to expand learning outcomes not only here in China but also in my own country, the United Kingdom, and this has impacted universities across the world. Students and universities are carefully considering their futures, and the skills and abilities they will need to compete internationally, be this in the world of work, competing for funding, student recruitment or sharing research and ideas beyond national borders.

As a global authority in English – across language teaching, assessment and policy – the British Council, over the past 80 years, has witnessed how the use of English and EMI has allowed countless academics and institutions to build connections internationally and expand the impact of their research, through increased international citations, student recruitment and university status.

However, EMI implementation is no easy task. It does not necessarily result in better learning outputs, but what it does offer is an opportunity for ideas to be connected, shared, appreciated and more widely understood. As a global community we face many challenges, and the more we are able to share ideas by means of a common language, the more likely we are to find solutions. Forums like this offer us that opportunity – to discuss, explore and understand the trends and ideas that are shaping EMI, and its ability to create yet more opportunities in a rapidly changing world.



**Ms Shen Xuesong** is Deputy Secretary General of China Education Association for International Exchange (CEAIE). She joined CEAIE in 1996, eventually becoming the executive director of the International Cooperation Department. In 2006 she joined UNESCO New York as a liaison and education officer, before moving to its headquarters in Paris as an education programme specialist. She was appointed Director of Executive Office after she returned to CEAIE in 2012, and then Director of the Project Development and Marketing Department one year later. Ms Shen was appointed Deputy Secretary General of CEAIE in October 2014. She supervises the International Cooperation Department, as well as the Program Development and Marketing Department, and the TVET and Professional Training Department.

Ms Shen Xuesong received her Bachelor's Degree of Arts and Master's Degree of Education from Beijing Normal University and Master's Degree of Public Administration from Ball State University (USA).

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## 2 Opening speech

Since the year 2000, the number of international students coming to China has been growing at a consistently rapid rate. Even by 2018, the total number of international students in China had surpassed 490,000. Today, China is the first destination of choice in Asia for international students and the third most preferred in the world.

As a direct result of this rapid increase, Chinese universities have been quick to recognise the importance of EMI, and the need to establish and develop EMI programmes which can provide their students with diverse and high-quality educational methods and resources. At the same time, with the expansion of China's reform and opening-up policy, and the growing trend toward better quality and sustainability in Chinese education, internationalisation is now a major characteristic of higher education in China. Therefore, while it is true that the development of EMI programmes in the past was primarily driven by the needs of international students, the focus and progress evident in EMI programmes today derive more from our universities' own demands for internationalisation and development. To date, the development of the EMI approach has facilitated exchanges of teachers and students among nations and has become a significant indicator of the competency of institutions and faculties; it is a means of increasing visibility worldwide and an important means of achieving China's goal of cultivating talent with an international perspective.

In 2016, in an attempt to accelerate the progress of EMI programme development in higher education in China, the China Education Association for International Exchange (CEAIE), as authorised by the Ministry of Education, organised the second session of national assessment and selection of Brand English-Taught Courses (BETC) for international students, and no fewer than 150 of these from colleges across the country were selected, promoted and publicised. Throughout the selection and assessment process, we were impressed by the vast experience many Chinese universities had acquired in promoting EMI courses, despite there being also some issues worthy of discussion.

This International Symposium on EMI for Higher Education in the New Era provided us with a forum for such discussion. It was an opportunity to bring new inspiration, insight and opinion on topics such as EMI global development trends, curriculum design and development, teacher development and research, quality teaching and learning and global co-operation. Together with the British Council, and other local and foreign educational organisations, the CEAIE will continue to promote international exchange, co-operation and joint development in the establishment and development of EMI programmes and the internationalisation of China's higher education institutions.



**John Knagg FAcSS** retired from a long career with the British Council in 2018. He had been Head of English for Education systems and Head of Research and Consultancy for English. He was also Chair of Accreditation UK, the British Council's inspection and quality assurance scheme for English teaching organisations in the United Kingdom. He has been instrumental in developing the British Council's approach to English as a medium of instruction internationally and has spoken at many international conferences on EMI and English language teaching, especially on policy issues.

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# 3 English-medium instruction (EMI) in higher education: nature, benefits and risks – an introduction for non-experts

This paper is based on the author's keynote speech at the International Symposium on EMI for Higher Education in the New Era, Beijing. The talk aimed to provide an overview of the field of EMI to a mixed audience, including active researchers into EMI from China, East Asia, the United Kingdom and other countries. This paper aims to make the themes accessible to a wider audience in university communities and anyone interested in the increasingly important phenomenon of EMI.

## What is English-medium instruction (EMI)?

A useful definition of EMI is:

*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* (Dearden, 2014: 2).

The words 'the use of' and 'to teach' in this definition can mean a variety of different things. They might mean the exclusive use of English in place of the local language or a mixture of English with the first language of the students. They might also mean a different level of use of English in different aspects of university education, for example the teacher's language in large lectures, teacher-student interaction and small-group discussion, or the use of English when reading texts, writing assignments and in written (or spoken) examinations.

We can also ask what we mean by 'the English language' in this definition. Different varieties of English are now generally recognised as valid. It is easy to imagine that

a university in India is not likely to insist on the use of standard British or American English in a context where a variety of Indian English is used. Indeed, since most students in EMI environments do not have English as their first language, we can expect that divergence from generally accepted ideas of 'standard English' will be found locally acceptable, particularly as teachers give more importance to the ability to communicate effectively in the academic setting than they do to traditional ideas of grammatical accuracy in speaking and writing.

In addition, while the definition refers to education in countries where English is not the traditional first language, there is much to be learned from universities in English-speaking countries such as the USA, the UK, Australia and Canada, where overseas students with a different first language might be in a substantial majority, especially at postgraduate level. The field of EAP (English for Academic Purposes) has developed in universities in the English-speaking world to prepare and support those students before and during their studies in a language different from their own, and knowledge and best practice from the field of EAP can be of great value in EMI contexts around the world.

Finally, the definition above does not limit EMI to higher education. EMI can be applied at all levels of education, including primary and secondary. The focus of this paper, however, is EMI in universities.

## Why is EMI an important topic?

The use of EMI in universities worldwide has been growing rapidly over the last 20 years. This results from a growing recognition that English is the most important international lingua franca in many areas of life, especially in professional working life. University graduates wishing to work internationally and to interact with others who do not share their first language will very often be expected to operate in English. Therefore, if they are going to need English in their international professional life, it seems sensible for them to start operating in English while still at university to ease the transition. This growing consensus that English is the most appropriate lingua franca is a part of globalisation.

At the same time there has also been a move to internationalise higher education. It has become increasingly common for more and more undergraduate and postgraduate students to travel to other countries for all or part of their studies. The international movement of teaching and research staff in universities has also grown, and in recent years university league tables have also become international, reflecting the reality that many universities now see themselves as operating in an international rather than national arena or market. There is also growing international collaboration in research and this, along with the fact that the top research universities in the international league tables are concentrated largely in English-speaking countries (the US, the UK, Australia,

Canada), means that an increasing amount of research and scholarship is published in English. All this has led universities to realise that the English language has a major role to play in their internationalisation strategies.

Finally, EMI is also important because it carries risks. If EMI is not designed and implemented well, then it can have an adverse effect on educational effectiveness and consequently institutional reputation, as we will see below.

## What is the difference between EMI and English language teaching (ELT)?

This is an important issue, as EMI and ELT are often and easily confused, which can lead to poor decision making, programme design and practice. We have defined EMI above as teaching academic subjects while using English in lectures, discussions, reading, writing and assessment. To clarify, English language teaching has the clear and primary goal of improving the English language proficiency of students. Incidentally, while English language teaching is often referred to as ELT, it is also known as EFL, ESL and ESOL. In discussing how to improve the English proficiency or level of students, it is important to be clear whether it is EMI or ELT that is being discussed or proposed.

The following table highlights the key differences between EMI and ELT.

EMI – English as a medium of instruction in HE	ELT – English language teaching in HE
Teaching in English	Teaching English/Teaching of English
Teachers are primarily subject specialists: chemistry teachers, law teachers, history teachers, etc.	Teachers are primarily specialist English teachers.
The main objective is the academic subject: chemistry, law, history.	The main objective is to improve students' English proficiency.
There may or may not be a secondary objective to improve students' English proficiency.	There may be a secondary objective to give students content knowledge or skills (see especially the paragraph on CLIL below).
It follows a subject curriculum (chemistry etc.).	It follows an English language curriculum. The content, topics and texts used are selected according to student interests and needs (including academic interests) and are designed to improve students' English.
Assessment measures subject knowledge and skills.	Assessment measures English learning and proficiency.
Often, but not always, applies to the whole of a student's study programme/degree qualification	Often only a few hours a week (unless in an intensive English course)
Students must have good English proficiency.	Students can be at any level of English from beginner to advanced.
Teachers must have good English proficiency.	Teachers must have an appropriate level of English according to the English level of their students.
Some or all of the teaching takes place in English. The decision to teach and learn wholly or partly in English, as opposed to wholly in a local language, may be due to a policy decision, the nature of the student group or the language proficiency of the teacher.	Some or all of the teaching takes place in English. The skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in English cannot be developed without students practising these skills in English. Appropriate use of the local language by teachers and students for a limited amount of time can facilitate learning.

Table 1: Key differences between EMI and ELT

Thus, EMI and ELT are seen to be different concepts and practices, although there is some overlap.

There is an educational approach – content and language integrated learning (CLIL) – which aims to focus on both language improvement and content learning at the same time. It was conceived originally as an approach within ELT, but can also be seen as a type of EMI. It can be carried out by a teacher with expertise in both the subject matter and language teaching or by a subject-specialist teacher and English teacher working closely together with the same students on the same syllabus. The CLIL approach has traditionally been applied more commonly in primary and secondary schools than in universities. It offers great possibilities to improve EMI in universities but is not easy to implement well without substantial investment in training because of the teacher expertise and teacher collaboration needed.

### What are the different contexts and models of EMI?

Every EMI context in every university around the world is different. This great variety of contexts means it is impossible to give a single set of specific recommendations which will be applicable to all. The first factor in distinguishing between different EMI contexts is the composition of the student body. In particular:

- Are the students from a variety of backgrounds, nationalities and first languages (for example a group of international students) or are they all from a similar background and with a language in common other than English (often referred to as 'local students')?

This distinction may have important implications for best EMI practice. For example, when the students are local, it is more likely that improving their English is one explicit aim of the EMI programme. A second factor is the place and proportion of EMI within a student's study programme:

- Is *the whole* of a student's study programme or degree qualification in EMI, and thus a highly important factor which is subject to high impact from EMI risks (see below), or is the EMI programme a small part of the student's wider study programme, most of which is taught in the local language, in which case the EMI element might be lower stake and subject to lower impact from the risks of EMI?

Other factors that distinguish between different contexts include:

- the level of English of the students
- the previous EMI experience of the students
- the previous EMI experience of the teachers
- the English proficiency and local language proficiency of the teachers
- the language awareness of the teachers
- the motivation and attitude to EMI of the students and the teachers
- the ability of the programme to pre-select students
- the reasons why EMI is being implemented.

Ernesto Macaro of Oxford University proposes the following possible models of EMI in universities in his book mentioned in the final section of this paper.

- 1. Selection model.** Students are selected based on English language proficiency before starting their EMI course.
- 2. Preparatory year model.** Students are given an intensive English course to improve their proficiency before starting their EMI course.
- 3. Concurrent support model.** Students are not rigorously assessed for English proficiency but are given language support as well as specially designed ELT classes, focusing on English for Academic Purposes (EAP) or English for Specific Purposes (ESP).
- 4. Multilingual model.** The first language is used to some extent alongside English in the EMI programme. This model can be implemented alongside any of the three models above.
- 5. Ostrich model.** This model is where there is no informed planning of the EMI programme and the risks of poorly designed and implemented EMI to education are not considered. It is an unacceptable model. The ostrich is a bird which is said to 'bury its head in the sand' so that it is not aware of what is happening around it. In fact, this is a myth – ostriches are not so stupid.

We can see what the variables within these models are: first, the initial English language level of the students; second, the English language support offered by the university; and third, the use of the first language or local language in the programme. Although the models were conceived for universities taking students into undergraduate programmes from secondary schools, they can be applied to postgraduate programmes too.

### What are the reasons for adopting EMI and the potential benefits for universities and students?

Universities adopt EMI because of perceived benefits to the university as an institution, and to the university community, including direct benefit to the students. The rationale for EMI in each case will be complex and will include a number of factors. Common reasons for the adoption of EMI, and therefore perceived benefits, include the following, which are clearly interlinked:

- to demonstrate that the university is playing in an international arena
- to improve the reputation of the university, including via league tables
- to attract international students, with their income and influence
- to attract international faculty staff
- to improve the international mobility potential (study and work) of local students
- to improve the English of students, especially local students

- to improve students' subject knowledge and skills because it is not as easy to deal with the subject in the local language, possibly due to lack of materials.

These perceived rationales and benefits are often the subject of criticism – see the section on risks of EMI below.

It is important to remember that decisions on the adoption, design and implementation of EMI take place at different levels in different contexts. Sometimes it is a national decision, sometimes from the senior university management, sometimes at faculty or department level, and in some cases driven by individual university teachers. One consequence of this is that for many individuals at all levels, key decisions on EMI are taken higher up in the management hierarchy and imposed on managers and teachers, and so the freedom of action of the individual is limited. So one common and valid response to the question of why an individual is implementing EMI is that they have been told to do so by superiors. We should also note that adopting EMI in a university or in a course of study is sometimes not a strategic decision at all, but rather a pragmatic response to wider internationalisation issues in a university, such as the arrival of international students or faculty.

### What are the risks of EMI?

The following criticisms have been made of EMI either in specific contexts or in general. Decision makers would do well to consider how valid each criticism is to their EMI programmes.

- Students may not learn subject content and skills as effectively or as efficiently in English as they would in their first language.
- Students may not improve their English in EMI as much as they would in English classes (ELT).
- Teachers without full mastery of English may not teach as well in English as they do in their first language.
- EMI programmes may be elitist and exclusive as they deny access to students without a good knowledge of English, which is often a result of socio-economic background.
- EMI programmes may devalue the local language, and thereby the local culture, by suggesting that the local language is not fit for purpose or is second class in teaching academic subjects at university.
- EMI programmes may not allow the individual student to develop their ability to operate professionally in the local language, which may well be a professional requirement locally.
- Lack of a written and accepted language policy in a university or department may mean that there is lack of clarity about how EMI is to be implemented, and this leads to inconsistent quality.

Some of these criticisms are addressed in the sections below.

### EMI students

I start from an assumption that human beings cannot learn things at university by listening or reading in a language that they have no knowledge of. Further, the better we understand a language of instruction, the more effective and efficient our learning will be.

So one key question is, 'What level of English proficiency does a student need to be able to benefit from (or not to be disadvantaged by) EMI?' To answer this we need to understand something about language proficiency or language competence levels. The Common European Framework of Reference divides language competence into three levels: A = elementary, B = intermediate, C = advanced. Each of these levels is further subdivided into two levels, giving six levels: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2. A1 is a basic ability to communicate and exchange information in a simple way, while C2 is called 'mastery' and is the capacity to deal with material which is academic or cognitively demanding.

To be confident of not suffering from reduced learning of subject matter in EMI, a student should have an *advanced* level of competence in English. If a student has only an intermediate level of English, then subject learning through English at university level will be negatively affected and the student will need to work on English competence, either independently or with the help of teachers, until they achieve an advanced level. This improvement can take a long time and will not happen without effort dedicated to language improvement. Exposure to English within an EMI context is not enough in itself to improve English competence. Students at elementary levels will be lost in full EMI environments, and students even at higher intermediate levels will benefit greatly from input in their first language until they achieve advanced competence in English. Even students who have achieved advanced competence in English and are operating at C1 level (effective operational proficiency) and can follow EMI programmes can improve and achieve full mastery of English through focused effort and feedback on their English language skills.

This is, of course, a simplification of a very complex situation. Each student is different, and some adapt more quickly and better than others to the EMI environment. However, there is a tendency in EMI programmes across the world to underestimate the level of English needed for success in EMI or to overestimate the English competence of individual students or groups. It is risky to accept students onto EMI programmes without carefully checking levels of English proficiency using reliable instruments. Another tendency in assessing the effectiveness of EMI programmes is to focus on students who have been successful and to pay less attention to those (and in some cases there may be many) who do not succeed due to English language proficiency.

It is advisable for students to be assessed for English language levels, using reliable tests, before starting any EMI programme and to monitor students throughout to ensure that English competence is not negatively affecting their overall education.

### **EMI teachers and EMI teaching**

If we expect students in EMI settings to have an advanced level of English, then it seems self-evident that EMI teachers must also have that advanced level of proficiency. That level of proficiency should be carefully measured rather than based on self-assessment or educational history. It would, for example, be a mistake to assume that a university teacher who completed a Master's degree in an English-speaking country some years ago and has been operating solely in the local language since then has the competence to deliver a lecture, lead a discussion group or give feedback on an assignment in English.

But advanced English proficiency is not in itself sufficient evidence of competence to teach in a university EMI setting. Pedagogy is also key. In most universities in most countries in the world teachers are not required to demonstrate competence in pedagogical skills. Training in pedagogy for university teachers is often non-existent, and when it does exist it tends to be much more rudimentary than for school teachers. The introduction of EMI can be seen by universities as an opportunity to improve pedagogy in the institution, and EMI can indeed be a catalyst for improved pedagogy if implemented correctly.

Students who are learning through a second language are likely to have a more difficult task than those learning through their first language, and this extra difficulty should be taken account of in the teaching. This implies a need for a language awareness in EMI teachers which many subject specialists do not have. An English native-speaking university teacher from the USA or the UK will need to modify their use of rapid idiomatic language in an EMI classroom. A fluent non-native English speaker will need to take extra care to check if students are following what they are saying.

This suggests the need for careful selection, training and self-reflection in EMI faculty. Well-implemented EMI programmes include the opportunity for such training, whether from inside the university or commissioned from outside experts. The content of this training for EMI teachers will vary according to the needs in each setting but would typically include raising teachers' awareness of the linguistic difficulties that students have and suggesting what the teachers can do to minimise these difficulties, including moderating teachers' own language and questioning, checking student comprehension and giving feedback to students. This raises the question of whether subject-specialist EMI teachers ought to concern themselves with student language proficiency. Many university teachers do not see this as part of their role.

The strain put on local teachers who are asked to begin teaching in English is often underestimated. Teaching well in a second language is often stressful and requires substantially more preparation time than is recognised, and this is especially the case when starting to teach EMI. Universities need to consider how the extra time and stress involved should be compensated and how EMI teachers and teaching can be motivated and incentivised.

### **Recommendations for institutions implementing EMI**

As EMI settings vary so much, it is difficult to make specific recommendations. Recently, there have been international efforts to establish quality assurance systems to help universities implement EMI effectively and these may be very useful to universities. The following ten recommendations are offered as a simple and preliminary checklist.

1. Be clear about the strategic reasons for having EMI programmes.
2. Decide what model of EMI is to be used in your institution, in terms of students' initial English proficiency and initial and ongoing English language support to students.
3. Be clear about the use of local or other languages in the various parts of the programme (e.g. lectures, discussion groups, assignments, feedback, readings, examinations, administration, etc.).
4. Maximise chances of success by involving all interested parties in the introduction of EMI so that it is seen to be introduced by consensus and consent rather than imposed from above, as in all educational and social-change programmes.
5. Choose a reliable method of assessing students' and teachers' English levels, drawing on advice from ELT experts. Be very cautious of trusting students' and teachers' self-assessment of English levels.
6. Decide your policy on students who either cannot or do not wish to follow EMI courses. Will they be offered similar programmes in the local language?
7. Consider how competence to operate professionally in the local language will be maintained for students on EMI programmes.
8. Design and offer initial and continuing training, development and monitoring for EMI teachers based on their specific needs.
9. Consider workloads of EMI teachers and design appropriate incentives and compensations.
10. Include the above issues as appropriate in a written EMI language policy document, with sections for teachers and students at university, faculty or course level.



## The state of EMI research and further reading

There has been an explosion of research into EMI in HE in the last few years and no doubt this will continue. However, the research does not yet tell us clearly under what circumstances EMI will work as well as or better than education in the first language, nor in what circumstances EMI will improve students' competence in English.

My recommendation for readers who want more detail on EMI is to start with the 2018 Oxford University Press publication *English Medium Instruction* by Ernesto Macaro, which gives a coherent and authoritative overview of the field at both secondary and university level. The book is firmly grounded in research, especially on a systematic review of EMI in HE research (no fewer than 83 studies) by Macaro with Samantha Curle, Jack Pun, Jiangshan An and Julie Dearden of Oxford University, and is available at: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/language-teaching/article/systematic-review-of-english-medium-instruction-in-higher-education/E802DA0854E0726F3DE213548B7B7EC7>

A number of other expert organisations have also published papers on EMI. These include:

- The International Research Foundation for English Language Education (TIRF), *English as a Medium of Instruction* by Joyce Kling, which gives a good short overview focusing on HE: [https://www.tirfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/TIRF\\_LEiR\\_EMI\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.tirfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/TIRF_LEiR_EMI_FINAL.pdf)
- Oxford University Press, *The Role of the First Language in English Medium Instruction* focusing on secondary school level: <https://elt.oup.com/feature/global/expert/emi?cc=global&selLanguage=en>
- British Council, *English Language and Medium of Instruction in Basic Education in Low and Middle Income Countries*, which focuses on primary level: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/english-language-medium-instruction-basic-education-low-middle-income-countries-a-british>

These final papers serve to remind us that discussions and research around EMI in HE are closely related to EMI at primary and secondary school level, including in some of the poorer countries in the world.

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# 4 EMI in China: A new perception and alternative way of implementation

## Introduction

In face of the challenges of 21st-century globalisation, in September 2001 the Ministry of Education released *Several Opinions on Strengthening Undergraduate Education to Improve Teaching Quality* ([http://www.moe.gov.cn/s78/A08/gjs\\_left/s5664/moe\\_1623/201001/t20100129\\_88633.html](http://www.moe.gov.cn/s78/A08/gjs_left/s5664/moe_1623/201001/t20100129_88633.html)) to encourage higher education institutions to teach subjects in foreign languages such as English. It set a requirement for five to ten per cent of all courses to be offered in foreign languages within three years. Over the course of the following 18 years, colleges and universities across China, particularly those in Shanghai, rapidly adopted English as a medium of instruction, with EMI courses making up an increasingly larger proportion of all courses provided. One such example is Tongji University; since 2019 it has offered a total of 932 EMI courses across 42 disciplines (Song and Zhu, 2019).

However, development has been uneven, and EMI in China has been the long-standing subject of misgivings and doubt. Opponents equate EMI with colonial cultures. Professor Hu Mingyang from the People's University of China maintained that 'when you talk about promoting EMI courses among all institutions of higher education nationwide, you are focusing on the language of instruction rather than a simple question on English teaching. It's a matter of national sovereignty and identity' (2002: 5). Professor Ma Qingzhu of Nankai University demanded an immediate ban of EMI, proposing to safeguard national sovereignty from the perspective of language (Cai, 2015: 4). In recent years such opinion has become less discernible, although

there are scholars who maintain that the linguistic skills of neither teachers nor students are at the level needed for EMI to succeed. This paper views EMI from a fresh perspective and introduces alternative approaches that can help facilitate EMI implementation.

## The significance of EMI

There is no doubt that effective EMI depends on the English proficiency of teachers and students (Cai, 2010). Today, key colleges and universities in China are hiring more teachers who have studied abroad, thereby ensuring good levels of language competence, which may also help to facilitate the rise in student proficiency levels. However, the situation with most other higher education institutions is less optimistic. Neither the teachers nor the students are linguistically ready for EMI and so the EMI courses provided prove to be less rewarding. However, even in these cases, EMI plays a positive role in the following ways.

## EMI impact on traditional Chinese teaching

First, EMI impacts positively on traditional Chinese teaching ideas and methods. Most classrooms in China's colleges and universities are dominated by teacher talk, with the students playing a subordinate or passive role. However, with EMI courses, Chinese teachers may be unable to express themselves clearly in English, and even if they can, they need to take into account the language proficiency of the students. As a result, teachers tend to talk less and ask students to read the textbooks and related literature for themselves. Class time is then spent focusing on the key points in the text and dealing with students' questions. In Europe and the US, this practice

is usual, and reading lists are a basic requirement of all courses at colleges and universities. However, in China, this practice is not usual; it disrupts the traditional approach to teaching. The upside, however, is that students are encouraged to think independently, critically and creatively.

According to a random survey of 145 science and engineering majors who took elective EMI courses at Fudan University in 2018, 82 per cent of respondents believed that less information was communicated in the EMI classroom, but that they gained more up-to-date information from the intensive reading of original texts and developed not only the habit of reading foreign texts but also critical-thinking skills.

### EMI impact on learning

Second, EMI courses boost language learning outcomes. Many Chinese spend years learning English and still often end up with inadequate skills. The average vocabulary size of Chinese college graduates is fewer than 4,700 words, while that of their Japanese counterparts is 13,000. A major cause of this phenomenon is the lack of opportunity to put to use what has been learned. Moreover, students are not motivated to learn English because of the exam-oriented teaching approach. However, taking courses where English is the medium for learning provides students with the motivation and opportunity to improve their English language skills.

Results from the same survey mentioned above show that 92.8 per cent of respondents believe EMI courses are beneficial to learning both the specialty subject and language proficiency. With remarkably improved reading skills, students are able to grasp the main ideas of an academic paper more quickly.

### EMI impact on subject knowledge

Third, reading teaching materials, texts and literature in a foreign language allows students and teachers to directly access the latest developments in their field of study, saving time spent on translation. English as an international academic language is used by about 9,000 SCI (Scientific Citation Index) journals, which cover 176 disciplines ranging from natural science to engineering and which share the latest research findings. Of the papers published in these journals, 95 per cent are written in English. Rapid developments in modern science and technology can render textbooks on biology, medical science, electronics and IT outdated within a few years of publication. Textbooks and journals published in English are often a more reliable source of the latest developments in a given sector. And finally, by incorporating English texts, Chinese teachers can improve their own subject knowledge in addition to keeping students informed of cutting-edge developments related to their studies, thereby increasing their academic competitive edge.

## A case for pushing forward with EMI implementation

Having outlined three key advantages of EMI, the question remains as to how these benefits can be experienced not only in the few key universities but in all colleges and universities across China.

### The case for academic English

After many years of study on this issue, as Director of the Shanghai Advisory Committee on College English Teaching (SHACCET) and also President of both the China EAP Association and the China ESP Association, I would argue that foreign language teachers can play an essential part in EMI. In 2013, I drafted *A Framework of Reference for EFL Teaching at Tertiary Level in Shanghai* (hereinafter referred to as the *Framework*), proposing that English teaching at tertiary level should be transformed from the homogeneous general English taught at primary and secondary levels to English for Academic Purposes (EAP), which is conducive to students' academic and professional learning and in line with the new curriculum and objectives. On 25 February 2013, the Shanghai education authority issued the 'Notice of Shanghai Municipal Education Commission (SHMEC) on the Pilot Reform of College English Teaching' (2013 NO. 2 Directive of Higher Education Department of Shanghai Education Commission): <http://edu.sh.gov.cn/html/xxgk/201302/418212013001.html>. This Directive approved the *Framework* and stipulated that the 30+ undergraduate institutions in Shanghai should focus on academic English, with the aim of improving their students' ability to use English for academic and work purposes, and foster their capacity to communicate and compete internationally in their fields of study. In order to expedite the reform of college English teaching, the Directive also specified that EAP courses should be offered, starting in the autumn of that year.<sup>1</sup>

### The Shanghai International Conference for University Students

In addition to the EGAP and ESAP courses offered by universities in Shanghai, and in order to support the smooth transition from general to academic English, SHACCET and China EAP Association have joined together to create nationwide events – the Shanghai International Conference for University Students and three national competitions for Chinese college students: the 'Five-Minute Research Presentation', the 'Academic English Citation Standard Competition' and the 'Academic English Vocabulary competition'.

The Shanghai International Conference for University Students, with the theme of sustainability and innovation, asks contestants to choose a topic related to their major and carry out data-driven investigation and research. The final English language submissions, which can be in the form of a research paper, scientific outline or proposal or poster presentation, must contain the conventions (moves) of a standard paper, including a literature review, research methodology, detailed results and analysis of new findings.

<sup>1</sup> Further details can be found at: [http://www.sbs.edu.cn/wyxy/xwtz/xwgg1/201303/t20130310\\_24062.html](http://www.sbs.edu.cn/wyxy/xwtz/xwgg1/201303/t20130310_24062.html).

In 2018, the 4th Shanghai International Conference for University Students was held concurrently in nine cities: Shanghai, Beijing, Nanjing, Nanning, Dalian, Wuhan, Kunming, Guangzhou and Qingdao. There were more than 1,000 English articles submitted by nearly 2,500 students from over 140 universities. In 2019, the 5th Shanghai International Conference for University Students was held concurrently in 17 cities and attracted more than 7,000 participants, who submitted and presented their articles. The main venue of Tongji University received 635 thesis abstracts and Kunming received a total of 883.

The 'Five-Minute Research Presentation' competition has similar entry requirements but is free from the constraints of time and place, since contestants submit their entries in the form of a five-minute video. It therefore attracts more students who are unable to attend 'in person' due to logistics of scheduling and distance. The first 'National Competition of Five-Minute Research Presentation' attracted video submissions from more than 64 universities and colleges. Details of the prize winners at undergraduate and graduate levels are listed below. These videos are all available on 'Tencent' and viewed by college students across the country.

### National Competition of Five-Minute Research Presentation – prize winners

1. *Implementing Advance Directives in China: Difficulties and Feasibilities*, by Lin Yingyi from the Medical School of Shantou University
2. *The Curative Effect of FMT on IBS: An Analysis of Influencing Factors*, by Wang Zhiyan from Southern Medical University
3. *A Study of the Function and Possible Underlying Mechanism of SIX4*, by Huang Taoran from the Medical School of Shantou University
4. *Preparation and Modification of Cathode Material Na<sub>2</sub>Ni<sub>2</sub>TeO<sub>6</sub> for Sodium Ion Batteries*, by Wang Xin from Hubei University of Technology
5. *Importance Analysis of Civil Aviation Markets for Countries Along the Route*, by Shen Jingyao from Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics
6. *Representation Learning for Heterogeneous Network: A Method Based on Homogeneous Subgraphs Transformation*, by Yin Ying from Information Engineering University

The 'Academic English Vocabulary competition' aims to boost students' vocabulary size and depth so that they can take EMI courses more effectively. The contestants should be familiar with the lexical meanings and collocations of both AWL (Academic Word List) by Coxhead (2000) and AVL (Academic Vocabulary List) by Gardner and Davis (2014) and complete 100 questions on their mobile phones.

### Perceived advantages of national competitions

Findings from our survey, which we carried out with contestants and their tutors, revealed a number of perceived advantages of these events. These can be summarised as follows:

1. They have greatly improved the students' ability to read original literature in English.

'I benefited a lot from the Conference, because I have read a lot of relevant English scientific literature since the beginning of my topic selection, and made more than 20 content and language modifications before submission.'

**Chen Yikang**, sophomore, Hefei University

2. They have also promoted the active participation of college students in scientific research.

'Attending the Conference has further enriched our professional knowledge and taught us how to use academic norms and rigorous research methods to conduct academic research.'

**Yang Yanjiao** and **Yu Hengqian**, sophomores, Yunnan University

'Not only the information retrieval but also the literature review and paper writing have greatly improved our academic reading ability, academic quality and scientific research capability.'

**Ding Hao**, freshman, Nanjing Audit University

3. They have stimulated students' strong desire to write research articles in English for publication in their discipline-specific fields.

'The school administrators well appreciate and fully support these events, because students both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels have benefited greatly from participating and begin to publish their research articles in SCI journals. For example, Lu Shanshan, a Science College senior student, published 17 SCI papers in the past two years (3 are as first author and 14 are as co-author).

**Wang Xibo**, tutor of East China University of Petroleum

4. They have created a teaching paradigm for the collaboration of English teachers and academic professors.

'In order to make the teaching content closely meet the students' needs for their academic courses at different stages, the English teachers adopted academic literature recommended by the medical teachers. And many titles of the videos come from genetic research projects conducted by the biochemistry and molecular biology teaching and research offices.'

**Yang Miao**, tutor, Shantou University

It is interesting to note that the special award winners at graduate and undergraduate levels all have one thing in common – the participation of both language teachers and subject specialists in their tutoring. For example, Chen Ye, the tutor of Wang Zhiyan, winner of a special award at graduate level from South University of Science and Technology, is a doctor.

## Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated the significance and advantages of EMI. And in addition to the more obvious advantages, it has shown how EMI can also promote the transformation of traditional Chinese teaching ideas and methods, enable students and teachers to keep up to date with new developments in their research field, and provide a solution to inefficient foreign language teaching in China. However, to give full play to these advantages, it is recommended that English teachers should engage in EAP teaching, especially on real scientific research projects which necessitate English, so that students approach their studies with greater motivation and enthusiasm, have more opportunities to read academic and professional texts and improve their English competence.

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# **EMI implementation: Example cases within the HE sector – challenges and achievements**



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## 5 The development and challenges of English-taught MA and PhD programmes in China: A case study of IICE

Since the introduction of English-taught programmes in 2011, the Institute of International and Comparative Education (IICE) at Beijing Normal University (BNU) has encountered many challenges and learned much from its experience. This paper discusses what motivated the launching of these 'English-taught' programmes and reflects on developments to date.

### Background

The IICE began offering a Chinese-taught MA programme in comparative education as early as 1979, introducing PhD programmes in comparative education in 1984; the faculty prides itself on its stellar array of alumni, with An Yan and Shen Xuesong among its notable graduates.

In 2011 the IICE turned its attention to English-taught programmes and introduced the MA in Educational Leadership and Policy – the first academic English-taught PhD programme in education in China. Shortly after, in 2012, the IICE partnered with universities in Austria, Germany and Finland to launch the Erasmus Mundus MA programme focusing on research and innovation in higher education – the first instance of a major Chinese university participating in such programmes as a full partner. One year later, the Educational Leadership and Policy PhD programme was launched – the first English-taught PhD programme in education in China.

### Driving forces

The forces driving the decision to offer English-taught programmes originated in a variety of considerations. At state level, with China's rapid growth, the country began to exert a stronger influence on the world stage than ever before. Moreover, foreigners were eager to learn more about China, its stories and the reasons why it had developed at such lightning speed. But central to China's strategy is the 'Chinese Dream'. To realise this dream – strengthening Chinese culture and the country's soft power within today's global context – is fundamental to the operating strategies of the BNU and the Chinese government.

### Reform and internationalisation

In 2010 the Chinese government issued a ten-year plan, the 'National Plan for Medium- and Long-term Education Reform and Development 2010–2020'. The plan aimed to promote faculty and student exchange, mutual recognition of credits, joint and dual degrees, as well as English-taught courses. However, despite this reform, the Chinese language still plays a major role in teaching, and the question of why instructors should use English over Chinese still remains a controversial issue. As a result of this controversy, it may be the case that the introduction of English-taught courses becomes a temporary, rather than permanent, policy and even if it were to become permanent, a mix of Chinese and English would continue, with a localised version of English naturally preferred.

A few years ago, I worked on a joint research project co-hosted by the Chinese government and the European Union. My colleagues on the project came from different countries, but only one was from the UK. During our discussions she commented on the fact that while many of the participants spoke English, it was not their mother tongue, and that they were 'destroying' the language. Indeed, this British professor did speak 'authentic' English, but imagine the future population distribution in Britain, India and China. It is possible that a few decades from now, Chinese or Indian English could become the 'standard', and 'British' English merely a 'dialect'.

### **Internationalisation at BNU**

For China, the imperative is to attract more international students. To this end the BNU is working with the China Scholarship Council and other organisations, but the prestigious status of BNU is also a central motivating factor.

In English-speaking countries such as the UK and the US, the concept of 'normal' does not exist in the realm of education – at least not during the past 100 years. So what does 'normal' mean in this context?

At a conference a few years ago, I was asked by peers from the US to define 'normal'. 'Does it mean your teaching quality is normal?' they questioned. 'Or is it not above average?' We explained that this concept of 'normal' is rooted in the word 'norm'; that Beijing Normal University is to educate teachers who are to be role models in society – not average, but, in fact, the best.

'Normal' then refers to the setting of educational standards, and the BNU is in fact one of China's best universities in terms of overall quality, and its scientific research capability ranks among the top ten nationwide. In China, the BNU enjoys an excellent reputation. It is a respected brand of higher education and ranked first in the field of education with impressive international rankings. The ambition is for it to become a 'world-class university', but for this to happen the percentage of international students – an important indicator of rank – needs to increase. So it is through the introduction of English-taught programmes that the BNU is seeking to internationalise and achieve this goal.

Various new policies have been implemented to date to support the curriculum development of these English-taught programmes in accordance with student needs through 'Project 985' funds, and international students are welcomed with the support of Chinese government and Beijing government scholarships. Meanwhile, foreign professors have been invited to teach English courses, while Chinese professors are also encouraged

to teach on English courses, which constitute twice the workload of equivalent Chinese courses. In addition, student accommodation, internet facilities, etc. are also being improved to attract international students, thereby enhancing the reputation of the BNU in higher education in China and, in particular, comparative education across the globe.

### **Comparative education programmes**

As described at the start of this paper, in 2011 an English-taught comparative education programme was launched. Many readers may not be familiar with 'comparative education', and because of the difficulties associated with attempting to explain how comparative majors can contribute to school and society after graduation, it was decided to rename the programme 'MA in Educational Leadership and Policy'. Leadership and policy are widely understood and more attractive to students from all over the world. The programme is based on the core-course system at the BNU and the Institute of International Education at Stockholm University (both renowned for their comparative education programmes). The BNU's programme is focused on a series of contemporary issues related to educational management, leadership and policy that are relevant to all countries, especially developing nations, as well as international organisations.

The programme aims to train talented individuals from all over the world so that they will develop a deep understanding of educational theories and acquire a broad knowledge of fundamental trends in educational reform and development worldwide. The programme meets the demands of the international labour market by equipping individuals with highly developed international communication skills, educational leadership and management skills. A future development of the programme is co-operation with international organisations, governmental authorities, NGOs and so on.

There are also a number of goals concerning the abilities of graduates that the university is looking to improve. To this end, we consulted the European educational framework and based on our findings we adjusted goals and divided capabilities into three categories, namely educational knowledge, educational abilities and educational attitudes. Nonetheless, there is a clear requirement for credits pertaining to these programmes (the MA and PhD), and this credit requirement may be higher than that of a similar programme in the UK. Doctoral programmes in the UK focus mainly on scientific research, rather than courses. In China, however, requirements are set for course credits, dissertation proposals and graduation theses, not dissimilar to doctoral requirements in the US. It is also important to point out that these programmes are designed for and open to international students only. While Chinese students may attend the courses, they cannot participate in the programmes, i.e. they can sign up for courses and get the credits, but they cannot become a member of the programme or gain a degree by attending.



## Successes and developments

Over the past few years, the programme has been developing rapidly. In the first year, 16 students enrolled on the MA – one self-funded and the rest supported by scholarships from the Chinese government or from their own home countries. This year, there are over 70 students from more than 30 different countries enrolled on the English-taught MA and PhD programmes. Enrolment for the Erasmus Mundus MA programme has increased slightly. The number of international students at IICE now exceeds that of Chinese students, accounting for 70 per cent of the total number of students. The fact that international students make up the majority of the student population at IICE differentiates our institute from others in China.

When the programme was first introduced, there were two main initial challenges to overcome. First, there were not enough teachers to teach the courses in English, and the teachers we had lacked the English skills to teach major courses. Consequently, many teachers from different countries, including professors from the UK, the US, Canada, France and elsewhere, were invited to join our teaching staff. In addition, young and middle-aged professors at the BNU were also encouraged to teach international students. Today, over 40 professors from the BNU (not only from the field of comparative education but also from other disciplines) teach 56 English courses at IICE. In addition to this full-time staff, professors from overseas have also been invited to give guest lectures on international education. Some of the paradigms and methods employed by these visiting lecturers differ from those generally adopted by Western countries, which supports our approach of encouraging Chinese professors to use a variety of methods, e.g. workshops, seminars, empirical analysis, etc., to fully motivate every student and improve the overall quality of teaching and learning.

Another area for immediate improvement was the enrichment of teaching resources, including textbooks and extended reading materials. There is now a huge course database and small library for international students. Added to this, we have also developed a multidimensional assessment system which takes participation, attendance, homework, papers, presentations, etc. into account. Unlike most Chinese-based education systems, there is also assignment feedback and a grade appeal system available to our international students. Teachers are accountable for grades – they need to justify their assessments and provide useful and constructive feedback.

## Challenges

Although various issues have been successfully addressed, others remain, and one of the biggest is related to campus services.

In 2015 and 2016 we carried out satisfaction surveys with international MA graduates. Overall, students were quite satisfied with the curriculum, teachers, teaching and thesis writing. They also indicated satisfaction with their improvement in academic ability and performance. However, what they were dissatisfied with were employment services and campus life – not internship, peer relationships nor partner systems, but campus services.

A main inconvenience was the fact that most accessible websites were in Chinese. In addition, signage in the library, instructions for library usage and the course selection system were in Chinese only. Moreover, there were insufficient learning spaces for international students. With regard to employment services, these were aimed primarily at Chinese students, and there was a lack of staff to serve international students in English. The third big issue was Chinese language courses and course content related to China. Many Chinese teachers felt that with international students they should focus on international content, and only focus on China with Chinese students. However, international students had come to China with the expectation of learning more about Chinese society and culture and were disappointed not to receive enough of this input. Finally, dissatisfaction was also expressed regarding academic writing lectures; the international students felt that there were insufficient opportunities for research and that too little feedback was given.

## Concluding remarks

To conclude, in the era of internationalisation of higher education in China, higher education reforms and the development of English-taught programmes were called for and have been achieved. Nevertheless, there still exist big differences in the concept and method of education between China and other countries, resulting in differing expectations from international and local students. Administrators and professors have made great efforts to make English-taught programmes a success, and overall it can be said that much has been achieved. But despite the successes, there are still many issues that need to be addressed. Most of these lie at university rather than programme level. The management and service systems, including course selection, teaching evaluation, etc., are designed with Chinese students in mind, which render them incapable of meeting the needs of internationalisation.

This discrimination of international and Chinese students which exists in student management policies isolates each from the other. At state level, concrete policies pertaining to dual and joint degrees need to be developed in this regard. At present, such policies are still at the stage of argumentation, despite the fact that it is almost ten years since the Chinese government declared its support of dual and joint degrees, and this is hampering our development.



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## 6 How to promote EMI programmes in universities

In this paper I will focus on how it is possible to promote EMI programmes at university level. I start by defining key terms related to EMI and then present a brief analysis of demand for EMI. I will then look at some key points to consider when establishing EMI programmes. Finally, I will outline how to promote the implementation of EMI by referring to key features of EMI implementation at Beihang University (BUAA).

### Key terms

I will begin by introducing some key terms to enable readers from outside China to have a better understanding of Beihang University's current programmes.

### Higher education internationalisation

In my opinion, this term can be interpreted in three ways:

1. as referring to EMI programmes in the education of international students in China. At country level, it is about study and experience in China; at school level, e.g. studying at Beihang University. Indeed, there was a time when 'educational internationalisation' referred specifically to EMI programmes for international students
2. as referring to EMI programmes in the education of Chinese students, for example EMI programmes within China through Sino-foreign co-operative education and foreign exchange programmes for Chinese students during their school years, e.g. the Yuanhang Initiative International Programme at the BUAA. In 2019, 48 per cent of undergraduates experienced at least one exchange during their school years, surpassing the target of 20 per cent

3. as referring to cutting-edge international teaching and learning methods. Methods we are actively promoting include design thinking, outcomes-based education (OBE), project-based learning (PBL), authentic learning, flipped learning, and so on. We hope that by improving teaching and learning methods, the quality of education can be enhanced, be in line with world-leading education and be ranked among the top in the world.

### Brand English-Taught Courses (BETC) for international students

In addition to National-BETC (N-BETC), there are also Province- and Municipality-BETC (P-BETC and M-BETC), as well as University-BETC (U-BETC). The setting and evaluation of BETC has drawn much attention from universities and lecturers to the importance of EMI courses and projects, and has attracted increasingly more international students to China.

### Double world-class

This refers to world-class university and world-class discipline. If we look at the indicators used for the QS World University Rankings, we can see that the percentage of international faculty and international students should be five. To increase this percentage would require EMI programmes to encourage more international teachers to teach and participate in research projects in China and more foreign students to come to China for education. When referring to establishing world-class disciplines, it is useful to look at the discipline ranking system in China. In the fourth China Discipline Ranking (CDR), BETC was set as an indicator, and it is to be hoped that it will continue to be so in the fifth CDR.

## Demand analysis

I will now move on to a demand analysis regarding EMI programmes.

Part of the demand for EMI comes from international students. In 2017, the number of international students in China was 487,000. Figure 1a shows the top five popular majors for undergraduate programmes, Master's programmes and doctoral programmes respectively.

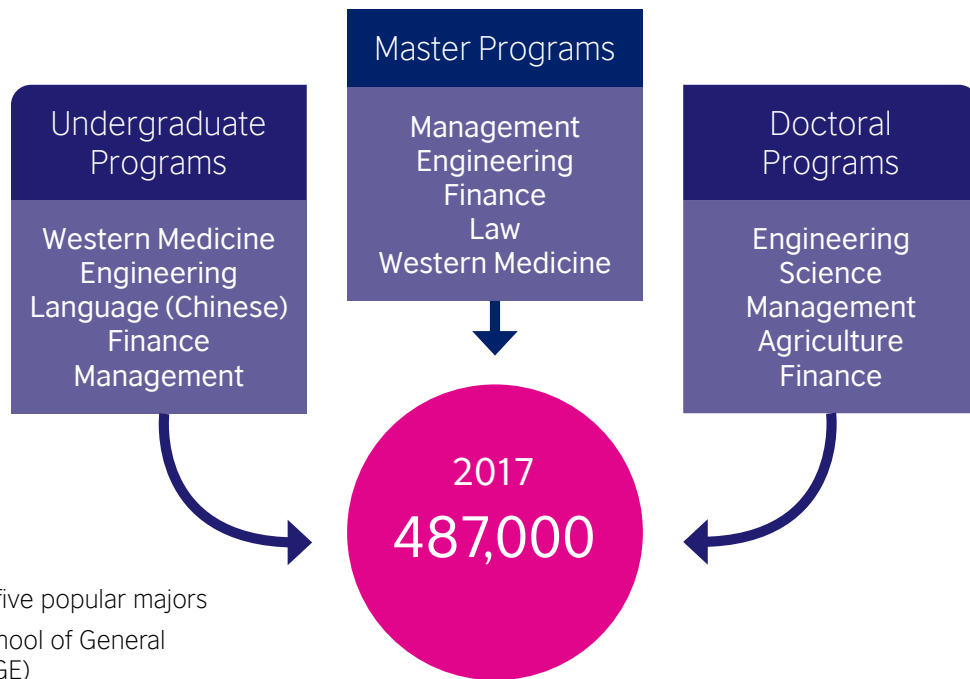


Figure 1a: Top five popular majors

Source: The School of General Engineering (SGE)

If we disregard majors that appear once only, the four majors that remain are Western Medicine, Engineering, Finance and Management, all of which can be seen in undergraduate, Master's and doctoral programmes. Each of these four majors are prime targets of existing EMI programmes (see Figure 1b).

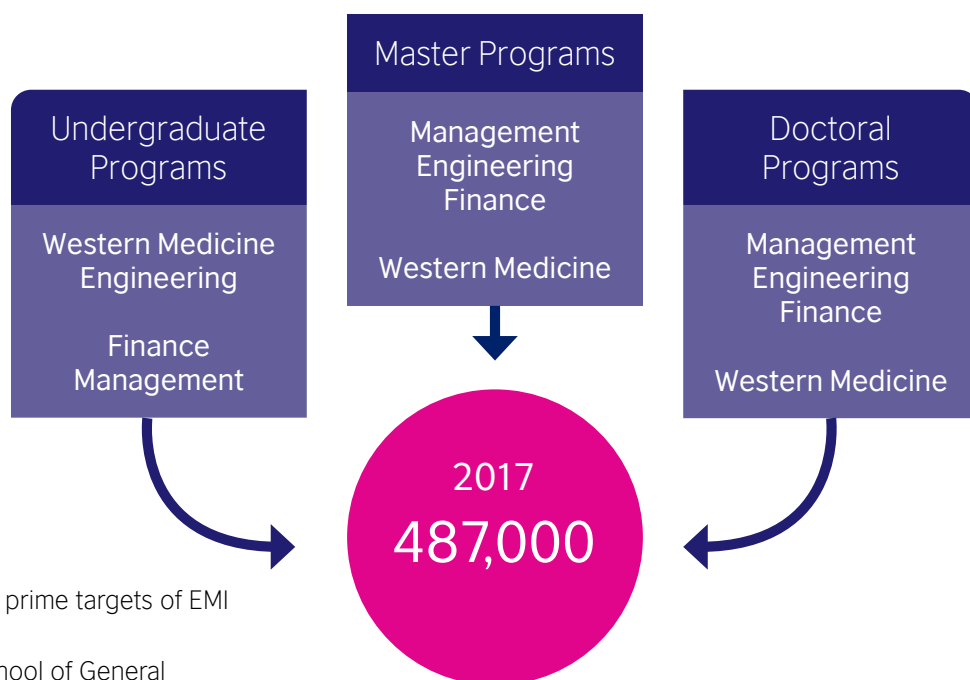


Figure 1b: Four prime targets of EMI programmes

Source: The School of General Engineering (SGE)

Demand also arises from Chinese students. Figure 2 shows what are commonly referred to as 21st-century skills, also known as the four Cs. The first C stands for communication – sharing thoughts, questions, ideas and solutions – and if we look at statistical data from the Job Outlook 2017 survey (Figure 3), it is clear that verbal and written communication skills are two attributes valued most by employers.

## What are 21st-century skills? These four Cs:

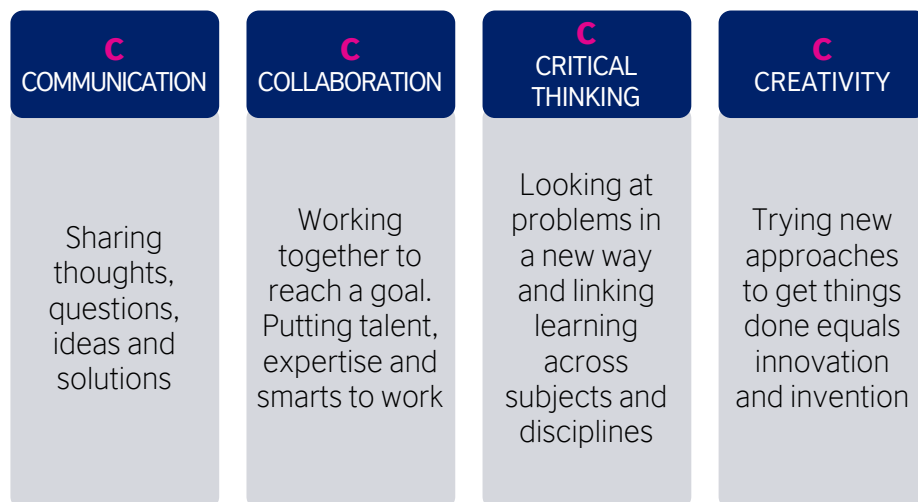


Figure 2: 21st-century skills, or the four Cs

In 2015 the BUAA carried out a survey to assess the competency of graduates according to employers. Of the abilities assessed, English language skills scored rather low, providing further argument for the participation of Chinese students in EMI programmes.

Demand analysis shows us that EMI programmes are necessary for both international students and Chinese students. According to the guideline for education of international students, we should 'expand the scale, optimise the structure, standardise the management, and guarantee the quality'. To effectively implement this guideline, and to improve the education of international students and facilitate communication between Chinese and foreign students, universities have been actively promoting both 'fusion education' and 'convergence management'. Both can effectively improve the education quality of international students and facilitate the educational internationalisation of universities.

# Attributes employers seek on a candidate's résumé

Source: Job outlook 2017, National Association of Colleges and Employers

Attribute	Percentage of respondents
Ability to work in a team	78.0%
Problem-solving skills	77.3%
Communication skills (written)	75.0%
Strong work ethic	72.0%
Communication skills (verbal)	70.5%
Leadership	68.9%
Initiative	65.9%
Analytical/quantitative skills	64.4%
Flexibility/adaptability	63.6%
Detail-oriented	62.1%
Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)	58.3%
Technical skills	56.8%
Computer skills	49.2%
Organisational ability	47.7%
Strategic planning skills	37.9%
Friendly/outgoing personality	25.8%
Tactfulness	25.8%
Creativity	21.2%
Entrepreneurial skills/risk-taker	19.7%
Fluency in a foreign language	4.5%

Figure 3: Attributes valued most by employers

## Key points to consider when establishing EMI programmes

Based on our experience at the BUAA, I will now list some key points to bear in mind when establishing an EMI programme. Here, I am not referring to simply teaching courses in English; I am referring to a system-wide project where key aspects of the curriculum are rearranged accordingly. Such aspects include outcomes, course arrangements, teaching books, content, teaching methods, management systems, English level, learning methods, experiments or lab, software, international faculty, local faculty, assessment, regulations and so on. Each of these needs to be adjusted but it is not within the scope of this paper to elaborate on each of these points.

When developing an EMI programme, we often come across the concept of 'bilingual teaching'. As a teacher, I tried this method for the duration of one semester and

found that bilingual teaching did help students gain a better understanding of certain concepts which tended to confuse them and lower their learning efficiency. However, the course I was teaching was based on *Engineering Materials*, an English textbook with more than 1,000 pages, alongside a Chinese translation. There was a video version too, and another 280-page Chinese textbook written by experts from the BUAA, with a corresponding English textbook. With the many differences between English and Chinese in terms of expressing concepts, ideas and opinions, such as with the use of modifiers (when defining a concept before the noun in Chinese, after the noun in English) the versions of translated texts that the students were required to access served as much to confuse as to enlighten. Therefore, I believe that it would be better to use only one language in the teaching and learning of a course.

## Key features of EMI implementation at Beihang University

Having looked at the key points, I will now introduce examples of innovation in the EMI programmes at BUAA.

To begin, I will discuss organisational development. In 2004, Beihang University established its International School, which is fully responsible for the education, management and recruitment of international students. In 2017, the School of General Engineering (SGE) was founded. The SGE is an internationalisation model school supported by the Department of Foreign Expert Services, the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Education. It is hoped that the injection of foreign expertise will help with the establishment of a number of model schools that are representative of internationalisation in teaching, research and management.

If we look at the timeline of Beihang University's EMI programme development, in 1993 the first batch of international graduate students enrolled and undertook EMI courses. Since 2008, five EMI undergraduate majors have been available to international students. In 2017, the SGE was established, along with two EMI majors for Chinese students, namely Mechanical Engineering and Aerospace Engineering.

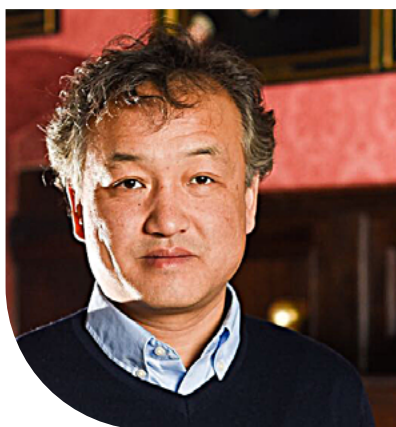
There are some key features of the SGE's EMI programmes that warrant a closer look.

1. The dean of the newly established SGE is Prof. WEN Dongsheng, who is a tenured professor at the University of Leeds. The two foreign honoured vice deans are Prof. Kamran Behdinan from the University of Toronto and Prof. Lueny Morell, former President of the International Federation of Engineering Education Societies (IFEES) and senior ABET Programme Evaluator. In addition, the International Advisory Committee was set up to ensure that the programme closely follows the trends of internationalised education.
2. The school modelled itself on colleges such as Olin College, MIT and Georgia Institute of Technology when designing its course schedule. A thorough system of outcomes, credits, syllabus and so on was established.
3. The SGE also prioritises teaching teachers how to teach, and in 2018 it launched the IGIP Programme aimed at the faculty, which comprises foreign and Chinese teachers and long- and short-term faculties. In 2019, Professor Oakes from Purdue University was invited to preside over the Service Learning Workshop.
4. The connection of knowledge between different courses was fully taken into consideration when the English textbooks for EMI programmes were selected.

5. Students enrolled into the SGE, after taking China's college entrance exam, have not undergone any specialised selection processes and so need to further strengthen their English skills after enrolment. To this end, the school has designed compulsory and elective courses, and organised activities such as an English corner, an English speech contest, cultural activities with foreign teachers, volunteering services, one-to-one English tutoring and so on. After one year, most students have successfully adapted to EMI courses.
6. The EMI programmes have created a platform for implementing advanced teaching methods, for example project-based learning for freshmen undergraduates, led by Prof. Kamran from the University of Toronto. This can be seen as an elementary graduation project. It allows undergraduates to experience engineering and practices as early as the first year. Another example is the Engineering Leadership Programme (ELP) led by Prof. Lueny, former President of IFEES. This is modelled after MIT's ELP, with some adjustments made to suit Chinese students. Indeed, the implementation of EMI programmes has provided ample opportunity for introducing projects and advanced methods of teaching and learning.

## Conclusion

To conclude, examples such as those given above are present not only at Beihang University but also at many other universities in China. Moreover, during a conference held by the Korean Society of Engineering and Education (KSEE) in October in the Republic of Korea, a professor from the University of Tokyo's School of Engineering introduced their EMI programme, which was similar to that at the SGE. Perhaps this serves to demonstrate that there is consensus among non-native English-speaking countries with regard to the benefits of promoting EMI programmes in universities.



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## 7 How EMI contributes to international standards of teaching and learning

The Beijing Institute of Technology (BIT) is a national key university in the field of science and technology. BIT was among the first group of universities admitted into 'Project 211' and 'Project 985' and is now ranked as Class A in the 'World-Class Universities' initiative.

### Scientific research and talent development in universities

Scientific research and talent development are two important tasks for higher education. Scientific research promotes the progress of science and technology and pushes the frontier for our national science and technology development. Cultivation of talent is the most important mission for a university. Given today's landscape, where knowledge, economy and competition for talent are globalised, universities in China are now faced with the critical task of promoting internationalisation. BIT attaches great importance to the development of talent and three years ago launched a special project for the comprehensive reform of talent development, of which the education of international talents is an essential component.

### Education of international talents

We define international talents as being high-level achievers with world-class knowledge and professional skills, international vision and understanding of global affairs and conventions, and the ability to become leaders and communicators in a competitive world. Specifically speaking, international talents should have the following attributes and qualifications:

- international first-class knowledge systems and proven research, development and innovation capabilities in their professional field
- broad international vision, knowledge of international conventions and culture, as well as enthusiasm and desire to participate in international affairs
- the ability to use foreign languages for cross-cultural exchange, communication and co-operation
- critical thinking, information literacy and lifelong learning
- remarkable mental resilience, good self-control and self-management, and ability to study, live and work in different countries and cultures
- high-level ideological and political quality, as well as integrity and independence in personality and beliefs.

### Establishment of the EMI programme

In 2011, following years of bilingual teaching, BIT began to establish the new EMI programme. Four EMI majors were launched: Mechanical Engineering, Electronic Science and Technology, Automation, and International Economics and Trade. Since 2018, two additional EMI majors – Mechatronic Engineering, and Data Science and Big Data – have been successively established. Mechanical Engineering was the first EMI major ever established in BIT. At the outset of the EMI programme development, we set out our goal: FISC – Fusion of faculties, Integration of international students, Synchronisation of curriculum and Collaboration of research. The fusion of faculties is to achieve exchange and co-operation between domestic and foreign

teachers in teaching and research, and to invite excellent foreign teachers to deliver lectures at BIT. The integration of international students includes the education of Chinese and international students together here in China, as well as the promotion of more exchanges and study abroad programmes. The synchronisation of curriculum is to establish a training programme and curriculum system which is recognised internationally, and to gain international certification for our majors. The collaboration of research is to increase the exchange and co-operation in scientific research between Chinese and foreign universities.

### **Motivation**

The driving force behind the EMI programme consists of many factors, both top-down and bottom-up. The establishment of the EMI programme was mainly driven by the internal demand for the development of majors and disciplines. With the EMI programme, we hope to cultivate students' English language skills, enable them to become familiar with foreign curricula and teaching methods, send more of our exchange students abroad and attract more international exchange or degree students to China.

Another intrinsic motivation has been the need for reform in university education. Chinese universities have always adopted the teacher-centred and lecture-based education mode. Students show low interest in classroom participation and interaction and do not develop strong autonomous learning skills. The EMI programme differs from the previous Chinese-instructed programmes in terms of curriculum, course content and teaching materials. We also hope to take advantage of such an opportunity to vigorously promote the reform of teaching methods and move from teacher-centred instruction to student-centred learning. EMI programmes also appeal to teachers who have just returned from abroad. These teachers have many years of overseas study and work experience, understand the teaching methods adopted in foreign universities and boast high levels of English proficiency. They have returned to China to take up teaching positions and are open to the idea of teaching EMI courses.

BIT has been striving to promote the international exchange of undergraduates. It has signed student exchange agreements with more than 100 universities. Nearly 40 per cent of BIT undergraduates participate in various international exchange programmes each year, including short-term courses in summer and winter, one-semester study tours and double-degree programmes. The launch of EMI majors and courses will not only improve students' international competence but also attract more foreign students to China.

Over the past eight years, we have implemented the EMI Mechanical Engineering programme and can now offer a full package of academic courses in English. Both our teaching quality and content continue to gain acknowledgement from more and more foreign universities, making it easier for us to achieve mutual recognition of courses with other universities. Our EMI majors and courses have allowed us to collaborate with

more foreign universities on student exchange and double-degree programmes.

### **Construction of an international education system through the EMI programme**

We regard the EMI programme as not simply a way to transform teaching methods but also, and more importantly, as a means of building an international education system.

Through the development of EMI majors and curricula, we have established a relatively integrated international education system, including curriculum systems (knowledge structures), teaching methods, faculty staff, international vision development, international student education, teaching evaluation and quality control, an international exchange platform and building international co-operation in higher education.

### **Curriculum building and teaching methods**

The curriculum for the EMI Mechanical Engineering programme is designed in accordance with the requirements set by first-class international universities, especially those in Europe and North America, for the cultivation of core knowledge and skills for mechanical engineering undergraduates. Aspects of the course, including ability indicators, teaching content, teaching methods, evaluation and assessment, all match standards set by international first-class universities in terms of knowledge structures, education methodology, assessment methods and education results.

In the process of developing our curriculum, we refer to mechanical engineering curricula adopted by foreign universities in such countries as the US, Australia, Germany and Italy. For the current curriculum, 160 credits are required. In the first year, courses are mainly taught in Chinese. From the second year, the language of instruction is shifted gradually to English.

Twenty-six courses are now available in the EMI Mechanical Engineering programme. In terms of teaching methods, English is used as the language of teaching and learning, and original English textbooks are assigned. We now teach all academic courses fully in English for the EMI programme.

At the same time, the EMI curriculum, which is at the forefront of teaching reform, has implemented concepts of outcome-based education (OBE) and student-centred learning. The EMI educational reform programme has received strong support from BIT.

### **Faculty**

During the development of the EMI programme, the toughest problem lay in the organisation of the academic staff. In comparison to Chinese-instructed courses, EMI courses require more time and effort for preparation and have higher expectations on the effectiveness and outcomes of teaching and learning. It is even more difficult to achieve effective outcomes for these courses and ensure student satisfaction. Teachers are expected to have high English proficiency, profound subject



and contextual background knowledge, as well as competence in teaching EMI courses. What matters most is their enthusiasm for and devotion to undergraduate teaching.

In the development of the EMI Mechanical Engineering programme, we focus on selecting those teachers with extensive teaching experience, excellent teaching skills, overseas learning experience and proficiency in teaching English. All of the academic staff for the EMI programme are advanced teachers with experience in living and studying overseas, excellent proficiency in English, extensive experience in English teaching and research, enthusiasm for teaching and concern for students. With support from the Office of Academic Affairs of BIT, we subsidise faculty for their overseas study and training every year. We also invite faculty from foreign universities with links to BIT to give lectures each year.

### **Student selection and education**

Selecting students with strong international development goals and the ability to learn English is the foundation of the programme's success. Students who want to join the EMI programme must apply directly and will be subject to a further selection process after enrolment on a course. An EMI panel then determines selection by reviewing candidates' basic information and college entrance examination scores, and by interviewing them to evaluate their proficiency in foreign languages and overall academic ability. During the selection process, we focus on students' basic knowledge of mathematics and physics and ability to speak English. But even more important is the students' willingness to internationalise their development, their ability to study independently, their self-management skills and long-term personal and career ambitions. In our experience with teaching EMI, we find that students' willingness to develop international skills and their ability to overcome difficulties and challenges are key to successful participation in an EMI programme.

In addition to the major courses, general English courses are modified to accommodate academic English, which helps students adapt to the EMI programme. EMI teaching features improving students' skills in mastering terminology and research in English and also stresses cross-cultural exchanges and developing an international vision. BIT and its School of ME have jointly established an international exchange platform with top universities in Europe and the US to help nurture international talents, which is also the purpose of the EMI programme. The undergraduates enrolled have good learning ability, and most can quickly improve their English writing and speaking skills and adapt to EMI. Chinese students begin studying with international students from the second year, when a truly international learning environment is achieved.

### **Professional evaluation and accreditation**

In 2016, Mechanical Engineering was evaluated as the BIT's first international subject and was recognised among the top in Asia. The school's ME courses are at the highest level in Asia in terms of undergraduate and postgraduate education, faculties, and teaching and research facilities. In 2012, the EMI Mechanical Engineering programme, together with the major taught in Chinese, achieved the domestic engineering education accreditation.

### **Some achievements of the EMI programme**

To date, the EMI Mechanical Engineering programme has had five cohorts. The data shows that, during the four-year undergraduate course, about 70 per cent of the students participated in international exchange programmes such as student exchanges, overseas study tours and double-degrees organised by BIT. About 80 per cent of the students chose to go abroad to pursue Master's degrees after graduation. The universities and colleges participating in exchanges are mainly in the US, Germany, Italy and Australia.

### **Erasmus+ capacity building in the field of higher education**

The EMI Mechanical Engineering programme also promotes the international co-operation of the School of ME in the field of higher education. We have now undertaken two Erasmus+ advanced capacity-building programmes and established good relationships with many practitioners in the international education community for extensive exchange programmes and other co-operation.

### **Reflections on the EMI programme**

The development of the EMI programme has resulted in a complete teaching and learning process chain, which covers teaching, seminars, examinations, experiments and internship practices, etc., so it is unclear whether it is a fully developed or complete teaching programme as yet. At present, the most demanding aspect is implementing the practical knowledge elements, including on-campus course experiments and off-campus internships. More teachers with the ability to teach practical knowledge in English are also required. The School is also actively reaching out to more foreign-funded enterprises in order to find additional opportunities for internships.

Another challenge is how to improve the teaching ability of teachers, mitigate the impact of inefficient teaching due to language non-proficiency and upgrade the efficiency and effectiveness of teaching and learning.

Teaching materials also pose problems. The EMI programme mainly deploys original textbooks used in foreign countries, which are more thorough and diverse in content and explanation. But the content of

foreign textbooks can sometimes fail to meet domestic requirements or match the teaching approach. As a result, content from various textbooks is sometimes required, although further efforts will be put into the preparation of new comprehensive English textbooks.

And finally, there has been a lack of foreign teachers engaged in professional development and management of teachers. Teacher training is an area we are working hard in, and we continue to explore active, effective and sustainable methods of training and supporting EMI teachers in terms of their language proficiency and pedagogic skills.

### **Future plan**

Eight-plus years of EMI experience have borne fruits in areas such as teaching ability, international curricula and approaches, professional evaluation and continuing improvement, international student education and international exchange of students, all of which elevate the international reputation and influence of BIT.

To summarise, the EMI Mechanical Engineering programme will continue to evolve, as will the curriculum and teaching methods. Research in EMI will be strengthened and ability to teach and learn in English will be upgraded. We will also continue to seek co-operation with foreign universities in jointly carrying out EMI, OBE teaching, international credit accreditation, student assessment, quality control, innovation and entrepreneurship development and other international exchanges and experiments. In light of this, we have co-applied with foreign universities for the EU Erasmus+ capacity-building programmes in the field of EMI in higher education for three consecutive years. Improvement of teaching conditions for practical learning, the development of innovative entrepreneurship and practical courses, and the expansion of the international exchange platform to meet the desire of students to go abroad will also be implemented.



**Ayşen Güven** works as Director Education for the British Council in Turkey. She has been working intensively on improving the quality of English provision in the higher education sector in Turkey at national and institutional level. Ayşen worked at an EMI university for 20 years as a teacher, trainer and supervisor, focusing on English for Academic Purposes (EAP), specialising in EAP curriculum design, reflective practice, leadership and change management. She is currently the co-ordinator of the IATEFL English for Specific Purposes Special Interest Group (ESP SIG).



**Professor Tuncay Döğeroğlu** is the rector of Eskişehir Technical University in Turkey. She is also a member of the Higher Education Quality Council, Turkey's Presidential Education Policies Council, and the Islamic World Science Citation Center. She served as Secretary-General of the Turkish Engineering Deans Council (MDK) and board member at the Global Engineering Deans Council (GEDC), the European Society for Engineering Education (SEFI) and the International Federation of Engineering Education Societies (IFEES).

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## 8 Setting national standards for English preparatory programmes: A reflection

With an increasing push in many countries for an improvement of current practices in English-medium provision, there is more pressure on institutional and national policy makers to search for quality assurance systems. This paper focuses on such drivers, and the process of establishing and assessing minimum standards for English preparatory programmes for English-medium universities in Turkey, in partnership with the Council of Higher Education (CoHE), the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) and UK partners such as the Global Forum for EAP professionals (BALEAP) and the Evaluation and Accreditation of Quality in Language Services (EQUALS). Some of the outcomes and recommendations of the evaluation of the pilot, based on quantitative and qualitative data collected during and at the end of this national project, are also shared.

### A brief overview of EMI in Turkey

Turkey has a long history of EMI instruction, dating back to 1863, with the foundation of Robert College, now Bogaziçi University – a lead that was followed with the establishment of the Middle East Technical University in 1956 and its first foundation EMI university in 1984. Since then the number of universities offering EMI programmes has increased to over 150 of the 207 universities in Turkey today. It is difficult to give precise figures for the number of universities using EMI because the context is diverse and instruction may range from full EMI to mixed-medium to Turkish-medium instruction (TMI) in a variety of forms. Among these variations in scope, the experience of the institution offering EMI, the experience of the academic staff, and entry and exit levels of faculty and students also vary considerably.

Most universities offering EMI programmes have a one-year English preparatory programme, which is mainly responsible for offering pre-session or in-session English courses to their students. Yet, here too there are variations. These language programmes, named in different ways, offer voluntary courses to TMI students but are compulsory for students who want to pursue their studies in an EMI programme. Regardless of the degree and scope of EMI in the universities, these preparatory courses are a requirement for entry to EMI programmes. In universities where the majority of instruction is in English, English language programmes also offer some in-session, credit-bearing courses to students.

Within this context, the fact that the central university exam does not test English on EMI programmes means that entry and exit levels for both the preparatory programmes and faculty vary. It is this variation and scope of EMI in Turkey that makes both the quality and the quantity of EMI programmes a subject of controversy among stakeholders. Although the English proficiency of EMI lecturers generally meets international proficiency level standards, and is outstanding in some universities, a majority of universities experience difficulties in finding academics with adequate levels of English or EMI experience to open or expand their EMI programmes.

Regardless of the proficiency level of English instructors, lack of EMI professional training for lecturers poses other challenges for institutions, as lecturers tend to take little or no responsibility for the language used and expect students and English language programmes to 'solve' the language proficiency issue.

With an ambition to increase the number of international students and staff in universities, and a 'mission differentiation agenda' to increase Turkey's ranking in international publications, ensuring high-quality EMI remains a priority for national and institutional higher education policy makers, who seek different solutions to the challenges posed.

In response to this, increasingly, some institutions have applied for international language accreditation programmes; others have come up with institutional quality assurance measurements. There has also been a search to establish a local English Language Accreditation Scheme, and the work is continuing. Within this context, the pilot described in this paper is one of the first attempts to come up with shared minimum standards and to implement a peer review system among preparatory programmes.

## **Contextualising the project within Turkey's bigger higher education landscape**

### **A brief background of the Turkish higher education system and its quality assurance system**

Turkey has 207 higher education institutions, including public and foundation universities. With a total of almost eight million students, Turkey has the highest number of students in the European Higher Education Area. Internationalisation and increasing inward staff and student mobility is a priority, and Turkey is trying to

increase its international student number, which currently stands at over 150,000. EMI instruction is seen as one of the main factors contributing to the internationalisation agenda.

The Council of Higher Education (CoHE) is an institution under the Turkish constitution and is responsible for the strategic planning, co-ordination, supervision and monitoring of higher education, and establishing and maintaining quality assurance mechanisms in Turkey.

The focus on quality assurance in higher education increased after the participation of Turkey in the Bologna Process in 2001. However, efforts and activities related to Bologna reforms gained momentum particularly after 2015, with the establishment of the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC). The HEQC is the national body which aims to oversee quality in higher education. In 2017 it became an independent institution directly funded by the government, with the mission to set up internal and external peer review systems. Since then it has been mainly responsible for the co-ordination and supervision of these review systems of universities. The reform activities, which are carried out by the HEQC, aim to set up a national system of quality assurance, with a structure and function comparable to its transnational counterparts.

Each higher education institution is evaluated at least once every five years. Programme accreditation is voluntary, and it is related to clear evaluation criteria. The reviewer pool is made up of academic and administrative staff and student reviewers.

Within this context, most major reforms have emerged as part of the 'mission differentiation agenda' and have led to the classification and specialisation of research universities and regional development universities. This differentiation agenda was launched in 2017. 'Mission Differentiation and Specialisation on the Basis of Regional Development' aims for regional socio-economic development led by the universities; the Research University Project aims for research-oriented specialisation of universities in certain areas, prioritised by the needs and aims of Turkey.

It is important to note that most universities which were nominated by the CoHE as research or regional development universities offer university degree programmes in English. In the context of a national call to improve inward and outward student and staff mobility and standards, improving the quality of English within the tertiary level had become a bigger priority, one that was in a way known but not acted upon at national level. It is this national context, in which a longer-term partnership between the CoHE and the British Council was established, that led to setting up minimum standards for English preparatory programmes in EMI universities.

### **The drivers in setting up and piloting national standards for English-medium programmes for Turkish universities**

In 2015, the CoHE asked the British Council to conduct research into the provision of English in higher education to come up with national recommendations to improve EMI practice. A large-scale baseline study was

conducted across 40 universities in 15 cities in Turkey, including both EMI and non-EMI institutions. The aim was to look at the strengths and the challenges faced. Recommendations based on this research were put forward to the CoHE in *The State of English in Higher Education in Turkey* (West et al., 2015), and included national and institutional-level recommendations to improve the practice of English provision across programmes in institutions offering full and partial EMI programmes.

Some of the challenges raised specific to EMI were related to improving assessment practices, moving from English for General Purposes (EGP) towards English for Academic Purposes (EAP), setting clear institutional language policies for both EMI and non-EMI institutions, and providing continuing professional development for both English and EMI teachers. Major recommendations were made at national level to set clear standards in EMI that would aid both institutional and programme delivery. Another major finding in the research was that compared to other countries, Turkey had far more undergraduate EMI programmes, which caused some major challenges for students and university policy makers as students were placed into programmes centrally. Two major recommendations were made: (1) to increase the number of 'parallel' programmes which would give students the choice to switch to TMI and not be disadvantaged in pursuing their academic studies; (2) to invest in more EMI programmes at graduate level to facilitate research outputs.

In 2017, some of the recommendations were followed up after large-scale dissemination meetings with all types of stakeholders, including national bodies, rectors, directors of foreign languages departments, teachers, EMI students and employers.

A second collaboration initiated by the CoHE was to look at how to support institutions in their provision of English. Five universities offering both EMI and non-EMI programmes were selected to pilot the Quality Development Programme project. Although limited to five universities from different parts of the country, the project aimed to combine data-gathering from institutions with a developmental approach to culminate in an action plan.

The Quality Development Programme was a one-week deep dive into a university, which combined quantitative and qualitative data collection at all levels: the policy maker(s) ultimately responsible to the senate for offering EMI or TMI courses, both EMI and English teachers, and the students. As a result of this deep dive, each university was presented with a list of recommendations to improve the provision of English for both EMI and non-EMI programmes. At the end of this pilot, a collated list of recommendations was presented by the British Council to the CoHE together with the institutions. More intense discussions followed, resulting in a national policy to set up minimum standards for English programmes in EMI universities.

### **The search for minimum standards: Accreditation or peer review?**

Following the pilots, in partnership with the British Council, the CoHE hosted a quality assurance workshop attended by 30 participants from Turkey and the UK, whose goal was to come up with a 'national solution' to improve the quality of English preparatory programmes. The participating institutions were diverse in terms of scale, their experience regarding international accreditation schemes, their rankings and their student profile. The British Council's role was to bring in the UK experience, via university representatives from UK English accreditation bodies. The workshop started with the main concern of the CoHE, which was whether B1 was a high enough exit level for students to pursue their studies in English at the end of a preparatory programme. At the beginning of the workshop, the president of the CoHE made a clear statement that the students' current proficiency level was not high enough, and that there were major concerns as to whether students actually achieved B1 level at the end of a one-year preparatory programme. A clear statement was made that there was a need to come up with a national solution to improve the exit level of foreign language programmes which serve as a prerequisite for entry to any EMI programme in Turkish universities.

One of the major issues discussed in this workshop was whether Turkey should set up its own national accreditation process – which was under way at the time of this workshop – or whether it should opt for a peer review process in line with quality assurance programmes for other subject areas overseen by the CoHE. Considering that Turkey's biggest and strongest English preparatory programmes had not opted for any international accreditation scheme but had their own internal QA systems, these prestigious EMI universities were called on to share their systems for quality assuring their programmes and come up with a first draft of a set of minimum standards for English preparatory programmes in EMI.

### **Setting minimum standards: A pilot of a national peer review with ten universities**

At the end of a four-year collaboration, a national pilot was initiated in partnership with the CoHE, the HEQC and the British Council, with the aim of establishing a means by which English language provision in English preparatory programmes could be assessed on a national level and, by identifying areas for development and sharing of good practice, contribute to raising standards. The narrow focus on English preparatory programmes, and not on EMI faculty, was deliberate as the English preparatory programme is perceived to be vitally important as a bridge to EMI instruction.

## Roles of partners

Each partner had a clear role. The CoHE was responsible for the selection of the pilot universities, including the six EMI universities who came up with the draft minimum standards. The HEQC was responsible for the co-ordination of the project with all universities, including the planning of the pilot and ensuring the procedures for the selection of local external reviewers. The British Council was the external partner responsible for planning, steering meetings, planning content, bringing in UK expertise, and briefing national bodies. More specifically the role of the British Council was to:

1. review the minimum standards with UK partners such as BALEAP, reviewers from UK accreditation schemes such as EAQUALS and other reviewers from UK universities
2. select UK reviewers to join the Turkish review groups (each group had one UK reviewer)
3. plan and co-train the reviewers selected by the HEQC
4. join the site visits to monitor the process
5. appoint a consultant to monitor and evaluate every phase of the pilot and write an evaluation report.

## The review process

The process involved various stages and was organic, as in some cases these stages were not linear but cyclical. The main stages of the pilot were:

1. selecting the project team and briefing them on the milestones leading up to the pilot
2. reviewing and revising the first draft of minimum standards set by the six universities with input from UK and Turkish reviewers who had experience with other accreditation schemes
3. coming up with core principles for the review scheme and agreeing on them
4. devising guidelines for reviewers and pilot universities (all reviewers were selected from the universities chosen for the pilot, which meant that the institutions involved were both 'reviewer' and 'reviewee')
5. planning a two-day training programme for reviewers with the core team that came up with the draft standards and UK trainers
6. conducting the site visits (1–1.5 days each)
7. conducting a short exit meeting
8. writing the reports and submitting them to the HEQC.

## Positive outcomes of the pilot

Overall, the pilot project was a concrete illustration that there was a national commitment to quality enhancement and raising English language standards in higher education institutions offering EMI programmes. The commitment was at all levels: the two national bodies and the universities participating in the project.

Some additional outcomes were:

- At an institutional level, both the reviewers and the programme staff who were responsible for submitting the self-evaluation report and arranging the focus groups and observations were highly committed to the review.
- The review process was considered to be beneficial as it involved universities evaluating their own systems and practices. Oral exit reports mentioned that they valued the dialogue with colleagues from other universities.
- Reviewers, who were all in positions of responsibility, such as directors of programmes and assessment or professional development co-ordinators, mentioned that they had benefited from gaining more awareness of areas for improvement in their own institutions. They also noted that they appreciated having experienced UK reviewers in the team. Specific areas mentioned were related to coming up with a clear language policy and improving systems of institutional assessment: the indicators under each section of the minimum standards were referred to specifically.
- During the pilot, both the British Council and the HEQC received expressions of interest from other institutions wanting to participate in the pilot review.

## Lessons learned from a national review on setting standards in EMI

The project was challenging as the review schedule and the timeline set by the partners was very tight. Despite this, the pilot was planned and implemented in a short time with lots of positive outcomes. But did it achieve its aim or answer the initial question of whether B1 is a high enough exit level? And did it go beyond looking at processes and focus also on outcomes?

## Did we achieve our aim?

Yes, in terms of piloting a set of standards with a diverse group of reviewers, setting up a developmental core team with a positive and collaborate attitude who were committed to improving standards of English language provision in preparatory programmes at EMI universities.

No, as we have not really raised the standards through a national review. The evaluation of the pilots, reviewing the minimum standards and procedures, is vital. It is also vital that institutions get support as to how they can work on the areas they need to improve.

A core issue that creates a barrier to improving standards is assessment. It is very difficult to talk about levels and outcomes in the absence of standardised assessment, and this remains a major challenge.

## Reference

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# 9 Designing an MA in English as a Medium of Instruction

## Introduction

When, in 2020, the Department of Education at the University of Bath launched its MA English as a Medium of Instruction, this was a signal that the time had come to acknowledge EMI as a professional-academic discipline and a career in its own right. In this paper I will outline how we designed the MA EMI, what we decided to include in the course and the reasons behind our decisions.

## Context and definitions

The MA EMI had its origins in the MA TESOL, which was established at the University of Bath in 2007. For several years the MA TESOL had contained a small component (a lecture and a seminar) which served as an introduction to the origins, definitions and key issues in EMI. The inclusion of EMI as a topic within the MA TESOL reflected the global growth of English-medium education and the emergence of several milestone research publications. The latter included Doiz et al.'s (2013) edited collection about the use of EMI in universities; Dearden's (2014) survey of EMI in 55 countries; Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri's (2017) survey of EMI in China and Japan; Pecorari and Malmstrom's (2018) special issue of *TESOL Quarterly*; and Macaro et al.'s (2018) systematic review of research on the policy and practice of EMI in higher education. Furthermore, a growing number of academic staff within the Department of Education at the University of Bath were themselves conducting research on EMI.

Most of the students who enrolled on our MA TESOL had not heard the term 'EMI'. And yet, once they had received an introduction to this new field and reflected on its career potential, many chose to conduct dissertation studies in the area of EMI. By the academic year 2018–19, almost a quarter of the 100 full-time students in the cohort chose to do so. Although at the time

the programme team did not think of it in such terms, we had, in effect, been testing the market. When the university invited suggestions for ways of expanding the postgraduate taught offer, the development of a full MA EMI seemed both timely and appropriate.

From the outset it was decided that we would keep our definitions of EMI as broad as possible. This was in recognition of the fact that EMI means different things to different people operating in different educational sectors and in different pedagogical contexts. Like Pecorari and Malmstrom we acknowledged the 'received understanding' which views EMI settings as having four key characteristics:

1. English is the language used for instructional purposes.
2. English is not itself the subject being taught.
3. Language development [i.e. increased language competency] is not a primary intended outcome.
4. For most participants in the setting, English is a second language (L2).

(Pecorari and Malmstrom, 2018: 497)

However, again like Pecorari and Malmstrom, we recognised that all of these features involved complexity and were worthy of problematisation.

## Insights from market research

Market research for the proposed new programme included an online survey of over 80 existing Master's programmes in applied linguistics, TESOL and related areas in the UK, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand, in order to identify those which contained components which referred to content and language integrated learning (CLIL) or EMI. This survey provided confirmation

of the growing interest in EMI as an area of study but also revealed a relative gap in the market for postgraduate taught courses.

Focus group interviews were conducted with the current students of our full-time MA TESOL and MA International Education and Globalisation in order to gather their feedback on the initial programme proposal. The prior work experience of the interviewees ranged from zero to five years, although in most cases their teaching experience was limited to a few weeks of an internship/ placement. Overall, the results suggested that applicants were likely to be attracted to a programme that was 'academic and vocational, however [...] leaning towards the latter'. Those participants with more professional maturity acknowledged that 'if you really want to be a teacher, a theoretical foundation is important, and you need to [...] reflect critically on your experience'. However, most participants advised that the new programme should have a 'hands-on approach' and that there should be relatively little emphasis on the 'theoretical stuff'.

The composition of the focus groups reflected that of their MA programme cohorts at Bath, which in turn reflected that of many full-time education-related Master's programmes in the UK. Some participants stated that their motivation in taking an MA was not to teach but to take roles in leadership, policy making or to support international students. Most said that their aims in taking an MA were to develop their skill sets and gain overseas experience, which would enhance their employability as teachers after graduation. The market for full-time education-related Master's degrees has in recent decades been increasingly driven by recent graduates or early career teachers, primarily from East and South East Asia. The pre-service participants tend to approach their MA as an initial qualification that will help them to get a foothold in a highly competitive job market. This creates a tension: historically, MA programmes in the UK have had very different learning objectives from initial teacher training courses such as the Cambridge English CELTA.

Some providers address these differing learning needs by running pre- and post-service variants of their MA programmes. This is, of course, only financially viable if both pathways recruit sufficient numbers of students. On the other hand, even when cohorts are quite large, it can be argued that it is beneficial to study with classmates from a range of backgrounds. After all, teaching experience is only one dimension of diversity. The MA TESOL team at Bath have addressed the differing levels of experience by ensuring that the assignments for each unit of study involve a range of options to suit the specific needs and interests of both pre- and post-service students, including practical elements such as lesson planning, materials evaluation, policy analysis and curriculum design. In addition, some years ago the MA TESOL at Bath incorporated optional, non-assessed teacher training workshops. Similar features were incorporated into the MA EMI, as will be seen below.

In seeking to define the target market for the MA EMI, a wide range of empirically based studies (research articles and reports) were reviewed in order to identify their participants and their research settings. The alumni database of the University of Bath was also drawn upon. These sources confirmed the ever-expanding range of education professionals operating through the medium of English, including teachers, teacher educators, curriculum designers, educational leaders and policy makers. They included educators at all levels – from pre-school to postgraduate – and in all academic subject areas. At tertiary level, where EMI is closely linked with the desire to internationalise the curricular offer, English-medium courses are by no means limited to the conventional domain of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects. Nowadays, when a Chinese academic teaches Chinese history and culture to a diverse cohort of international students in a Chinese university, she is quite likely to do so in English. Another key market is the rapidly expanding sector of international and bilingual schools. Research by a colleague within our own Department of Education suggests that by the year 2022 there may be as many as 11,000 English-medium international schools, employing half a million English-speaking teachers worldwide (Bunnell, 2014). In addition, many of the alumni of our other MA programmes were found to be working in the private sector of language schools, agencies, IELTS training centres and corporate trainers (including those specialising in intercultural communication and business communication skills).

A key feature of EMI as a professional field is that it challenges the primacy of the 'native speaker', and in particular the monolingual English speaker. Consequently, from the earliest discussions it was anticipated that applicants would be from diverse linguistic backgrounds. In line with widely accepted definitions of EMI (Dearden, 2014: 2; Macaro, 2018: 18), it was assumed that many applicants would be from countries or jurisdictions where English is not the first language of the majority of the population (i.e. 'non-native English speakers'). Others might indeed be from contexts where English is spoken as a national language (i.e. 'native speakers'). Still others might not fit easily into either side of the questionable 'native speaker'/'non-native speaker' dichotomy. Increasingly, the world of international education is populated by people with bilingual/multilingual/plurilingual profiles, for whom English is one of their working languages.

The most fundamental decision to be made was how to name the new programme. This was a major issue, given that the field has so many different names. For example, in the Chinese-speaking world alone it is known by at least four different terms, depending on the context: 全英文授课 (English-medium instruction), 全英文教育 (English-medium education), 英文授课 (Teaching courses/ subjects in English) and 双语教学 (Bilingual teaching/ instruction). Indeed, it could be argued that although millions of people worldwide are doing EMI, many of them do not recognise it as such.



The focus group interviews with current MA students included concept testing, whereby the participants were given a 500-word summary of the programme concept and a list of possible programme titles, then invited to consider which title represented the concept most appropriately. Options included 'MA English-Medium Education', 'MA Teaching in English', 'MA Content Based Instruction', 'MA Bilingual Education', and so on. The results highlighted the confusion surrounding the field and its nomenclature. Some interviewees considered the term 'English-medium Education' to be useful in that it had the potential to include 'the perspective of both teachers and students'. Several interviewees felt that programme titles involving the word 'Teaching' did 'not sound professional', whereas those involving 'Education' sounded 'more academic'. 'Bilingual Education' was felt by the interviewees to be potentially misleading in that it did not mention English. Furthermore, 'Bilingual Education' is often associated with the maintenance and development of heritage languages within national systems (e.g. García, 2008; Baker and Wright, 2017; Berthele and Lambelet, 2018). Arguably, EMI represents a different paradigm in that it is associated not with national systems but with the internationalisation of education. One interviewee preferred 'English as a Medium of Instruction' as this 'sound[ed] the nicest to put on my resumé'. In contrast, another felt that 'Instruction' seemed 'too abstract'. An additional – albeit anecdotal – insight was provided by an experienced educator when I was giving an invited talk at a UK independent school. The teacher expressed dismay that the dominant term had become 'English-medium Instruction'. She felt that 'English-medium "Learning"' might be more appropriate, since it placed the learner at the heart of the process.

In the end, despite the limitations, it was decided that the new programme would be branded as the MA English as a Medium of Instruction (MA EMI). The key factor was that all the programmes of study of the University of Bath are research-led, and 'EMI' is the term that is most consistently used in the titles of research publications and conferences.

The focus group interviews revealed some confusion about the fundamental nature of EMI. One common perception was that EMI was concerned with teaching subject-specific knowledge and terminology. Thus, the interviewees raised questions such as: 'Will they teach enough about specific fields? If not, it could lead to disappointment' and 'How can the lecturers ... cover the terminologies of different disciplines? Do you really offer such terminologies to teachers?' It is worth noting that English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has for decades been similarly perceived as little more than a collection of specialist vocabulary (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987).

From the outset, when the initial proposal was discussed at a faculty level meeting, it was acknowledged that the success of the programme would rest to some extent on 'educating the market'. However, at a time when so many people are still unfamiliar with the term 'EMI', communicating to potential applicants, student recruitment agents and employers 'what the programme is really about' remains perhaps the biggest challenge to marketing.

Conversations with recruitment agents reveal the basic concerns of potential applicants and those who would fund their studies (usually their parents): 'Is this really a profession?' 'Is there a career in this?' 'I know what an English teacher is, but what is an "EMI teacher"?'

### Key principles

The design of academic programmes is shaped by market opportunities and economic constraints, but also by educational and ideological principles. The latter are often based on the core beliefs of those driving the curriculum innovation, although they may be reinforced by previous experience of what has proved to be successful.

One core principle which has underpinned the MA TESOL programme at the University of Bath and which has been carried into the design of the MA EMI is the idea that the course should have an overall coherence. Although all units of study are team taught and each member of academic staff deploys their own particular repertoire of teaching strategies, the content of the units of study should interconnect and support one another at a conceptual level. In this way students would, in following the programme, acquire an overview of EMI as a professional-academic field and a comprehensive understanding of the major issues and approaches to policy and practice.

A second key principle is that of context-appropriate practice (Holliday, 1994; Bax, 1995). Given that the understandings and applications of EMI vary so greatly between pedagogical settings, it seems self-evident that there can be no 'one size fits all' approach. Consequently, the MA EMI places much emphasis on supporting participants in researching and developing local pedagogies that work with, build on and enhance existing features of their environments.

A third (and related) core principle that has been carried from the MA TESOL into the MA EMI is the intercultural perspective. The need for intercultural competence goes hand in hand with the internationalisation of education. As an educator or learner operating through the medium of English, one is compelled to engage with the culture of anglophone academia, if only through the teaching materials that are used. But current conceptualisations of interculturality encourage us to view this not only in terms of the relations between national or ethnic cultures but also in terms of the relations between other types, including professional-academic or disciplinary cultures (Holliday, Kullman and Hyde, 2016). This is particularly useful in considering the relations between language educators and subject/content teachers (i.e. teachers of science, maths, history, social science, art, PE, etc.).

Collaboration between language teachers and subject/content teachers is often suggested as a way of addressing the challenges of EMI. While this seems obvious and logical, the question remains as to precisely how it can be achieved. One way forward may be to articulate the issue in terms of disciplinary literacies (Forey and Cheung, 2019). It is typically argued that specialists in English language teaching and applied

linguistics have been trained to understand literacies from a linguistic point of view, but that they lack the disciplinary knowledge and the feel for literacy practices within content areas. In contrast, subject/content teachers are recognised as experts in their discipline, but it is often said that, having developed in their knowledge of literacy practices in an intuitive way, they find it difficult to identify and explain these practices to novices (i.e. their students) (Humphrey, 2017; Lent and Voigt, 2019). Indeed, subject/content teachers may claim that they simply 'do not do language'. And yet, as with so many intercultural issues, the differences between the cultural groups are often perceived rather than real in any objective sense. For this reason, the MA EMI will feature a strong emphasis on developing skills of intercultural analysis and communication as well as disciplinary literacies.

In addition to the principles that I have explained above, more prosaic and practical decisions also influenced the design of the MA EMI. One was the choice of a clear and simple programme structure. The MA EMI would comprise six compulsory units of study and a dissertation. There would be no optional units. This simple structure would ensure clearly defined cohorts and minimal administration (e.g. in terms of timetabling). Rather than choosing between units of study (modules), students would be offered choice in terms of the different types of assignment by which they could be assessed for each unit of study. Another key factor was economy of scale. The MA EMI would share the Research Methods components with the existing MA TESOL programme. This would enable efficiency in the sense that students from both programmes could attend the same lectures (although differentiated content would be provided for the seminars).

### Units of study

The units of study that comprise the MA EMI took shape through a cumulative and iterative process as the programme proposal progressed through the hierarchy of university committees. In this section I will highlight some of the key features of the units, as well as the decisions that led to their inclusion.

**Research Methods:** There was no question that the MA EMI would contain an introduction to the key methods of research used in the field. Like any MA programme, it needed to provide a basis for those who wish to pursue doctoral studies in future. Besides, all educational professionals must be able to critically analyse published research so that this may inform their practice. Furthermore, practitioners need to be able to participate in teacher-led research within the rapidly developing field of EMI. The teaching of research methods was designed so that it would run throughout the programme. Assessment would be in two stages. Students would first be required to select a specific aspect of EMI policy or practice, identify several research-based articles related to that topic and critically evaluate aspects such as the research approach, quality

criteria and ethics. The students would suggest how aspects of these studies could be adapted for use in a research design of their own. In the second phase of assessment the students would be required to formulate a research question and develop a proposal and outline protocol for a small-scale enquiry. Although the choice remained with the students, it was anticipated that many of them would use this assignment as an opportunity to plan their dissertation project.

**Policy and Curriculum of EMI:** English-medium instruction is a deeply contested area for educationalists, policy makers and researchers. Although EMI is driven and/or backed by official government policy in many contexts, practitioners in those same contexts often report a lack of clear guidelines for teacher education and curriculum design (Dearden, 2014). Furthermore, EMI is a socially divisive issue in many countries, provoking concerns about access to the curriculum by lower socio-economic groups, as well as concerns about loss of the first language and/or erosion of national identity (Milligan and Tikly, 2016).

The Policy and Curriculum unit addresses these issues through a critical exploration of the relations between EMI and its historical, political, economic, social and cultural context. Students evaluate the theoretical and ideological underpinnings of different policies and curricula. They also explore how English as a global language functions in relation to other languages in the curriculum. Students are assessed by choosing one option from a range of tasks which explore aspects of policy and/or curriculum and enable them to formulate recommendations which are appropriate to the needs of students in a specific EMI setting.

The policy element is one of the more challenging aspects of the programme in terms of reconciling the interests of pre- and post-service students. Experienced educators, including those that aspire to leadership roles, are likely to have greater interest in the analysis and formulation of policy. Employers such as research-intensive universities, ministries and organisations such as the British Council also tend to place a high premium on policy development. However, through communications with recruitment agents and potential students it has become clear that the policy element may in fact be the least appealing aspect for early career educators. Such people tend to see themselves as being at the receiving end of policy. Their role, as they see it, is not to influence policy but rather to attend meetings, listen to the latest announcements and comply. The counterargument from academic staff is that policy analysis, like theory, gives educators a critical and explanatory perspective on practice. In any case, students on the MA EMI also have the option of choosing assignments which focus on curriculum development (e.g. materials evaluation and design) rather than policy.

**Teaching and Assessing in EMI:** This unit is designed to complement the preceding one. Whereas Policy and Curriculum of EMI addresses issues at the macro and mezzo levels, this unit deals with the micro level of the classroom. The unit encourages EMI educators to analyse and support the needs of learners, and to develop 'language conscious' teaching and assessment strategies. A key concept that is introduced in the unit is the 'Language-Content Continuum' (Macaro, 2018: 28–32). This describes a spectrum of approaches ranging from those in which the objectives of the programme are 'language-dominant' and those in which the objectives are 'content-dominant'. At the 'language-dominant' end of the continuum we find EFL. As we progress along the continuum, we encounter English for Academic Purposes (EAP), English for Specific Purposes (ESP), then – near the middle – content and language integrated learning (CLIL). At the 'content-dominant' end of the continuum we find 'strong' forms of EMI, wherein the teaching of the subject matter is clearly prioritised over second language learning. This continuum serves as a constant point of reference as we explore the various understandings of and approaches to EMI.

In keeping with the practice-based focus of the unit, it was decided that the most appropriate form of assessment would be a portfolio of work in which students critically reflect and comment on the teaching and/or assessment of an English-medium programme of study.

Again, it is important to note that, in addition to the assessed coursework, students attend teacher training workshops in which they try out some of the techniques and procedures that they have studied in lectures and seminars.

### **Bilingualism, Multilingualism and**

**Plurilingualism:** This unit offers a contemporary perspective on discourse processes in English-medium education. It covers areas such as language socialisation, biliteracies, multiliteracies and multimodalities, and translanguaging (Schechter and Bailey, 2003; García and Li, 2014; Palfreyman and Van der Walt, 2017; Wang and Curdt-Christiansen, 2018). Students are encouraged to view issues from the perspective of the learner. The unit therefore draws upon research which focuses on the strategies deployed by students in EMI settings (e.g. Soruç and Griffiths, 2017). Regarding the assessment of the unit, it was decided that students should be allowed to choose from a range of tasks in which they must apply current theories and research on bilingualism/multilingualism/plurilingualism in order to inform aspects of learning and communication in specific EMI contexts.

### **Intercultural Communication and Learning**

**unit:** As explained above, the focus on intercultural competence is one of the key principles of the MA EMI. This unit aims to provide a conceptual foundation for the understanding of intercultural communication in diverse contexts. It draws upon current critical approaches to intercultural education and cosmopolitanism, covering issues such as identity, representation, stereotyping and Othering. For their unit assignment, students are required to design a small-scale case study in order to investigate aspects of intercultural communication and learning in an educational, professional or community setting. The assignment may be presented in written and/or digital video format.

**Dissertation project:** As with any Master's programme, the MA EMI involves a substantial element of empirical research. However, in order to address the diverse professional learning needs of the participants, it was decided that this could take a range of forms, including classroom-based studies, policy analysis, or syllabus and materials design projects. The work could be presented in a range of media, including a conventional written report but also a video format or a portfolio of digital materials.

### **Face-to-face and online delivery**

It would seem that the work of the curriculum developer is never quite done. It was initially planned that the MA EMI would be taught as a full-time face-to-face course for one or two years before a part-time/distance learning version would be developed. However, at the time of writing, the Covid-19 pandemic is changing the working practices of millions of educators and learners worldwide. The need to switch to the online delivery of full-time courses is proving to be a watershed experience. While the long-term impact on the wider field of education remains difficult to predict, in the specific case of the University of Bath's MA EMI the imperative to teach under conditions of social distancing have precipitated the development of an online version of the course to be launched in September 2020.

### **Conclusion**

As we have seen, the MA EMI is a postgraduate taught course which applies the latest research to address the challenges of English-medium education. It is designed to enable graduates to take advantage of the opportunities that are offered by this rapidly developing field. As in any educational discipline, the process of curriculum transformation must always be ongoing and open-ended, since the environment in which we operate is constantly changing. Perhaps the only thing of which educators can be certain in this dynamic environment is that it will become ever more crucial to equip ourselves with adaptable skill sets and critical professional awareness.

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# EMI implementation: Moving forward – research and recommendations



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# 10 Promoting the continuing professional development of EMI teachers: Perspectives from a teaching development centre

## Background

The Chongqing University Centre for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (CET&L) was established in 2010, and in 2012 it became one of the first 30 national teaching development demonstration centres. Since the establishment of the centre, the development of teachers in the context of internationalisation has always been a main focus.

With the growing internationalisation of higher education, the significance of EMI is self-evident, and while the current proliferation of EMI courses is largely due to the increasing numbers of foreign students, it also meets the needs of local students. EMI courses enable them to improve their English skills and increase their competitive edge in international markets while promoting cross-cultural exchanges and thereby enhancing the internationalisation of universities. It is for these reasons that EMI courses and programmes have become so widespread in recent years in China, Asia and other non-English-speaking countries.

Along with this growth in such programmes and courses, the sustainable development of EMI has become a central concern of EMI practitioners and academics at home and abroad, and research shows that the challenges faced by Asian universities in implementing EMI come in large part from teachers and students. Ultimately, however, it is the quality of teaching that has become the decisive factor in the effectiveness of EMI programmes. Are our EMI teachers competent? What difficulties have they encountered? From the standpoint of our teaching development centre, what professional support can we give to EMI teachers?

## Research

It is not unusual to face challenges. As long as we can identify the issues and find appropriate solutions, we can overcome them. To this end, we at the centre decided to conduct some research into what challenges EMI teachers face. We began with a review of the Chinese and English EMI-themed academic literature published over the past decade. We then invited EMI teachers and stakeholders (e.g. staff from the School Personnel Office, the Academic Affairs Office, the International Office, the Joint School, and college and department heads) to a number of round-table discussions. The participants were seated in groups of four to six and were given questions to discuss, e.g. Why do you want to join this programme? What challenges do you face within EMI teaching? What do you expect to gain? What do you need most at this stage? and so on. Each group then presented their answers.

What we discovered from our research was that the main challenges our EMI teachers faced were lack of knowledge about EMI and lack of confidence in their ability to implement an EMI approach. Teachers were unsure about what EMI entails, the difference between EMI and bilingual teaching, whether the focus of EMI courses is English or subject knowledge, and what exactly the role of English is.

In terms of teaching ability, EMI teachers are required to be competent in both language skills and teaching methods. Regarding the former, they need to be proficient not only in all aspects of communication but also in the language of their specialist subject area. With respect to the latter, the main challenge is that of moving

from a 'teacher-centred' to 'student-centred' approach. In results from our 'survey' of EMI teachers, respondents generally reflected on their difficulties with the student-centred curriculum design, interactive teaching, classroom management to promote communication, and the ability to evaluate learning outcomes.

On the basis of this initiative, by identifying and clarifying the difficulties teachers faced, we felt that we could plan and support teacher development more specifically and effectively.

### **EMI teacher development programme**

In March 2015, the centre co-operated with the British Council to develop and implement the first teacher development programme for EMI teachers in Chinese mainland's universities. The key activities of the programme are described below.

#### **Initial intensive training**

The intensive training stage was five days and we thought long and hard about how to make best use of these five days to maximise the benefits to EMI teachers and help them overcome the practical challenges they faced. In fact, this became the primary objective or goal of the training programme. After taking into account our preliminary research findings and consultations with the British Council academic team, it was decided that the four main training modules would be: conceptualising EMI, EMI and classroom language modification, EMI instructional strategies, and microteaching.

Having identified the main modules, we then refined the topics, specified the module tasks and focused on the design and implementation of microteaching. Day five was dedicated to microteaching, which focused on course design and planning. The course participants also drew on and integrated the knowledge and skills from the different themes of the training by designing and implementing microteaching sessions. The guidance, feedback and support of trainers and peers truly realised 'learning by doing'.

At the start and end of the training process, we distributed self-assessment questionnaires to the participants to assess the effectiveness of the training. It was evident that at all levels of knowledge and confidence set targets had been achieved. Most noticeable improvements were found in inspiring students, enhancing interaction between teachers and students and modifying the language of instruction to ensure content could be easily understood.

#### **Follow-up support**

It is generally accepted that one-off training does not work and that teachers need continued encouragement and development. Therefore, after the intensive training, we provided the EMI teachers with various follow-up activities. Over the past few years, we have adopted various methods of communication to maintain follow-up contact and support between trainers and teachers, e.g. video recordings, online guidance, remote telephone tutorials, etc. In addition, scholars from the EMI field are regularly invited to come and give lectures or workshops to these teachers, and we also conduct face-to-face in-depth interviews with them. The most popular activity, however, is teaching practice. Under the direction of trainers, the teachers take part in focused classroom observations teaching 'real' students in 'real' EMI classrooms. These observations are followed by reflection, feedback and discussion sessions with peers and trainers, and future observations focus on areas that have been identified for development.

#### **The creation of a learning community for EMI teachers**

There is an old saying in China that 'drops of water do not make a sea; one tree does not make a forest'. A learning community provides EMI teachers with an important support network in addition to opportunities to meet (face-to-face or virtually) with like-minded colleagues and discuss and share problems and challenges, solutions and successes.

#### **Call for a more supportive environment for EMI teachers**

As the teaching support department of the university, CET&L should also try its best to appeal on behalf of EMI teachers for a more favourable policy environment. For example, some of the colleges at Chongqing University have already recognised the extra burden placed on EMI teachers, and have therefore created incentive schemes, such as double credits and increased pay, as acknowledgement of their additional workload.

#### **Concluding remarks**

It is now five years since the Chongqing University CET&L began working with the British Council, and due to the initial high-quality programme described above, our co-operation and collaboration have led us to expand into new areas of teacher development – publishing academic writing, EAP teacher development and researcher connect. Moreover, it is 30 years since the Chongqing University Advanced Teacher Training Course (ATTC) project was officially launched with the support of the Chinese Ministry of Education and the British Council. Since then the programme has provided training to nearly 80 college English teachers across the south-western provinces. And, finally, we should mark the 40th anniversary of the British Council's entry into China – forty years of mutual trust and hand-in-hand co-operation that have resulted in today's achievements.



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# 11 Current challenges and accomplishments of using EMI on transnational (TNE) undergraduate and postgraduate courses in China with Chinese (and international) students

This paper is based on the author's experience of working with Chinese and international students in two Sino-British TNE collaborations in Chinese mainland. A review of challenges is accompanied by some of the accomplishments.

## Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to examine how EMI, enhanced by the delivery of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) language input, caters for the needs of Chinese and international students on TNE and TNE-related courses in Chinese higher education institutions (HEIs). As an English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) specialist, I now look at ESAP as a complement to EMI. At present most ELT authorities associate EMI only with its use by subject tutors (Macaro, 2018). EMI has not developed by itself and has not evolved in isolation. In fact, it draws on sub-areas of ESP and ELT itself. In this post-conference write-up, I see EMI in a wider sense, i.e. not only referring to the teaching of a subject of a propositional content of an academic discipline via

English by subject-specific tutors. It appears that EMI could be legitimately extended onto the teaching of 'academic English' (seen as a proxy subject) to students by EAP tutors (irrespective of whether these tutors are native speakers or not). EMI as a term with current definitions may well be a misnomer, and in the final part of this paper I will try to further disambiguate this concept through an updated post-conference reflection.

Historically, EMI seems to have emerged as a more-focused derivative of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) (Jenkins, 2014) and English for International Communication (EIC). The former gained wider recognition in the 1990s, largely owing to the work of Professor J. Jenkins, while the latter had been part of ESP since circa the mid 1970s (Brumfit, 1982). EIC subsequently was also referred to as English as Global Language (Gnutzmann, 1999).

I focus on the role of EMI and ESAP with regard to academic, pedagogic and quality-assurance challenges respectively on TNE courses in China. Academic challenges concentrate on the language needs of 'spiky



profile' students, Anglo-Saxon academic rhetorical conventions vs Chinese academic norms, and academic and professional qualifications of EAP and EMI lecturers. Pedagogic challenges include the discussion of teaching methods, the infrastructural set-up and learning and teaching materials.

Quality-assurance challenges focus on how realistic it may be to apply the same QA criteria to Chinese HE EMI/ESAP modules as the British Council, English UK and BALEAP apply in the UK. The latter part of this paper also looks briefly at how Chinese universities at present cater for the EAP/EMI needs of international students (e.g. from Russia, Bangladesh and sub-Saharan Africa), since such students are increasingly forming a very large cohort in Chinese HEIs on both undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

Last but not least, I also touch on the 'plight' of Chinese-born subject lecturers having to deliver their modules via the medium of English and how they can be assisted in their work. I share my experience of working with Chinese and international students in two Sino-British TNE collaborations in Chinese mainland. A review of challenges faced is accompanied by highlighting some of the benefits and accomplishments of EMI instruction.

### Challenges on TNE courses

The academic challenges encountered in China on TNE courses are numerous. Chinese students studying in a monolingual environment normally have 'spiky profiles':<sup>1</sup> the competence in skills of speaking, writing, reading and listening in one student varies considerably and this affects learners' progress in both EAP modules and subject modules. Chinese learners find it difficult to grapple with Anglo-Saxon academic rhetorical conventions since they are different from Chinese academic norms: this affects their progress in EAP and in coursework for their subjects.

Academic and professional qualifications of expat EAP lecturers working in Chinese universities do not match the standards observed in British HE. It is relatively rare to find an EAP lecturer in China holding both a Level 7 DELTA or Trinity TESOL Diploma and an MA TESOL (or ELT). This creates issues impacting on quality assurance. Expat subject lecturers working in Chinese universities may not be able to understand the needs and wants of Chinese learners due to insufficient pedagogic training: while most British subject lecturers hold PhDs and postdoctoral qualifications, they may not necessarily be pedagogically inclined, let alone have a teaching qualification. Delivering a subject in EMI in China is different from delivering a subject in English at British universities to local and international students.

The pedagogic challenges encountered in the delivery of double-degree courses in TNE in China are also numerous. As for EAP, expat teachers may only hold a Certificate Level 5 qualification and thus be unable to embrace the complexities of teaching ESAP, which would need a tutor to have a Diploma Level 7 qualification. As for EMI subject lecturers from the UK, they may not always hold a HEA Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. If so, they may tend to deliver their lecturers in a traditional 'old' transmission mode (Exley and Dennick, 2004), which in the 21st century needs to be complemented with communicative touches.

What affects the delivery of ESAP and EMI on TNE courses pedagogically is also the infrastructural set-up of classrooms. Often they reflect the classroom of the past, with traditional rows of desks rather than movable furniture that could be rearranged to facilitate eye contact and improve communication. There is an issue of easy access to international EAP/ESAP and EMI teaching and learning materials. A double-degree course in TNE at a Chinese university is not always synonymous with an agreeable mix of materials which are locally produced as well as brought in from overseas. For economies of scale or due to import or pricing restrictions, often the latter type dominates. Quality assurance-wise, it remains debatable how realistic it may be to apply the same quality-assurance criteria to Chinese HE EMI/ESAP modules as QA, the British Council, English UK and BALEAP apply in the UK.

As another manifestation of EMI and EAP, Chinese universities at present cater for the academic English needs of international students (e.g. from Russia, Bangladesh and sub-Saharan Africa,) since such students are increasingly forming a very large cohort in Chinese HEIs on both undergraduate and postgraduate courses (Bhardwa, 2019). It is interesting to note that this area remains somewhat underdeveloped, and there is no national policy outlining how to deliver English language support to international students or how to support Chinese subject lecturers in their delivery of their subjects via English. The focus seems to be on getting international students to write up Master's and PhD dissertations on the assumption that these learners can redress any 'academic English' deficiencies in their own right.

EMI has certainly had a major impact on the job descriptions of local Chinese subject teachers who are involved in the delivery of dual-degree TNE courses and often need to deliver their subjects in English – not in Chinese (Yang et al., 2019). Those Chinese lecturers who gained their postgraduate qualifications in Anglo-Saxon academies overseas somehow manage to cope with the challenge, but those who have never left China often struggle as their mastery of English may well be below IELTS Level 7.

<sup>1</sup> 'A learner who is assessed as having a spiky profile has different levels of skill in an overall area. For example, the individual literacy skills such as reading and writing can be at different levels.' See <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/glossary/spiky-profile>

## Concluding remarks and updated post-conference reflection

Despite so many challenges, there are certainly many accomplishments associated with ESAP and EMI on TNE courses in China. This needs to be acknowledged and amplified. The delivery of dual-degree courses via the medium of English has not only enhanced the role of English as the most important world lingua franca/ lingua mundi, but also has benefited and is benefiting many current Chinese students who, as representatives of Generation Z, have or will become highly qualified, near-bilingual professionals and global citizens. Dual-degree courses in question have also added value to the experience of ESAP *language* and EMI *subject* lecturers. This ESAP/EMI collaboration is benefiting both the UK and China; it is still gaining momentum and it is bound to grow from strength to strength.

As an updated post-conference reflection, I have realised that EMI still needs to be interpreted as (1) the teaching of English to discipline-specific lecturers to whom English is a second, 'foreign' or additional language, and (2) the teaching of subject-specific disciplines done by such tutors to multilingual students. At present EMI appears to be an emerging sub-area of ELT, and is still a 'phenomenon' (Dearden, 2014) – very much like English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) (Bowles and Cogo, 2015). EMI may well soon be redefined to encompass wider interpretations. Whether EMI establishes itself as a defined branch of ELT or whether it will become subsumed, for instance, under or within ESP remains to be seen. The jury is not out yet, and academic debates and discussions continue. Readers who wish to further explore all issues are advised to access the EMI entry on <https://www.tirfonline.org/resources/references/?sort=E> (updated in January 2020) which contains the details of all known books and articles on the topic.

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# 12 Creating professional spaces to foster pedagogical development

## Introduction

This paper is a summary of the talk 'Creating professional spaces to foster pedagogical development', which reported on research carried out as part of a wider study into professional development needs for lecturers working in EMI contexts (Beaumont, 2019), as described by both lecturers and teacher educators working in these contexts.

By researching the opinions of lecturers and teacher educators, the research aimed to view issues and potential solutions to those issues through the lens of the practitioners themselves, helping promote their agency and gain data from those present at the site of interaction of EMI practice. In this paper, 'EMI' uses the Dearden (2014: 2) definition of the potentially ambiguous term: 'The use of English language to teach academic subjects (other than English itself) in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English'. The fact that the number of EMI undergraduate and postgraduate courses in international higher educational institutions (HEIs) continues to grow is an undisputed fact and demonstrated in the wide-ranging research on the topic (Dearden, 2014; Guarda and Helm, 2017; Wächter and Maiworm, 2008). While much research has focused on the cost benefit of EMI courses or learners' perceptions of EMI courses, there has been little research into lecturers' and teacher educators' beliefs about the continuing professional development needs of lecturers working in EMI contexts (Macaro, 2018).

## Literature

The literature around the development of lecturers' skills to help them deliver course content in English has tended to focus on general language ability (Jeffrey, Melchor and Walsh, 2019), the use of 'lexical bundles' (Biber and Barbieri, 2007) and key academic language as identified from corpus studies (Coxhead, 2000). Without being able to atomise language into discrete units that are only used in isolation, however, an exclusive focus on any of these areas is unlikely to provide the kind of information necessary to support lecturers in their general development as educational practitioners and overall communicative competence. Recognising that communicative competence is more than a lexical or grammatical competence (Canale, 1983) and with an increasing awareness that communication is something that involves more than the speaker, but the listener as well (Bourdieu, 1991), it becomes necessary to consider language at the site of interaction, that is, in the lecture room. In this respect it becomes necessary to build an understanding of the language and pedagogical skills of a lecturer, helping identify issues that cause a breakdown in understanding of language as well as stratagems that help develop a productive learning environment.

Walker et al. (2008) note that, overall, it is the skills of the lecturer that will be a deciding factor in how helpful students find a lecture and how successful a lecturer will be in creating an effective learning environment. And these skills are not limited to language but involve pedagogical skills as well (Hattie and Zierer, 2017). Studies have investigated content processing, the speed of delivery and amount of content intake (Flowerdew,

1994), as well as the structuring of discourse (Gibbs and Jenkins, 1984) and use of extra resources (Marsh and Sink, 2010), e.g. handouts. However, in the majority of these studies, the focus has been on HEI sessions where lecturers and students share the first language or cohorts where international students (those with English as an additional language) are studying alongside those with English as a first language in territories where English is the first language. As noted above, the research into lecturers' professional development needs to help them deliver courses in EMI has been limited (Macaro, 2018), potentially missing opportunities for identification of areas that can help both lecturers and their students in EMI environments.

### Aims and method of the research

This study followed an interpretivist, social constructionist approach to understanding the issues surrounding support needs for EMI lecturers. Within this paradigm, it uses a symbolic interactionism to give value to and make sense of participants' responses. To identify commonalities across different EMI environments, this study used data collected from two different sets of participants working in and across different institutions in a number of different countries:

1. teacher educators who were engaged in supporting lecturers in short, in-service, EMI CPD support courses
2. lecturers who deliver their subject specialism in EMI contexts and who were on short EMI CPD support courses.

Using both teacher educator and EMI lecturer participants was essential in developing a contextualised and multi-perspective understanding of EMI lecturers' in-service support needs. The four teacher educators were European and gave their views based on their experiences running in-service educational support in different institutions in different academic sectors. The lecturers were from two European countries and two East Asian countries and gave their views based on the real and immediate needs resulting from their day-to-day EMI practice.

Each participant was given the opportunity to be interviewed twice (see Table 1): first, before or during an in-service support course; second, after an in-service support course, giving participants a chance to reflect on their EMI context. The minimum duration between interviews was four weeks; the maximum was 14 weeks.

The first interviews were designed to elicit perceptions about lecturers' needs and to identify suitable content for in-service EMI support courses. The second interviews allowed participants to reflect on their responses in the first interview, adding detail as necessary, and for lecturers to assess the impact of techniques taught in their EMI support course on their practice.

The first stage of data analysis included transcribing interview data and then completing summaries of the interviews for participants' review before finally identifying common themes [copies of the anonymised transcripts can be sought from the author].

### Summary of findings

A close reading thematic analysis resulted in two sets of findings from the interview data.

#### Teacher educators

Teacher educators identified the following four areas as being of primary importance for inclusion in one- or two-week EMI support courses, with the aim of the development of skills for lecturers working in EMI contexts:

1. pedagogic skills for conveying content
2. focused, subject-specific language support (with some general fluency work)
3. experiential learning, e.g. through microteaching sessions or lecture feedback
4. concept-checking techniques, e.g. questions, demonstrations or through class discussions.

#### Lecturers

EMI lecturers identified the following four areas as being of primary importance for inclusion in one- or two-week EMI support courses, with the aim of the development of their skills for working in EMI contexts:

1. practical techniques for teaching activities
2. focused English language development
3. opportunities to share ideas and experiences with colleagues
4. feedback on observations/microteaching sessions.

	Group 1 (four teacher educators)	Group 2 (seven EMI lecturers)
<b>1st interviews</b>	before delivering an in-service EMI support course	at the beginning of/during an in-service EMI support course
<b>2nd interviews</b>	after delivering an in-service EMI support course	after taking an in-service EMI support course

Table 1: Interview schedule

## Implications for practice

Considering the need to build lecturers' skills, as suggested in the literature above, the research suggests the following practical implications to support lecturers working in EMI contexts:

1. creation of lecturer support networks/'buddy' systems to encourage opportunities for experiential learning and collaboration with peers
2. long-term pedagogical and language support events that are not 'one-off' events but which support a longer-term reflection through experience
3. unassessed support observations that give feedback on both language and pedagogical practice
4. personal study, which focuses on both pedagogic and language development
5. support courses run by experienced HEI educators that have experience relating to experienced and highly educated practitioners working across different fields of education and different modes of subject-specialist delivery
6. use of in-service lecturer support courses and qualifications that focus on practice, the site of language interaction and underlying theoretical considerations over the acquisition of purely theoretical pedagogical content.

Through the use of such practical considerations as these listed and further research to identify current and emerging professional development needs, it is hoped that we can increase the positive impact for both lecturers and students in EMI contexts and maximise opportunities for effective learning.

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# 13 English-medium instruction (EMI) policy implementation in universities in China

## Introduction

Internationalisation of Chinese higher education (including an increase in the role of English-medium instruction, or EMI) has accelerated at a rapid pace over the past two decades, spurred by numerous government initiatives. Due to this growth, there is a pressing need for an investigation into EMI implementation across Chinese universities. This paper provides an overview of a research project (Rose et al., 2020) that aimed to take stock of the current state of EMI policy in Chinese higher education to better understand EMI provision and to inform future EMI growth. It explores multiple levels of policy diffusion, alongside an investigation of implementation affordances and challenges.

EMI is defined as 'the use of the English language to teach academic subjects (other than English itself) in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English' (Macaro, 2018: 19). The growth of EMI in Europe has been well documented (e.g. Wächter and Maiworm, 2014). In other East Asian contexts such as Japan, there have been some notable explorations of top-down policy initiatives which are connected to the creation of EMI programmes (see Rose and McKinley, 2018), as well as case study explorations of policy enacted into practice (see Aizawa and Rose, 2019; McKinley, 2018). However, similar monitoring exercises of EMI policy implementation have yet to be conducted in the Chinese context.

## Methods

The study aimed to investigate EMI policy implementation and plans in Chinese higher education to map current EMI provision and its future implications. This paper reports on three phases of data collection at three levels of policy implementation:

1. macro-level policy research of 93 EMI-related documents produced by 63 universities
2. meso-level fieldwork at eight universities, consisting of interviews with 26 key EMI policy stakeholders, including programme leaders, heads of schools, senior management and EMI professors/teachers
3. micro-level survey research with 152 EMI teachers and 561 EMI students at multiple universities across China.

The study aims to respond to the following research questions:

1. MACRO: How do top-down higher education policies position EMI at universities in China? How are EMI courses developing as a result of such policy planning?
2. MESO: How is EMI growth being managed and implemented by schools and programmes in these universities? What challenges does this entail?
3. MICRO: How is EMI being implemented at the classroom level? What challenges does this entail?

## Sample

The sample for the policy scan included 42 Double First-Class universities and 98 universities with Double First-Class disciplines. These universities and disciplines largely include previous '985' and '211' universities, which were designated by China in 1995 and 1998 to build world-class universities and to increase the quality of Chinese higher education (China Academic Degrees and Graduate Education Information, 2009, 2012). In addition to these universities, a list of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) universities was checked to ensure we had included BRI associated universities. The BRI demonstrates China's outward-oriented internationalisation, and as part of the BRI, a University Alliance of the Silk Road was created to support research and academic exchanges, as well as to support engineering projects. This alliance includes more than 30 universities in Chinese mainland and 38 universities in other countries and regions.

Transnational universities that were not part of the Double First-Class University initiative were not included in the policy scan as these universities were seen to operate from a different policy-making perspective. However, for the fieldwork component of the project, transnational universities were included to compare the implementation of EMI policy initiatives to programmes that had grown out of other internationalisation movements. For a similar purpose, we also included a non-Double First-Class language-oriented university to capture EMI programmes that evolved out of language-oriented, content-based methodologies rather than top-down policy.

## Data collection

In Phase One of the research, 93 university-level EMI policy documents from 63 universities were collected using two search engines, in July 2019. Among the 42 Double First-Class universities, 25 universities were found to have published EMI policy documents. For three universities, full-text documents were not available online but were cited in other documents. Some universities published more than one such document. In total, 44 full-text documents from 22 universities were collected and analysed. Among the 98 universities with Double First-Class disciplines, 43 had published publicly available EMI regulation documents. In total, 49 discipline-level policy documents from 42 universities were collected and analysed.

For Phase Two of the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted at eight universities in four cities in China, in September 2019. The universities were chosen to sample a range of EMI provisions at various types of universities in China. These included:

- two Class A universities,<sup>1</sup> located in two different cities
- two language-specialist universities, one which is designated a 'Double First-Class Discipline' and one ordinary
- two transnational universities, one well established and the other emerging
- two C9 League universities,<sup>2</sup> located in two different cities.

During the fieldwork phase of the study, three of the researchers conducted individual and group interviews with 26 interviewees. These interviewees included people in the following positions:

- four senior managers, including one university vice president, two heads of academic affairs and a faculty dean
- four senior staff of faculty development units, who engaged in teacher training and support
- two senior managers of international programmes and student offices
- four EMI programme directors or course leaders.

For Phase Three of the study, questionnaires were used to gather information from classroom-level stakeholders of EMI policy – namely the EMI teachers and students. The teacher questionnaire was adapted from that used by Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri (2017), with further items added from the oft-cited Wächter and Maiworm (2014) questionnaire to allow for possible comparison with their study in the European context. The student questionnaire was adapted from that used in Rose et al. (2019) and Aizawa and Rose (2019) to explore EMI in Japan, which was adapted from previous research in the Chinese context, namely Evans and Morrison's (2011) study of students' language-related challenges at an English-medium Hong Kong university.

1 Among the 42 'Double First-Class' universities, 36 universities are listed as Class A, all of which were previously '985' universities. Three previous '985' universities and three previous '211' universities have become Class B (Ministry of Education et al., 2017), regarded as still progressing towards the standards of the Class A group (Xinhua News Agency, 2017).

2 The 'C9 League', a consortium of nine '985' universities designated as China's leading universities (the equivalent of the Ivy League in the US).

## Findings

### Models of EMI provision

Analysis of policy over time revealed that there has been a pivot away from the creation of bilingual programmes, with more emphasis on English-only and mixed programmes. Figure 1 shows the changes in titles across the years. Before 2009, EMI was only referred to as 'bilingual teaching/instruction'. The use of '(All) English' and 'Bilingual and/or (all) English' began to emerge after 2009, and in 2019 documents, no programmes were described only as bilingual.

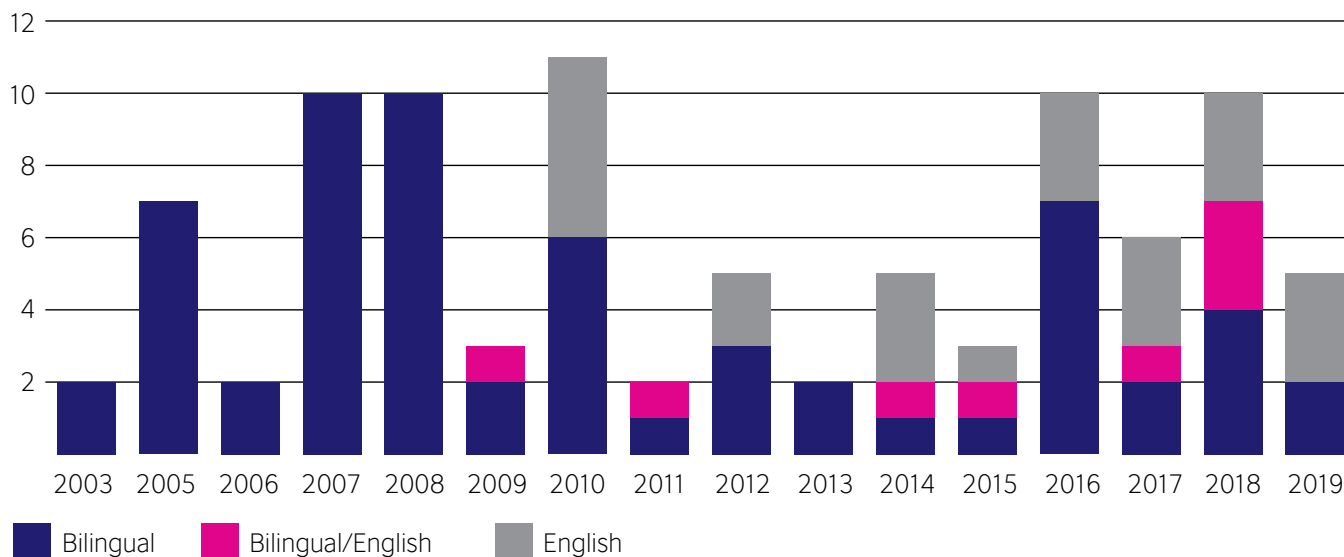


Figure 1: Publication year and changes in titles

In practice, students and teachers report multilingualism and bilingualism as normal practice in EMI classrooms. The fieldwork data confirmed the existence of numerous models of EMI provision, often within the same schools. These included:

1. international courses in fully English-taught programmes, which catered to international students only
2. bilingual courses mainly for domestic students. Some Chinese would be used in these courses, but materials, presentation slides and readings would be provided in English
3. all English courses in non-EMI programmes, mostly for non-degree international exchange students to gain discipline-focused credits for their home degrees and local students who could take them as electives
4. content courses for English majors, often in language-related disciplines such as cultural studies, linguistics, area studies, translation, journalism and media studies
5. fully English-taught programmes at transnational universities mainly targeted for local (rather than international) students.

Questionnaire data reveals that English language is the dominant language used for EMI course delivery, but interaction and discussions take place predominantly in Chinese (in most cases). As can be seen in Table 1, the use of English averaged 74.5 per cent to 86.52 per cent, with English most predominantly used on PowerPoint slides and least often used in spoken lectures. Many of the respondents indicated that their course materials, slides and assessment were entirely in English.

	Percentage of spoken lectures in English	Percentage of course materials in English	Percentage of PPT slides in English	Percentage of assessment in English
Mean	74.5	82.39	86.52	80.78
Median	86.5	100	100	100
SD	28.91	26.69	25.12	30.09
Range	100	97	90	95
Minimum	0	3	10	5
Maximum	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	78	76	75	73

Table 1: Percentage of English use reported by EMI teachers



The student questionnaire also revealed flexibility in terms of their own language use to perform various functions in their EMI classes. Respondents were asked to rate on a sliding scale of 1–7 whether they used Chinese or English for a variety of class tasks, with 1 representing always Chinese, and 7 indicating always

English. As Table 2 shows, only the item ‘Answering the teacher’s questions’ is at the middle point 4, indicating that students on average use Chinese and English equally for this task. For all other items, on average, students use Chinese more than half of the time to complete the task, especially in discussions with other classmates.

	Mean	SD	Range
Answering the teacher’s questions	4.07	1.70	6
Asking the teacher questions	3.63	1.85	6
Taking part in whole-class discussions	3.28	1.70	6
Taking part in pair-work activities	3.01	1.60	6
Discussing classwork with classmate	2.74	1.64	6

Table 2: Use of Chinese and English in EMI classrooms

### Growth of EMI

The policy analysis revealed that some universities encouraged EMI courses in certain disciplines. The results in Figure 1 show steady growth in EMI provision, with most growth in EMI policies appearing from 2010. The fieldwork data indicated a mixed picture of current and future EMI expansion among the eight case universities. At the Class A comprehensive universities there appeared to be a direct push for expansion of EMI programmes. At the C9 League universities, EMI expansion appeared to be the result of a mix between top-down policy to create programmes and courses for the large number of exchange students at the universities, and the organic switch to English for many courses by the professors themselves to cater to the highly fluent English-speaking local and international student body. In the two language-specialist universities, the creation of EMI courses was bottom-up, and it was usually the responsibility of language teachers to create new courses for the purposes of expanding the academic offerings to English majors, who desired such courses. At the transnational universities, the expansion of EMI programmes was centralised as these universities were entirely English-medium institutions. Expansion was thus tied to the strategic plan of the university to increase the number of programmes and students.

Questionnaire data suggested that EMI growth has occurred at all levels of higher education in the past five years. This trend is more pronounced at the postgraduate level, where 24.7 per cent of teachers reported EMI courses to have expanded more than 50 per cent at the Master’s level. In contrast, only 15.6 per cent of teachers discerned the same rate of growth at undergraduate level. Most teachers agreed that EMI courses would continue to grow at all three levels, though there is some indication that growth may slow down in the next five years.

### Driving forces of EMI

The aims of formulating institutional policy are found in 65 documents. They form five dimensions: cultivating talents/students (mentioned in 44 documents), responding to globalisation and promoting internationalisation (41 documents), improving the quality of teaching and curriculum (37 documents), implementing national and/or provincial policies (30 documents) and assisting the development of the university and of higher education (16 documents). These themes were well supported by interview and questionnaire data. It should be noted, however, that some students and teachers are concerned that EMI may involve reducing the quality of the subject matter. In one Class A university, faculty in several different programmes indicated that the content in the EMI courses is ‘simplified’ or ‘reduced’, compared to Chinese-medium instruction (CMI), and that some students raised concerns that their peers in CMI were gaining more depth of knowledge in their subject areas.

### Funding and incentives

In policy, EMI course creation is incentivised through monetary rewards, workload models, promotion and overseas travel opportunities. Some universities provided EMI courses funding to reward teachers and support course development through grants or reimbursement for purchasing teaching materials and funding to publish self-edited textbooks. At 29 universities, the workload of teaching one EMI course can be counted as 1.2–1.3 times that of teaching a CMI course. Incentives also involved priority in other areas, such as applications for university-level grants, academic awards, tenure promotion, and overseas training and visiting opportunities.

In practice, however, EMI teachers report that the incentives are not enough, and their biggest concern is the increased workload associated with EMI course creation. Data from the teacher questionnaire confirmed

that EMI courses generally take lecturers much more time to prepare, with 94 per cent in agreement (of which 51 per cent strongly agreed) with the statement that 'EMI courses take more preparation time than Chinese-medium courses'. Of the items on the questionnaire which explored the challenges of implementing EMI courses from a teacher perspective, the following five items were rated the highest by respondents, thus representing the largest barriers to successful policy implementation:

1. mixed language ability of students on the same course
2. differences in academic ability of students on the same course
3. insufficient proficiency in Chinese language of international students
4. insufficient proficiency in English of academic staff
5. insufficient proficiency in English of domestic students.

### **Language-related regulations for EMI teaching and learning**

In policy, there are numerous regulations focusing on ensuring teachers' language ability to teach in English. More than 70 per cent of the policy documents had specific regulations on teachers conducting EMI courses, which include high-level English writing and speaking proficiency, academic capability in the taught subject, rich teaching experiences in EMI and other courses, training experiences of EMI teaching, overseas academic experiences, and stipulations that only professors or associate professors can develop EMI courses.

In contrast, only nine universities in the policy scan raised concerns about students' capability. This is worrying, considering that students indicated their confidence level to achieve a good grade in a course taught in English was on average 63 per cent, compared to 80 per cent for the same course taught in Chinese. Students also reported a range of language-related challenges, particularly in productive skills.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

We have four primary recommendations in response to the data collected. First, in consideration of conflicts between policy and practice, there were concerns raised about top-down policy decisions regarding language use in teaching and materials, as well as acknowledging how or why these policies would be supportive, or how they should be built into the EMI courses. While most universities in our study had evaluation systems of teaching and learning (e.g. student evaluations), our first recommendation is for more concrete evaluative practices in quality assurance to be built into EMI offerings, confirming with both teachers and students what best practice looks like.

Another recommendation concerns the ability to meet the stated policy objectives of EMI to enhance the quality of teaching and learning at Chinese universities. Fieldwork data indicated that programme directors and EMI lecturers described the EMI content they provided

as 'less' or 'simplified' compared with CMI content both in contrast to other universities, as well as their own institutions. In these cases, it is recommended to supplement these courses with Chinese materials and/or CMI, providing a bilingual model of EMI where Chinese language materials and/or teaching are structured into the course. Resourcing Chinese as a supporting language may happen in the form of supportive translanguaging – a practice observed in European EMI classrooms (Doiz, Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2012). A further option would be to structure EMI programmes more like CLIL, which provides overt language support in the students' learning of content.

A third recommendation is for universities to reconsider monetary incentive schemes for the creation of EMI courses. The current system encourages academic staff to self-elect to create EMI courses, and our fieldwork revealed that many teachers who were creating these courses did so for professional and academic reasons, rather than monetary rewards. However, the questionnaire and interview data both pointed to the fact that the creation and teaching of EMI courses was far more time-consuming for these teachers. Thus, our recommendation is that this time be better reflected in the workload model incentives for EMI teachers, rather than monetary incentives. If the true costs to a teacher's time to engage in EMI were reflected in their workload credits, it may lead to more EMI course creation by teachers who want to create such courses, but are hesitant to do so due to time constraints.

A final recommendation is for future EMI policy to emphasise the importance of building language support structures within EMI programmes to help students with language-related learning difficulties. Evidence of structured English language support in EMI was only found in the data from transnational universities, so we raise the concern that this requires more attention in all universities offering EMI courses. Student questionnaires pointed to the fact that almost all EMI students surveyed encounter numerous language-related difficulties in their courses, leading to reduced confidence in being able to perform well in their academic studies. The language courses offered at most universities (except the transnational universities) were general, and not discipline-specific. We recommend that EMI programmes need to be accompanied with discipline-specific or programme-specific structured English language support that addresses students' immediate needs (such as technical vocabulary, particular genres, etc.) for their EMI studies.

Note: This paper is based on research undertaken by **Dr Heath Rose**, **Jim McKinley**, Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics and TESOL, Institute of Education, University College London, **Sihan Zhou**, doctoral researcher, Department of Education, University of Oxford, and **Xin Xu**, ESRC postdoctoral researcher, Department of Education, University of Oxford.

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EMI programmes are expanding at a rapid pace in higher education sectors in East Asia and on a global scale, and in October 2019 the British Council China in partnership with China Education Association for International Exchange (CEAIE) hosted the 'International Symposium on EMI for Higher Education in the New Era' in Beijing. EMI practitioners from China and around the world participated in the event.

The main objectives of the symposium were to explore challenges and solutions relating to EMI policy and implementation in a variety of contexts. The articles within are a record of the expert speakers' presentations, summarising their points of view on how EMI programmes can be best implemented, offering different perspectives on how the challenges that accompany EMI provision can be addressed.

Key themes covered within include:

- current trends in EMI policy and provision
- continuing professional development for practitioners
- developing quality assurance standards
- creating support systems for lecturers and students.

As well as these topics and others, the findings of a research project into EMI provision in the China context, commissioned by the British Council and undertaken by the Oxford EMI Research Group, can be found within.

#### **To find out more about the British Council:**

British Council China website:  
[www.britishcouncil.cn](http://www.britishcouncil.cn)

2019 International Symposium on EMI for Higher Education in the New Era website:  
<https://www.britishcouncil.cn/en/teach/EMIsymposium>

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#### **To find out more about China Education Association for International Exchange (CEAIE):**

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