Attitudes Toward EMI in East Asia and the Gulf:
A Systematic Review

Keith M. Graham, M.Ed.
Texas A&M University
Zohreh Eslami, Ph.D.
Texas A&M University
Background

Major Expansion of EMI
• Over 2,638 EMI Programs in Asia (Neghina, 2017)
• EMI is becoming a “new normal” (Fenton-Smith, Humphreys, & Walkinshaw, 2017)

Current EMI Attitude Research
• A lot of individual country research
• Little cross-country research
Attitudes and Formation

Definition

“a psychological tendency that is expressed by **evaluating** a particular **entity** with some degree of favor or disfavor” (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 1).

Formation

(1) Affect (2) Beliefs (3) Behavior (Albarracín, Johnson, Zanna, & Kumkale, 2005)
Defining EMI

• a variant of Content-Based Instruction (CBI) (Snow & Brinton, 2017), a method of instruction that involves “both academic subject matter content and a new language at the same time” (Lightbown, 2014, p. 6).

• “no explicit English language-related learning outcomes” (Airey, 2016, p. 73).

• Dafouz and Smit’s (2016) ROADMAPPING Framework
  • Roles of English (RO), Academic Disciplines (AD), (language) Management (M), Agents (A), Practices and Processes (PP), and Internationalization/Glocalization (ING).
The Study
Research Questions

1. What are the attitudes toward EMI in countries in East Asia and the Gulf?
2. What are the similarities/differences between countries and what factors can they be attributed to?
Search Method

Databases

• ERIC
• Education Source
• PSYCHINFO
• Web of Science

Search Terms

[TI (attitude* OR opinion* OR belief* OR perspective* OR satisfaction) OR AB (attitude* OR opinion* OR belief* OR perspective* OR satisfaction) OR SU (attitude* OR opinion* OR belief* OR perspective* OR satisfaction) ]

AND

[ TI (English medium instruction) OR AB (English medium instruction) OR SU (English Medium Instruction) ].
Search Criteria

• The article was published between 2007-2017.
• The article was an empirical study published in an academic journal.
• The study focused on EMI in East Asia* or the Gulf.
• The study examined attitudes of stakeholders toward EMI in higher education.

*Studies from Hong Kong and Macau were excluded due to their multilingual histories.
The Selection Process

281 Articles Found

69 Duplicates

27 Removed (Time)

46 Removed (Topic)

38 Removed (Publication)

86 Removed (Location)

3 Added (References)

2 Added (Recommended)

20 Articles Included
Results
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author (Date)</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Study Participants</th>
<th>Academic Discipline</th>
<th>EMI Attitude</th>
<th>Attitude Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beckett and Li (2012)</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Qualitative Questionnaire</td>
<td>34 Students</td>
<td>Finance</td>
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<td>Lei and Hu (2014)</td>
<td>China</td>
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<td>136 Students</td>
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<td>Muthanna and Miao (2015)</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Qualitative Interview</td>
<td>6 Graduate Students</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>3 Positive Themes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ghorbani and Alavi (2014)</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>Mixed Methods Questionnaire &amp; Interview</td>
<td>344 Student, 36 Instructors</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>Positive</td>
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<td>Chapple (2015)</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Mixed Methods Questionnaire</td>
<td>89 Students</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>Slightly Negative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bouhmama and Bouhmama (2015)</td>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>Quantitative Questionnaire</td>
<td>158 Students</td>
<td>Not Reported</td>
<td>Slightly Negative</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Al-Bakri (2013)</td>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>Qualitative Interview &amp; Observation</td>
<td>10 Students, 5 Business Classrooms</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2 Positive &amp; Two Negative Themes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ellili-Cherif and Alkhateeb (2015)</td>
<td>Qatar</td>
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<td>259 Students</td>
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<td>Al-Jarf (2008)</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>Qualitative Interview</td>
<td>470 Students</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>3 Positive Themes</td>
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<td>Al-Kahtany et al. (2016)</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
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<td>702 Students, 162 Instructors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author (Date)</td>
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<td>Attitude Score</td>
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<td>Byun et al. (2011)</td>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>Mixed Methods Questionnaire &amp; Interview</td>
<td>&gt;100,000 Students (2004-2009)</td>
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<td>61 Students</td>
<td>Medicine</td>
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<td>91 Instructors</td>
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<td>524 Students</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
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<td>-1.70</td>
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<td>Chang (2010)</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>Mixed Methods Questionnaire &amp; Interview</td>
<td>370 Students, 6 Instructors</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>Slightly Negative</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
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<td>Huang (2012)</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>Qualitative Interview</td>
<td>24 Students, 4 Instructors, 3 Administrators</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary Program</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>1 Positive &amp; 1 Negative Theme</td>
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<td>Yeh (2014)</td>
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<td>476 Students</td>
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<td>40 Students</td>
<td>Social Work</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
RQ1: Calculating Attitude Scores

What is the Attitude Score?

For quantitative studies: The distance of the attitudes, in standard deviations, from neutral

\[
\text{Mean} - \text{Neutral} \over \text{Standard Deviation}
\]

For qualitative studies: The amount of positive/negative themes present.
RQ1: Attitude Scores

• Negative (< -1)
• Slightly negative (between -1 and -0.01)
• Neutral (0)
• Slightly positive (between 0 and 1)
• Positive (>1)
**RQ1: Attitudes toward EMI in East Asia and the Gulf?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Slightly Positive</th>
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<th>Slightly Negative</th>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
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<table>
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<th>Country</th>
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<th>Slightly Negative</th>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
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</table>
RQ2: Identifying Themes

1. Reading code organization sheet (Shon, 2015)
2. Analyzed for common themes

Identified Themes

1. Language and Content Issues
2. Choice of Medium of Instruction
3. Instructor Quality
4. Motivation to Learn English
5. Deficit Views of the L1
RQ2: Language and Content Issues

• Lack of content coverage possible in an EMI class, usually as a result of the instructor’s and/or students’ English ability.

• One study from China (Lei & Hu, 2014), one from Japan (Chapple, 2015), one from Saudi Arabia (Al-Kahtany, Golam Faruk, & Al Zumor, 2016), one from Taiwan (Huang, 2012) and four from South Korea (Chun et al., 2017; Joe & Lee, 2013; Kim, Kweon, & Kim, 2017; Kim & Tatar, 2017) reported language and content issues affecting attitudes toward EMI.
RQ2: Choice of Medium of Instruction

• Positive attitudes emerged in places that wanted more EMI options to supplement their L1 education (Ghorbani & Alavi, 2014; Muthanna & Miao, 2015; Yeh, 2014)

• Negative attitudes were mostly related to university or government policy mandating EMI (Belhiah & Elhami, 2015; Kim, Kweon, & Kim, 2017).
RQ2: Instructor Quality

- Many students in Yeh’s (2014) reported choosing EMI courses over L1 courses due to the instructor’s expertise or teaching style.
- A study from South Korea by Chun et al., 2017 showed negative perceptions toward their EMI instructors and, subsequently, negative attitudes toward EMI.
RQ2: Motivation to Learn English

- Two motivations for enrolling in EMI:
  - To improve English (Belhiah & Elhami, 2015; Byun et al., 2011; Chang, 2010; Huang, 2012; Yeh, 2014)
RQ2: Deficit Views of the L1

• Across countries in the Gulf, many of the studies reported positive attitudes toward EMI simply because Arabic was seen as an insufficient language of instruction (Al-Bakri, 2013; Al-Jarf, 2008; Al-Kahtany, Golam Faruk, & Al Zumor. 2016; Ellili-Cherif & Alkhateeb, 2015; Holtzhausen, 2010)

• Al-Jarf (2008) reported that 96% of students consider English superior to Arabic and 93% believe Arabic lacks much of the vocabulary needed in academics.

• This could be termed as a “false positive” attitude toward EMI
Discussion and Conclusion
Roles of English (RO)

• Programs in which EMI courses are seen to be of practical importance for students’ futures may cultivate more positive attitudes.

• Programs with mandated EMI courses in which students see no need for English tend to result in negative attitudes.

**POLICY SUGGESTION:** EMI programs should be implemented to add value to students’ future lives, not just for the sake of having EMI at a university.
Academic Discipline (AD)

• Not enough research on specific academic disciplines
• A concern that students are not learning as much academic content as a result of EMI (Al-Bakri, 2013; Huang, 2012; Kim & Tatar, 2017).

**POLICY SUGGESTION:** EMI programs should set prerequisite language proficiency for student enrollment and that instructors receive adequate language support or training.
Agents (A)

• Agents who are adequately prepared for EMI generally elicit more positive behaviors and, subsequently, more positive attitudes.

• Zhao and Dixon (2017) suggest that Krashen’s “i + 1” input hypothesis, with “i” being language you are capable of and “+1” being the level above that, is two-fold in EMI with an “i” for English knowledge and an “i” for academic knowledge.

POLICY SUGGESTION: Policies should be developed that support content learning in the L1 with supplementary L2 instruction.
Practices and Processes (PP)

• Student attitudes can be affected by teaching style.

POLICY SUGGESTION: Universities should provide instructors, both EMI and non-EMI, opportunities to grow professionally and improve as educators.
Internationalization/Glocalization (ING)

• One of the more concerning findings of this review is the deficit attitudes toward Arabic compared to English in the Gulf.

**POLICY SUGGESTION:** While EMI should not be discouraged, governments and universities should make efforts to protect and promote their L1 in academia and industry.
Limitations and Conclusion

• Only studies published in English were included
• Terms for CBI are being used inconsistently, making comprehensive reviews difficult
• The number of studies from the various countries concerning EMI attitudes remains low.
• Examining EMI attitudes in specific academic disciplines is much needed.
Questions?
Thank You!

Correspondence:
Keith M. Graham
kmgraham@tamu.edu
https://keithmgraham.com/
References


References


References


Hino, N. (2017). The significance of EMI for the learning of EIL in higher education: Four cases from Japan. In B. Fenton-Smith, P. Humphreys, & I. Walkinshaw (Eds.), *English medium instruction in higher education in Asia-Pacific: From policy to pedagogy*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-51976-0_7
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