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CHAPTER 10: EM In Latin America

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Abstract
This study explores the emerging implementation of EMI in Latin America from the perspectives of teachers and students. Although Latin American EMI is recent and limited, there is evidence of a growing interest in implementing this approach in these countries. Through open-ended questionnaires, participants report on their experiences in EMI courses, their opportunities and challenges, and how they address potential difficulties. While both groups regard EMI as an approach that boosts opportunities for mobility and collaboration, its implementation may be negatively affected by students' low English proficiency. The authors also conclude that current implementations of EMI can be confused with CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) and that further support for teacher education is needed.

1. Introduction

Latin America, for the purpose of this study, is understood as the 20 countries[1] in the Americas where people speak predominantly a romance language. The most spoken language is Spanish followed by Portuguese and French. Although having been colonised by Spain and Portugal, and therefore, mostly having a baseline culture, there is great diversity among the countries due to varied geographical, climatological, political, and educational contexts. Despite this rich linguistic diversity, globalisation has motivated the adoption of English as the primary mandatory foreign language taught at schools in many of these countries as well as the creation of nation-wide plans to promote the learning of this language in the region (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017). Similarly, some higher education institutions throughout Latin America have started to respond to the internationalisation of higher education by implementing courses using English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI).

EMI has been defined as

> the use of 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 EMI is expected to contribute to "reducing language exchange isolation in the region" (Reus, 2020, p.1), EMI in Latin America is still scarce (Macaro et al., 2018). While

[1] Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama.

limited in number, EMI research has had a recent growth in Latin America. Most research in this field has been published in the last five years, showing an emergent interest in adopting and implementing EMI, particularly at higher education level. The motivations behind the adoption of EMI tend to be associated with attracting international students and making university courses more globally-oriented (Martínez, 2016). Despite the potential benefits of EMI, its uptake has been considerably smaller across Latin American countries in comparison to European and Asian contexts.

Publications that examine the impact of the EMI phenomenon across Latin American contexts and that evaluate its effectiveness are currently nonexistent to our knowledge. Therefore, this study intends to explore how teachers and students already engaging in EMI education experience this method of instruction and seeks to understand why the spread of EMI has not been as successful in Latin America as in other non-English speaking contexts.

2. EMI in Latin America

Macaro et al. (2018) indicate that EMI's presence in Latin America has mainly been anecdotal rather than systematic. In an interview with Sahan (2021), Macaro suggests that EMI has not been widely adopted in Latin America due to a language factor, since Spanish is the predominant language in the continent, with only a few exceptions. In this section, we present an overview of the context focusing on Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico.

2.1. Argentina

There is limited research on EMI in the Argentinean context. To our knowledge, the only published research was done by Banegas & Manzur Busleimán (2021), who report on a self-study on developing EMI materials in an online initial teacher education programme. As programme tutors, they analysed their own engagement designing EMI materials, and their student teachers' experiences with them. The authors conclude that EMI materials should include activities for language development in addition to the subject content, with a hint to Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). EMI tutors, similarly, should receive guidance to support language learning in a systematic manner, and materials, and tutors' practices need to respond to the "content, context, and learners' trajectories and needs" (Banegas & Manzur Busleimán, 2021, p.123).

2.2. Brazil

In recent years, EMI has grown quickly in Brazil, where Portuguese is the dominant language. According to the British Council (2018), between 2016 and 2018the offer of EMI courses increased from 671 to over 1,000 in an attempt to internationalise Brazilian education and

become a key player in global knowledge mobilisation.This survey also evidences an increasing demand on EMI for mobility and creation of global networks.

Martinez (2016) offers a review of the current state of affairs of Brazilian EMI. EMI in Brazil has grown significantly, particularly as of 2014, and it has now been adopted at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. This increase may be influenced by an interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects and students' international mobility, particularly motivated by the *Science Without Borders* programme which allows STEM students to study in top universities worldwide.

However, the implementation of EMI in Brazil has not been without shortcomings. Martinez (2016) divides these into linguistic, cultural and institutional challenges. First, linguistic challenges appear to be related to students' language proficiency in English to study EMI. In fact, Brazilian universities do not seem to require a minimum proficiency level to study or teach an EMI course. Gimenez and Marson (2022) suggest that there is hope that through exposure to content and jargon, there will be some residual language learning.

At the cultural level, Martinez (2016) mentions that despite the great diversity that Brazil has due to its large population and vast territory, Brazilian universities have failed to attract international students as most EMI students are Brazilian, with only a few exceptions. In this respect, he suggests EMI in Brazil is more concerned with developing English skills than on offering opportunities for intercultural contact. Another observed limitation is that EMI may be sensed as a threat to national heritage, which is a common phenomenon when decision-making is made top-down. However, Martinez (2016) reports that the Brazilian implementation of EMI has mostly been bottom-up, i.e. it has been initiated by teachers rather than by institutions. It is recommended that for change to be sustainable over time, both top-down and bottom-up forces need to converge (Fullan, 2015)..

Regarding institutional challenges, Martinez (2016, p.18) reports that EMI courses are "internationalisation window dressing" in the sense that universities do not necessarily have to accommodate EMI to all their courses. Thus, keeping a balance between individual and institutional initiatives proves sometimes challenging. For example, differences in funding are more evident as lecturers at private institutions are likely to be offered monetary and special training incentives to teach EMI. However, the reality is different at public universities which may not have the funds to properly implement EMI and train teachers accordingly. Pusey (2020, p.8) agrees with Martinez's (2016) observation and suggests that teachers working in EMI contexts are expected to demonstrate "pedagogical, communicative, and linguistic skills'' together with "an understanding of the larger historical and ideological underpinnings of EMI". Similarly, Gimenez and Marson's (2022) study on EMI teacher education in Brazil gives visibility to the internationalisation strategy that has led to a wide implementation of EMI across the country. They also agree with Martinez (2016) in terms of

the challenges posed by EMI, e.g. curriculum diversity, and a greater need for EMI teacher education.

2.3. Chile

There is little experience of EMI in Chile, with only one documented case of EMI (Reus, 2020), to our knowledge. This quantitative study aims at determining the effect of EMI on content acquisition, based on Macaro et al. (2018), by testing students of economics-related optional modules taught in English. All participants are Chilean, and their mother tongue is Spanish. Reus does not find significant differences in students' performance when implementing EMI. However, the study reports that proficient students perform better than those with a lower proficiency level and that proficient students' prior GPA correlates with their overall performance in the course. The students also acknowledge that their language level helps them advance in their professional careers.

2.4. Colombia

Corrales et al. (2016) report on the implementation of EMI in a Colombian university from the perspective of computer science professors, students and the programme administrator in developing intercultural and international competences (IIC) together with foreign language learning. Internationalisation at Home (IaH) is an initiative where students "develop IIC without leaving their home institutions" (Corrales et al., 2016, p.322). In this study, EMI is understood as "the type of context where content is the priority and where no assessment of students' English competence is made because no language learning outcomes are acknowledged" (Aguilar, 2015, p.4). The results show that both teachers and students appreciate the opportunity to use English in authentic communicative situations and be able to "join the international conversation on their discipline in English" (Corrales et al., 2016, p. 335).

Tejada-Sanchez and Molina-Naar (2020) present the implementation of an EMI course at a Colombian university as part of an internationalisation process from the perspective of administrators, faculty and students. Colombia has a strong internationalisation plan, devised by the *Colombia Bilingüe* governmental programme to develop human capital through English language teaching. Tejada-Sanchez and Molina-Naar (2020, p.344) acknowledge that the lack of English proficiency in Latin America, together with "low teacher training quality, insufficient resources, and inconsistency in language educational policies" make the Colombian context particularly challenging. Their findings suggest that EMI plays a crucial role in the internationalisation process of this university, leading to a curriculum reform and the strengthening of an EMI environment during a two-year period. The fast implementation of this programme appears to be two-fold. English was considered very relevant by all the participants, yet the students' proficiency level was seen as an issue

by administrators and faculty. Although some students enrolled in the EMI courses to enhance their professional careers, most of them saw it as a requirement. This disagreement suggests that there is a mismatch between the programme aspirations and the actual implementation of EMI in a succinct period of time. To be successful, it requires all actors to be involved and better articulate strategies for its implementation and institutionalisation in the Colombian context.

2.5. Mexico

Higher education in Mexico represents one of the most noticeable adoptions of EMI in Latin America, particularly since 2012, as its implementation has been strongly supported by educational policy (Sibaja, 2020). This interest in offering courses taught in English has led to the creation of 'BIS' universities which are institutions that aim

> to provide bilingual education to low income students who otherwise would have never had the opportunity to develop English skills, access scholarships to study abroad or have opportunities to position themselves in the international industry sector (Saracho, 2017, in Sibaja, 2020, p.10).

In the Mexican Higher Education context, BIS stands for 'Bilingual, International, and Sustainable', where, according to Sibaja (2020), 'bilingual' refers to EMI, 'international' refers to mobility, and 'sustainable' refers to social justice, solidarity, and environmental responsibility. Sibaja (2020) also reports that the Mexican Ministry of Education aims to open a BIS university in each Mexican state; however, this goal has not been achieved yet.

What is striking about the BIS initiative is that EMI (within the BIS approach) is promoted as a model to challenge existing inequalities in HE rather than perpetuating them. In this respect, Sibaja (2020) points out that students who join these programmes need to demonstrate a minimum A2 level and students are supported with English language lessons throughout their studies. Similarly, students experience a gradual transition through their studies adding more subjects taught in English each term. However, despite these governmental initiatives and the rapid growth of BIS universities in Mexico, EMI literature that focuses on this context is surprisingly limited.

Another study was conducted by Santana (2019) who explored the extent to which EMI can affect instructor-student rapport in a Mexican University. She compared the interactions and relationship between a teacher and her students in two identical modules that had different media of instruction: one taught in Spanish and one taught in English. Using lesson recordings, teacher's logs, and student-instructor rapport scales, she concluded that the language of instruction was not a barrier to establish rapport.

2.6. Summary

The emergence of EMI in Latin America is relatively new and has shown some similarities within the continent and the general literature. Brazil is the country with the largest number of EMI programmes in the continent as a result of a systematic internationalisation policy, where the adoption of EMI was a political decision. Similarly, in Mexico, the BIS programmes respond to internationalisation from a social justice perspective, with an expectation to expand at a national level. In both contexts, EMI was implemented following a top-down model.

On the other hand, in Argentina, Chile and Colombia, there is evidence of EMI emerging from bottom-up initiatives led by universities or module leaders who have implemented this innovation at course or even module level. In some of these examples, EMI modules are presented as options that are not expected to replace but to offer an alternative to the Spanish-medium mainstream version of the module. Interestingly, English language teaching training courses at university level, where students are expected to learn English as part of their degree are also treated as EMI courses in the reviewed literature (Banegas & Manzur Busleimán, 2021). However, these courses would not meet the criteria of what constitutes the essence of EMI education - as in Macaro et al.'s (2018) definition - as English would also be the subject of study. In this scenario, EMI could be interpreted as CLIL.

Within the reported EMI courses, there are differences in proficiency level requirements for students: from no specific requirements to a high proficiency level. Similarly, teachers' proficiency level and training offered to teach in an EMI programme is varied, which tends to coincide with a top-down institutional implementation of EMI. From this literature review, we can conclude that EMI is still at an early stage in the Latin American context, and with the exceptions of Brazil and Mexico, its implementation has been at individual institutions, mainly bottom-up, disconnected from one another, rather than as a regional or national policy.

3. Methodology

This small-scale qualitative study intended to answer the following questions from the perspective of teachers and students in different Latin American countries:

1. How do teachers and students working in EMI courses in Latin America experience the implementation of EMI in their contexts?
2. What opportunities and challenges in the implementation of EMI are perceived by teachers and students?

3. How do teachers and students believe that potential difficulties emerging from EMI instruction in their contexts should be addressed?
4. To what extent has EMI been successful in Latin America?

As we were interested in the experiences, opinions, and recommendations of teachers and students working in EMI contexts in Latin America, we designed two open-response questionnaires - one for teachers, and one for students. Brown (2009, p. 201) suggests that this kind of questionnaire "provide[s] a way to find out, in an unstructured manner, what people are thinking about a particular topic or issue". As the study intended to collect data from participants engaging with EMI education in a variety of Latin American contexts, the questionnaires were designed as Google Forms online surveys and were shared via different channels including social media (e.g. LinkedIn, and teachers' organisations on Facebook), and through researchers' personal and professional contacts. In other words, we adopted a combination of convenience and snowballing sampling approaches (Dörnyei, 2007) to recruit participants for this study.

Both questionnaires consisted of two parts. The first part gathered demographic information about participants' linguistic backgrounds, contexts where they have taught or studied through EMI, the levels of education in which they engaged with EMI (e.g., school, undergraduate, postgraduate), age range, and gender. The second part required participants to explain why they decided to work or study in an EMI context, discuss the advantages and disadvantages that they have faced working or studying in this educational modality, provide recommendations for addressing the challenges they have encountered, and evaluate the success of the implementation of EMI in their respective educational contexts.

3.1. Participants and data generation

Due to the scarcity of EMI programmes in Latin American higher education, finding participants for this study proved to be a challenging task. Similarly, as some of the institutions contacted by the researchers were in the early stages of the implementation of an EMI approach (e.g. courses that have recently been created or were offering this modality for the first time), locating students who were willing to participate in the study was even harder. In total, 14 teacher questionnaires and 5 student questionnaires were completed. The data collected included contributions from participants who have taught or been taught courses where English is the medium of instruction from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, and Mexico.

Teacher participants had different levels of experience and engagement with EMI in their professional roles. Most (64%) had at least 5 years of experience with 6 out of 14 reporting more than 10 years working under this modality. Four had worked in an EMI environment for about 3 to 5 years, while only one was relatively new to EMI. The most dominant age

groups in the sample were 36-45 (5) and 46-55 (5), while the rest of the participants were aged 56 or over.

Almost all participant teachers (13) indicated English and Spanish as the languages they speak, while one teacher reported being able to communicate in Portuguese and English. 5 teachers could communicate in more than 2 languages with French and Japanese also being reported. Regarding the context where they taught in an EMI modality, 6 teachers had worked only in Mexico, 4 had done so in Chile, 2 in Brazil, 1 in Colombia, and only 1 teacher reported having worked in an EMI environment in more than one Latin American context: Argentina, Colombia, and Ecuador. In terms of gender, most of the participant teachers identified as females (9); the rest identified as male (5). All teachers were working in EMI at Higher Education level. The most common level of education where these teachers had engaged with EMI was undergraduate (78%), followed by taught postgraduate (master's) (42.9%). Two of them also reported having worked in EMI at school level.

Out of the 5 students that completed the survey, 4 studied in Chile and 1in Mexico. All the students could communicate in Spanish and English and 3 of them indicated that they also mastered a third language (Korean, German, and French). All students identified as female; 3 of them were between 18 and 25 years old, one was in the 26-35 age group, and one in the 36-45 group.

3.2. Ethics

Ethics clearance was obtained through a UK University where one of the authors works. All participants were informed about the purpose of the project and how the collected data would be stored and handled, as well as any potential risks. All participants were asked to tick the corresponding checkboxes to give consent to the use of their data before submitting their answers. The data collected was anonymised to make sure that individuals and the institutions they mentioned are not identifiable.

3.3. Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected via the online survey was retrieved from the online platform and analysed following a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2009). We collated the participants' responses and organised it into themes, drawing on the research questions. Participants' answers were initially read and checked for comprehension and correction of typos in order to facilitate the analysis and presentation of results. Participants' names and their institutions were anonymised and a system of codes was generated to represent the views of the participants. These were expressed by the use of "T" for teachers and "S" for students together with a number that helped us locate their answers in the questionnaire (for example, T1; T2; S1; S2; and so on).

4. Findings

4.1. Teachers' perspectives

4.1.1. Institutional Pressure

Teachers' questionnaires revealed that participants perceive the implementation of EMI in their contexts as a university-driven initiative that intends to enhance the recruitment of 'international' - non-Spanish/Portuguese speaking - students and thus contributing to the internationalisation of Higher Education. For example, T1, a teacher based in Mexico, mentioned: *"My institution wanted to increment the number of EMI classes to attend to an increasing number of international students"*, while T14, based in Chile, commented that in her institution *"the partial incorporation of EMI has been one of the strategies implemented to boost internationalisation"*. In this respect, the data evidences that the universities' decisions to offer courses in EMI has impacted them in different ways as some see their newly found roles as unexpected turns in their professional careers. For instance, T8 revealed that her *"choice to work in an EMI environment wasn't particularly intentional"*, while T2 confessed that she *"was asked to teach her classes in English and since then [...] decided to improve [her] skills"*. Such comments are also in line with claims about the lack of qualified professionals who have the necessary linguistic and pedagogical skills to offer courses in EMI. T3, a programme director at a Chilean university, commented that *"finding different teachers for the different courses is a challenge"*. In support of this claim, T5, who works in the same context reveals that *"many colleagues do not speak English, it is hard finding teachers who can teach in English with confidence"*. Interestingly, this situation is also perceived as an advantage by some teachers who see their ability to work in an EMI environment as an opportunity to better-position themselves in the market since, as T11 demonstrates, *"teachers who are linguistically and methodologically equipped to teach English as a medium of instruction will thrive in this area, as there is a gap in the market due to the lack of prepared professionals"*.

4.1.2 EMI as a platform for professional development

The teachers also identify a series of benefits associated with offering and delivering courses in EMI in Latin American contexts, particularly in relation to their own and their students' professional development, and the generation of wider academic networks. T10, for example, refers to how teachers and students can benefit from EMI beyond just improving their English language skills by stating that *"I consider that more than practising other languages, I can develop knowledge related to specific fields and to teach students to become professionals in such fields"*. Similarly, T6 points out that *"for both English L1/L2 users this can be an opportunity to develop metalinguistic and intercultural awareness [...] [while] also provid[ing] opportunities for networking and establishing academic or professional partnerships with other contexts"*. This advantage is also supported by T1, who claims that the opportunities that EMI offers by bringing together students from different

backgrounds *"broadens the horizons of local students, and it allows them to create broader networks"*.

Another salient positive aspect of adopting an EMI approach is access to quality resources. References to the status of English as the dominant language of research and technological development were common. T5, for example, indicates that "*cutting edge research and educational materials for History, Geography, and Social Studies (my area) are mainly in English*" and that *"there are many more quality teaching resources in English"*. Similarly, T9 emphasises the benefits that EMI brings to her students by indicating that *"studying literature in English, doing presentations and writing papers provide them with quality input that enhances their skills and increases their chance to get an international certification"*. From these comments, it is possible to infer that engaging with English at Higher Education level is generally perceived, at least by the teachers from our sample, as more beneficial than simply using local languages (primarily Spanish and Portuguese) as working languages. A few participants, however, criticised this hegemonic understanding of English and suggested that *"if English becomes more prominent in academic contexts, these [local] languages might get even more ignored together with the knowledge and ancestral wisdom they carry (and that is so important for our identity)"* (T6).

4.1.3. Language proficiency as a barrier

Teachers identified the differing levels of proficiency in English that students enrolled in these courses display as the most significant difficulty across the contexts. For instance, T3, based in Mexico, mentioned that *"the main challenge is that students are not native English speakers and not all of them have the same level of fluency"*. This is replicated by T7, who teaches in Chile, by indicating that *"not all students are at the same proficiency level which provides an additional challenge for some students"*. Similarly, T12, based in Brazil, pointed out that *"sometimes students' levels of proficiency in a classroom may vary, which may pose some issues"*. In this respect, the participants suggest that *"students should be required to pass a test to enter the course, or they should prove their level of English in some way"* (T1) or *"to apply surveys previously in order to divide the group according to different levels"* (T2), revealing that such imbalances in proficiency pose an important problem for the development of their lessons. Similarly, the participants recommend that more support is given to English language learning (T13, T14), especially in relation to *"reading and completing tasks in the second language"* (T3).

Important differences, however, arise when referring to the role of local languages in EMI courses since, as the data reveals, English can be considered to be a foreign language or a common lingua franca depending on the EMI context under scope. In other words, in environments where the student body is relatively homogeneous in cultural and linguistic aspects, the dominant local languages (e.g., Spanish or Portuguese) are likely to be used as a resource as these languages are often shared by the students, and, in most cases, the

teacher. For example, T6 who works in Chile, indicates that *"during my career I have had to translate a lot"*. On the other hand, the usefulness of local languages is much more limited in contexts where students from different linguacultural backgrounds meet. This is evident in T1's words when referring to the difficulties she faced working in EMI in Mexico by saying *"using Spanish with the whole group was not an option because there were non-Spanish speaking international students in the group"*.

Regardless of these challenges, most teachers agreed that the implementation of EMI in their teaching contexts has been a relatively successful one. Reasons for such a success, again, are based on linguistic development and student satisfaction. For instance, T9 comments that, in her experience, *"most of our students succeed and their skills in English improve"*, while T11 mentions that the implementation of EMI in his context *"has been absolutely successful and this is based on my own learners' feedback comments in the surveys that the university applies at the end of the course"*. Interestingly, references to disciplinary content or pro-internationalisation discourse are very limited in the evaluations provided by theseteachers. As most comments focus on linguistic development, it is evident that, from the perspective of these participants, meeting an English proficiency threshold seems key to fulfil the corresponding learning outcomes of the courses since as, T5 mentions, *"without a sufficient level of English, these students would not be able to access content at all"*.

4.2. Students' perspectives

4.2.1. Language learning for personal and professional benefit

All students chose to study in an EMI environment because they were interested in English and in learning English, for they perceived it as a tool for their personal and professional lives, as illustrated by S3: *"I chose to study in an EMI environment because I am obsessed with English and I knew that I wanted to do something related to it professionally"*. A similar motivation is drawn by S4, who focuses on the benefits of knowing more languages, as they "*are crucial for communication and, at the same time, to open yourself to more people, cultures and knowledge"*. In this case, knowing more languages brings the benefit of advancing opportunities to understand and interact with others.

There is agreement on the benefits of becoming a more profitable professional, who can be more employable than one that does not know English. S2 illustrates this well: *"I am going to be a primary teacher and in my country English speaking schools are growing, thus giving me an advantage with other teachers"*. In this case, S2's motivation to learn English is driven by the fact that knowing English becomes a professional advantage. S3, on the other hand, sees being a teacher who speaks English as a factor that leads to job security: *"The best-paid teachers are those who speak English proficiently. Teachers that don't know English are*

being fired, so obviously it is pretty advantageous to speak the language". Although S3 does not refer to other aspects that may affect employability, she believes that knowing English offers certain stability when referring to job security.

There is also agreement among the participants on their enjoyment and motivation to learn English for personal and professional reasons. On the one hand, they focus on aspects of teaching and learning English by referring to language learning and bilingualism. S3 sheds some light on what she believes are the advantages of teaching and learning a foreign language at an early age:

> Teaching students (at an early age) to be bilingual can have many benefits in the brain. When you have a bilingual brain, you have a different way of thinking and creating, it can be said that your brain "works differently" rather than just having one language.

On the other hand, S3 also believes that *"teaching the language isn't easy"* referring to the challenges that teaching (in) English brings to teachers working in a bilingual environment.

4.2.2. Challenges of teaching and learning

Students observe some challenges in studying in an EMI environment, which mostly rely on learning English as a foreign language. For example, S1 refers to her motivation, stating that*: "a lot of the learning depends on me, on how committed I am in using and learning English"*. When studying in an EMI environment, autonomy, competence and relatedness (Deci &Ryan, 2012) are crucial to keep students engaged. In addition, students comment on their EMI teachers' capacity to teach their subjects in English. S2 is critical about her teachers' proficiency levels: *"Not all teachers speak quite well or have a high domain of English or other language"*. This statement correlates with research in other EMI contexts (An, Macaro &Childs, 2021), where students perceive that teachers' proficiency has an impact on their learning.

To address these challenges, students have some suggestions for themselves as EMI students and their programmes. Firstly, participants reflect on staying motivated with learning, as stated by S1 *"Be reflective and know yourself to know what drives you"*. Similarly, S3 thinks "*Just try harder. People think that by attending a couple of English classes a week will be enough to learn English efficiently and quickly, but no. You need to expose yourself to the language as much as you can*".

Regarding their programmes, and their teachers, students suggest practical aspects of teaching and learning, e.g. dividing students' groups into proficiency levels. S4 suggests that teachers *"check for understanding, see what they were able to understand and let them*

explain what they [students] learn in their own words, that way, the teacher can address those problems right away". S5 looks into EMI as part of her future teaching practice, where she is taught *"to implement strategies in order to teach curricula in a foreign language"*. These considerations, however, do not shed light on the wider view of the EMI programmes where the students study.

Overall, participants believe that the implementation of EMI has been mostly successful in their contexts, as their expectations have been met. For example, S2 believes that she gets *"to know more about the language, the reason behind its usage, as well as more tools to communicate and teach"*. Similarly, S4 believes that she has learned *"many strategies that as a teacher you can do so that having more languages in a classroom can be easier for the students and simpler for them to understand"*. Both S2 and S4 focus on the three areas of teaching knowledge: knowing the language, knowing about the language, and knowing how to teach the language (Malderez & Wedell, 2007), which highlight their relevance. However, neither makes references to being in an EMI environment.

In the only comment that refers to EMI in relation to learning about other disciplines through English, S5 thinks that her EMI programme has been *"successfully implemented because I have learnt a lot about other fields while practising the language"*. Albeit brief, S5 nods to the integration of content and language learning.

Summing up, all participants showed similarities in their experiences studying in an EMI environment. However, the data does not provide enough evidence to gauge that the students understand the concept of EMI. They appear to focus on their bilingual programmes, with some modules taught in English, as well as learning English at the same time, rather than discussing EMI itself. Their first-person testimonies do not delve into their programmes and how EMI is embedded in them.

5. Discussion and implications

Given the limited research of EMI in the Latin American context as a single region, this study intended to explore how teachers and students already engaging in EMI education experience its implementation, and sought to understand why the spread of EMI has not been as successful in Latin America as in other non-English speaking contexts. The findings prompt critical questions about the underpinning reasons of the current status and its implications for practice.

5.1. How do teachers and students working in EMI courses in Latin America experience the implementation of EMI in their contexts?

Internationalisation and 'opening doors' is the most salient factor to answer for the decision of having adopted EMI, agreeing with EMI literature. Within internationalisation, many institutions seem to lead an "*Englishisation"* of the curriculum (Galloway et al., 2020), so

that more modules are taught in English, also with a hope that this will overall improve their students' command of the language. In this respect, both the existing literature on EMI in Latin America and the participants' views support the view that, to date, EMIimplementation relies mostly on changing the language of instruction of existing courses to English - or offering an 'English version' of them. In other words, the lack of student mobility in Latin America forces EMI programmes to cater for the academic needs of English-speaking locals rather than act as a form of internationalisation of HE since, in most cases, these EMI classrooms do not represent an international student body but a local elite instead.

The role of local languages in EMI classrooms in Latin American institutions raises questions about what the drivers of this educational approach (e.g. higher education institutions, governments) intend to achieve in relation to internationalisation since the composition of the target audience and those delivering these courses may reveal the actual understanding of internationalisation that is being adopted. In fact, internationalisation is not mentioned by teachers referring to their practices, nor by students referring to their learning experiences (apart from seeing English as a tool for international communication). This dichotomy, i.e. internationalisation as the core of the implementation of EMI yet not factored by the main actors, suggests that the focus of EMI is still on language and content learning, and that there is an evident mismatch between the intended and the enabled curriculum.

The vision of the participants suggest that there needs to be a mindful EMI implementation in Latin America, where local traditions and languages present in the region are respected. Following Rose et al. (2022, p.168), "a socially responsible and politically empowering implementation of EMI should see authority given to local teachers and academic staff for conceiving and implementing the appropriate curriculum and pedagogy to meet their students' needs". This is in line with a harmonic implementation of a curriculum change, where both top-down and bottom-up forces work together towards the initiation, implementation, and institutionalisation of change. In practical terms, enabling an EMI curriculum does not necessarily need to lead to a monolingual environment. In fact, the sought-after internationalisation can be enhanced by promoting a translanguaging environment (Wei, 2018) to enhance all actors' teaching and learning experiences.

5.2. What opportunities and challenges in the implementation of EMI are perceived by teachers and students?

*T*his study supports that EMI is generally perceived as a platform for professional development due to its perceived links with global networking, intercultural awareness, and access to knowledge (Galloway et al., 2020). Participant teachers evidence that this method of instruction not only can help their students to be better-prepared professionals by developing a deeper and up-to-date engagement with their disciplines, but also allows

them, as teachers, to broaden their academic networks. Interestingly, however, discussions around EMI in Latin American Spanish-speaking contexts do not seem to consider the role that Spanish may have had in achieving these newly perceived goals. Little is mentioned about how instruction in Spanish may have previously served a similar purpose in the region. In this respect, the somewhat idealised internationalisation that these teachers and their institutions seem to seek is beyond the continental borders. It is important to point out, however, that participants did not make reference to any specific country or geographical context when referring to internationalisation. The students, on the other hand, tended to attribute the benefits of EMI mostly to linguistic development which is seen as a professional advantage in itself. In fact, students perceive enrolment in EMI courses as an opportunity for future economic return as completing courses in English is understood as the acquisition of a higher level of professionalisation than just doing so in the local language. Similarly, students linked EMI with opportunities for intercultural exchanges even when their classrooms tended to be linguaculturally homogenous.

As previously discussed, English proficiency is clearly the most important challenge to the implementation of EMI identified by teachers and students. Both groups stress the importance that a sufficient proficiency level has in the success of this method of instruction. Interestingly, participants did not make explicit reference to how the content of the courses can be compromised because of these imbalances. This may be explained by the fact that local languages can still be used as major resources due to the dominant linguistic and cultural homogeneity of the teaching and student bodies. In this respect, the benefits that EMI has promised to bring to the Latin American context would only be enjoyed by those who manage to overcome the linguistic barrier who, in most cases, happen to be those who are privileged enough to receive quality English language education before starting higher education, as the student participants demonstrate. Ultimately, this makes us wonder whether the implementation of EMI in Latin America represents another way of broadening the socioeconomic gaps that already exist in such an unequal context (Lasagabaster, 2022).

5.3. How do teachers and students believe that potential difficulties emerging from EMI instruction in their contexts should be addressed?

Both groups of participants suggest that proficiency is an issue in EMI. Regarding teachers' proficiency, current research does not evidence a significant impact of teachers' proficiency and students' learning, but classroom practices and interaction do (An, Macaro & Childs, 2021; Galloway et al., 2020). The main barrier to the success of EMI identified in this study referred to the teachers' and students' ability to communicate in English (Tejeda-Sánchez & Molina-Naar, 2020). Thus, teachers and students' opinions differ in how this challenge can be overcome since, on the one hand, teachers agree that institutions that offer courses in EMI should test students' levels of English before entering their courses and provide them

with in-sessional English language support; while students tended to focus on individual effort and agency in the learning process (e.g. more exposure to English; checking for understanding; paraphrasing).

As demonstrated above, most teachers find themselves teaching in EMI environments because of institutional decisions or better career prospects; therefore, professional development, understood as linguistic and pedagogical tools for EMI teachers is key. To our knowledge, there is no documented evidence of whether EMI teachers in Latin American receive this kind of support and, if so, what it looks like.

5.4. To what extent has EMI been successful in Latin America?

Although EMI is, by definition, not expected to teach "English" - making this fact its fundamental difference with CLIL - the implementation of EMI in Latin America appears to lean towards CLIL. The student data strongly suggests that their focus is on learning English rather than a particular subject area. It is still unclear to what extent institutions (at a micro-level) and/or governments (at a macro-level) prepare the grounds for implementing EMI in a contextually-relevant manner. The data indicates that EMI has been ill-implemented in some contexts, which may be in relation to the length of time in which EMI has been adopted, and therefore, it may correlate with the degree of current EMI expertise.

EMI teachers' professional development is crucial. As Martinez (2016) lists, linguistic, cultural and institutional constraints undermine the implementation of EMI in Latin America. The data suggest that current micro-management of the programmes, where teachers have been prompted to teach EMI without any previous experience or training, may also have an impact on its success. Recruiting teachers that have some preparation to teach subject-specific modules proves to be challenging. A possible solution to this would be to create partnerships with ESP colleagues, for example, to develop and provide pertinent training to support teachers in the planning and delivering of their EMI classes.

Similarly, neither group of participants gave a strong sense of the relevance of content. Although the literature reports that EMI teachers perceive themselves as content teachers rather than language teachers (Lasagabaster, 2022), teacher participants saw themselves as language teachers with a strong view on proficiency level as the most detrimental aspect of their EMI experience, since without having a baseline level, students cannot access content. Although both groups of participants agree that the implementation of EMI is successful in their contexts, the data is inconclusive in relation to how or if teachers adapted or simplified their practices and/or materials to reach all students, and if so, whether students mastered the expected contents.

6. Conclusion and suggestions for further study

This chapter has attempted to give some visibility to the teaching and learning experiences of teachers and students in different EMI contexts in Latin America, looking into their opportunities and challenges, and to what extent these initiatives have been successful.

Our study demonstrates that the concept of EMI may not be still well understood. With a patchy and uneven implementation in Latin America, we conclude that EMI is a concept that has not been fully processed and has been mostly implemented in a somehow improvised manner due to lack of experience and knowledge. Furthermore, it appears that CLIL and EMI have blurred boundaries, as there is a heavy focus on language learning rather than content learning. Similarly, the internationalisation factor seems to be nominal, that is it is a driver that leads decision-makers to implement EMI, but internationalisation is absent from the discourse and practice of our participants.

The greatest limitation of this study is the restricted number of participants as a result of the scarce implementation of EMI across the continent. Regardless, it was possible to observe commonalities across the different groups of participants, particularly among the teacher participants. Further research with more participants in a single country or a group of countries would be beneficial to understand the commonalities and differences in the practice of EMI from the perspective of teachers and students, with a longitudinal focus, so that there is a systematic study of the initiation, implementation, and institutionalisation of EMI, at a macro, meso and micro-levels. Similarly, insights into the impact that EMI in this context has had on the learning of content as well as the support that students and faculty receive to facilitate its implementation would enrich the EMI literature emerging from this context.

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