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MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION FOR GLOBALLY
ORIENTED PROFESSIONAL TRAINING. A
THEORETICAL REVIEW**

**LAS VENTAJAS DE UTILIZAR EL INGLÉS COMO MEDIO
DE INSTRUCCIÓN PARA UNA FORMACIÓN PROFESIONAL
DE ORIENTACIÓN GLOBAL. UNA REVISIÓN TEÓRICA**

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The Advantages of using English as the Medium of Instruction for Globally Oriented Professional Training. A Theoretical Review

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ABSTRACT

English has become a dominant lingua franca on a global scale, facilitating communication between individuals who do not share a common mother tongue. Consequently, novel methodologies have been introduced with the objective of promoting the strengthening of the English language, including the English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) approach. The present article offers a literature review that aims to examine recent research on the implementation of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in different international educational contexts, to identify its benefits, challenges and conditions for success, and analyze its potential applicability in Colombia. Employing a mixed-method design to analyze 25 peer-reviewed articles on EMI in higher education, this review uses a systematic literature review approach based on George (2008) and Braun & Clarke (2006) for structured source selection, organization, and analysis. The available data demonstrate that EMI improves students' communicative competencies in English, particularly in the domains of writing, speaking and listening. The objective of this program is to equip students with the necessary skills to compete in the global job market. However, research indicates that students encounter difficulties in comprehending specific English terminology or accents, a phenomenon attributable to the influence of students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds on EMI outcomes. The findings indicate that even in Asian and European countries, teachers encounter challenges and lack the necessary preparation to implement these methodologies, as well as a lack of institutional commitment and deficiencies in educational policies.

Key words: English as the Medium of Instruction, professional training, English as a lingua franca

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Las ventajas de Utilizar el Inglés como Medio de Instrucción para una Formación Profesional de Orientación Global. Una Revisión Teórica

RESUMEN

El inglés se ha convertido en una lengua franca dominante a escala mundial, facilitando la comunicación entre personas que no comparten una lengua materna común. En consecuencia, se han introducido nuevas metodologías con el objetivo de promover el fortalecimiento del idioma inglés, entre ellas el enfoque del inglés como medio de instrucción (EMI). El presente artículo ofrece una revisión bibliográfica que tiene como objetivo examinar las investigaciones recientes sobre la implementación del inglés como medio de instrucción (EMI) en diferentes contextos educativos internacionales, identificar sus beneficios, retos y condiciones para el éxito, y analizar su potencial aplicabilidad en Colombia. Mediante un diseño de método mixto para analizar 25 artículos revisados por pares sobre EMI en la educación superior, esta revisión utiliza un enfoque de revisión bibliográfica sistemática basado en George (2008) y Braun y Clarke (2006) para la selección, organización y análisis estructurados de las fuentes. Los datos disponibles demuestran que el EMI mejora las competencias comunicativas de los estudiantes en inglés, especialmente en las áreas de expresión escrita, expresión oral y comprensión auditiva. El objetivo de este programa es dotar a los estudiantes de las habilidades necesarias para competir en el mercado laboral global. Sin embargo, las investigaciones indican que los estudiantes encuentran dificultades para comprender la terminología específica del inglés o los acentos, un fenómeno atribuible a la influencia de los antecedentes culturales y lingüísticos de los estudiantes en los resultados del EMI. Los resultados indican que, incluso en países asiáticos y europeos, los profesores se enfrentan a retos y carecen de la preparación necesaria para implementar estas metodologías, así como de compromiso institucional y deficiencias en las políticas educativas.

Palabras clave: El inglés como medio de enseñanza, formación profesional, el inglés como lengua franca

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INTRODUCTION

English language has become a globally dominant lingua franca, facilitating communication between people who do not share a native language. The spread of an originally ethnic language across the world is a phenomenon without precedent. The origins of this process can be traced back to British colonialism and the subsequent economic, political and military ascendancy of one of the former colonies, the United States. However, the origins no longer serve as the primary driver for the continued expansion of the language, Mauranen (2005). English has become the primary lingua franca around the world, with most speakers being non-native English speakers, Jenkins (2017). In broad, cross-cultural contexts where English serves as a Lingua Franca and people do not speak the same native tongue, they utilize English, (Jenkins, 2011).

As noted by Michaud et al. (2015), in an increasingly globalized world where people from many different geographical and linguistic backgrounds must communicate with each other daily, the need for a global lingua franca is evident. The economic and cultural hegemony of the United States over the last century, together with the lingering influences of the colonial British Empire, have reinforced the position of English as the common language of international communication, (Michaud et al., 2015)

Since only about one in four English users worldwide are native speakers (Crystal 2003, cited in Seidlhofer, 2005), most ELF exchanges occur between "non-native" English speakers. For that reason, English as a lingua franca (ELF) is a phrase that has become popular in recent years to describe communication in English amongst speakers of diverse first languages. This is undoubtedly connected to the phenomenon of globalization and internationalization, which has significant implications for the academic field, particularly in higher education. One notable example of the widespread use and development of ELF is higher education (HE). Many institutions have switched to teaching in English as part of their internationalization efforts to draw in more faculty and staff from other countries, Jenkins (2019). This environment has given rise to new methodologies that facilitate instruction of new professionals, as exemplified by EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction).

According to Brosch (2015) English is often associated with the term "lingua franca" these days. English enables communication between speakers of different native languages, facilitating interactions in business, academia, and international diplomacy. English has become a lingua franca due to various



reasons: 1) Globalization has resulted in more interactions between people of different languages, with English often being the common communication medium. 2) The cultural impact of English-speaking countries, mainly the US and UK, has led to the global acceptance of English in media, technology, and education. 3) English is now the dominant language for scientific research and academic publishing, necessitating global scholars and researchers to convey their findings. 4) English frequently acts as a bridge language, facilitating communication in multicultural settings as individuals migrate across borders for various reasons. 5) English's role as a common language shows its usefulness in promoting communication in our interconnected world.

English as a Lingua Franca

According to Knapp & Meierkord (2002), *lingua franca* is a language used for communication between people for whom they are not the mother tongue. Lingua francas have acquired several different functions and are used by a heterogeneous group of speakers for whom they do not always have the same status as a second or foreign language. They are languages used by non-native speakers for limited, specific communication needs, (Knapp & Meierkord, 2002).

The term "lingua franca" has its origins in the medieval Mediterranean, where it was used to describe a mixed language that was employed primarily for commercial purposes. This language was a mixture of Italian, Spanish, French, Greek, Arabic and other languages, and was used by European traders and sailors (mainly of Italian origin) to facilitate communication with people of different linguistic origins throughout the Mediterranean, (Bakker 1997). The term "Franca" does not refer to France, but rather to the Franks, a term used by the Arabs and Ottomans to refer to Western Europeans in general, Bakker (1997).

In the Mediterranean region, Lingua Franca (LF) was the contact language used for interethnic communication until the second half of the 18th century. The Romance basis of LF is unquestioned, but assessments of the nature and extent of Romance contributions to LF, especially beyond the lexicon, have only recently begun, Operstein (2017). The term "Lingua Franca" describes both the structure and the various natural languages that were used as a means of communication, Wansborough (2013). In essence, lingua franca is a term that denotes a language used to bridge communication gaps between



individuals with different first languages. The origins of it are connected to trade, diplomacy, and interactions between diverse cultures and people.

EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction)

According to Dearden (2014), English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) refers to the use of the English language to teach academic subjects in countries or contexts where English is not the first language of most of the population. EMI has gained prominence in higher education as part of internationalization strategies, aiming to attract international students and faculty, enhance global competitiveness, and provide students with access to a wider range of academic resources (Dearden, 2014). The rise of EMI is closely linked to the global dominance of English as a lingua franca, particularly in academia, where English has become the primary language for research, publication, and international collaboration (Jenkins, 2017).

The origins of EMI can be traced back to the increasing globalization of higher education and the need for universities to prepare students for a globalized workforce. As noted by Kirkpatrick (2017), EMI programs are often implemented to improve students' English proficiency, increase their employability, and foster intercultural communication skills. However, the implementation of EMI is not without challenges, as it requires careful consideration of students' linguistic abilities, teaching methodologies, and institutional support systems (Macaro, 2018).

One of the key features of EMI is its focus on content and language integration. Unlike traditional English language teaching, where the primary goal is language acquisition, EMI emphasizes the use of English as a tool for learning academic content (Wilkinson & Walsh, 2015). This approach aligns with the principles of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), which seeks to simultaneously develop students' subject knowledge and language skills (Coyle et al., 2010). However, EMI differs from CLIL in that it often assumes a higher level of English proficiency among students and does not always include explicit language support (Macaro, 2018).

The spread of EMI has been particularly notable in non-English-speaking countries, where it is seen to enhance the international profile of universities and attract foreign investment in education (Kirkpatrick, 2017). For example, in Europe, EMI programs have been widely adopted in countries such as the Netherlands, Sweden, and Germany, where English is used to teach a variety of disciplines, from



engineering to social sciences (Wächter & Maiworm, 2014). Similarly, in Asia, countries like China, Japan, and South Korea have introduced EMI programs to align their higher education systems with global standards and improve their competitiveness in the international academic market (Byun et al., 2011).

Despite its benefits, EMI has raised concerns about its impact on linguistic equity and academic quality. Critics argue that the dominance of English in higher education may marginalize local languages and cultures, creating barriers for students who are not proficient in English (Phillipson, 2009). Additionally, the lack of adequate language support in EMI programs can lead to difficulties in understanding course content, which may negatively affect students' academic performance (Airey, 2016).

In conclusion, EMI represents a significant shift in the landscape of higher education, driven by the forces of globalization and the growing importance of English as a global lingua franca. While it offers opportunities for internationalization and academic collaboration, its implementation requires careful planning and support to ensure that it benefits all stakeholders, including students, faculty, and institutions.

CLIL, CBL, and EMI: Distinct Pedagogical Approaches or Variations of the Same Model?

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is an educational approach that integrates the teaching of subject content with the teaching of a foreign language, typically English. According to Coyle et al. (2010), CLIL is based on the principle that language is learned most effectively when it is used as a medium for acquiring knowledge, rather than being taught as a separate subject. This approach emphasizes the dual focus on content mastery and language development, aiming to enhance simultaneously students' understanding of academic subjects and their proficiency in the target language. CLIL has its roots in Content-Based Learning (CBL), an approach that emerged in the 1980s as a response to the limitations of traditional language teaching methods. CBL focuses on using subjects as the vehicle for language instruction, with the primary goal of developing language skills through meaningful and context-rich content (Brinton et al., 1989). While CBL primarily targets language learners, CLIL extends this approach to mainstream education, where both native and non-native speakers of the target language are exposed to content-driven language learning (Dalton-Puffer, 2011).



One of the key features of CLIL is its 4Cs Framework, which includes Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture (Coyle, 2007). This framework ensures that CLIL lessons are not only focused on delivering subject content but also on fostering communication skills, critical thinking, and intercultural awareness. For example, in a CLIL science class, students might learn about the water cycle (content) while practicing vocabulary and grammar structures related to the topic (communication), analyzing cause-and-effect relationships (cognition), and discussing how water management practices vary across cultures (culture).

CLIL has been widely adopted in European education systems, particularly in countries such as Spain, Finland, and the Netherlands, where it is seen to promote multilingualism and prepare students for a globalized world (Eurydice, 2006). In these contexts, CLIL is often implemented in primary and secondary schools, with subjects such as history, geography, and science being taught in a foreign language. The success of CLIL in Europe has inspired its adoption in other regions, including Asia and Latin America, where it is increasingly being used to enhance English language proficiency and academic achievement (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2010).

Despite its benefits, CLIL poses several challenges for both teachers and students. For teachers, implementing CLIL requires a high level of proficiency in both the target language and the subject, as well as specialized training in CLIL methodologies (Pérez Cañado, 2012). For students, the cognitive and linguistic demands of learning content through a foreign language can be overwhelming, particularly for those with limited language proficiency (Dalton-Puffer, 2011). To address these challenges, researchers have emphasized the importance of providing scaffolding and language support in CLIL classrooms, such as visual aids, glossaries, and collaborative learning activities (Meyer, 2010). In contrast to CLIL, Content-Based Learning (CBL) is more commonly associated with language teaching contexts, such as English for Specific Purposes (ESP) or English for Academic Purposes (EAP). CBL focuses on using authentic materials and real-world content to teach language skills, with the primary goal of preparing students for specific academic or professional contexts (Brinton et al., 1989). For example, in an EAP program, students might study academic articles or lectures to develop their reading and listening skills, while also learning the vocabulary and grammar structures needed to write research papers or give presentations.



While CLIL and CBL share a common emphasis on content-driven language learning, they differ in their target audiences and educational goals. CLIL is primarily aimed at mainstream education, where the focus is on both content and language development, whereas CBL is typically used in language teaching contexts, where the primary goal is language acquisition (Dalton-Puffer, 2011). However, both approaches highlight the importance of integrating language and content to create meaningful and engaging learning experiences.

In conclusion, CLIL and CBL represent innovative approaches to language education that emphasize the integration of content and language learning. While CLIL has gained prominence in mainstream education to promote multilingualism and academic achievement, CBL remains a valuable tool for language teaching in specialized contexts. Both approaches underscore the importance of using authentic and meaningful content to enhance language learning outcomes.

In the context of English Medium Instruction (EMI), the target language is English, serving as a medium for instruction rather than as an explicit learning objective. The primary objective is to enable the acquisition of academic content, with a particular emphasis on the development of disciplinary knowledge. It is generally expected that students possess a sufficient level of English proficiency (B2 or higher) to engage with the material effectively. In this context, instruction is typically delivered by subject-matter experts who do not necessarily have training in language teaching. The following chart clarifies their differences and similitudes.

Table N. 1 EMI similitudes with CLIL and content-based learning (CBL)

	CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning)	CBL (Content-Based Learning)	EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction)
Main objective	Learning content and language at the same time.	Learning the language through meaningful content.	Learning academic content, not the language itself.
Target language	A foreign language.	A foreign language.	English.
Focus	Balanced content and language.	Language development.	Content mastery.
Language level	It is adapted to students' own level.	Language determines the complexity of content.	Requires good English proficiency.
Teacher profile	Language or content teacher with dual competence.	Language teacher.	Content professional, not necessarily trained in ELT.
Common context	Bilingual schools, Europe, Latin America	Language classrooms.	Higher education institutions.

Note: The table shows similitudes and differences among these three approaches.



Despite the shared characteristics of integrating language and content, CLIL, CBL and EMI represent discrete pedagogical approaches, underpinned by distinct theoretical foundations and with divergent target outcomes. CLIL is an educational approach that aims to achieve a dual focus, fostering both content learning and language development simultaneously, often in school settings. CBL is principally a language teaching approach that uses content as a vehicle to enhance language skills, a method commonly employed in EFL/ESL classrooms. EMI, by contrast, is predominantly utilized in higher education and focuses exclusively on teaching academic content through English, without the provision of explicit language instruction.

METODOLOGY

This study used mixed methods to review 25 peer-reviewed articles on EMI in higher education comprehensively. The goal was to recognize patterns, difficulties, and consequences of EMI implementation. The selection of studies published between 2001 and 2025 was purposeful. The criteria for inclusion were that studies addressed EMI in higher education, were peer-reviewed, and provided empirical or theoretical insights. The databases used to find articles included Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, and Google Scholar. The analysis was conducted in two phases:

- **Qualitative analysis:** Thematic coding was used to identify key topics such as there are six key areas that require consideration: (1) academic benefits, (2) teacher training, (3) language challenges, (4) institutional practices, (5) stakeholder perspectives, and (6) equity and policy issues. The findings were synthesized narratively and supported with illustrative examples.
- **Quantitative analysis:** A frequency analysis was conducted to examine trends by publication year, country of study, type of research (empirical, theoretical), and thematic category. The application of descriptive statistics was utilized to facilitate the visualization of trends across the data.

This review adopts a systematic literature review approach focused on the use of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI). The choice of this approach is based on the models proposed by George (2008) and Braun & Clarke (2006), which provide a structured framework for the selection, organization, and analysis of sources. These models were selected because of their effectiveness in identifying patterns and trends in literature, allowing for a clear and detailed synthesis of findings.



Findings

The implementation of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in higher education has gained significant momentum globally, particularly in non-English-speaking countries seeking internationalization and improved academic standards. Recent studies have highlighted a wide range of benefits and challenges associated with EMI. On the one hand, EMI has been shown to enhance students' critical thinking skills, increase access to global knowledge (Bälter et al., 2022), and improve English language skills, including speaking confidence and motivation to learn (Rahmadani, 2016). The phenomenon has been demonstrated to be correlated with superior employability, particularly in international contexts (Kirkpatrick, 2014; McKinley & Rose, 2022). Nevertheless, several challenges persist, such as limited English proficiency among lecturers, which hinders effective content delivery (Volchenkova & Kravtsova, 2021), and insufficient language support tailored to students' disciplinary needs (Santoso et al., 2024). Furthermore, both students and teachers encounter challenges in adapting EMI practices to local educational contexts, underscoring the necessity for pedagogical reconceptualization and targeted professional development (Saragih, 2024; Ernawati et al., 2021). These findings reflect the complex, multifaceted nature of EMI and underscore the importance of contextualized approaches for its successful implementation. Table N. 2 presents previous studies found on the implementation of EMI.

Table N. 2: Review of previous studies

Author(s)	Year	Key Findings	Country/Countries
Ibrahim	2001	Combining English with native language improves comprehension in EMI settings.	Malaysia
Kirkpatrick	2014	EMI enhances employability especially in international contexts.	Asia, Australia
Rahmadani, D.	2016	EMI increases English ability, confidence, motivation; teachers need professional development.	Indonesia
Martinez, R.	2016	EMI challenges and opportunities in Brazilian higher education.	Brazil
Lin & Lo	2017	Balanced use of both languages enhances EMI effectiveness.	Hong Kong (China)
Tejada-Sánchez & Molina-Naar	2020	EMI fosters internationalization in Colombian higher education. Despite institutional support, challenges include lack of policy clarity and teacher preparation.	Colombia
Ernawati et al.	2021	Professional development is crucial for EMI teachers' linguistic and pedagogical growth.	Indonesia



Author(s)	Year	Key Findings	Country/Countries
Volchenkova & Kravtsova	2021	Teachers lack sufficient English proficiency, impacting quality.	Russia
Bälter et al.	2022	EMI improves critical thinking, global knowledge access; viewed positively for global career preparation.	Sweden
McKinley & Rose	2022	EMI improves English skills & employability; stakeholder attitudes and teacher preparation are essential.	Japan, Global
Santoso & Kinasih	2022	EMI promotes internationalization; mixed perceptions; English & career readiness.	Indonesia
Almusharraf et al. (n.d.)	2023	EMI content needs alignment with student needs; current implementations show mismatch.	Saudi Arabia
Griffiths	2023	Lack of training and negative teacher perceptions hinder EMI effectiveness.	New Zealand
Santoso, Hamied & Muslim	2024	Students value EMI for career advancement; EAP insufficient; ESAP recommended.	Indonesia
Saragih, E.	2024	Lecturers face language barriers, especially in arguing concepts, explaining and clarifying concepts, giving examples, and defining concepts.	Indonesia
Kiyu Itoi & Ryo Mizukura	2024	Linguistic backgrounds influence student interactions and learning processes in multicultural classrooms, particularly within a Japanese context.	Taiwan and South Korea
Raffaa, S. S. M., Alhamami, M., & Ali, N. L. B. H.	2024	Comprehensive policy planning is necessary to address the limitations and enhance support systems for both instructors and students in EMI contexts, thereby promoting inclusivity and academic success.	Saudi Arabia
Doran & Rieker	2024	Effective practices in EMI include tailored language support, enhanced curriculum design, and faculty development programs aimed at improving instructional quality.	Taiwan
Alam, S. S. A. N., Suprihatin, Y., & Yuniasih, E.	2024	Challenges include vocabulary, technical terms, and accent comprehension; support needed through language strategies and teacher training.	Indonesia
Simbolon, N. E., Sadiq, N., & Curle, S.	2025	Language skills are challenged mainly in productive areas like writing and speaking; cultural and environmental factors are critical.	Indonesian students abroad (Taiwan, South Korea, Australia, UK, Germany, France)
Simbolon et al.	2025	Significant difficulties in writing and speaking, need for better preparatory frameworks.	Indonesian
Saldo et al.	2025	EMI improves language skills, academic literacy, global competitiveness, and cultural awareness; challenges include limited proficiency, training, support, and pressure.	Philippines



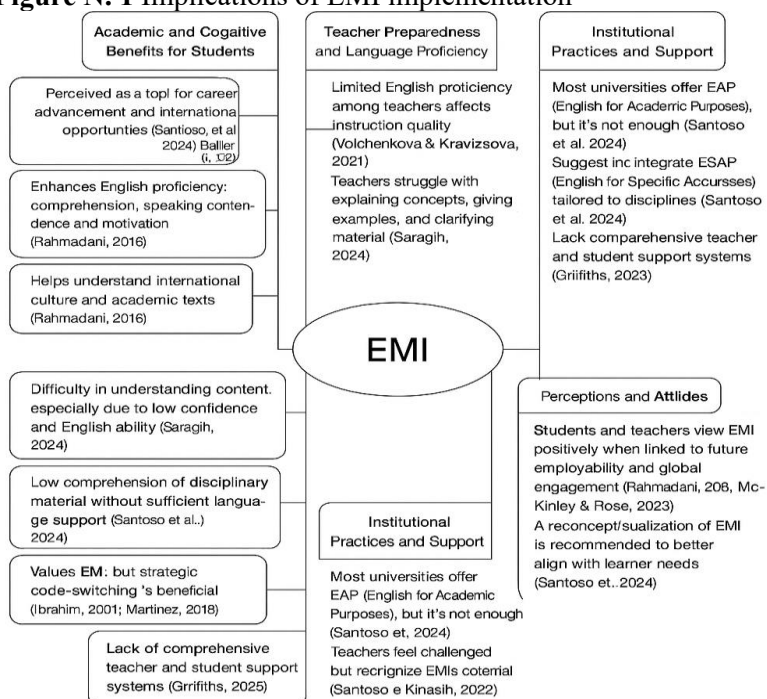
Andika & Putra	2025	Teacher proficiency in English is crucial; higher skills benefit learning process.	Indonesia
Rahman & Hu	2025	Neoliberal EMI policies may reinforce inequality; multilingual approaches needed.	China, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal
Khadka	2025	EMI may reinforce educational inequalities among lower socioeconomic students; tailored strategies needed.	South Asian contexts

Note: the table presents the main funding of 25 reviewed articles.

Qualitative analysis

The analysis of the articles listed above reveals the presence of both advantages and disadvantages, as illustrated in the subsequent figure.

Figure N. 1 Implications of EMI implementation



Advantages

The findings demonstrate that the implementation of EMI engenders academic and cognitive benefits for students. In the context of higher education, English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) has been identified as a catalyst for both the professional advancement of students and the facilitation of access to international opportunities (Santoso et al., 2024; Ballier, 2022). The strategic use of code-switching, or using multiple languages together, is of significant interest. Although EMI is highly valued, studies show that using the mother tongue sometimes improves results (Ibrahim, 2001). It is widely acknowledged that EMI is regarded as a means of facilitating professional advancement and providing

access to international opportunities (Santoso et al., 2024; Baller, 2023). The findings of this study consider the improvement of English proficiency, with reference to comprehension, oral expression, and motivation. As Rahmadani (2016) also demonstrates, this approach facilitates comprehension of both international cultures and academic texts. (Rahmadani, 2016). The perception among students and teaching staff of the English for Migrants and Immigrants (EMI) course is predominantly positive, with its association with future employability and global engagement being particularly salient factors in this regard. (Rahmadani, 2018; McKinley & Rose, 2023).

Disadvantages

As Saragh (2024) hypothesizes, students encounter challenges in comprehending the subject because of their diminished self-assurance and modest English language capabilities. Linguistic support is lacking. Santoso et al. (2024) posit that an absence of adequate support in English can result in an inability to comprehend subject. Lack of sufficient institutional support is a key problem. The lack of proper support exacerbates the difficulties faced by students and teachers (Griffiths, 2025).

A significant challenge in the implementation of EMI is the limited English proficiency of teachers, which detrimentally affects the quality of instruction and their ability to explain concepts effectively, provide examples, and clarify content (Volchenkova & Kravtsova, 2021; These challenges are further compounded by students' difficulties in comprehending disciplinary content, particularly when they lack confidence and adequate language proficiency (Saragih, 2024; Santoso et al., 2024). While most universities offer English for Academic Purposes (EAP), this support is often inadequate, leading to proposals for the incorporation of English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP), tailored to individual disciplines (Santoso et al., 2024). Moreover, the absence of comprehensive support systems for teachers and students has been identified as a significant barrier (Griffiths, 2023, 2025). A significant number of teachers exhibit limited English proficiency, and in the absence of appropriate professional development, their linguistic and pedagogical limitations hinder the effectiveness of EMI (Rahmadani, 2016; Ernawati et al., 2021). Research has demonstrated that the success of EMI is contingent not only on linguistic proficiency, but also on the attitudes of key stakeholders, including educators and students (McKinley & Rose, 2022). Negative perceptions and insufficient teacher training remain major obstacles to successful EMI adoption (Griffiths, 2023; Volchenkova & Kravtsova, 2021). Consequently, a



reconceptualization of EMI is recommended to ensure its alignment with learner needs and institutional realities (Santoso et al., 2024).

The challenges confronting higher education teachers in educational innovations in teaching are multiple. The challenges in the teaching process in higher education are increasingly challenging in view of the current demands for professionals who are critical, reflective, and involved in the development and transformation of society from their professional training. These professionals must be capable of solving problems and adapting to a constantly changing society, posited by Cely-Betancourt (2023).

Quantitative analysis

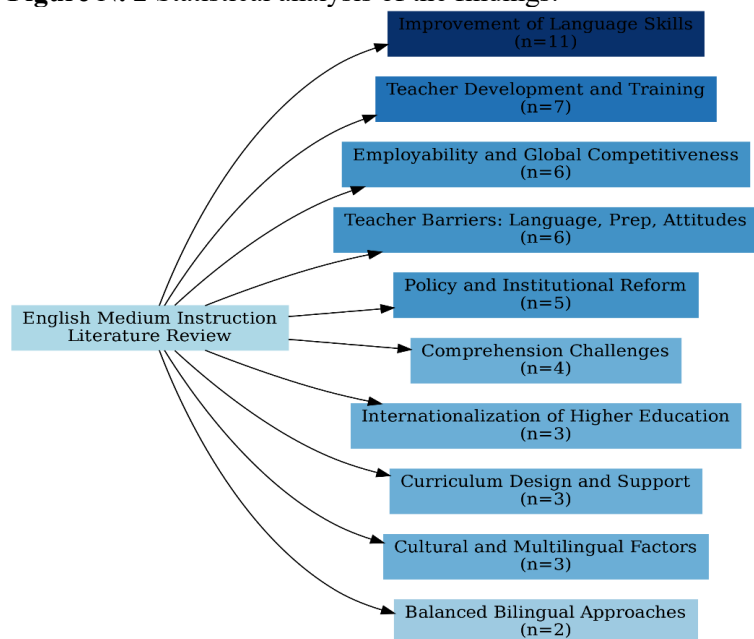
To analyze the prominence of each thematic category in EMI related literature, descriptive statistics were applied. The most frequently cited value was "Improvement of language skills," a theme that emerged in 11 studies, suggesting that it is the most prevalent topic. The mean frequency across all categories was 5.0, suggesting that, on average, each theme appeared in five studies. The median was 4.5, indicating that half of the categories had frequencies above and below this value, thereby offering a balanced perspective that was not influenced by extreme cases.

The statistical analysis of the findings revealed key patterns in the thematic focus of EMI research. A total of 50 key findings were extracted from the 25 articles reviewed, which were subsequently categorized into 10 distinct themes. The most frequently mentioned category, designated as 'Improvement of language skills', was cited in 11 studies, indicating its dominance in extant literature. The mean frequency was 5.0, indicating that, on average, each thematic category was discussed in five studies. The median (4.5) reflects a balanced distribution. The results of the study demonstrated that 50% of the categories exhibited a frequency that lay below or above the central value. Collectively, these measures indicate that while certain themes such as language development and teacher training are the more prevalent, a wide and diverse range of topics is explored across the EMI research scenery.

The mean was calculated using the standard formula $\bar{x} = \frac{\sum xi}{n}$, resulting in a value of 5.0. The median, calculated by averaging the two central values in the ordered dataset, was 4.5. The most frequently occurring value was found to be 11, which corresponds to the theme entitled "Improvement of language skills".



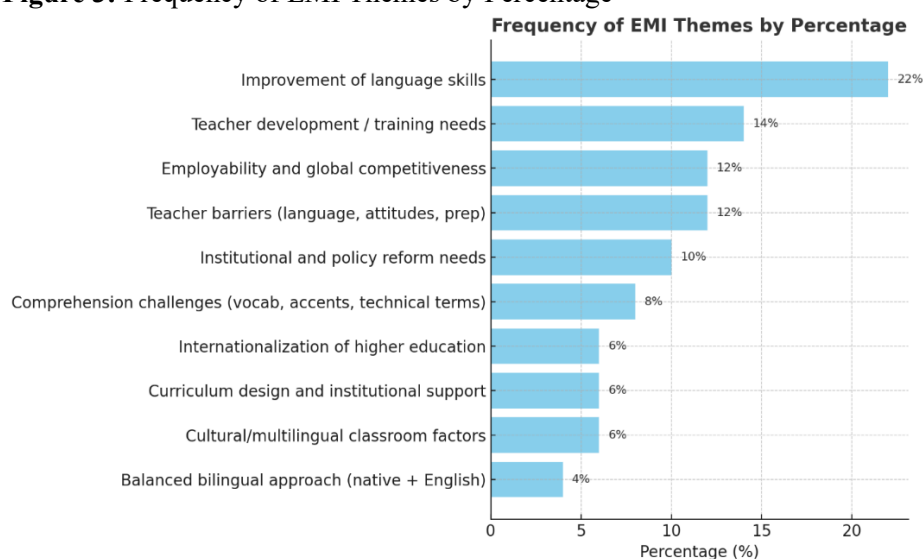
Figure N. 2 Statistical analysis of the findings.



The calculation of the percentage for each category is achieved by dividing the frequency of that specific category by the total frequency of all categories and then multiplying the result by 100. This provides the proportion of each category relative to the total, expressed as a percentage.

$$\%Category = \frac{\text{Frequency of the category}}{\text{Total frequency}} \times 100 =$$

Figure 3: Frequency of EMI Themes by Percentage



A horizontal bar chart displays how often key themes in English Medium Instruction (EMI) studies appear. Improving language skills is the most common theme, appearing in 22% of the studies. This highlights EMI's crucial role in developing students' English skills. Teacher development and training needs, making up 14% of the total, are the second most prominent theme, indicating a clear need for professional development among English-medium instructors.

The themes of employability and global competitiveness, as well as teacher barriers (language, attitudes, and preparation), are of particular significance, with each being mentioned in 12% of the studies. This finding suggests that there are both advantages and challenges associated with EMI for educators and students. The findings of the present study indicate that institutional and policy reform is a necessity in 10% of cases, suggesting that many researchers emphasize the need for structural support and reforms to successfully implement EMI. The analysis indicates that, suggesting concerns regarding students' comprehension in EMI contexts, comprehension challenges, including vocabulary, accents, and technical terms, are addressed in 8% of the studies.

Themes such as the internationalization of higher education, curriculum design and institutional support, and cultural and multilingual factors in the classroom are each represented in 6% of the studies. These elements are indicative of the broader educational and intercultural dimensions of EMI. Finally, the balanced bilingual approach, which involves the simultaneous use of both the native language and English, emerged as the least frequently mentioned theme. The prevalence of this phenomenon was observed to be minimal, with its presence documented in a mere 4% of the studies reviewed. This observation suggests that the exploration of this domain remains relatively under-explored.

In summary, the chart emphasizes that while EMI is largely viewed as a tool for enhancing language skills and employability, it also brings to light pressing needs related to teacher training, institutional support, and student comprehension.

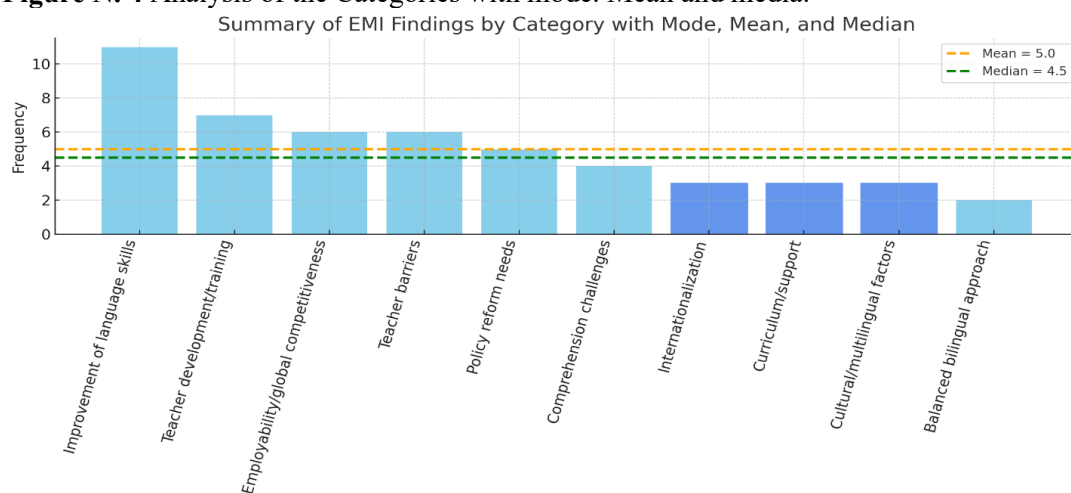


Table N. 3 Categories and description

Finding Category	Freq.	%	Description
Improvement of language skills	11	22%	EMI improves students' English in writing, speaking, listening, etc.
Teacher development / training needs	7	14%	Teachers need training in both English and teaching methods.
Employability and global competitiveness	6	12%	EMI helps students prepare for careers and compete globally.
Teacher barriers (language, attitudes, prep)	6	12%	Teachers face difficulties due to low proficiency or lack of preparation.
Institutional and policy reform needs	5	10%	Institutions need clearer EMI policies and structural support.
Comprehension challenges (vocab, accents, technical terms)	4	8%	Students struggle with understanding specific English terms or accents.
Internationalization of higher education	3	6%	EMI supports global exchange and international visibility of universities.
Curriculum design and institutional support	3	6%	EMI works better when curriculum and faculty support are well structured.
Cultural/multilingual classroom factors	3	6%	Students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds affect EMI outcomes.
Balanced bilingual approach (native + English)	2	4%	Using both native language and English improves comprehension and engagement.

Note: The table presents the analysis done per category with a description of each one.

The table above illustrates the benefits that arise from the implementation of EMI programs, with a particular emphasis on the enhancement of communication skills. Nevertheless, it is imperative to acknowledge the challenges confronting students when engaged in such programs. Furthermore, it emphasizes the challenges encountered by teachers and the absence of commitment and clear policies on the part of educational institutions.

Figure N. 4 Analysis of the Categories with mode. Mean and media.

The graph e illustrates the frequency with which different findings related to English as a medium of instruction (EMI) emerge in the analyzed literature. The categories are distributed along the horizontal axis, while the vertical axis shows the frequency of occurrence of each finding. The category with the highest representation is 'Improvement of language skills', which received more than 10 mentions, indicating its central relevance in the studies reviewed. The subsequent categories, namely 'Teacher development/training' and 'Employability/global competitiveness', exhibit a frequency distribution ranging from 6 to 7. In contrast, categories such as 'Internationalization', 'Curriculum/support' and 'Cultural/multilingual factors' exhibit lower frequencies, which may be indicative of less attention devoted to these areas in the extant literature. The graph also incorporates horizontal lines marking the mean (5.0) and median (4.5), which allows the distribution of the data to be visualized in relation to these central measures. The graphical representation provides a clear overview of the predominant themes in EMI research and allows identification of areas that could benefit from further analysis in future research.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Regarding the advantages and disadvantages of EMI on students, there is a coherence between the quantitative and qualitative data. Both types of data demonstrate that EMI improves students' communicative competencies in English, particularly in the domains of writing, speaking and listening. The objective of this program is to equip students with the necessary skills to compete in the global job market. However, research indicates that students encounter difficulties in comprehending specific English terminology or accents, a phenomenon attributable to the influence of students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds on EMI outcomes.

In relation to teaching staff, research findings indicate a necessity for training in both C.C. in English and teaching methods. This is since teachers encounter challenges arising from low proficiency or inadequate preparation. Conversely, the development of EMI as a strategy has been instrumental in promoting internationalization and facilitating global exchange, thereby enhancing the international visibility of universities. However, to optimize its potential, it is imperative that institutions implement more explicit EMI policies and ensure the presence of structural support. Furthermore, the enhancement



of the curriculum and the provision of faculty support are also crucial factors that must be given due consideration.

According to the research reviewed, most EMI (English-Medium Instruction) implementations have taken place in countries such as Indonesia and other Asian nations. The findings report significant advantages associated with this methodology; however, they also reveal substantial obstacles that have hindered the expected academic outcomes. In relation to the Colombian context, and responding to our initial research question: What are the benefits, challenges, and critical factors identified in the implementation of EMI in different countries around the world, and what implications would its adoption have in the Colombian educational context? We argue that although there are differences in economic, political, demographic, and educational factors between Colombia and these Asian countries, such differences are not insurmountable.

In fact, there are also relevant similarities, as both contexts are committed to strengthening curriculum internationalisation and promoting English as a foreign language. Regarding teachers' English level, in the report published by EF English Proficiency in 2021, Colombia was ranked 81st among 112 countries worldwide, classified as a country with low English proficiency (Betancourt and Ramos, 2024). However, within the same report, Indonesia ranks 81st and Japan 78th, indicating a parallel tendency in the limited English proficiency among teaching professionals in these nations.

Implementing EMI not only requires solid communicative competence in English but also demands strong pedagogical and didactic skills, along with the ability to navigate intercultural differences and foster openness toward diverse cultural perspectives. Furthermore, instructors must demonstrate mastery of disciplinary knowledge in specific fields of study. Despite these challenges, EMI represents a highly relevant methodology for the development of 21st-century competencies. It is an approach that educational institutions could adopt to promote high-quality academic preparation for future professionals in a globalised and multilingual world.

In Colombia, there is still a significant gap in the training of teachers to adopt these new educational trends. Jiménez & Betancourt (2024) affirm that Colombia has a notable history in teacher training, particularly in the integration of foreign languages into the curriculum. From colonial times to the



present day, the national government has included policies to strengthen foreign language skills among the population. However, there is still room for improvement.

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