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Introduction – The Impact of Affective Variables on EMI Programmes: A Close Examination

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Affective factors are connected with emotions, feelings, moods and attitudes, which is why affective instruments of measurement are aimed 'to capture people's feelings, attitudes, or inner emotional states' (McCoach *et al.*, 2023: 1). Affective factors are pivotal in teaching and learning and, in fact, research has consistently reported how they contribute to learner success (Simons & Smits, 2020). Elements such as motivation, language attitudes, anxiety and emotions have been on the radar of applied linguists since the 2000s (e.g. Lasagabaster, 2016; Macaro *et al.*, 2018; Morley *et al.*, 2021). However, considering the social relevance and the impact of the affective dimension on learning, further research is needed, especially when it comes to tertiary education, because robust research on the affective sphere has a strong potential to provide rich data that can be used to improve education programmes. This book offers an updated outlook of cutting-edge research into the most salient factors that affect learning in English-medium instruction (EMI), taking into account students' and teachers' experiences and perspectives. This is important because universities should strive to develop not only stakeholders' cognitive domain, but they also need to foster and underpin their affective domain. Although applied linguists have often been too focused on individual's cognitive skills, on many occasions emotions rather than intellect help to account for the easiness or the difficulties students may go through during the learning process (Klebowska, 2012). As a result of this, it could be affirmed

that nowadays there is widespread agreement on the fact that both the cognitive and the affective domains complement each other. As Dörnyei and Ryan bluntly put it:

> Perhaps the greatest omission of the classic ID [individual difference] paradigm is that it barely acknowledges the central role of emotions in human thought and behaviour, even though affect is an unavoidable component of any attempt to understand the nature of learner characteristics. (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015: 9)

These authors underscore that the trend to regard affect as a poor relation to cognition or rational thinking is deeply rooted in the Western tradition that has tended to separate reason from emotion. Since the learning process is an emotionally heavily loaded process, we strongly believe that a close look at affective factors will help us to better understand the relationship between cognition and emotion. If our objective is to have engaged and proactive learners and teachers in our university classrooms, it is vital to try to find out how we can bolster their engagement, but we should not overlook the fact that 'emotions create the foundations on which engagement is built' (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020: 161). In addition, research has revealed that students' success in EMI programmes is not solely based on English proficiency and that researchers should also zoom in on affective variables such as attitudes, motivation, self-concept and self-efficacy in order to capture the wider picture of the learning process (Bradford, 2019; Thompson *et al.*, 2022; Zhou *et al.*, 2023).

In this light, the current edited volume aims to bridge this lack of communication between the cognitive and the affective domains in order to shed light on those affective factors that may help to implement and develop more effective and successful EMI programmes. This is a conviction firmly shared by the three editors.

The Englishisation of higher education appears to be an approach adopted by many universities to promote outward-looking and internationalization perspectives (Ryan, 2018). As a result, the number of EMI programmes is rapidly increasing at a global scale, and their spread has clearly outpaced research. In fact, despite the 'exponentially growing research literature' in EMI (Smit, 2023: 1), affective factors have hitherto been overlooked. From an affective point of view, the implementation of English as a medium of instruction and the key role that it assumes in the internationalization process seems to have an impact on the language ecology of these institutions (Lasagabaster, 2022). In recognition of these two factors, this book attempts to delve into how the teaching and learning process through English at university level interacts with the various affective factors that surround its environment and the other languages in contact.

By investigating EMI education from an affective lens, the aim of this book is not only to provide new insights into the teaching and learning

process through English at university level, but also to determine a better understanding of how students' and teachers' affective domains work, and how language teacher education (LTE) programmes can be streamlined and enhanced. In other words, this volume attempts to extend our methodological and theoretical understanding of the impact of the affective dimension on language learning within tertiary education. To achieve this objective, we approached a number of active EMI researchers in the field of affectivity and invited them to contribute to their areas of expertise. The response was encouragingly positive from leading scholars in the field, with a renowned track of publications in EMI and related topics, at universities worldwide, spanning three continents: Africa, Asia and Europe. This international group of scholars is a further testimony of the flourishing interest in the affectivity domain in EMI settings.

The different studies that these scholars present in this book begin with an analysis of the particular affective dimension(s) under scrutiny, followed by a more specific examination of this dimension within EMI programmes at colleges and university. Some of the topics covered approach teachers' and learners' motivation, self-concept and identity (Chapters 1, 4, 5 and 8), language attitudes and beliefs (Chapters 2, 3 and 9), and perceptions (Chapters 6, 7, 10 and 11), among others. The contributions to this volume provide new insights into this field by offering an updated and exhaustive panorama on affective factors in language learning in several higher education settings, including Anglophone (Chapters 2 and 4) and non-Anglophone countries: China (Chapters 11 and 3), different European contexts (Chapters 6, 8, 9 and 10), Japan (Chapters 1 and 5), South Africa (Chapter 2), South Korea (Chapter 5), and Turkey (Chapter 7). In addition, monolingual and multilingual territories, as well as migration contexts are reviewed.

From a methodological viewpoint, these scholars employ an eclectic range of approaches to examine contemporary issues, combining the conventional and the traditional with more dynamic approaches. Accordingly, an even keel of quantitative (Chapters 5, 9 and 10), qualitative (Chapters 1, 2, 4 and 7) and mixed-methods (Chapters 3, 6, 8 and 11) research studies is presented to shed light on the nuanced and the quantifiable factors that have a significant impact on the affective dimension in EMI.

The topics these scholars address fall under three primary parts. Part 1 deals with **the impact of affective factors on identity and wellbeing** on the field and comprises four chapters. Bradford (Chapter 1) starts by exploring Japanese female professors traversing internationalized classroom worlds, which she defines as scary and challenging, yet a fun and necessary adventure. In this first chapter, Bradford sheds some light on the complexity of interactions within international Japanese university contexts. As higher education becomes more international and classrooms become more diverse, Bradford provides some insight into how faculty

members navigate these contexts that are internationalizing in different ways and brimming with complex interactions. Through narrative inquiry, the study reflects on the journeys of eight Japanese female professors as they traverse cultures and worlds, navigating classes in English and Japanese with varied groups of students, exploring the ways in which female faculty construct and manage their competing identities, their feelings of 'fit' and (dis)comfort as these professors manage their ascribed and personal identities to become trans-world professionals.

Coetzee-Van Rooy (Chapter 2) presents an analysis of 55 language portraits to study the interrelationships between language and identity among multilingual South African students through the beliefs and the experiences they have with using English as language of learning and teaching (LoLT). Known for its complex multilingual ecology in which English plays specific roles, Coetzee-Van Rooy examines the complicated interplay between multilingualism and the use of English as LoLT in South African higher education settings. The context of the study reported on is that of a large-scale language portrait study where a total of 2033 language portraits were collected from first year students attending the North-West University's (NWU) welcoming and reception programme in South Africa.

Yuan *et al*. (Chapter 3) consider the relationship between EMI teacher motivation and perceived burnout within Chinese university settings to elucidate upon how addressing EMI teachers' needs and well-being can be beneficial for EMI teacher education and retention. The study is part of a larger research project on EMI teachers' professional experience and continuing development in Chinese higher education. A mixed-methods approach of questionnaires and interviews is employed to probe into the psychological experiences of 45 EMI teachers from different universities in China through five dimensions, namely self-efficacy, collective efficacy, outcome expectancy beliefs, satisfaction, and stress. The aim of the chapter is to confirm whether a relationship exists among these five dimensions, whether this association or these individual dimensions are subject to gender, disciplinary or academic position variance, and the impact of these correlations upon teacher motivation and job satisfaction.

Lastly, Dearden and Kubanyiova (Chapter 4) explore affect through the philosophical lens of identity narratives in the context of migrant adults attending English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes at an adult education institute in the UK. It critically reflects on the role of affect in a teacher-student relationship through observations, interactions, and narratives by focusing on a highly qualified professional from Iran with aspirations of attending university to complete a PhD in aerospace engineering. The chapter discusses its implications for language teaching pedagogy, while at the same time reflecting on the limits of current ESOL provision as preparation for students' future EMI education. These authors adopt a creative non-fiction approach (CNF) to shed light on

these affective encounters and reflect on how ESOL provision might be enhanced to enable its participants to pursue a wider range of options, including EMI higher education. Although EMI usually refers to the teaching of academic subjects through English in non-Anglophone contexts (Macaro *et al*., 2018; Smit, 2023), we agree with those authors (e.g. Pecorari & Malmström, 2018) who claim that EMI research should also approach Anglophone countries on the grounds that students whose L1 is not English face similar challenges to those experienced by EMI students in non-Anglophone settings.

Part 2 addresses **the impact of affective factors on academic results** in EMI and covers three chapters. Thompson *et al*. (Chapter 5) begin by exploring the potential impact of affective factors such as L2 self-concept, motivation, and self-regulation on language attainment across EMI students at Korean and Japanese universities. Specifically, it compares learners from different disciplinary contexts using the same content knowledge measurement in relation to the strength of these affective factors as predictors of business content knowledge for learners studying via EMI at universities in Korea and Japan. This study analyses test and questionnaire data from 455 students studying business classes from two institutions and participants represent three groups (Japanese business majors, Korean business majors, and Korean non-business majors). The authors aim to define the relevance of language proficiency and the potential impact of motivation and self-regulatory behaviour and instruction on EMI success, and to understand which factors may motivate different types of student groups.

González-Mujico and Fernández-Costales (Chapter 6) examine the impact of perceived digital competence on faculty and students' digital competence and academic results across undergraduate programmes at a Spanish university. This is a topical piece of research that aligns with the rapidly developing body of literature on the level and development of digital competence within higher education. Using the DigCompEdu and DigComp 2.0 self-assessment tools, this study explores the affective dimension of teachers' and learners' perceived digital competence and its impact on academic outcomes through task performance and academic grades. The chapter uses a mixed-methods approach to analyse a total of 31 undergraduate dissertations submitted in EMI degree programmes across four disciplines.

As a final point, Sahan (Chapter 7) attempts to shed light on questions of language learning through EMI by exploring students' and teachers' perceptions of EMI policies and motivations in relation to academic outcomes in Turkish higher education. Although EMI programmes are often assumed to simultaneously improve students' understanding of content knowledge and their English language skills, Sahan discusses the degree to which EMI programmes achieve these alleged dual aims and the reasons why EMI study programmes are primarily undertaken. The study uses

interviews and focus groups to examine the perceptions of 21 teachers and 150 students from Engineering Faculties at seven universities using qualitative content analysis.

Part 3 focuses on **the impact of affective factors on classroom practices and perceptions** in EMI and includes four chapters. Dalziel and Guarda (Chapter 8) consider attitudes and emotional responses to language use and the emergence of plurilingual identities in the context of two EMI programmes at an Italian university with high numbers of international students. The objective is to offer practitioners a comprehensive view of affective elements within the EMI classroom, particularly within the context of multilingual educational settings, thereby contributing to their pedagogical insights and strategies. Through questionnaire responses and focus group discussions, the authors delve into students' selection of degree programmes and their emotional responses associated with the languages employed for learning purposes. This chapter reflects on the students' profound emotional connection to the English language as an integral component of their academic identity and translanguaging practices in the process of content knowledge acquisition.

Serna-Bermejo and Lasagabaster (Chapter 9) scrutinize the convictions and inclinations of 455 learners concerning their engagement in EMI lectures conducted at a Spanish university, a context where language proficiency and the learning milieu exert notable influence. Given the paucity of research dedicated to the subject of interaction and students' perspectives, the present study addresses this void by analysing university students' beliefs about the impact of EMI on classroom interaction. Subsequently, an insightful discussion is presented on the positive and negative impact of gender and level of language proficiency on students' beliefs about language interaction and their willingness to participate in EMI classes.

Dimova and Jensen (Chapter 10) examine students' perceptions of lecturers' English competences for teaching, with a particular focus on accent, comprehensibility, overall proficiency, and the lecturers' English proficiency at a Danish university. The study involves the assessment of audio-recorded lectures conducted by 16 lecturers and their corresponding scores on an oral English proficiency test, with a total of 95 student evaluations. Using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) along with post-hoc Tukey testing and Pearson correlation for data exploration and inference, these authors analyse the impact of lecturers' English language competence for teaching and their overall oral English proficiency on students' evaluations and its implications for effective EMI teacher training.

Jia *et al*. (Chapter 11) wrap up this final part investigating the relationships between learner characteristics (namely anxiety, motivation and narrative identity) and self-perceived language challenges among postgraduate EMI students in China. The study employs a convergent

parallel mixed-methods approach, with 88 postgraduate engineering students participating in surveys, and a subset of six students engaged in semi-structured interviews. Correlation analysis is used to decipher the complex relationship between language challenges, English learning motivation, and EMI classroom anxiety, while qualitative data uncovers overarching themes pertaining to the interplay of these three learner attributes through students' narrative identities. By synthesising these two sets of findings, these authors attempt to delineate a multifaceted relationship in which anxiety, motivation and self-perceived language challenges can exhibit both positive and negative associations, influenced by situational factors and students' individualised narrative identities.

Besides presenting empirical results on the affective dimension in EMI, this book also approaches the educational implications for teachers and students, offering guidelines for language and content lecturers in tertiary education. With a view to maintaining the coherence of the volume, all chapters end with a final section in which authors explain how their findings can contribute to improving both language and content teaching and learning practices, while they also propose recommendations for EMI education in university settings.

As a final reflection of the volume as a whole and where it may lead the field to in terms of future research, Macaro expands the discussion one last time in the **Epilogue** summarising the main findings set forth in the book, making connections between them and providing potential new avenues for research. We hope that this collection of engaging and appealing chapters will whet researchers' appetite to embark on new research projects in the EMI field of research by drawing on the rich findings discussed by the contributors, while it will also serve to give food for thought to EMI teacher trainers when it comes to tackling the affective parameter in their training courses. Although both teachers' and students' language proficiency has an impact on EMI, the impact of affective factors on performance should not be underestimated.

Acknowledgements

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