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BOOK REVIEW

English-Medium Instruction at Universities: Global Challenges
Aintzane Doiz, David Lasagabaster and Juan Manuel Sierra
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This collection of articles is an interesting and timely addition to the growing literature on the use of English as the language of instruction at universities in non-native contexts. In the past two decades, EMI (English-Medium Instruction, as the educational practice tends to be called when referring to the tertiary level, as opposed to the more thought-through pedagogical approach of Content and Language Integrated Learning or CLIL at secondary level) has caught on in many different countries and settings. Motivated partly by the wish to attract international students, partly by the need to prepare home students for the international market, or, increasingly, with the aim of promoting the institution in an ever more competitive higher education market, universities have introduced English to replace the local language(s). Needless to say this is having immediate implications for teachers and students alike and research is badly needed on issues such as language proficiency demands, effective curriculum design, and quality assurance, not only because this may lead to important contributions to theory building but also, hopefully, because the results could feed into the decision-making processes of university administrators.

The aim of the present volume is, according to the editors, to "advance our awareness" of what is needed to improve EMI at tertiary level. It sets out to do so by providing a varied picture of current issues and practices, in contributions from eighteen authors from countries as diverse as China, Finland, Israel, the Netherlands, South Africa, Spain, and the USA. The selection may be somewhat arbitrary, but the emerging picture is highly interesting not only because of its diversity (in terms of, for instance, the societal position of English and the levels of language proficiency) but also because

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unexpected connections appear and very different settings turn out to be faced with quite similar issues.

The volume has been organised into five parts which are not always very clearly delineated – some consist of just one chapter, while others contain chapters that might well have been more appropriate under the heading of one of the other sections. All contributions, however, add to the overall picture. The opening chapter is on Maastricht University in the Netherlands, a very early adopter, in which Robert Wilkinson emphasizes the crucial collaboration between 'content' departments and language specialists in the 25-year-old development of English-taught programmes there. This is followed by two case studies of the linguistic needs of students and teachers in the multilingual settings of South Africa and the Basque country respectively.

In the section on institutional policies, Taina Saarinen and Tarja Nikula use discourse analysis to study policy documents concerning language and internationalisation strategies in Finland, which has the highest number of institutions providing English-taught programmes in Europe. The authors' starting point is the apparent invisibility of language in such policies. The findings from their document analysis point at the 'self-evidence' of English, with "foreign language" often really meaning "English". They also ask the common-sensical question of "what kind of English" is referred to in lists of entry requirements, and find that apart from many departments mentioning vague criteria such as "a good command" or "a sufficient knowledge", Finnish polytechnics since 2011 have specified the setting in which prospective students should have learnt their English in such narrow terms that the qualifications of applicants from about 50 countries in which English is, in fact, an official language (India, Pakistan, South Africa) would not be accepted, thus creating "a hierarchy of different 'Englishes'". In the same section of the volume, Ofelia García, Mercè Pujol-Ferran and Pooja Reddy also make clear how language can be caught up, and become a factor in power relations. Studying a community college with immigrant students and a global research university, they describe a painful dichotomy between international and immigrant students. Using the somewhat comical (and rather poignant) abbreviation LOTE (Languages Other Than English), they conclude that "whereas the LOTEs of international students are taught, celebrated and used in academic pursuits, the use of LOTEs in education is often restricted by colleges and

universities serving immigrant students. Whereas international students are welcomed in university content classes and their English proficiency is not seen as an obstacle to learning, immigrant students are often excluded from academic content until they develop appropriate English vocabulary" (193).

It is this focus on language as a symbol of ethnic, cultural or national identity, which makes the volume such an interesting addition to the current body of literature on EMI. It informs a number of other essays in the volume, and the editors might have emphasized this in their introduction. Indeed, the book does not shy away from naming difficulties and potential negative effects of EMI, both at the level of the individual learner and the community: concerns about the loss of L1 (and 2) at the cost of English, about EMI programmes producing an "elite" whose skills and outlook sets them apart from others in society, and other sensitivities and anxieties. The buzzword in this book is "language ecology", emphasizing the role of language as a social practice, in interaction with its environment. All this comes to the forefront especially in the chapters on trilingual education, which together form the third part of the book.

The contexts of this section of the book are China and Spain, and the topics described are at times strikingly similar. David C.S. Li writes about the Chinese University of Hong Kong, where the question of whether the predominance of English in higher education should be viewed as hegemony or linguistic capital became quite urgent after a proposed increase in the percentage of English-taught courses. Local Cantonese speaking students, faced with the necessity to learn both Putonghua (Mandarin), which is the national language, and English, staged vehement protests. They feared that English would push out Cantonese and written Chinese and voiced their emotions in terms that made it very clear the issue went beyond the pragmatic intentions of the vice-chancellor who had made the proposal. Ofra Onbar-Lourie and Smadar Donitsa-Schmidt, whose contribution is mysteriously included in the section on language policies, study the same theme as Li but in the intricate linguistic scene of Israel, where English is tentatively being introduced at a small number of colleges. Because the language of instruction at almost all higher education institutions is Hebrew, Arabic speakers learn through their second language anyway, and English would be their L3. Through self-report questionnaires the views of students at one teacher training college are studied, one interesting finding being that English was not

being perceived as threat, perhaps, as the authors suggest, as a result of the unrivalled position of Hebrew in this particular educational setting.

Aintzane Doiz, David Lasagabaster and Juan Manuel Sierra investigate students' views on the introduction of English as L3 at the Basque University, where Spanish and Basque are the official languages. Again, linguistic capital turned out to play a major role. They found that "[l]ocal students show a manifest unwillingness towards being required to be proficient in English or to be proficient in two languages at the end of their studies", with Basque mother tongue students manifestly more negative than those with Spanish or Basque and Spanish as their mother tongue. Josep Maria Cots concentrates on the Catalan context with the aim of revealing "possible ambiguities and tensions" in the language policy of the bilingual University of Lleida. In this sensitive environment, the introduction of English as one of the languages of instruction met with scepticism: it is only in the past 30 years or so that there has been what the author calls a "reverse language shift" with Catalan gaining more prominence in society; moreover, there are serious fears that the university may not be ready for this, with the great majority of incoming students having an English language proficiency level of B1 or lower. The chapter illustrates the existing tensions nicely by pointing out some of the discourse surrounding the debate in which English is presented as a 'killer language' or a 'language predator', while the Catalan students are characterised as having a 'bunker attitude'.

The final word in the book is by Elana Shohamy, who presents a "critical view of EMI at university", identifying a number of educational and societal issues that may have been overlooked as universities rushed to implement English-medium programmes. It is a fitting conclusion to a collection of articles that is highly valuable because it contextualizes and because it problematizes: it places EMI firmly at the centre of a complex interplay of all kinds of socio-linguistic factors, and although it does offer ideas for overcoming some of the difficulties faced by universities, it is not simplistic or overly idealistic. Perhaps we may see it as a sign that EMI, both as an educational phenomenon and as an emerging field of study, has grown up.

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