CHAPTER 14

English Medium Instruction as a Vehicle for Language Teaching or a Product for Marketing? The Case of Turkey

Rifat Kamasak and Mustafa Ozbilgin

1 Introduction

The distinction between economic, social, and cultural goods, and the boundary conditions between them has been the subject of much debate. English medium instruction (EMI) is framed variably as a means of cultural learning, or as a relic of the British colonial project, a social good which is offered to public language learning or a marketing tool for selling education to an international audience (Léglise & Migge, 2007; Pennycook, 1998; Pihama, 2019). In this chapter, we consider EMI from a lens which is less discussed in education literature: as

R. Kamasak (✉)
Yeditepe University, Istanbul, Turkey
e-mail: rifat.kamasak@yeditepe.edu.tr

M. Ozbilgin
Brunel University, London, UK
e-mail: mustafa.ozbilgin@brunel.ac.uk

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a product to market schools, commercialisation, and marketisation of education. Polanyi (1944/2001) warned us over 75 years ago that the liberal demands for blurring of boundaries between social, economic, and cultural goods, subordinate social and cultural systems to economic systems and rationales. When a social good is commercialised and marketed with economic motives, the way it is produced, engagement, and the relationship of the actors which produce and consume the social good transforms are dominated by economic rationales (Polanyi, 2001; Riep, 2019). EMI as a social and cultural good is governed by rationales of education, learning, skilling of public, improving internationalisation, communication between people, and capturing globalisation (Ball & Junemann, 2012; Hogan et al., 2015). Yet when EMI is considered as an economic good, other motives such as profitability, education as a commodity, affordability, and education as an economic privilege could come to the fore, underlining the social and economic motives for EMI (Apple, 2001; Lynch, 2016). In this chapter, we question universal treatment of EMI without regard for its different uses across different settings, by exploring and illustrating the complexities of how EMI is used variably by educational institutions for marketing their higher education (HE) programmes.

There has been a growing trend towards teaching academic subjects (business, psychology, mathematics, and science, for example) in English at the university level in many countries where English is not the native language (Dearden, 2014; Fenton-Smith et al., 2018; Jiang, Zhang, & May, 2019; Macaro, Tian, & Chu, 2018). Research on EMI (Macaro, Akincioglu, & Han, 2020; Wachter & Maiworm, 2014) shows that the number of EMI programmes in higher education has risen dramatically across non-English-speaking countries. Wachter and Maiworm (2014) find that the number of EMI programmes at bachelor and master levels in Europe has increased from 800 to 8000 since the early 2000s. The Middle East, Latin America, and Asia have seen similar trends. The study by Tsou and Kao (2017) reported a 50% increase in EMI programmes offered in Taiwan over the period from 2009 to 2014, leading to 24,077 EMI programmes.

As the EMI has become widespread across many countries, except for some remarkable efforts to protect education in national languages, the motives for having EMI have become more varied. The main reasons which are often cited for using EMI in HE include the need for universities to become more international institutions in parallel with the

emergent role of English as the lingua franca (Rose & Galloway, 2019; Van Parijs, 2011), despite some cautionary notes that English as a lingua franca remains a fragmented, layered, and complicated issue (Mufwene, 2010). At a more critical level, Kamasak et al. (2020) identify that EMI serves to advance the colonisation of mind by transposing English language constructs and cultural artefacts to otherwise culturally and sociallyremote geographies.

There are other more economy- and policy-related reasons for EMI, such as cultivating students with a high calibre of academic and communication skills in English, particularly to improve prospects of job mobility and employability (Bozdoğan & Karlıdağ, 2013; Earls, 2016). As such, educational institutions in countries with national languages which are less appealing for international students use EMI as a tool for marketing. EMI might help them increase the global visibility of the country's and the specific institution's educational system, cutting national costs in HE investment, promoting state universities to compete with private universities, and encouraging academics to produce research publications in the English language (Knight, 2013; Macaro et al., 2018). The social and policy motives for EMI are often complicated and conflicted by national drives for cultural and social protectionism, aided by drives for international competition and globalisation. Pressures for international completion often temper nationalist and protectionist tendencies which exist in non-English educational settings (Bağlama, 2019).

In addition to these reasons, some scholars (Cho, 2012; Ellili-Cherif & Alkhateeb, 2015; Hamid, Jahan, & Islam, 2013) suggest that EMI is offered by institutions in order to market their programmes, and attract high-quality scholars and national and foreign students and their families who perceive HE in English language as more prestigious. Indeed, most of the international educational accreditation quality-ranking standards are in English language. These programmes and standards which they espouse render EMI a crucial element of international recognition and student recruitment from wider pools of talent.

Despite the dramatic increase of EMI programmes globally, previous studies (Jiang et al., 2019; Probyn, 2001; Sampson, 2012; Sultana, 2014, for example) conducted in different EMI contexts have shown various problems in relation to a number of factors such as student challenges, teacher and student beliefs of EMI effectiveness, and poor learning environments which have implications for EMI success. There is also some resistance in countries where English is not an official or local language to

have EMI. Although EMI aims to contribute to content knowledge and linguistic knowledge of students, at the end there is a danger that neither can be achieved if EMI does not deliver appropriately embedded content which could be used in the local setting (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2020). In particular, there is the danger of the 'colonisation of the mind', to borrow a phrase from Fanon (1967, 1986) in non-English language settings. Countries like Brazil, Spain, and Turkey which join in the expanding circle of Kachru's (1985) model of World Englishes experience a rapid and uncontrolled increase of EMI in their HE sectors (Aslan, 2017; Di Paolo & Tansel, 2015). Against the questionable benefits of EMI, a lot of universities across the world ambitiously adopt EMI programmes to market their degree programmes. Thus, this chapter addresses the problems of the universal treatment of EMI, by exploring and illustrating the complexities of how EMI is used variably by educational institutions in different countries (with a particular focus on Turkey) for marketing their HE programmes.

2 English Medium Instruction in Higher Education

English Medium Instruction 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 of the majority of the population is not English" (Macaro et al., 2018, p. 37). Although a "widely purported benefit of EMI is that it kills two birds with one stone, in other words, students simultaneously acquire both English and content knowledge" (Rose et al., 2019, p. 2), the primary aim of EMI is to teach academic content rather than to teach language itself (Dearden, 2014; Smit & Dafouz-Milne, 2012). There is still an ongoing debate in the EMI literature (Dearden, 2014; Evans, 2002; Hu et al., 2013; Lyster & Ballinger, 2011; Royce, 1994, for example) in determining whether the aim and focus of EMI ought to be to promote language proficiency, content learning, or both. According to Jiménez-Muñoz (2014), "the controversy over the usefulness of EMI to promote excellence in both content and language learning" (p. 30) creates a major problem for researchers to offer a common definition on EMI.

In a recent systematic review, Macaro et al. (2018) find that "the labels given to the phenomenon of EMI and their definition are inconsistent and problematic" (p. 46). The distinctions in understanding and defining

EMI emerge from the blurring roles attributed to EMI and the variety of provision of EMI programmes in different higher educational contexts (Dearden, 2014; Fenton-Smith et al., 2018). These differences led to a complexity of the definition of EMI. Consequently, linguistic scholars have paid considerable attention to provide an EMI definition which can satisfy the expectations of EMI stakeholders (Jiménez-Muñoz, 2014; Macaro, 2018). Yet the demands for consistency in definitions might underplay the complexity of EMI in terms of its use, delivery, content, and utility across different institutional and national HE systems.

Two research streams focus on the effectiveness of EMI (Dearden, 2014; Dearden & Macaro, 2016; Macaro et al., 2018). While one research stream (Ali, 2013; Beacco & Byram, 2003; Coleman, 2006; Smit & Dafouz-Milne, 2012, for example) considers EMI as a useful tool for enhancing both students' English proficiency and content comprehension, the other stream (Chapple, 2015; Hynninen, 2012; Hu et al., 2013, for example) suggests that the achievement of this dual aim through EMI is dubious. Some researchers (Ibrahim, 2001; Kim, 2011, for example) attribute the dual achievement potential of EMI to Krashen's (1982) 'Input Hypothesis' such that "EMI students are more exposed to English (comprehensible input), and thus, have a greater chance to use and [improve] it (comprehensible output)" (Williams, 2015, p. 9). Yet this might not always be the case. It is difficult to make generalisations about the overall utility of EMI, because there are many factors which cause variations in reception and utility of EMI in any specific setting, such as the cultural, historical, political, geographical, and social proximity and distance of the English-speaking countries to the specific setting where EMI is practised.

Empirical research which investigated the relationship between EMI and language proficiency and academic success yielded mixed results. In an early study by Johnson and Swain (1997), native English students learning French in academic content classes where French was used as the medium of instruction achieved both advanced language skills and satisfactory academic performance. According to Brinton et al. (2003), EMI provides learners with an ideal learning situation where the negotiation of content knowledge in English occurs and enables students to improve their linguistic skills while learning academic content. Similarly, Rose et al. (2019) found in the Japanese HE context that students saw a number of perceived benefits of EMI, such as maintaining the quality of content learning and improving English language knowledge simultaneously,

thereby indicating the successful dual learning outcome. Considering the ties which exist between the English and French language and cultural worlds, it is not surprising to find such multiple advantages of EMI.

Despite the positive findings in relation to the dual learning achievements of EMI, the study by Lei and Hu (2014) which was conducted in a Chinese university revealed that EMI students were dissatisfied with both the quality and richness of the academic content which was taught and the linguistic benefits which they gained through EMI. These results corroborate the findings of several studies (Hynninen, 2012; Kamasak et al., 2020; Kung, 2013; Lorenzo, 2007; Pecorari, 2020; Yang, 2015, for example) which present inefficiencies and failures of the way of achieving the dual-focused educational aims of EMI. For example, Yang's (2015) study which was conducted on a sample of 29 students who study in an international tourism degree programme at a vocational school in Taiwan found that while students achieved some improvements in their receptive and productive language skills through their EMI, they did not show the same performance in their content comprehension and knowledge. Other similar studies (Chapple, 2015; Hellekjær, 2010, for example) also emphasised the negative student perceptions about "the shallowness of the academic content" (Aizawa, 2017, p. 12) taught in EMI and the absence of some vital elements of language teaching (explicit grammar teaching and interactive conversations, for example) in EMI implementations which were previously found to contribute to second language learning (Ellis, 2006; Ur, 2011). Considering the limited nature of cultural, social, and historical ties between China and the English-speaking world, in contrast to English–French relations, it is possible to understand why EMI was not unproblematic in delivery of content and language learning in China.

Thus, two different streams of linguistics research offer mixed findings about the impact of EMI on learning of language and content simultaneously. We need to attend to the reasons for these results more closely. Given the varying expectations of EMI stakeholders in different educational contexts, the position of "EMI in HE and its practice appear to be fluid" (Macaro et al., 2018, p. 46). Research (Çankaya, 2017; Doiz et al., 2011; Napoli & Sourisseau, 2013, for example) exploring the impact of EMI on linguistic and content knowledge presumes that students ought to have at least a certain level of language proficiency before entering EMI classes. How much English equates to a sufficient level of proficiency in English is also unclear (Hamid et al., 2013; Jenkins, 2014; Kamasak,

Ozbilgin, & Esmen, 2020; Kim & Shin, 2014). However, this requirement provides some clues about the focal concern of EMI. If a sufficient level of English is considered as a pre-condition for a student to study in EMI, then the primary aim of EMI ought not to be teaching English with an excessive cost to academic content learning (Jiménez-Castellanos et al., 2014; Kirkpatrick, 2011). Given the cost-benefit concerns of HE institutions and governments (Macaro et al., 2018), learners also ought to gain linguistic benefits while they study academic content in English.

3 EMI in Turkish Higher Education

Turkey is an interesting setting to study EMI, because its geographic proximity to Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Russia, and Caucasian countries has often complicated its cultural and historical relationships with the English-speaking world. The countries where English language was learned and taught were examined by the 'Three Concentric Circles Model' of Kachru (1986) based on the sociolinguistic profile of English in these countries (See Fig. 1). According to Kachru (1986), the countries where English language is used fall into three categories: (1) the

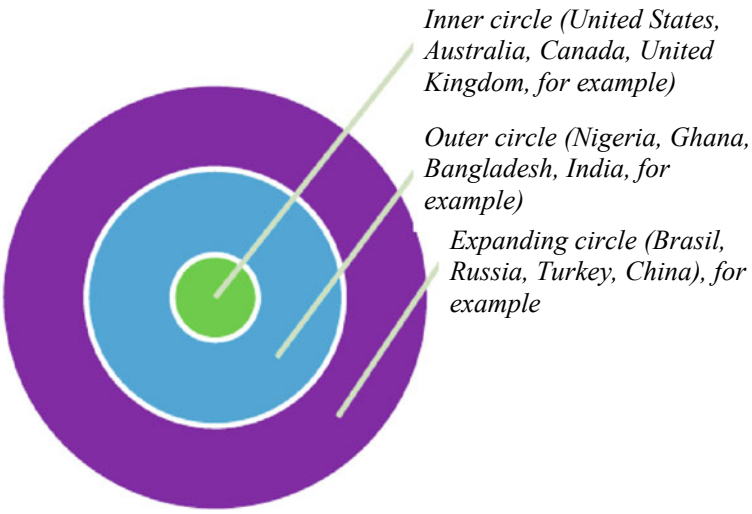

Fig. 1 The three concentric circles of English (*Source* Kachru [1986])

inner circle countries where English is the mother tongue (United States, United Kingdom, and Canada, for example), (2) the outer circle countries where English is not the mother tongue but used as an additional institutionalised and official language (Ghana, India, Malaysia, and Pakistan, for example), and (3) the expanding circle countries where English is used as a foreign language (Brazil, Russia, Turkey, and China, for example).

The inner circle countries represent "the traditional cultural and linguistic bases of English" (Xiaoqiong & Xianxing, 2011, p. 221). The sociolinguistic dynamics which shape the role and impact of English in the outer circle countries which have a colonial history are well known (De Los Reyes, 2019; Mpofu & Salawu, 2019). The sociolinguistic realities which determine the selection of English language for education in the expanding circle countries are relatively underexplored.

In accordance with Turkey's position in Kachru's (1986) model as an expanding circle country "where English is taught as a foreign language for reasons of international diplomacy, law and commerce, which do not necessarily have a history of colonisation" (Aslan, 2017, p. 605), English is considered as a second language if not as an official language (Doğancay-Aktuna, 2005; İnceçay, 2012) in Turkey. Yet the overall English language proficiency remains low, except for centres of tourism and commerce in the country.

Indeed, Turkey has a long history of English medium instruction (EMI) in the higher education system which can be traced back to the founding of Robert College (now Boğaziçi University) in 1863 (British Council & TEPAV, 2015). Following Boğaziçi University, EMI was used by Middle East Technical University (METU) in 1956 and Turkey's first private university, Bilkent University in 1984. While the Ottoman Era prioritised French language instruction over English language instruction, the situation has drastically changed in the Republic of Turkey in favour of English as the preferred language for foreign language instruction. In more recent years, EMI has expanded in the country, with instruction in other languages also gaining currency and appeal.

Starting from the mid-1990s, in line with the growing importance of English as the world's lingua franca which refers to "any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice [in science, technology, and business], and often the only option" (Seidlhofer, 2011, p. 7), the number of universities offering EMI programmes has started to increase in Turkey (Çankaya, 2017; Kırkgöz, 2014). While 53 out of the 56 universities were

offering courses in Turkish in 1995, there were 77 universities offering EMI courses in 2006 (Kırkgöz, 2009a) in Turkey.

The country has seen a rapid growth in the number of universities which offer EMI programmes, particularly in the last 10 years. The number of undergraduate degrees which are taught fully in English by 206 public and private universities rose almost 600% between 2010 and 2019, from 574 to 3463 (ÖSYM, 2019). In addition to the global role of English, this huge increase might be attributed to other economic and political factors, such as Turkey's nomination to become a full member of the EU after 1996 (Aslan, 2017), better career opportunities for new graduates with EMI degrees in Turkey (Çokgezen, 2014; Toköz, 2014), adaptation to the Bologna Process, and benefits from the Erasmus and other exchange mobility programmes (Füruzan, 2012; Yağcı, 2010) across Europe and the world. The culmination of these factors, in addition to the drive of Turkish universities to attract talent from wider pools of students and staff, has engendered an explosion of EMI.

Moreover, Turkey's important advantages in terms of its geographical, cultural, and linguistic proximities to Central Asian, European, and Middle Eastern countries, moderate living costs, inexpensive university tuition fees, and scholarship opportunities, make the country a popular destination for international students, particularly from Turkic republics, Africa, the Middle East, and other regions' middle or low level income countries (Çetin, et al., 2017; Özoğlu, Gür, & Coşkun, 2012). Additionally, the relatively easier procedures for issuing visas for students from low-income countries make the country an attractive setting for studying in EMI. Aslan (2017) asserts that "rising global uncertainty about the USA's willingness to admit students from several Muslim-majority countries could pose an opportunity for international enrolment growth in Turkey" (p. 612). As a consequence, Turkey welcomes a high number of international students from different parts of the world. According to Anatolian News Agency (2017) which is the official news agency of Turkey, the number of international students in Turkish universities reached 796,000 in 2017. All these factors coupled with the importance of English as a lingua franca, have influenced the foreign language policy in HE in Turkey, resulting in a rapid increase in the number EMI programmes offered by Turkish universities (Aslan, 2017; Kırkgöz, 2014).

It is not all rosy for local and international students to enter EMI programmes in Turkey. The entrance to an undergraduate programme

(no matter whether or not the programme is conducted through EMI) is not unconditional in Turkey. In fact, there is a competitive examination system. All students must take a two-phased exam which is conducted by the Student Selection and Replacement Centre of Turkey (ÖSYM) in their final year of high school. Each student must achieve a test score in accordance with the requirement of his/her preferred undergraduate programme. However, the entrance to university does not guarantee that the student can begin his/her study in the faculty. If the student's undergraduate programme is conducted through EMI, then the student must either pass an English proficiency exam which is conducted by the university itself, or submit a satisfactory score of an international English proficiency test such as TOEFL, CPE, or IELTS. Otherwise, the student must attend the institution's one-year long intensive English preparatory (prep) programme to raise his/her proficiency level. The student must also be successful in the English preparation programme to be able to proceed to the faculty. Thus, the English proficiency itself is a significant hurdle for access to EMI programmes in Turkey.

The quality and effectiveness of the English prep programmes in Turkish universities has been a research topic for linguists (Bayram & Canaran, 2019; Çelik-Yazıcı & Kahyalar, 2018; Gerede, 2005; Karataş & Fer, 2009; O'Regan, 2017; Öner & Mede, 2015; Örs, 2006, for example). The findings of studies offer controversial results. Although some studies (Gerede, 2005; Öner & Mede, 2015; Örs, 2006, for example) provide evidence that the academic needs of EMI students were met by the prep programmes, others (Akyel & Özek, 2010; İnal & Aksoy, 2014; Karataş & Fer, 2009; Kırkgöz, 2009b, for example) report contrary findings. For example, Akyel and Özek (2010) concluded that "teaching materials were designed to teach through testing" (p. 975). While Coşkun (2013) claimed that speaking skills were not taken into account in the curriculum, and Örs (2006) noted technical vocabulary as the weakest link in the prep programmes. Nevertheless, nearly all studies suggest that the design of the prep programmes and their curricula must be improved to better support students' academic needs and success in their EMI courses. These suggestions are clear indicators of the necessity of further studies to investigate the factors which influence students' academic performance in EMI classes. EMI presents a drastic learning opportunity for many Turkish students, exposing them to ideas, concepts, and ways of thinking which are highly dissimilar to their Turkish language instruction.

Consequently, against Turkey's high potential to attract international students and ambitious efforts to promote EMI in its HE system, academic content learning through EMI does not seem to be achieved successfully (British Council & TEPAV, 2015; Macaro et al., 2016).

Turkey's commercial turn in terms of attracting international students through the use of EMI offers it a unique position to capture talented students from low-income countries in particular and access to accreditation and educational links with HE systems or advanced economies. As Polanyi (1944) warns, commercialisation might corrode the social character of EMI, and undermine the utility of local education in generating embedded knowledge and competencies for learners. Scullion, Collings, and Caligiuri (2010) show which marketisation and commercialisation of education has taken root, although there are courses of action which could be taken to curb its negative consequences. As Groutsis et al. (2019) highlight, talent drain could occur as one country becomes peripheral in terms of its democratic institutions and human rights record. Thus, the risk remains that EMI educates swaths of Turkish and international students who are fit for social and cultural settings outside Turkey. As Polanyi Levitt (2013) notes, financialisation of a social system could deteriorate the social utility of that very system. There is a real danger in Turkey for such financialisation. The gold rush to EMI appears to be happening in an unplanned fashion without regard for local needs for talent. Thus it is likely to graduate cohorts of students whose education will not equip them for local markets. As a result, financialisation of the EMI might generate unintended consequences, such as talent drain out of Turkey as the EMI prepares students for employment in the English-speaking world.

4 Conclusion

We intended to provoke a debate around the use of EMI as a social good or as a marketing tool. Our reflection on the extant literature reveals that the multiplicity of motives for EMI instruction ought not to be taken at face value. Moving from social good motives such as learning another language or understanding educational content for EMI, to economic motives such as recruiting more students and generating income, could have unintended consequences such as providing ill-considered content or content which is unfit for the local setting. This economic and financial turn might undermine the original social utility of EMI.

Research (Bozdoğan & Karlıdağ, 2013; Macaro et al., 2018) found that Turkish students identified the benefits of EMI through pragmatic or extrinsic reasons, such as increasing communication skills, keeping up with global developments, obtaining better employment prospects, and gaining social prestige. Higher education institutions, therefore, might align their strategy with the expectations of students from EMI programmes, and use EMI as a product at all its costs, just to market higher education. Furthermore, EMI programme content ought to capture the local needs for talent and competencies to prevent brain drain and to offer a healthy supply of talented people to meet the demands of the local cultural, social, and economic life. Specifically, students in the Turkish EMI context must be much better prepared for EMI courses. Given preparatory schools' critical role in implementing EMI effectively, the content of language curricula used in these schools ought to be revised in accordance with students' needs. Which English ought to be taught in prep schools to prepare students for EMI classes is a question to be answered, and it ought to address vocabulary and specialised lexis needs of students. One-size-fits-all types of prep programmes might not address content-specific requirements of EMI degrees, and the cross disciplinary results of this study indicate that students in the social sciences might benefit from additional language support to lessen the significantly greater challenges which they face.

The ambitious desire for universities to increase revenue from national and foreign students ought not to give occasion to lowering their EMI standards. The fact is that students who passed university-specific language proficiency exams with loose 'good level' scores experience greater challenges. The quality and standards of language proficiency assessment tests, therefore, also ought to be reviewed. Strict adherence to internationally accepted frameworks such as The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) might be helpful in this regard. Moreover, lecturers ought to help students to use productive skills more in EMI classes.

Finally, educators and policy-makers often focus solely on the academic side of EMI. Yet, the perceived goal of EMI is much wider in scope. EMI might play other social roles such as enhancing international student mobility, cross cultural exchange, and human capital development. These benefits, therefore, also ought to be considered by stakeholders in HE when assessing the overall effectiveness of EMI, and using EMI to attract students for their programmes.

Such a turn to social good is not likely to happen on its own. As Jonsen et al. (2013) identify, it is important for regulators and stakeholders in HE to come into play, in order to secure optimum utility of education as a social good, unhinged by over-financialisation or domination of market logics.

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