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# ENGLISH MEDIUM INSTRUCTION IN IRAQI KURDISTAN

## PERSPECTIVES FROM LECTURERS AT STATE UNIVERSITIES

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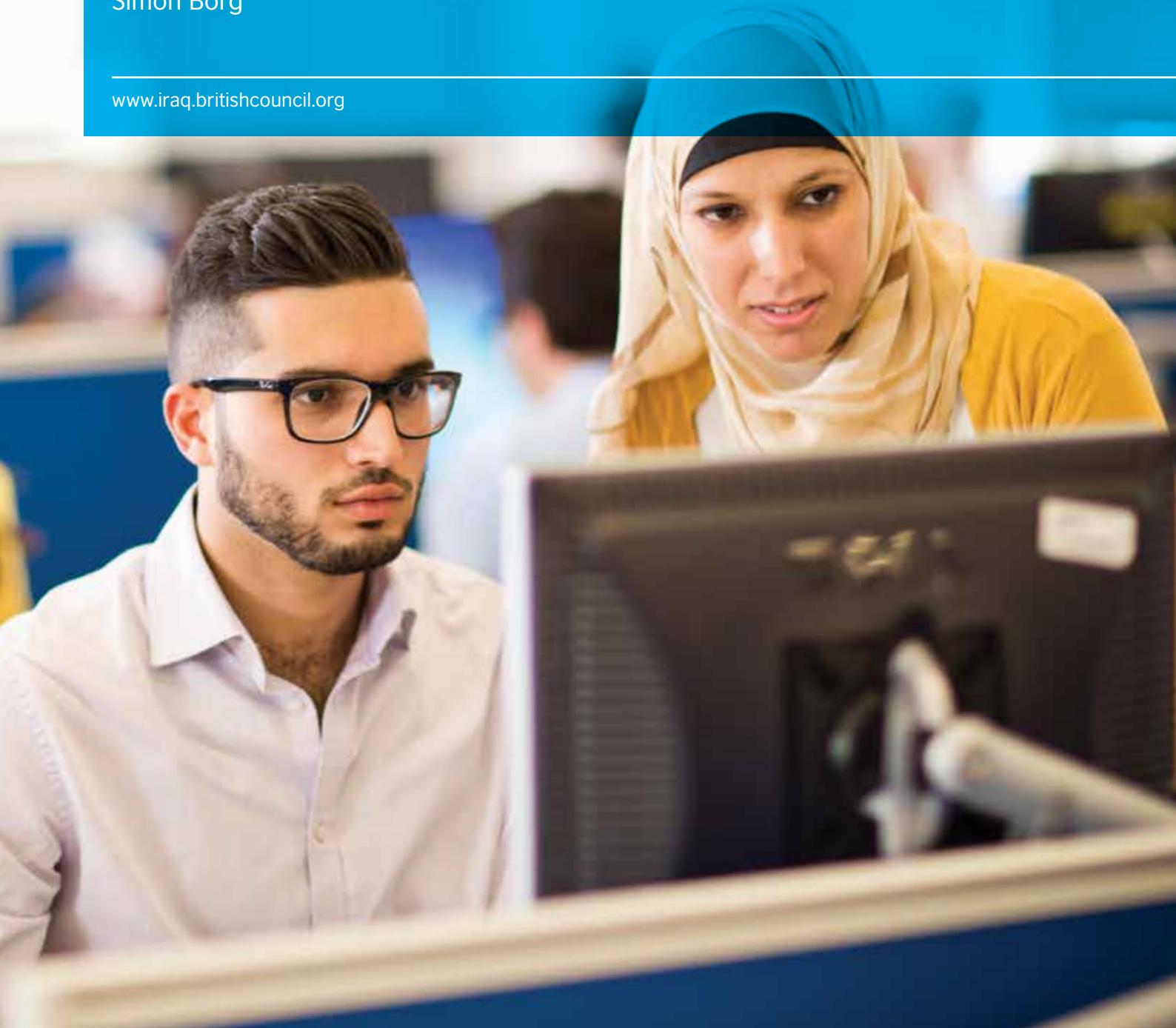

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Iraqi Kurdistan, officially known as Kurdistan Region of Iraq, is an autonomous region in Northern Iraq. It comprises the four governorates of Duhok, Erbil, Sulaimani and Halabja. Locally, it is known as Kurdistan and we have used this last term throughout the report.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) in Kurdistan Region of Iraq is seeking to reform the teaching and use of English in state universities.

This survey of English medium instruction (EMI) was carried out to support this reform but it also makes a contribution to the international literature on EMI in higher education. Drawing on responses from 416 academics who teach undergraduate courses in English at 13 universities, the key findings here are that:

1. Just over 63 per cent of respondents are satisfied with their current level of English. Close to 90 per cent, though, would like to improve their spoken and written English.
2. Just under 30 per cent said they spoke English all the time or almost all the time during lectures, while 27.4 per cent said they used English about 25 per cent of the time or occasionally.
3. In the majority of cases EMI seems to occur through a combination of English and/or Kurdish and Arabic and in many cases English is used less frequently than these other languages.
4. During lectures, English seems to be used more frequently for the presentation of written material than for oral communication.
5. Very high proportions of respondents said that examination questions are set in English and that students must write their answers in English too.
6. Respondents expressed quite strongly the belief that students' levels of English (typically beginner or elementary) were inadequate for the purposes of academic study in English.
7. Not all lecturers agree with the EMI policy in their department or university. However, a large majority of lecturers believe that EMI enhances their own English and that of their students.
8. Most also agreed that it was easier to explain academic ideas in English than in Kurdish or Arabic.
9. Opinions were divided among lecturers about whether it was their role to support the development of students' English and whether students' English should affect the way they are assessed.
10. Most lecturers said they were confident in their ability to teach in English. Most also agreed, though, that they would like to learn more about how their colleagues implement EMI.
11. Almost 46 per cent of respondents, from all 13 universities said that EMI created challenges for them. The single most dominant one was students' level of English, which was widely seen to be too low for EMI. Many lecturers also expressed concerns about their own proficiency in English.

EMI is a significant area of activity in higher education in Kurdistan Region of Iraq and it is clear from this study that in many contexts the conditions required for EMI to be effective are not in place.

This report recommends that current EMI policies be reviewed; this review should be informed by an awareness of current international research, further research in Kurdistan Region of Iraq (including case studies of both good and less effective EMI practices), and the assessment of students' (and possibly lecturers') levels of English.

Such evidence can, collectively, allow for the development of more informed and productive approach to EMI than that which currently exists in many of the contexts represented in this report.

A reformed approach to EMI would need to take into account not only students' and lecturers' levels of English, but also to support lecturers in developing the pedagogical skills needed for effective EMI.

# 1- INTRODUCTION

Kurdistan Region of Iraq is an autonomous region of Iraq with an area of approximately 80,000km$^2$ and a population of some 5.5 million inhabitants.

In terms of higher education (and the role of English in it), the following points can be noted:

1. There are 13 state sector universities in Kurdistan. The Kurdistan Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) is responsible for these institutions.
2. Based on figures provide by the universities, the total undergraduate student population in 2014-15 was 107,486, with almost 35,000 of these being first year students. There were over 8300 academic staff at these 13 universities.
3. Universities are not involved in the admissions process for undergraduates. Students who want to go to university complete a national test at the end of the 6th year of intermediate school; this test is made up of several subjects (including English) and students are then allocated to universities based on their overall test score.
4. Students who have high marks in the national test are allocated to study medicine, dentistry and veterinary science, followed by, in order of decreasing marks, engineering, English, law and sciences.

## The focus of this report is the English-medium instruction in state universities in Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

5. Undergraduate students will have had 12 years of English lessons at school by the time they start university. There are also increasing numbers of private schools where English is the medium of instruction.
6. Official MHESR policy stipulates that all first year students at state universities must study English for at least two hours a week.
7. The MHESR vision for English language learning is that all students graduating from state universities should be independent users of English (CEFR B1 or B2).

In a previous study (Borg, 2014), information was collected about the extent to which HE courses in state universities in Kurdistan Region of Iraq were taught in English and about the number of staff and students involved.

Table 1 summarizes the results. All 13 state universities, to varying degrees, teach courses in English; in only one case are all courses reportedly taught in English, in another the figure is 75 per cent, while in four institutions about 50 per cent of undergraduate teaching is delivered in English. In three further cases the proportion of teaching in English was reported to be 25 per cent or less. Almost 1750 staff (almost 21 per cent of the total) and close to 17000 students (almost 16 per cent of the total) are involved in undergraduate teaching that takes place (reportedly and to varying degrees) through the medium of English. EMI is thus a substantial area of activity in HE in Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

| Institution | EMI (Yes/No) | % EMI | EMI Staff | EMI Students |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Duhok Polytechnic University | Yes | 50% | 152 | 1268 |
| Erbil Polytechnic University | Yes | NR* | NR | NR |
| Garmian University | Yes | 25% | 61 | 610 |
| Hawler Medical University | Yes | 100% | 525 | 2298 |
| Koya University | Yes | 50% | 194 | 2450 |
| Raparin University | Yes | 25% | 63 | 956 |
| Salahaddin University | Yes | NR | NR | NR |
| Soran University | Yes | 10% | 20 | 200 |
| Sulaimani Polytechnic University | Yes | 75% | 326 | 2784 |
| University of Duhok | Yes | NR | NR | NR |
| University of Halabja | Yes | NR | 24 | 400 |
| University of Sulaimani | Yes | 50% | 196 | 4405 |
| University of Zakho | Yes | 50% | 187 | 1500 |
| **Total** | **13/13** | **-** | **1748** | **16871** |

Table 1: EMI in state universities in Kurdistan Region of Iraq *(NR = no response provided)

# 2- LECTURERS' VIEWS AND PRACTICES IN EMI

The increasing prevalence of EMI in higher education worldwide is reflected in an extensive and rapidly growing literature. Much of this literature has been driven by developments in Europe, where enormous growth has been registered in the last 20 years (Coleman, 2006). More recently, though, motivated largely by policies which promote the internationalisation of higher education and link increased use of and proficiency in English to economic growth and enhanced global prestige and mobility, discussions of EMI in contexts outside Europe have also become common.

I will now provide a brief overview of some recent research from higher education in a range of countries which, in common with my focus here, provides insight into the EMI views and practices of university staff. Table 2 provides details of the core studies I will draw on. These studies in most cases focus on one country and on one specific institution within that country. though there are some exceptions such as Dearden (2012), which reports information about EMI (from all education sectors not just HE) in 55 countries and Costa & Coleman (2012), which surveyed 38 universities across Italy.

| Source | HE Context | Research Methods | Participants |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ali (2013) | Malaysia | Document analysis and interviews | One administrator and 11 lecturers at a public university |
| Başıbek et al. (2014) | Turkey | Questionnaire | 63 lecturers at two state universities |
| Belhiah & Elhami (2015) | UAE | Questionnaires and e-mail interviews | 500 students and 100 teachers at six universities |
| Botha (2013) | Macau | Questionnaires | 26 staff and 227 students at a private university |
| Chapple (2015) | Japan | Questionnaires and informal discussions | 89 Japanese and 26 international students; some lecturers (number unspecified) |
| Costa & Coleman (2012) | Italy | Questionnaires | 38 universities (one representative from each) |
| Dearden (2014) | Global | Questionnaires and interviews | One survey respondent from each of 55 countries; 25 teachers from three countries interviewed |
| Ghorbani & Alavi (2014) | Iran | Questionnaires and interviews | 344 students and 36 lecturers in one university |
| Goodman (2014) | Ukraine | Observations and interviews | 49 students and four teachers at a private university |
| Hamid, Jahan & Islam (2013) | Bangladesh | Interviews | 17 academics and 37 students from one private university |
| Hu, Li & Lei (2014) | China | Interviews | Five teachers and 10 students at one university |
| Jensen & Thøgersen (2011) | Denmark | Questionnaires | 1131 lecturers at one university |
| Werther, Denver, Jensen & Mees (2014) | Denmark | Observations, questionnaires and interviews | 33 lecturers at one university |

Table 2: Selected studies of lecturers' views and experiences of EMI

Methodologically questionnaires and interviews are the most common data collection strategies, with observational studies of EMI much less in evidence. The numbers of lecturers participating in the studies are in most cases modest (many of the studies are qualitative), with the large survey by Jensen & Thøgersen (2011) an exception here.

The studies varied in the perspective they adopted in examining lecturers' views and practices in relation to EMI, but a number of recurrent themes can be extracted from this literature and I summarise these below.

- The drive for EMI in HE is top-down – it comes from university leaders, often in response to national initiatives, rather than being sought by lectures themselves. For example, in China, Hu, Li & Lei (2014: 28) note that "the Ministry of Education issued a directive in 2000, requiring that 5–10 per cent of undergraduate courses in institutions of higher learning across mainland China be taught in English or other foreign languages within a period of 3 years".
- A key theme in EMI in HE is internationalisation (Ali, 2013), though this is interpreted in diverse ways (e.g. more teaching in English, attracting foreign students and enabling local students to study in English-speaking universities in another country).
- Economic considerations are also very salient in policy decisions about promoting EMI in HE. For example, Costa & Coleman (2012: 5) note that "for universities in Italy and across Europe, measures to improve competence in English are as much economic as educational, since ETPs [English-taught programmes] are open to both foreign and local students, and fee-paying foreign students raise additional resources".
- Although "the idea that merely taking a content class taught in English will lead to substantial linguistic gains is dubious" (Chapple, 2015: 4), EMI in HE is often seen by policy makers as a mechanism for improving the English language proficiency of university students (Ali, 2013) and there is some evidence it is believed to do so; for example, in the UAE, Belhiah & Elhami (2015: 11) found that "there is a general consensus among instructors that students' overall proficiency in English has improved thanks to instruction in the English medium". However, in China, Lei & Hu (2014) did not find significant differences in the English proficiency of students in EMI and Chinese-medium programs.
- There is often a gap between policy and practice in EMI in HE. In China, Hu, Li & Lei (2014: 37) refer to the "yawning gap between the ideal language behavior institutionally envisioned for EMI and the actual language practices", while writing about a university in Macau, Botha (2013) notes that the official policy on EMI is not implemented consistently across all faculties.

- Coleman (2006) draws on Smith (2004) to list several 'predictable problems' associated with EMI in HE. Many of these are highlighted in the studies being discussed here, for example: a lack of explicit EMI policy or vague policy which is subsequently poorly understood (Ali, 2013); lack of training for EMI lecturers (Costa & Coleman, 2012); limited English proficiency among lecturers and/or ability to teach EMI effectively (Chapple, 2015; Dearden, 2014); resistance to EMI because it is seen to threaten the status of the national language (Jensen, Mee, & Werther, 2013); uncertainty among lecturers about their roles in EMI classes (Ali, 2013); the creation of inequalities between EMI lecturers and students and those who are not deemed capable enough to be part of EMI (Hu et al., 2014).
- The single most recurrent barrier to successful EMI in HE noted in these studies, though, was limited English proficiency among university students (Belhiah & Elhami, 2015; Chapple, 2015; Costa & Coleman, 2012; Hamid et al., 2013; Hu et al., 2014). In Japan, students had to achieve an IELTS 4.0 to be allowed to attend EMI courses, but they still found these too difficult to follow. In Turkey, lecturers generally agreed that students' English sufficiency was not adequate for EMI (Başıbek et al., 2014).
- Lecturers' attitudes to EMI are often positive. For example, Botha (2013) found that over 95 per cent of staff at a Macau university agreed that EMI makes a university more international, while in Iran, Ghorbani & Alavi (2014) also concluded that teachers agreed EMI was a positive phenomenon. Debates in Scandinavian countries about EMI have highlighted more critical perspectives, though; in their large survey in Denmark, for example, Jensen & Thøgersen (2011: 29) note that "more than two thirds of the teachers agreed with statements that highlight the potential negative consequences of EMI". In the same study, though, a similar proportion of teachers also expressed positive views about EMI. Engineering lecturers in a study from Turkey supported EMI but also agreed that lecturing in Turkish allows them to explore content in more depth (Başıbek et al., 2014).
- Studies which have examined actual or reported EMI practices (as opposed to just beliefs) have shown that lecturers feel confident in their ability to teach content courses in English (Werther et al., 2014). However, there is also evidence that EMI can lead lecturers to simplify content (Chapple, 2015), affect lecturers' confidence (Goodman, 2014), require increased preparation time (an early study in the Netherlands is relevant here - Vinke, Snippe, & Jochems, 1998) and influence how lecturers respond to student questions. In Hong Kong, "in order to accommodate for the [English] language and literacy needs of the students, many lecturers shift their pedagogical approaches" (Mahboob, 2014: 184).

- In many contexts where EMI is official policy, lecturers will often codeswitch between English and a local language to facilitate student understanding. In some cases, English may not even be the majority language used; for example, in his study in Macau, Botha (2013: 471) said that "in typical English medium classes some 70 per cent of students reported that all or most of their language exposure was to Putonghua". Also, in China it was found that an EMI lecturer "reported that he codeswitched to Chinese to explain difficult concepts and discuss case studies, because he found an exclusive use of English inhibiting him from effectively conveying the local culture and context vital to some case studies" (Hu et al., 2014: 35).

This brief review of recent literature on lecturers' views and practices in relation to EMI highlights the complex range of considerations that the adoption of EMI in HE provokes. Overall, this work suggests a distinction between European and non-European EMI contexts. In the former, European HE policy, higher levels of English among staff and students and more favourable institutional conditions have allowed EMI to expand (not unproblematically though); outside Europe (e.g. Japan, China and the Middle East), EMI is a more recent feature of HE policy and substantial challenges to EMI practice exist, often because policy is unclear but above all due to limitations in staff capacity (linguistic and instructional) and student proficiency in English. One would expect the situation in Kurdistan Region of Iraq to reflect the situation in emerging EMI contexts outside Europe, and I will now proceed to describe the conduct of this study of lecturers' perspectives on EMI in Kurdish state universities.

# 3- METHODOLOGY

The evidence presented in this report was generated through a purposefully-designed questionnaire (see Appendix) for lecturers using EMI on undergraduate courses in state universities in Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The literature discussed earlier suggested topics to include in the instrument, and questions from Dearden (2014) also provided some ideas. A number of issues were also suggested by the findings of two previous studies of English in higher education in Kurdistan Region of Iraq which I carried out (Borg, 2014, 2015b).

The questionnaire was designed to collect information about the following issues:

- lecturer profile, including a self-assessment of their level of spoken English
- their use of EMI
- students' proficiency in English, according to lecturers
- lecturer attitudes to English and EMI
- challenges lecturers face using EMI
- lecturers' attitudes to improving their English.

All 13 state universities in Kurdistan Region of Iraq were invited to participate in this study. The questionnaire was made available online using SurveyMonkey and university co-ordinators nominated to assist with the study were sent the URL and asked to invite lecturers who taught EMI courses in their institutions to respond.

From an earlier survey it was possible to estimate the number of lecturers in each university who were believed to use EMI (see Table 1 above) and a target response rate of 25 per cent per institution (a total of 890) was set. Where estimates for the number of EMI lecturers were missing from the earlier study, these were obtained from the relevant university co-ordinators at the start of this survey.

Instructions were sent to the university co-ordinators on 19 February 2014, with a deadline for responses of 5 March. Individual updates were sent to each co-ordinator on 25 February with information about the number of responses received from their university against the target, and a final general reminder was sent to all co-ordinators on 3 March.

The survey closed on 15 March with 437 responses. The data were analysed quantitatively using SPSS 20, apart from one open-ended question which was studied qualitatively.

# 4- FINDINGS

## 4.1 RESPONSE RATE

Ten largely incomplete responses were omitted from the analysis, together with 11 further respondents who said they never used English in their lectures. A final sample of 416 completed questionnaires was thus available for analysis and this represents 11.7 per cent of the total of 3548 lecturers from 13 state universities who were estimated to use EMI and 46.7 per cent of the overall target of 890 responses that was set.

Table 3 summarizes the responses by institution. This shows that while seven universities met or exceeded their 25 per cent target, six did not, with the lowest response rates coming from the three largest universities in terms of EMI lecturers (11.2 per cent from Salahaddin University, 12.3 per cent from University of Duhok and 29 per cent from Hawler Medical University – the latter is officially 100 per cent EMI).

| Institution | EMI Lecturers | Target (25%) | Responses | % of Target |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Duhok Polytechnic University | 152 | 38 | 52 | 136.8 |
| Erbil Polytechnic University | 225 | 57 | 24 | 42.1 |
| Garmian University | 61 | 15 | 15 | 100.0 |
| Hawler Medical University | 525 | 131 | 38 | 29.0 |
| Koya University | 194 | 49 | 59 | 120.4 |
| Raparin University | 63 | 16 | 25 | 156.3 |
| Salahaddin University | 925 | 232 | 26 | 11.2 |
| Soran University | 20 | 5 | 8 | 160.0 |
| Sulaimani Polytechnic University | 326 | 82 | 55 | 67.1 |
| University of Duhok | 650 | 163 | 20 | 12.3 |
| University of Halabja | 24 | 6 | 6 | 100.0 |
| University of Sulaimani | 196 | 49 | 55 | 112.2 |
| University of Zakho | 187 | 47 | 33 | 70.2 |
| **Total** | **3548** | **890** | **416** | **46.7** |

Table 3: Distribution of responses by institution

## 4.2 LECTURER PROFILE

The profile of lecturers who replied to the questionnaire was as follows:

- Respondents taught in a wide range of mostly science disciplines (e.g. mathematics, engineering, medicine, biology, and geology) though non-science subjects were also represented (e.g. accounting, business studies, and law);
- The majority were male (74.9 per cent);
- Almost all (96.7 per cent) were Iraqi or Kurdish;
- Age-wise, the largest group (40.9 per cent) was 30-39, followed by 40-49 (25 per cent) and under 30 (17.5 per cent);
- In terms of academic position, almost 73 per cent were either instructors or assistant instructors; in contrast only 3.4 per cent were professors;
- 60.5 per cent were qualified to Master's level and a further 37.8 per cent held a PhD;
- 43per cent had studied in an English-speaking country (broken down by age, 69.9 per cent of those under 30 had done so - a much higher proportion than for the older age groups);
- Almost 74 per cent had 10 years or less experience of teaching undergraduates in Kurdistan, with 1-5 years being the most common group (49 per cent).

### 4.2.1 English Proficiency

Respondents were asked to describe their own level of spoken English and Figure 1 summarizes their responses. Thus while 68.9 per cent felt their spoken English was higher intermediate or above, 31.1 per cent felt it was intermediate or lower, with 6.9 per cent describing their level as elementary or beginner. Age was not associated with how lecturers assessed their oral proficiency in English, though those who had studied in an English-speaking country rated themselves significantly more highly than those who had not[1].

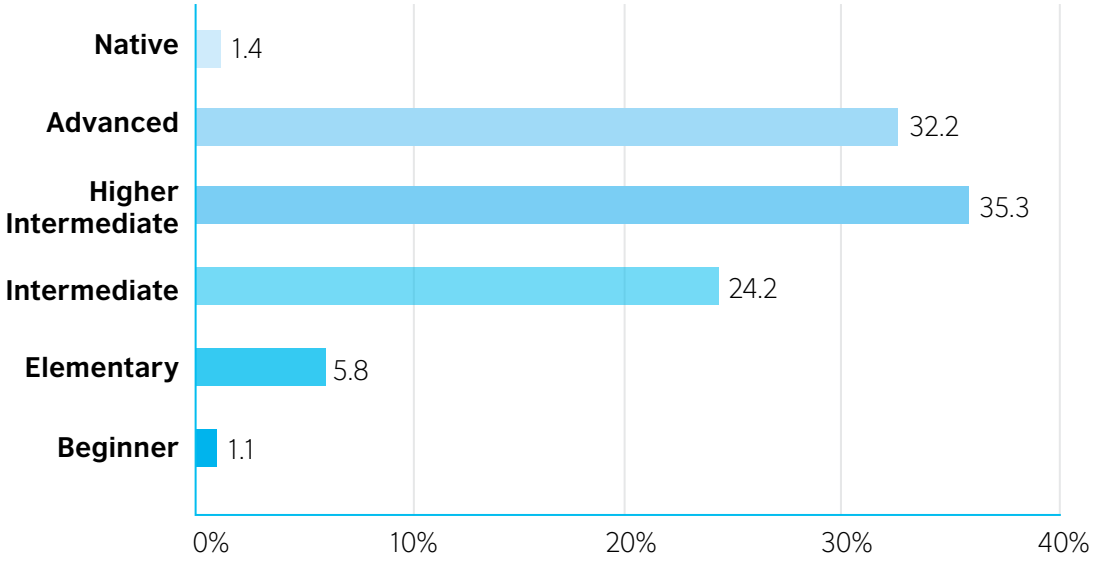


Figure 1: Lecturers' assessment of their own spoken English (N=363)

[1] Using a Mann-Whitney test, studied in English-speaking country mean proficiency rating 4.31, N=170, not studied in English-speaking country mean proficiency rating 3.65, N=193, U=10324.5, p=.000, with a medium effect size r=0.34.

## 4.3 CHOOSING THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

Lecturers were asked who decides on the language(s) of instruction on their courses. They were given three options (their university, their department, and themselves – they could choose more than one of these) together with a fourth option to specify some other party who influenced the choice of which language(s) are used. Table 4 presents their responses. One-hundred and forty-four lecturers who used EMI, then, felt they were free to decide which language(s) to teach in, but closer analysis shows that the number of respondents who chose only this option was actually 79 (20 per cent). Several lecturers did actually say that they were required to teach in English and that they were free to decide which language(s) to teach in; one interpretation for this apparent contradiction is that the 'requirement' reflected policy but in terms of actual practice lecturers did not necessarily adhere to this (evidence throughout this report supports the conclusion that a gap exists in this context between EMI policy and practice).

| Institution | N | N choosing only this answer |
|---|---|---|
| My university requires me to teach in English | 209 | 72 (18.2%) |
| My department requires me to teach in English | 203 | 51 (12.9%) |
| I am free to decide which language(s) to teach in | 144 | 79 (20%) |
| The decision is (also) made by others | 54 | 14 (3.5%) |

Table 4: Decisions about language of instruction (N=395)

The proportion of respondents who said the decision was made only by the university was 18.2 per cent and only by the department 12.9 per cent. Around 45 per cent cited at least two major influences on which language(s) were used.

An analysis of the 'other' explanations provided by 54 lecturers indicates that they feel students have a major influence on decisions about the language of instruction; a common explanation was that Kurdish often needs to be used because students are unable to understand lectures in English. Here are some examples of lecturers' comments (disciplines in brackets):

"The decision is also made by the students, as they don't understand the lecture if the teacher only uses English without translating some words into Kurdish". (City Planning)

"The students also decide which language they prefer in order to obtain best understanding in the class". (Plant Protection)

"My students ask me to teach them in Kurdish". (Physics)

"My university requires me to teach in English but 98 per cent of students did not understand it hence I'm using mother language in addition to English". (Chemistry)

"English is university requirement, however, student can not understand with fully teaching in English". (Software Engineering)

Further evidence emerges throughout this report that many lecturers feel that students' English is not good enough to make EMI productive.

## 4.4 DEGREE OF EMI

Respondents were asked how often they used English and their responses are presented in Figure 2. Only 6.7 per cent said they used English all the time, while the most common reply (by 27.2 per cent of lecturers) was 'about half the time'. 27.4 per cent of the lecturers said they used English about 25 per cent of the time or occasionally.

When these responses are examined in terms of who decides what language(s) teaching takes place in, it is interesting that where the responsibility was reportedly entirely with the lecturer, only 10.1 per cent of them said they spoke English most or all of the time. Where the decision was made entirely by the university, the corresponding figure was 29.2 per cent.

English thus seemed to be spoken more widely in lectures where EMI was university policy compared to where it was at the discretion of the lecturer. One university is officially 100 per cent EMI. In this context (N=38), 2.7 per cent of respondents said they use English only occasionally, 29.7 per cent said they did so about 75 per cent of the time, and 67.5 per cent reportedly used English all or most of the time during lectures. The reported levels of English use in this context are clearly much higher than the average across the 13 universities under study here.

Respondents who said they did not use English all the time were asked which additional languages they use; Kurdish was unsurprisingly that used most often (by 358 lecturers) followed by Arabic (by 152 lecturers).

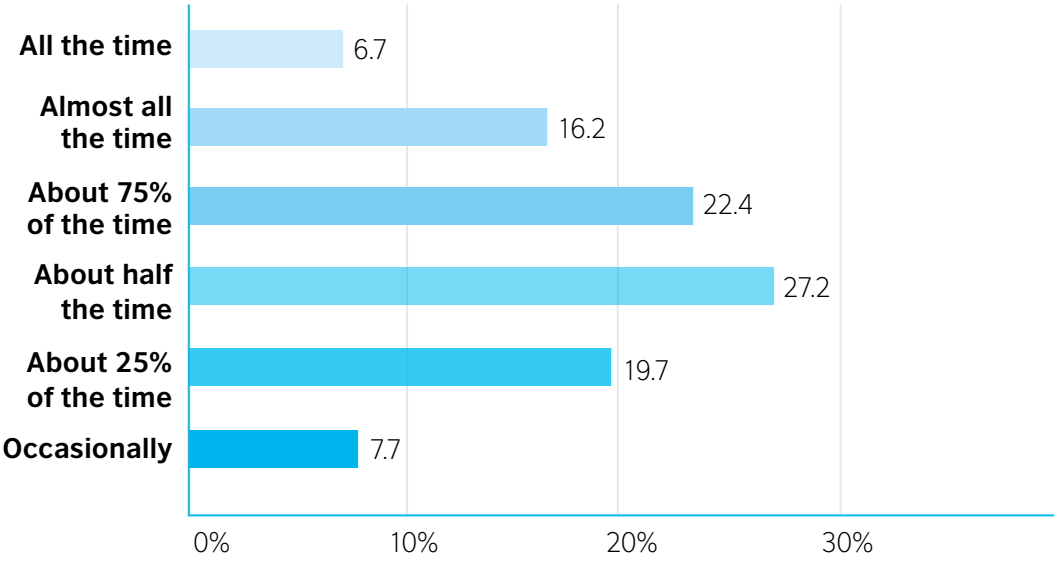


Figure 2: How often English is used in lectures (N=401)

### 4.4.1 Purpose of English in Lectures

Respondents were asked to indicate the purposes for which English was used during their lectures and Table 5 shows their responses.

In decreasing order of frequency, the uses of English most commonly reported in most or all lectures were PowerPoint slides (91.2 per cent), writing on board (90.5 per cent), giving students handouts (86.1 per cent), giving students reading texts (77.3 per cent) and, only fifth, explaining content (73.7 per cent). Over 65 per cent said they ask questions in English in most or all lectures, with just over 58 per cent saying they ask students to answer in English most or all of the time (and 10.5 per cent said they never ask students to answer questions in English).

These results suggest that English is more frequently used in the presentation of written material (e.g. slides, handouts and readings) than in oral communication during lectures (e.g. explanation of content, asking and answering questions).

### 4.4.2 Use of English in Assessment

Undergraduate courses in state universities in Kurdistan Region of Iraq are typically assessed by written examinations. Lecturers were asked whether exam questions were in English and whether students had to answer in English too. Over 96 per cent of 389 lecturers who answered the first question said all examination questions are in English, while almost 91 per cent of the 388 who answered the second question said all answers must also be in English. Overall, then, in courses where English is (officially) the medium of instruction, examinations are also conducted through English.

The challenges lecturers say they face in EMI are discussed below, but some comments relevant to examinations in English can be noted here. One lecturer (Field Crops) noted that "In the exam day the students ask 'I cannot write in English even I know the answers'", indicating that limited English rather a knowledge of academic content was a problem for students.

| Uses of English | N | Never (%) | In a minority of lectures (%) | In about half my lectures (%) | In most lectures (%) | In every lecture (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| to explain content | 380 | 2.1 | 10.3 | 13.9 | 23.7 | 50.0 |
| to show PPT slides | 384 | 1.6 | 2.9 | 4.4 | 8.1 | 83.1 |
| to ask questions | 384 | 4.2 | 11.2 | 19.3 | 19.8 | 45.6 |
| to write on board | 379 | 1.1 | 4.5 | 4.0 | 9.0 | 81.5 |
| in handouts | 381 | 2.1 | 4.2 | 7.6 | 11.8 | 74.3 |
| in videos | 380 | 9.5 | 13.7 | 11.3 | 17.4 | 48.2 |
| students' answers | 382 | 10.5 | 13.4 | 18.1 | 23.8 | 34.3 |
| in reading texts | 387 | 7.8 | 8.5 | 6.5 | 13.7 | 63.6 |

Table 5: Use of English during lectures

Such concerns raised questions about the validity of assessment conducted in English:

The assessment process is not 100 per cent valid all the time, because some students many times either don't understand (even misunderstand) the questions fully in English or they understand and know the scientific answer but don't know how to express it well in English. (Physiology and Critical Thinking)

In response to this problem, another lecturer (Chemistry) explained that "Sometimes students with good potential in science don't have good English background, so I have to explain the questions in Kurdish language in exam to make sure they get it right and answer the right question". Stronger concerns about students' ability to do exams in English are seen in the comment that "...their writing is terrible. A researcher can review the exam answers randomly to find how weak are the students. Most of them even can not write a sentence correctly in English" (Medical Microbiology).

## 4.5 STUDENTS' ENGLISH

Lecturers were asked two questions about students' English. The first was what level of English they typically had; the second was what level of English they needed to understand academic courses in English. Figure 3 presents their responses to both questions and it is clear that there is a substantial difference between the two assessments.

Almost 75 per cent of the lecturers believe their students are currently at beginner and elementary levels, with only 18.6 per cent at intermediate and just over 2 per cent even higher. In contrast, 72 per cent believe students should be at intermediate or higher intermediate to cope with EMI.

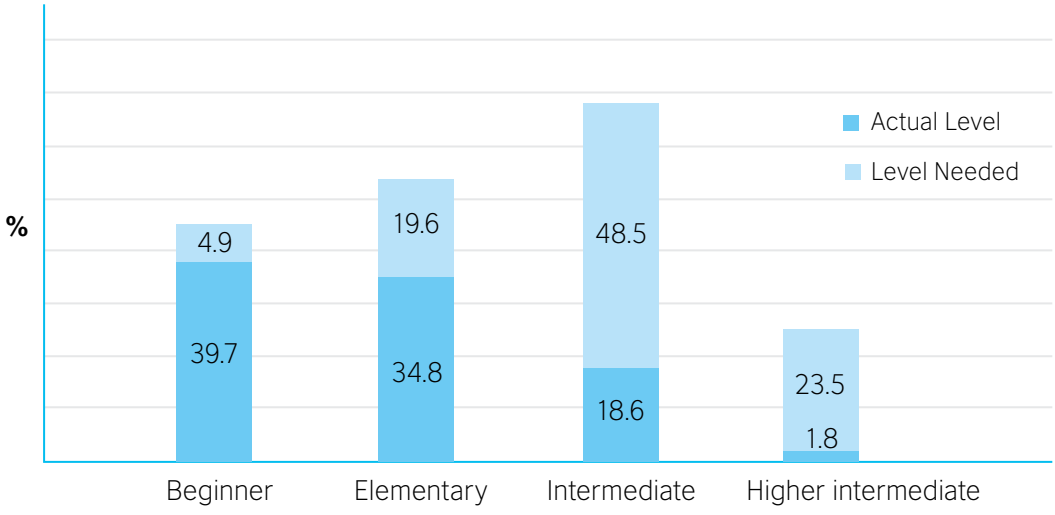


Figure 3: Actual and required level of students' English

## 4.6 VIEWS ABOUT ENGLISH AND EMI

Section 3 of the questionnaire asked lecturers for their views on a range of issues relevant to EMI in the context of higher education in Kurdistan. There were nine statements and responses are summarized in Table 6 (the original five-point scale has been collapsed into three - agree, disagree and neither).

Over 90 per cent of respondents agreed with four statements: 'Teaching in English helps me improve my own English' (97.6 per cent), 'It is important for all students to graduate with a good level of English' (95 per cent), 'I am confident in my ability to teach in English' (91.7 per cent) and 'Students' English improves when they attend courses taught in English' (90.3 per cent). Agreement was also high (87.7 per cent) with the statement 'Lecturers must have a high level of spoken English to teach their courses in English'.

Lecturers were thus positive about the benefits of EMI for their own and their students' English. Confidence in their ability to teach using EMI was also widespread among respondents.

Other results worth noting here are that:

- Almost 50 per cent disagreed that it was not their job to help students improve their English, while over 29 per cent agreed, indicating this was an issue where opinions were divided;
- Similarly, while 57 per cent agreed they did not award marks for English when students are assessed, 18.5 per cent disagreed;
- Over 70 per cent felt that academic ideas can be explained more easily in English;
- Over 62 per cent said their students find it difficult to understand lectures in English; only 17.5 per cent disagreed.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. I am confident in my ability to teach in English | 384 | 91.7% | 2.1% | 6.2% |
| b. It is easier to explain academic ideas in English than in Kurdish or Arabic | 384 | 70.1% | 9.1% | 20.8% |
| c. It is important for all students to graduate with a good level of English | 381 | 95.0% | 1.3% | 3.7% |
| d. It is not my job to help students improve their English | 383 | 29.2% | 49.6% | 21.1% |
| e. Lecturers must have a high level of spoken English to teach their courses in English | 382 | 87.7% | 1.8% | 10.5% |
| f. My students find it difficult to understand lectures in English | 383 | 62.1% | 17.5% | 20.4% |
| g. Students' English improves when they attend courses taught in English | 383 | 90.3% | 1.0% | 8.6% |
| h. Teaching in English helps me improve my own English | 380 | 97.6% | 1.1% | 1.3% |
| i. When I assess students I do not give marks for the quality of their English | 379 | 57.0% | 18.5% | 24.5% |

Table 6: Lecturers' views about EMI

## 4.7 CHALLENGES IN EMI

In response to the question 'Do you face any challenges in teaching your academic courses in English?', 176 lecturers from all 13 universities (45.7 per cent of 385 who answered the question) said 'Yes', while 209 (54.3 per cent) said 'No'. Responses here were not associated with lecturers' earlier self-assessment of their spoken English – for example, of those who felt they were at higher intermediate level, 60 said they faced challenges in EMI while 66 said they did not; in the 'advanced' category, some 57 per cent also said they faced challenges.

Those who answered 'Yes' here were also asked to describe the main challenge(s) they faced and 156 respondents did so. The challenge most frequently mentioned by the lecturers was limited student proficiency in English; limitations in lecturers' own proficiency also recurred in the responses, while other challenges mentioned by several lecturers were student resistance to EMI, their lack of motivation to learn English, their negative feedback on courses taught in English, and large class sizes. I report on each of these main areas of challenge below.

### 4.7.1 Limited Student Proficiency in English

By far the most salient challenge in EMI highlighted by lecturers was the low level of English among students. Here are examples of comments which illustrate their views:

- "Every time I say something in English, I see question marks on their faces. Therefore, I feel that it much better to switch to Kurdish language for better understanding and saving times of the class". (Software Engineering)
- "I am afraid that most of the student could not understand most of the lectures if I speak in English". (Software Engineering)
- "Being asked to teach in English and the English level of the students make effective teaching basically impossible. All teaching is a constant compromise". (Geography)

- "75 per cent of student do not understand English well". (Mechanics)
- "When I teach and explain in English most of the students do not understand". (Physics)
- "The main challenges lie in the low standard of English language proficiency of most of my students". (Geotechnical Engineering)
- "Students' English level is very poor, and in order to make them understand, I have to translate most of the topics into their native language". (Media)
- "Other challenges relates on my students, their levels in English is very bad, their spelling, reading and understanding are very bad". (Administration)
- "The students are very weak in English Language". (Business Management)
- "The teaching system in our department is in English language, but students' level of English is not helping both me and the students during the lectures because sometimes I need to translate the difficult terms to Kurdish". (Social Work)
- "In my opinion when I teaching all lecture with English language a few number of students understand it". (Animal Production)
- "The most problem is that students can not read, write with English, and also they cant understand well when I teach with English". (Agriculture)
- "I think all the lecturers including me, the main challenge we face is that the student did not understanding us specially the first grade students because they came from high school which the medium of instruction is in Kurdish or Arabic language". (Nursing)

### 4.7.2 Limited Lecturer Proficiency

- Many lecturers also highlighted limitations in their own English (especially spoken) and the impact this had on their confidence during EMI. The following comments are representative of their views:
- "I think I need to attend some academic English courses to improve my ability in speaking English language". (Physics)
- "I am very good in pronunciation, reading and writing but I think my speaking is not as well as my other skills". (Geography)
- "Because I am not a native English speaker, sometimes I find it difficult to express an idea in English so that the students can easily understand it". (City Planning)
- "The main challenge which I face is that English is not my mother language, so I have to teach myself before I teach my students". (Microbiology)
- "Some time, I forget the meaning of some academic words and phrases". (Nursing)
- The difficulty of answering questions from students in English". (Animal Production)
- "We need to participate in English language course as a lecturers". (Metallurgy Engineering
- "Many teachers also did not have a perfect language so this affect their teaching outcome". (Pathology)

- "I have to depend on dictionary some times to comprehensive my self before I teach my students. I have to prepare my slides after reducing main ideas. So I couldn't talking very good in English". (Administration)
- "To deliver my lectures in English is rather difficult because both my MA and BA course were both in Arabic and Kurdish and I have not taken any courses in English up to now. Therefore, it is sometimes difficult for me express everything in English". (Nursing)
- "I need to rehearse before the lecture so as not to make mistakes … Sometimes I am afraid of pronouncing words incorrectly". (Geology)
- "There is something like a wall between me and the person who I speak to him (maybe I feel shame)". (Biology)
- "The challenge is I am not satisfied with my English and afraid of doing mistakes". (Software Engineering)
- "Because I don't use English so frequently in the class, sometimes I forget very easily words during explanation, which embarrassing me". (Software Engineering)

Some of the comments cited above suggest that lecturers are comparing themselves with native-speaker models of 'perfect' English.

### 4.7.3 Student Resistance to EMI

In addition to the two major challenges already discussed, a further group of four difficulties associated with EMI were mentioned by several lecturers. One was that students did not want lectures to be in English, as these comments indicate:

- "The students don't accept the units to be in English, so they worry every time in particular about the examinations". (Field Crops)
- "Sometimes my students asked me, why we should study our lecture in English?". (Computers)
- "The students do not want me to speak English". (Information and Library)

Such resistance is understandable if, as many lecturers claimed, students find it hard to understand lectures in English. Students will also be concerned about the impact that EMI will have on their performance in examinations.

### 4.7.4 Lack of Student Motivation

Several lecturers added that EMI was challenging because students were not motivated either to study certain academic subjects or to improve their English. For example:

- "Most students have no motivation to learn … most students in our department are there against their choices (choosing fields they wish to study)"[2]. (Social Work)
- "Also students generally do not have the desire to learn and improve, not only the language but also the knowledge". (Social Work)
- "Students don't have any motivation to learn English, it is not within their priorities, thus, they do not give it enough attention and they just want to gain marks".
- "The students are not willing to learn English". (Media)

### 4.7.5 Negative Student Evaluations

Some lecturers also noted that when they deliver academic courses in English, students rate these negatively in their end of course evaluations:

- not all students can understand the material no matter how hard I try because of their poor language and my refusal to deliver the material in a language other than English, they sometimes give me low grades in the feedback form provided by the university to assess the teaching staff. (Physiology)

One lecturer also felt that their university does not support lecturers who seek to adhere to an EMI policy but who find themselves negatively evaluated by students:

- Another issue is that the administration does not strongly support the lecturer who gave their lectures in English when they have been complained by students. To me, it was the main reason to have a very few mark from the student feedback on the lectures given. (Field Crops)

[2] Students are allocated to university departments by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research depending on their entrance examination results.

### 4.7.6 Large Class Sizes

Another challenge to EMI mentioned by some lecturers was the large number of students in their classes. The comments below illustrate this concern:

- "Owing to the fact that there are so many students in one class, I cannot elucidate everything I utter for the individuals and it feels bad knowing some students have not got the message". (Surveying)
- "The classes are very crowded, the average of a group number is between 50-60 student". (Media)
- "Big class size: having 75 students in an English class is a disaster. How can I have all my students participate in 45-minute lecture?". (Information and Library)

### 4.7.7 Other Challenges

Several other challenges that EMI creates were mentioned less frequently in lecturers' feedback and they are listed in Figure 4 with an illustrative quotation for each. Overall, then, it is clear that a significant (over 45 per cent) proportion of participants in this study feel that EMI policy creates challenges for them and their students; this does not mean that these lecturers are against the idea of EMI (in fact almost 41 per cent of those who said they faced challenges also said they were free to choose the language of instruction) but in the circumstances described above serious questions must be asked about the extent to which EMI is actually facilitating students' academic development; in many cases it is very likely that it is not. Many lecturers seem very aware of this problem and some expressed their opposition to the EMI quite clearly:

- We are teaching science and not English language [so] lectures should be in Kurdish, it is easier for students understand and writing down answers in Kurdish, did we ever heard that UK students studying in other languages!?? We needs to focus on teaching science rather than Language. (Agriculture)
- About almost half of if not more than half of the teaching staff member disagree or challenging the other minority of teaching staffs member in teaching the students in English language. (Field Crops)

| | |
|---|---|
| Lack of English in the university | • "Most educational processes in the university are in Kurdish language, therefore it is not easy to teach in English". (Physics) |
| More time needed to explain lectures | • "When saying a word in the class, I should spell out it very slowly, write it on the white board, and translate it to Kurdish. This makes learning and teaching process goes too slowly". (Software Engineering) |
| Increased preparation time | • "I studied my lecture more time to understand in a good way". (Animal Production) |
| Lack of support for lecturers | • "There's no training courses scheduled during the academic year ... to support my speaking, listening, writing as high level". (Path Analysis) |
| Insufficient English support for students | • "They study English only in their first year which is - in my opinion - not enough to learn a good English". (Media) |
| Lack of monitoring of EMI policy | • "Not everyone follow the rules and regulations by the book ... It is hard to be the only one to push student. There is no system for monitoring teachers and take measures if the quality is not satisfactory". (Architectural Engineering) |

Figure 4: Other EMI challenges

## 4.8 DEVELOPING ENGLISH AND EMI

In the final section of the questionnaire lecturers were asked questions relevant to the improvement of their English and to EMI. Table 7 summarizes their responses, collapsed once again into three categories – agree, disagree and neither.

The two statements here that attracted most agreement were those about publishing in English (96.6 per cent) and doing conference presentations in English (97.1 per cent). A larger proportion of lecturers wanted to improve their spoken rather than their written English but in both cases the levels of agreement were high (89 per cent and 86.4 per cent respectively).

Not everyone who wanted to improve their English was dissatisfied with their current level and in fact under 16 per cent felt this way. Also, the drive to improve was not reflected in the extent to which lecturers were willing to pay for such improvement – only 45.5 per cent agreed they were, though there were a substantial proportion of 'neither agree nor disagree' answers here (29.5 per cent). Finally, interest in learning abut colleagues' EMI practices was healthy, with under 5 per cent disagreeing that this is something they would like to know more about.

| Uses of English | N | Agree (%) | Disagree (%) | Neither (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. I would like to improve my own spoken English | 382 | 89.0% | 4.5% | 6.5% |
| b. I would like to improve my own written English | 381 | 86.4% | 6.0% | 7.6% |
| c. The university provides language courses to help me improve my English | 378 | 55.0% | 19.6% | 25.4% |
| d. I am willing to pay for a course to help me improve my English | 380 | 45.5% | 25.0% | 29.5% |
| e. I am satisfied with my current level of English | 377 | 63.1% | 15.6% | 21.2% |
| f. It is important for me to publish academic articles in English | 377 | 97.1% | 0.3% | 2.7% |
| g. It is important for me to give academic conference presentations in English | 381 | 96.6% | 0.5% | 2.9% |
| h. I would like to know more about how my colleagues use English in their lectures | 380 | 81.3% | 4.7% | 13.9% |

Table 7: Developing English and EMI

# 5- SUMMARY

This study of EMI was based on responses to a questionnaire from 416 predominantly junior, male, local and moderately experienced academic staff teaching undergraduate courses in 13 state universities in Kurdistan Region of Iraq. All respondents said they adopted EMI to some extent. The key findings are summarized below and these resonate with many key issues highlighted in the literature discussed earlier.

1. Just over 63 per cent of respondents are satisfied with their current level of English. Almost 69 per cent felt their spoken English was at higher intermediate level or above and 31 per cent felt it was intermediate or lower. Respondents who had studied in an English-speaking country rated their spoken English significantly more highly than those who had not.
2. Almost 92 per cent of respondents said they were confident in their ability to teach in English (lecturers were similarly positive about their ability to teach EMI in other contexts such as Turkey and Denmark – see Başıbek et al., 2014; Werther et al., 2014).
3. While 20 per cent of respondents said decisions about the language(s) of instruction were solely theirs, almost 33 per cent said the decision was made entirely by their university or department. Around 45 per cent cited at least two major influences on which language(s) were used, while a small proportion cited students as the major determining factor. These variations suggest a consistent EMI policy for the state university sector in Kurdistan Region of Iraq has not been established.
4. In terms of how often lecturers spoke English, the most common answer (27.2 per cent) was 'about half the time'. Just under 30 per cent said they spoke English all or almost all the time, while 27.4 per cent said they used English about 25 per cent of the time or occasionally. In the majority of cases, then, EMI takes places through a combination of English plus Kurdish and/or Arabic and in many cases English may be used less frequently than these other languages. Such findings again reflect existing research on what happens in practice when EMI policy (i.e. that teaching be entirely in English) is not feasible (e.g. Botha, 2013; Hu et al., 2014).

5. During lectures, English was reportedly used by lecturers more frequently for the presentation of written material (slides, writing on board, handouts and reading texts) than for oral communication, although almost 74 per cent of respondents said they did use English to explain lecture content.
6. Very high proportions of respondents said that examination questions are set in English and that students must write their answers in English too. Concerns about this policy were raised by lecturers who felt that students do not understand the questions or cannot express themselves in English even when they do (see Belhiah & Elhami, 2015 for similar concerns in the UAE). Questions therefore arise about the validity of assessment in EMI contexts in Kurdistan Region of Iraq state universities.
7. Lecturers' views about whether their assessment of students is influenced by their English also varied; 57 per cent said they did not take English into account but 18.5 per cent disagreed with this position and 24.5 per cent did not express an opinion either way. These findings highlight further the inconsistencies that currently characterise EMI in HE in Kurdistan Region of Iraq.
8. Respondents expressed quite strongly the belief that students' levels of English were inadequate for the purposes of academic study in English. Almost 75 per cent of lecturers believe their students are at beginner or elementary levels, while 72 per cent believe they should be at intermediate or higher intermediate to cope with EMI. This confirms the view widely reported in the literature that limited student proficiency in English is a major barrier to EMI (e.g. Hamid et al., 2013; Hu et al., 2014).
9. Not all lecturers agree with the EMI policy in their department or university. However, a large majority of them believe that EMI enhances their own English and that of their students (this too resonates with research findings reported earlier – e.g. Belhiah & Elhami, 2015).
10. Opinions were divided on whether lecturers should help students improve their English; just under 50 per cent disagreed that providing such support was not part of lecturers' role, but over 29 per cent agreed and just over 21 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed. Uncertainties would thus seem to exist among lecturers, then, about the scope of their role in EMI (an issue also highlighted by Ali, 2013)
11. Almost 46 per cent of respondents, from all 13 universities, and irrespective of how highly they rated their own spoken English, said EMI created challenges for them. Several challenges were identified, though the single most dominant one was students' level of English, which was widely seen to be too low for EMI.
12. Despite being confident in their ability to teach EMI courses, and although only 15.6 per cent of respondents were not satisfied with their current level of English, the vast majority of the lecturers said they wanted to improve their spoken and written English.

# 6- RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was based on evidence collected from 11.7 per cent of the estimated total number of lecturers who reportedly use EMI in 13 state universities in Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

This response rate needs to be taken into account when the findings are interpreted. With self-report studies of this kind it is also important to treat respondents' assessments of their knowledge and behaviour conservatively.

For example, without observational research it is difficult to provide an accurate picture of how EMI unfolds in the context under study here. And while this report has highlighted clear difficulties that EMI raises in higher education Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the reality in many contexts may be even more challenging that the evidence presented here suggests.

At the same time, over half the respondents said that EMI did not raise any challenges for them, which suggests that examples of good practice may be available for closer study. With these points in mind, I now draw on the key findings to make the following recommendations. While these refer specifically to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq context studied here, they will be relevant to comparable contexts where EMI is currently being promoted or where there is a desire to do so:

1. Based the estimates available, over 40 per cent of the academic staff in 13 state universities in Kurdistan Region of Iraq are involved in some form of EMI. It is clearly, then, a significant feature of higher education in the country and merits empirical attention so that decisions for policy and practice can be made in an informed manner. At present, EMI is being driven by an internationalisation agenda, but evidence from this report suggests that in many contexts across every university the conditions required for EMI to work productively are not yet in place. Serious questions therefore arise about the benefits for students in these contexts of the current approach to EMI and further research is needed to (a) describe what actually happens in EMI classrooms (b) elicit in more detail lecturers' experience of and opinions about EMI and (c) examine students 'perspectives on and experience of EMI. As noted above, successful examples of EMI in Kurdistan Region of Iraq may exist - identifying these and producing case studies which can inform policy and practice more widely is also desirable.
2. Decision-making about the language(s) of instruction in higher education in Kurdistan Region of Iraq does not seem to follow a consistent pattern, not just across but also within universities. In some cases it would seem that EMI is university policy, in others departmental policy and there are also cases where the decision seems to lie with individual lecturers. Institutions and departments need to develop better informed and more consistently applied policies on EMI. Mechanisms also need to be created to monitor the implementation of these policies, to evaluate them systematically and periodically review them.

**3.** A growing body of international literature on EMI now exists. To better enable universities and MHESR to make informed policy decisions, it would also be desirable that they engage with this literature as it can support the development of more critical perspectives on why EMI might be desirable and on the conditions that are needed to make it work. Costa & Coleman (2012: 5), for example, highlight these prerequisites (writing with particular attention to EMI in European HE): funding, preimplementation analysis, full support from the university board, training for teaching staff, English language training and academic writing support for students, an efficient International office, international exchanges for both students and academics, identification of appropriate content, communication and collaboration and institutionalising the effort".

**4.** The single most challenging element of EMI highlighted in this study is the significant gap that is seen to exist between the proficiency in English students require and their actual ability in English, which is typically felt to be beginner or elementary (A1 to A2 on the CEFR). A previous survey of teachers of English in Kurdistan universities (Borg, 2015b) highlighted similar concerns about the levels of English first year undergraduates have. If students cannot understand lectures and other study material delivered in English, the goals of EMI are undermined. The fact that in most EMI contexts in Kurdistan HE examinations are also administered in English exacerbates the situation and raises serious questions about the validity of the assessment. The key recommendation here is that first year undergraduate students' levels of English need to be established using a valid test; it is not possible to make informed decisions about EMI without such information.

If the assessment confirms the general impression that students' levels of English are very low, then it would be necessary for universities to rethink current policies on EMI. Universities may also need to consider alternative models of English language support rather than the current non-departmental English model which in many cases only provides 60 hours of English and only in the first year of study. For example, a preparatory year of intensive English which prepares students for EMI might be a more productive option for developing both students' English and their ability to learn academic content through English.

5. This report also suggests that lecturers require support to improve their own English. While student factors had a powerful impact on the extent that English is the main language used in EMI contexts (and in many it was not), lecturers also acknowledged limitations in their own proficiency in English. Even those who were satisfied with their English and confident in their ability to teach in English expressed a desire to improve their English further. Support, therefore, is required to enhance lecturers' proficiency in their spoken English, and English departments and Language Centres should be encouraged to develop appropriate courses, possibly in partnership with external collaborators who might provide initial support for the design and delivery of such courses.

   For universities and departments committed to EMI, there would also be value in assessing lecturers' English so that support can be provided in a manner proportional to their needs (work at Copenhagen University's Centre for Internationalisation and Parallel Language Use illustrates ways in which lecturers can received tailored support for EMI – see Westbrook & B. Henriksen, 2011)

6. Specific support in doing EMI is also needed for lecturers so that they can develop effective strategies for teaching in English – a course or workshops that deal with practical issues such as using English to provide an overview of lectures, explain concepts (including through slides), give instructions, ask and answer questions, engage students, check understanding, give feedback, and write examination questions. Lecturers can also receive support in making informed decisions about how Kurdish and/or Arabic can be productively used. In keeping with contemporary approaches to professional development for educators (Borg, 2015a; Zepeda, 2015), such support would ideally be distributed over time (rather than short and intensive), be grounded very clearly in EMI classroom practices, provide space for lecturers to reflect on the ire EMI-related practices and beliefs, and foster a culture of collaboration which would outlast the formal training intervention.

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# APPENDIX

## ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Thank you for assisting us with this survey, which is being conducted for the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research by the British Council. The questions below are for staff **who use English to teach academic subjects**.

Please follow the instructions on screen. It should take no more than 15 minutes to answer these questions and we would appreciate your responses by **5 March 2015**. There is no need to write your name and your answers will be treated confidentially.

Thank you for your time.

Professor Simon Borg
**s.borg@education.leeds.ac.uk**
**http://simon-borg.co.uk/**

## SECTION 1: ABOUT YOU

Name of your university

The name of the 'unit' you work in (e.g. department, centre, school)

Your nationality

Your gender Male Female Your age Under 30 30-39 40-49 50-59 Over 59

Your academic position Assistant Instructor Instructor Assistant Professor Professor Other

Highest academic qualification (Tick ONE) Certificate Diploma Bachelor's Master's PhD/EdD Other

Did you obtain any of your academic qualifications in an English-speaking country? Yes No

If YES, say which country

Number of years' experience teaching undergraduates in Kurdistan 1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 20+

How would you describe your own level of spoken English? Tick ONE.
Beginner Elementary Intermediate Higher Intermediate Advanced

When you teach academic courses to undergraduates, do you teach in English?
Yes, always Yes, sometimes No, never

**If 'NEVER' STOP HERE**

## SECTION 2: YOUR COURSES

Which student groups do you teach? (Tick all that apply) 1st year ☐ 2nd year ☐ 3rd year ☐ 4th year ☐ Other ☐

You said that you speak English when you teach academic courses. Overall, how often do you speak English during your lectures? (Tick ONE) Occasionally ☐ About 25% of the time ☐ About half the time ☐
About 75% of the time ☐ Almost all the time ☐ All the time ☐

You said that you speak some English during lectures but not all the time. Which other languages do you use for teaching? (Tick all) Kurdish ☐ Arabic ☐ Other (please specify) ☐

Who decides which language(s) you use when you teach? Tick Yes or No for each statement below.

a. My university requires me to teach in English Y ☐ / N ☐ b. My department requires me to teach in English Y ☐ / N ☐
c. I am free to decide which language(s) to teach in Y ☐ / N ☐ d. The decision is (also) made by (please specify) Y ☐ / N ☐

Thinking about the courses you teach most often, say how often you do each activity below in your lectures with undergraduate students.

| **In my courses with undergraduates** | In every lesson | In most lessons | In about half my lessons | In a minority of lessons | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. I explain information in English | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b. I present PowerPoint slides in English | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| c. I ask students questions in English | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| d. I write on the board in English | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| e. I give students handouts in English | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| f. I ask students to watch videos in English | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| g. I ask students to speak English when they answer questions | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| h. I give students reading texts in English | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

When your students do the examination for your course, are the exam questions in English?
Yes, all questions ☐ Yes, some questions ☐ No ☐

When your students do the examination for your course, do they have to write their answers in English?
Yes, all questions ☐ Yes, some questions ☐ No ☐

Not every student has the same level of English, but if you think about the majority of your students, what level of English do they typically have? I don't know ☐ Beginner ☐ Elementary ☐
Intermediate ☐ Higher intermediate ☐ Advanced ☐

What level of English do you think students should have to understand academic courses in English?
I don't know ☐ Beginner ☐ Elementary ☐ Intermediate ☐ Higher intermediate ☐ Advanced ☐

## SECTION 3: TEACHING IN ENGLISH AT UNIVERSITY

Based on your experience, give your opinion on each of the following statements.

a. I am confident in my ability to teach in English

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

b. It is easier to explain academic ideas in English than in Kurdish or Arabic

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

c. It is important for all students to graduate with a good level of English.

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

d. It is not my job to help students improve their English

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

e. Lecturers must have a high level of spoken English to teach their courses in English.

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

f. My students find it difficult to understand lectures in English

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

g. Students' English improves when they attend courses taught in English.

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

h. Teaching in English helps me improve my own English.

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

i. When I assess students I do not give marks for the quality of their English.

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

Do you face any challenges in teaching your academic courses in English? Yes ☐ No ☐

If YES, please describe the main challenge(s) you face.

## SECTION 4: YOUR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Tick ONE box for each of the items below to give your opinion

**a.** I would like to improve my own spoken English.

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

**b.** I would like to improve my own written English.

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

**c.** The university provides language courses to help me improve my English.

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

**d.** I am willing to pay for a course to help me improve my English.

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

**e.** I am satisfied with my current level of English.

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

**f.** It is important for me to publish academic articles in English

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

**g.** It is important for me to give academic conference presentations in English

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

**h.** I would like to know more about how my colleagues use English in their lectures.

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq is seeking to reform the teaching and use of English in state universities. This survey of English medium instruction (EMI) was carried out to support this reform but it also makes a contribution to the international literature on EMI in higher education. It draws on responses from 416 academics who teach undergraduate courses in English at 13 universities.

**Simon Borg** has been involved in ELT for over 25 years working as a teacher, teacher educator, lecturer, examiner, researcher and consultant in a range of international contexts. After 15 years at the University of Leeds, he now works full-time as an ELT consultant and specialises in teacher education and development, the monitoring and evaluation of educational programmes and projects, and research methods training. He is recognised internationally as a leading scholar in the study of language teachers and has published extensively. He is currently Visiting Professor of TESOL at the University of Leeds and Adjunct Professor of English at Bergen University College.

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