Lecturers' experiences with English-medium instruction in a state university in Turkey: Practices and challenges

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The current paper is a phenomenological study of faculty members' perception of English-medium instruction (EMI) undergraduate programs. An open-ended questionnaire covering teaching practices, challenges encountered and training preferences was developed. Through a thematic analysis of the data collected from 102 lecturers, this study aims to shed light on the needs of content lecturers in EMI undergraduate programs in a state university in Turkey. The findings show that most of the participants aspired to see an EMI support system set up in the institution. The major themes which emerged from the inquiry are 'teaching practices among content lecturers', 'challenges and constraints which content lecturers face' and 'training courses for content lecturers'. Based on university-wide teaching practices and the views of EMI lecturers, it is concluded that lecturers are more in favour than against the university's EMI policy, but they also would like the university administration to be responsible for monitoring the language provision and providing training. Findings also indicate lecturers' endeavour to use English as much as possible, regardless of their agreement with the institutional language policy.

Introduction

A number of practices have been adopted by higher education institutions (HEIs) as part of internationalisation. Altbach and Knight (2007) listed the specific initiatives as international bilateral agreements, branch campuses, programs for foreign students, and offering English-medium instruction (EMI) programs. In recent years, many universities in Asia (Bolton, Botha & Bacon-Shone, 2017; Poon, 2013; Rose & McKinley, 2018) and Europe (Arnó-Macià & Mancho-Barés, 2015; O'Dowd, 2018; Werther, Denver, Jensen & Mees, 2014) and some universities in Central and South America (Baumvol & Sarmento, 2019; Hamel, López & Carvalhal, 2016; Taquini, Finardi & Amorim, 2017) have expanded their international activities in number and scope. However, higher education in some European (Dearden & Macaro, 2016; Gustafsson, 2020; Haigh, 2014; Schmidt-Unterberger, 2018), Asian (Belyaeva & Kuznetsova, 2018; Brown, 2016; Duong & Chua, 2016; Ekoç, 2018; Kim & Tatar, 2018; Poon, 2013) and Central and South American (Baumvol & Sarmento, 2019; Hamel et al., 2016) countries has progressed internationalisation by depending primarily on statistics and numbers, that is, on quantity. Belyaeva and Kuznetsova (2018) and Kim and Tatar (2018) have similarly reported that HEIs in some Asian countries are putting a particular emphasis on university rankings and the recruitment of international students.

Karakas (2016) suggested that EMI programs in Turkey are usually seen as a path towards internationalisation in the form of the recruitment of international students. In other cases, internationalisation of an HEI refers mainly to a calculation based on the number of classes offered in English, and the numbers of international students and academics. Some

HEIs offer EMI programs because EMI gives them an international image and prestige (Dearden, 2015; Ekoç, 2018; Selvi, 2014), but as Haigh (2014) commented, the current emphasis of HEIs on quantity needs also to be accompanied by a focus on quality. Dearden (2018) drew attention to some assumptions made by HEIs when switching to EMI, which are that "students' proficiency in English will improve as a result of immersion through English Medium Instruction (EMI) and that the transition for EMI academics from teaching their academic discipline in their first language to teaching through their second language (English) will be smooth and problem-free" (p. 323). Lei and Hu (2014), however, found no evidence that Chinese university students' English language proficiency was greater than that of their peers in Chinese-medium instruction programs. In order for a Turkish-medium instruction (TMI) program to switch to EMI, the academics in the relevant department first have to certify their English language proficiency by obtaining specific minimum scores either in a national English-language proficiency test (such as YDS and YOKDIL) (Ekoç, 2018) or in an international test (such as PTE, TOEFL and IELTS) (Jenkins, 2014). The national tests are administered centrally and the questions principally cover vocabulary, grammatical structures and reading comprehension. Given the fact that national language tests evaluate only reading comprehension skills and ignore the listening, speaking and writing skills, there is a growing concern about whether academics are really able to teach, because EMI necessitates good communication skills (Mancho-Barés & Arnó-Macià, 2017).

The current spread of English as a *lingua franca* has had a profound impact in many countries at every educational level (Kırkgöz, 2009; Kuteeva, 2019). Especially at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, English-taught programs are growing rapidly in non-Anglophone countries worldwide (Macaro & Han, 2020; Rose & McKinley, 2018). In the last decade, many universities in Europe (Airey, Lauridsen, Rasanen, Salö & Schwach, 2017; Gustafsson, 2020; O'Dowd, 2018; Roothooft, 2020) and Asia (Belyaeva & Kuznetsova, 2018; Poon, 2013; Yıldız, Soruç & Griffiths, 2017; Zhang, 2018) have introduced EMI programs. Many HEIs consider EMI programs to be an important part of their internationalisation process (Zhang, 2018).

The implementation of EMI, driven by the motivation to differentiate the university from others (Çatı & Bilgin, 2015; Selvi, 2014), raises questions as to how successfully subject content is acquired (Ba ıbek et al., 2014; Guarda & Helm, 2017; Ozer & Bayram, 2019; Selvi, 2014), and the extent to which EMI is internalised by lecturers and students (Ekoç, 2018). Moreover, there is a growing concern about whether most HEIs simply adopt the language policies of well-known universities in Turkey or abroad, which they have then developed for their own institutions according to their own needs and aims (Selvi, 2014), although most HEIs in Turkey need to re-regulate their current institutional language policies (Turhan & Kırkgöz, 2018). Kırkgöz (2009) and Schmidt-Unterberger (2018) argued that in parallel with the institution's needs, EMI cannot be a 'one-size-fits-all' method, but that a combination of English-medium instruction, English for specific purposes, and English for academic purposes based on the needs of students, lecturers and the HEI, can better serve all the educational stakeholders' needs and expectations.

Revealing attitudes towards EMI and understanding what lecturers think and believe (Brown, 2016; Simbolon, 2018) can be considered as a precondition for the acceptance and long-term success of any language policy (Tri & Moskovsky, 2019). Despite studies reporting the challenges which students face in EMI programs in Turkey, there is a dearth of research which has focused on the quality of EMI delivery by monitoring the process and identifying needs by understanding perceptions, constructions and practices in Turkish universities. In the Turkish context, of the two studies which were found to have examined the perspectives of lecturers on teaching through the medium of English, one was based on the attitude of lecturers and used quantitative data and the other was qualitative in nature but was based on a sample of only six EMI lecturers. This current study is designed to fill this knowledge gap by adopting a qualitative research approach in order to interpret the practices and to identify the needs in EMI programs, with the participation of over half of the academics in one HEI at the time of the study. In short, for effective learning in an EMI setting, determining and addressing the needs of EMI lecturers is a necessity. This necessity led to the following research questions:

1. What are content lecturers' teaching practices in EMI classrooms?
2. What challenges do EMI lecturers face?
3. In what areas for improvement should training be provided by the HEI?

EMI in Turkish higher education

HEIs in Turkey have recently undergone a change somewhat similar to some northern European universities (Airey et al., 2017; Hultgren, 2018; Henriksen, Holmen & Kling, 2019; Maiworm & Wächter, 2014; Werther et al., 2014). A growing number of research studies from Turkey (Ba ıbek et al, 2014; Macaro & Akincioglu, 2018; Ozer & Bayram, 2019; Selvi, 2014; Turhan & Kırkgöz, 2018) and from Nordic countries (Hultgren, 2018; Maiworm & Wächter, 2014; Thøgersen & Airey, 2011; Werther et al., 2014) have reported that EMI is on the rise, particularly in undergraduate programs, and that the main reasons for departments to switch to EMI are to attract international students and to give the home students an international edge over Turkish-medium instruction graduates in the competitive employment market. Lam and Wächter (2014) confirmed the popularity of HEIs offering EMI bachelor or masters programs in the Nordic region.

The similarity ends when Turkey and Nordic countries are compared in terms of their EMI programs over the course of years. Nordic countries have consistently been in the higher ranks of institutions offering EMI programs (Lam & Wächter, 2014), whereas in Turkey, until recently EMI has been restricted to some prestigious universities in Ankara and İstanbul (Başıbek et al., 2014; Selvi, 2014). A limited number of high schools in Turkey offer EMI but not content and language integrated learning (CLIL) (Arnó-Macià & Mancho-Barés, 2015; Pavón Vázquez & Ellison, 2013) because students are expected to enter programs with a good command of English. However, EMI is much more common at the tertiary level (Aslan, 2018; Ba ıbek et al., 2014); Fenton-Smith, Humphreys & Walkinshaw, 2017; Macaro & Han, 2020; Selvi, 2014; Thøgersen & Airey, 2011). Aslan (2018) and Selvi (2014) noted that the main motivation for students to opt for

undergraduate EMI programs is instrumental, that is to improve their international career and employment opportunities. As stated by the then head of the Council of Turkish Higher Education (Cetinsaya, 2014), EMI can also be considered as a reflection of a top-down, state-centred approach to internationalisation with a focus on international students (Efe & Ozer, 2105; Karakas, 2016) and the pivotal role of English at the tertiary level.

EMI has expanded into a number of undergraduate programs in Turkey (Karakas, 2016; Kırkgöz, 2014; Selvi, 2014). Arik and Arik (2014) suggested that approximately twenty percent of all programs in Turkish HEIs are provided through different modes of English, either partial or full EMI. There are many factors which contribute to this expansion of EMI in Turkey. Over the last two decades, a number of university administrations have increasingly taken EMI as a strategy for internationalising their institutions. Some universities, in order to compete with other HEIs nationally and even internationally, consider EMI to be a method of differentiation over TMI universities (Aslan, 2018; Çatı & Bilgin, 2015; Selvi, 2014). Another reason behind the spread of EMI programs is the global demand and competitiveness in the market (Thøgersen & Airey, 2011; Zaif, Karapınar & Eksi, 2017). Some universities offer EMI programs just for prestige (Macaro, Curle, Pun, An & Dearden, 2018; Selvi, 2014; Turhan & Kırkgöz, 2018), in order to improve their position in the global university rankings (Macaro, Akincioglu & Dearden, 2016; Rauhvargers, 2013), or to attract more international faculty members and students (Aslan, 2018; Macaro et al., 2018; Selvi, 2014).

No matter how or why administrators support EMI in higher education, Spolsky (2004) suggested that top-down language policies are, in most cases, far from guaranteeing success. Even if HEIs are enforced centrally in a top-down manner to internationalise (Efe & Ozer, 2015), and to switch the medium of instruction in some of their programs, they must then internalise that top-down encouragement to rationalise their short-term and long-term institutional plans. Otherwise, the issue arises that practices in an EMI classroom can be disregarded or ignored (Cho, 2012; Kim & Tatar, 2018). Decision-makers in universities must keep in mind that one-size-fits-all methods adopted from different HEIs might not work in every single Turkish university (Kırkgöz, 2009) and that therefore the needs of stakeholders such as students, lecturers, employers and accreditation agencies must be carefully analysed to ensure the effectiveness of a language policy (Ba ıbek et al., 2014; Brown, 2016; Ekoç, 2018; Simbolon, 2018).

A growing body of research has contributed to the ongoing debate over the medium of instruction in the Turkish HE context. A report on Turkish HE by the British Council/TEPAV (2015) recommended that TMI programs should be prioritised over mixed-medium instruction. However, the report also recommended that students' proficiency in English should be supported and encouraged throughout their education and that EMI at postgraduate level was reportedly of greater use than at undergraduate level. Keles, Yazan and Giles (2019) investigated the website content of EMI programs and language policy in a technical state university in Turkey and found a disparity between the university's language policy and practice. Despite EMI's popularity at the tertiary level, only a limited body of information is available about what attracts Turkish students to

EMI programs. Kırkgöz (2005) found that students had both integrative and instrumental motivations. Kırkgöz (2005), Macaro and Akincioglu (2018), Ozer and Bayram (2019) and Turhan and Kırkgöz (2018) all found that students reported a positive attitude towards EMI and were motivated primarily by the long-term opportunities which graduating from an EMI degree program might bring them in the future. The British Council/TEPAV (2015) reported that students enrolled in EMI courses were satisfied with nothing more than the fact that more resources in their related disciplines were available in English. EMI has also sparked some counter arguments; Aslan (2018) observed that

> The reality is that due to significant variations in the quality and quantity of English language instruction available, the English language has not yet managed to penetrate into all strata of society both socioeconomically and geographically. This lack of a level playing field for all learners, along with Turkey's low English Proficiency Index (EPI) rating, pose serious questions… (p. 613)

In order to study an EMI undergraduate program or to teach in English in a HEI in Turkey, some qualifications are required. Students have to pass an in-house English proficiency test developed by a preparatory year program, or gain a sufficient score in a national/international central examination, in order to be able to proceed to the departmental courses (Kırkgöz, 2009; Macaro & Akincioglu, 2018). An incoming student who has not gained a pass score must take the preparatory year program, lasting for one semester or two depending on the student's English language proficiency growth (Aslan, 2018; Ekoç, 2018; Macaro, Akincioglu & Dearden, 2016). Preparatory year programs are tailored to provide intensive tuition, thereby preparing students to the English level required for their undergraduate study. Karakas (2018) suggested that policy-makers in HEIs should reform their in-house language tests by prioritising content and meaning in students' oral and written performance rather than accuracy in language use.

Needs of lecturers in EMI classes

Although HEIs worldwide are offering a very many programs through English, this does not necessarily mean that meticulous attention is being paid to the training of the lecturers who deliver EMI courses. O'Dowd (2018) stated that "the training of teachers in EMI is far from being treated as an important issue in European university education" (p. 557). English language proficiency is, however, not the only competency required for effective EMI delivery; methodological and pedagogical competences are also required. Similarly, many researchers have called for more frequent use of the pedagogical principles which are also at play in CLIL classrooms, for example student-centred approaches and paying greater attention to the scaffolding of materials (Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols, 2008; O'Dowd, 2018). So both teachers' linguistic competence and pedagogical competence are needed for successful learning. Even though the successful implementation of EMI depends on key stakeholders, including the lecturers, there are major concerns reported relating to Turkish universities. Ekoç (2018) commented that there are large numbers of lecturers using Turkish in EMI courses but with limited comprehensibility of their lectures because of the lack of pedagogical content knowledge.

Offering an EMI program at undergraduate level is a major complicated task which raises many questions, such as the language proficiency of classes and the particular discipline under focus (Duran & Sert, 2019), and both the academic staff and the university administration should be concerned with these questions (Helm & Guarda, 2015; O'Dowd, 2018; Werther et al., 2014). In recent years, the need for a HEI-wide language policy has increased but it has yet to be adequately addressed (Dunworth, Drury, Kralik & Moore, 2014; Fenton-Smith & Gurney, 2016; Karaka , 2018; O'Dwyer & Atlı, 2018). Likewise, research from diverse higher education contexts shows that content lecturers aspire to more support and rewards from their institution (Aguilar, 2017; Belyaeva & Kuznetsova, 2018; Chang, Kim & Lee, 2017; Guarda & Helm, 2017; Turhan & Kırkgöz, 2018). Support could encompass language training (Dearden & Macaro, 2016; O'Dowd, 2018; Werther et al., 2014), pedagogy training (Dearden & Macaro, 2016; Mancho-Barés & Arnó-Macià, 2017) and methodology training (Aguilar, 2017; Duong & Chua, 2016; Karakas, 2016).

Dearden and Macaro (2016) investigated the attitudes of lecturers in EMI programs in HEIs in Austria, Italy and Poland and concluded that teachers engaged in teaching through English were not formally required to enhance their language or pedagogical skills and there was little apparent impetus to create a structure for preparing EMI lecturers. In a Danish study, Jensen and Thøgersen (2011) found that lecturers teaching through English gave low levels of detail and provided few examples while teaching. Airey (2012) found that EMI lecturers asked fewer questions during courses. In the Turkish context, despite Turkish EMI lecturers' limited linguistic flexibility when teaching (Ba ıbek et al., 2014; British Council/TEPAV, 2015; Chen, 2018), there are some pedagogical aspects such as scaffolding and interactivity in teaching, which can be employed to enable better lecture comprehension in EMI classes (Aguilar, 2017; Yıldız, Soruç & Griffiths, 2017).

In a survey of 79 HEIs across Europe, more than sixty percent of the participating universities stated that their institutions were already providing training courses lasting from one to 60 hours or in some cases even longer (O'Dowd, 2018). A large number of those courses focused on the development of lecturers' language skills. Lecturers' preference for linguistic training over pedagogical training might result from lecturers not reflecting sufficiently on how they teach (Aguilar, 2017). Cots (2013) argued that offering EMI courses requires a dramatic shift in teaching methods and warned that lecturers who are not language specialists might not be familiar with the method changes which are necessary. The more capable lecturers are in teaching methodology and foreign-language proficiency, the higher the learners' motivation, attention and lecture comprehension will be (Duarte & van der Ploeg, 2019; Evans & Morrison, 2017; Hellekjær, 2017). In recent years, two research studies, to the best knowledge of the researcher, have specified the importance of pre-service and in-service training for lecturers delivering EMI courses in Turkish universities (Ba ıbek et al., 2014, Ekoç, 2018; Soruç & Griffiths, 2018), but neither of them addressed what the content of such training should include. The present study, therefore, has the additional purpose of exploring what kind of training content lecturers really need in order to deliver EMI courses.

Challenges faced by students in EMI classes

In an EMI classroom, there are direct connections between what lecturers experience and what students experience. A challenge facing students might come from the content lecturers or the EMI policy of the institution, so examining the recent literature related to students' experience in EMI classes might reveal areas for improvement, or might lead to a fuller discussion of the findings of this study. A review of the relevant literature was therefore carried out from the viewpoint of students in EMI, and in general, some growing concerns were identified. A lack of adequate language proficiency and of lecture comprehension are two of the main areas where students from different higher education contexts reportedly suffer (Hellekjær, 2017; Kırkgöz, 2009; 2014; Ozer & Bayram, 2019; Sert, 2008; Yıldız, Soruç & Griffiths, 2017). Kırkgöz (2005), Guarda and Helm (2017) and Selvi (2014) also reported that students in EMI undergraduate programs encounter difficulty in acquiring subject content. Given that domestic students, in most non-Anglophone countries, constitute a substantial part of EMI undergraduate programs (Corrales, Paba Rey & Santiago Escamilla, 2016; Higher Education Management System, 2018; Rose & McKinley, 2018), a great deal of effort should go into responding to the domestic students' needs (Brown, 2016).

Over the last a few decades, in many countries across the world, the numbers of HEIs offering EMI programs has increased, and Turkey is no exception (Ekoç, 2018; Kırkgöz, 2014; Macaro & Akincioglu, 2018). After enrolling in a university, students whose English-language proficiency is insufficient for them to be able to study their academic subjects in English have to take a preparatory year program, as stated above. Most Turkish high-school students can be considered to be at the rudimentary level in English after their graduation (British Council/TEPAV, 2015). To make things even more complicated, most preparatory year programs in Turkey are designed to teach students general English, but when students embark on EMI courses, they are exposed to a large amount of terminology in English and they are expected to have a good command of the language generally and be able to use academic English competently (Karakaş, 2019). Teaching academic subjects through EMI requires a wide variety of tools, such as students' field-specific vocabulary knowledge and their academic English proficiency, and how well-equipped the content lecturers are is another matter for concern. Sert (2008) studied three universities in Turkey with the participation of 527 fourth-year students and 87 faculty members and found that EMI was effective for language skill development, but failed to deliver the academic content effectively. Obtaining information on the views of lecturers regarding the use of EMI and identifying and their needs, motivation and attitudes towards being involved in EMI became one of the main objectives for the present study.

Method

The current paper is a phenomenological study of the faculty members' perception of EMI undergraduate programs. This approach enabled us to describe what the participants had in common as they taught in EMI classrooms. Creswell (2007) explained the purpose of phenomenology as trying to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a

description of the overall or universal essence. The main reason why a phenomenological study design was undertaken in this study was to identify, understand and describe the commonality of perception, "the essence" (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012) as experienced by different lecturers across academic ranks and disciplines. To this end, this study was designed to focus on the commonality of EMI experience, by comparing lecturers' perspectives not across different universities, but across different programs within a single university. The intention is to complement the findings of an earlier study investigating students' experiences of EMI within the same university, the Adana Alparslan Turkes Science and Technology University (Ozer & Bayram, 2019). Doing this has given the researchers in this study an opportunity to construct a universal meaning of the EMI phenomenon within the institution, and arrive at a more profound and holistic understanding, which might allow this or other universities to re-regulate their language policies and to provide their lecturers with in-service training as part of continuing professional development.

Participants

A non-probability convenience sample was used (N = 102), with data collected from lecturers in a state university located in the south of Turkey, in order to identify, understand and describe their experiences regarding teaching through English. In order to acquire in-depth data showing the patterns and variety of the phenomena under study (Moser & Korstjens, 2018), the criterion sampling strategy was also employed, by which only lecturers who had taught courses through English for at least one full semester were included in the study. The survey was distributed to 113 lecturers in Adana Alparslan Turkes Science and Technology who were recruited because they had all lectured in an undergraduate EMI program for at least one full semester. This institution has been offering EMI practice in almost all its undergraduate programs since 2013. The EMI programs in the university started as EMIs right from the start, unlike the TMI programs which had been switched to EMI programs, particularly in recent years in several universities in Turkey. By this inclusion criterion, only academics who had completed their postgraduate degrees in an Anglophone country or had certified their English language ability in a standardised test were employed within this university.

With respect to academic subject, the academics represent two major areas, programmes which were mainly numerical (science-related) (n=70) and those which were mainly verbal (social-related) (n=32). The participants were distributed across academic rank and comprised five professors (4.9%), nineteen associate professors (18.6%), 68 assistant professors (66.7%), four lecturers (3.9%) and six research assistants (PhD, 5.9%). The participants' mean work experience was around ten years and the median was fourteen years. The participants taught in a variety of degree programs; Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Food Engineering, Bioengineering, Industrial Engineering, Computer Engineering, Energy Systems Engineering, Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Materials Engineering, Aerospace Engineering, Political Science and Public Administration, Business Administration, Management Information Systems, Tourism Management, and International Relations.

Data collection and analysis

In order to reach as many respondents as possible, an open-ended questionnaire rather than face-to-face interviews was prepared and administered. The decision to use an open-ended questionnaire was in part a way of keeping the responses anonymous, thereby encouraging more detailed answers. Another reason for using the open-ended questionnaire format was the fact that the lecturers were working to a tight schedule, so giving them flexibility to fill in the questionnaire in the researcher's absence could generate more reliable answers. The questionnaire's first section contained socio-demographic questions and the second section comprised nine open-ended questions related to attitudes towards the implementation of EMI. The research was conducted in Turkish in order to gain higher response rates. The second section contained the following questions (translated from Turkish):

1. Do you have any difficulties in preparing lectures for EMI classes? If yes, why?
2. Do you have any difficulties in engaging a class discussion in English? If yes, why?
3. When your students do not understand the academic content presented in class, how do you handle this situation?
4. What sort of preparations do you make before your classes?
5. What are the challenges faced by your students in the classroom?
6. How do you feel when you practise EMI? Why?
7. Do you face any challenges when you teach your courses? If yes, please explain.
8. Should international students be accepted for the program? Why or why not?
9. Do teachers need any support to perform EMI practice? If yes, please specify.

All of the data collection was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the institution's Research and Publication Committee on Ethics. In addition, the necessary permission to distribute the open-ended form to the faculty members was obtained from the university administration. Data were collected by the researcher himself by distributing printed survey forms to the participants. The forms were collected a few days after the distribution. All returns were considered valid. Consent to participate was obtained from 102 of the 113 participants approached. The academics' consent to take part was inferred by the return of the form.

The participants' answers were analysed using content analysis and coded for emergent themes. Content analysis allowed the researcher to gain a sense of how different lecturers handled the same phenomena and to infer their attitudes towards different practices and challenges in an EMI class. Both the manifest and the latent content were coded so the researcher also read through the entire transcription to assess any meaning underlying what was written. First, the researcher and an expert who was a faculty member and had been a member of the committee working on the HEI's language policy separately coded the data. The expert was not one of the respondents. Then, the researcher and the expert reviewed the codes and developed themes. Descriptive statistics were used to determine frequencies and percentages. Inter-rater reliability was computed between the coders. The inter-rater reliability was 0.84 (78/78+15) and a value above 0.80 represents good qualitative reliability; Miles and Huberman (1994) recommended that inter-rater reliability

should approach 0.90. All quotations from the open-ended surveys were translated by the author.

Findings

The main points which emerged from the questionnaire responses were categorised under three headings: 'teaching practices among content lecturers', 'challenges and constraints which content lecturers face', and 'training courses for content lecturers'. In relation to the first and second research questions 'What are the content lecturers' teaching practices in EMI classrooms?' and 'What challenges do EMI lecturers face?', the discussion is presented under the first two headings. In response to the third research question 'What areas of improvement should training provided by the HEI include?', the discussion is presented under the heading of 'training courses for content lecturers'.

Teaching practices among content lecturers

The first major finding of the study related to the practices which lecturers widely adopted when their students did not understand specific content. When lecturers were asked to comment on their teaching practices, a wide range of answers were given. The most commonly cited practices were 'providing a simpler explanation' (69.6%, n =102), 'switching to Turkish/recapping in Turkish' (27.5%), 'using analogies or real-life examples' (20.6%) and 're-explaining the content more slowly' (10.8%).

> I re-explain [the unclear parts] in a different and simpler way. I try to use real-world situations to help them understand. (Respondent 47, Assistant Professor, Bioengineering)

> [When the content is not understood clearly] I rephrase the unclear part (by finding different sentences – examples). If it is still not clear enough, I recap in Turkish. (Respondent 28, Assistant Professor, Materials Engineering)

When the participants were asked what sort of preparations they made before their classes, the most commonly cited answers were 'updating/reviewing the lecture notes' (55.9%), 'updating/reviewing the presentation' (41.2%), 'seeking ways to link course content to real-life situations' (20.6%), and 'preparing weekly lesson plans' (6.9%).

> Before every class, I review my lecture notes and lecture slides, look up the Internet for recent events [and stories] and interesting [thought-provoking] examples, videos, etc. (Respondent 50, Assistant Professor, Energy Systems Engineering)

> I revise my lesson plan. I look at my textbook. I review and re-do [maths] proofs. (Respondent 75, Assistant Professor, Computer Engineering)

Challenges and constraints which content lecturers face

The analysis of the questionnaire responses showed that some content lecturers could come under severe strain while teaching through English. The main points which emerged

were 'students' reluctance to talk in English due to their low level of English proficiency' (81.4%), 'lack of international students' (77.5%), 'difficulty in trying to find ways of simplifying content for understanding' (58.9%), 'insufficient lecture comprehension' (32.4%), 'lack of English terminology' (17.6%) and 'lack of improvisation and spontaneity while teaching' (7.8%).

> Students' lecture comprehension is limited by [their] lack of terminology and they are [too] shy to ask questions when they don't understand content. (Respondent 62, Assistant Professor, Mechanical Engineering).

> Students have great difficulty making a sentence in English. They prefer not to talk even if they know the answer. (Respondent 24, Associate Professor, Materials Engineering)

> I sometimes see my students self-doubting about their speaking [communicative] skills. They need to practise more. A couple of courses [to help students adapt successfully] could be added to the first-year program. (Respondent 8, Professor, Electrical and Electronics Engineering)

> They are too shy to talk. It takes a semester for me to overcome this resistance, and [students'] quietness and timidity. (Respondent 25, Assistant Professor, Materials Engineering)

> I keep trying but it is hard for me to improvise in English. (Respondent 81, Assistant Professor, Management Information Systems)

International students were a topic for which there was a consensus among the respondents. The practice of recruiting more international students is believed to increase local students' motivation to communicate in English (45.1%) and also to force content lecturers to use only English as the medium of instruction (17.6%).

> [Recruitment of international] students will contribute greatly to the development of students' communication skills [but only] if they are invited from Anglophone countries [to study]. (Respondent 74, Assistant Professor, Computer Engineering)

It is also worth noting that three respondents proposed that the university administration should set up a mechanism for monitoring EMI lecturers' level of English language proficiency.

> Lecturers' levels of English language proficiency (written and spoken) should be monitored by the [university] administration. Training programs for effective presentation techniques should be designed. (Respondent 27, Assistant Professor, Materials Engineering).

Training courses for content lecturers

The responses showed what content lecturers would prefer to see in the training provided. The most commonly articulated topics were 'training aimed at the development of speaking and pronunciation skills' (28.4%), 'pedagogical training' (12.8%), 'provision of ample opportunities to content lecturers for visiting [mobility] to Anglophone countries'

(11.8%), 'training aimed at the development of methodological skills' (11.8%), 'effective presentation techniques' (9.8%), 'training in how to teach through a foreign language' (6.9%) and 'training for language proficiency'.

> Professional development training such as speaking clubs can be offered to lecturers. Some pedagogical training aiming at how to teach through a foreign language can also be offered. (Respondent 36, Associate Professor, Industrial Engineering)

> During the summer break, various optional courses on how to speak English fluently could be provided. Pronunciation training course could be organised. … It would be useful if the way lecturers teach is rated by students. (Respondent 56, Assistant Professor, Aerospace Engineering)

> Training programs in speaking fluent English, signposting, using audio-visual materials [effectively]. Such materials will lead to better [lecture] comprehension. (Respondent 69, Assistant Professor, Civil Engineering).

Discussion and implications

This study provides a snapshot of the case of EMI in a state university in Turkey. The results highlight the need for university administrations to pay attention to the quality of the EMI delivery by monitoring the process and identifying needs.

The findings have shown that on the whole, with regard to their teaching practices, the majority of the lecturers provided a simple explanation when their students did not understand a specific content. The use of Turkish by lecturers was reportedly widespread, and as was found by Ekoç (2018), Karakas (2016) and Yıldız, Soruç and Griffiths (2017), used principally to compensate for the lack of students' adequate English proficiency. It was also used when there was a lack of interaction and discussion between students. Karakas (2016) also found that lecturers were largely supportive of the use of the L1 in class to varying degrees. Some lecturers did not perceive the use of Turkish as a valuable teaching tool, whilst others perceived L1 as the explaining language, a perception due mainly to either practical or ideological reasons. A few lecturers, regardless of their own English-language proficiency, considered full-EMI courses as a barrier to lecture comprehension in mainly numerical/technical courses. In a recent study, Macaro, Tian and Chu (2020) also found that EMI teachers' use of their L1 in classrooms was mainly to explain subject content, followed by as a function for interpersonal interaction, and classroom management. In a recent study of Chinese undergraduate students' perceptions, Qui and Fang (2020) found that the students perceived that native English-speaking EMI teachers, in comparison with local EMI teachers, adopted more interactive teaching methodologies with varying modalities of communication but lacked the intercultural competence that local EMI teachers usually employed.

Through the voice of the content lecturers, their students, in general, were reported to be suffering from their lack of English language proficiency and their lack of terminology, which are two important prerequisites for lecture comprehension. This finding supports those by Baker and Hüttner (2019), Ozer and Bayram (2019), Sert (2008) and Turhan and

Kırkgöz (2018). Students have difficulty in lecture comprehension in courses in which technical vocabulary is used predominantly, as found by Ekoç (2018), Hellekjær (2017), and Yıldız, Soruç and Griffiths (2017). Similarly, Chin-Leong (2017), Cho (2012), Soruç and Griffiths (2018) and Turhan and Kırkgöz (2018) found that students' inadequate English proficiency was a barrier to the successful implementation of EMI policy. It is necessary to note here that students' lack of interaction and their unwillingness to engage in discussion might have resulted partly from the fact that subject content and subject genre play a decisive role in the teaching efficacy of the lecturer. This corroborates findings by Macaro and Han (2020), Kırkgöz (2009) and Ozer and Bayram (2019).

Most of the lecturers in this study felt that students in EMI programs can feel too shy to talk in English, corroborating findings by Rowland & Murray (2020) and Soruç and Griffiths (2018). Karaka (2019) investigated the actual medium of instruction in some HEIs in Turkey and found evidence that lecturers and undergraduate students in relatively new EMI programs sometimes breached the English-only policy by using Turkish. Sava (2016) found that even Turkish EFL students were unwilling to communicate and engage in discussion unless a constructive learning environment was provided. As for international students, a broad consensus appears to exist over the pivotal role of EMI programs in recruiting increasing numbers of non-Turkish students. The respondents believed that there is a strategic necessity for recruiting more international students. This matches findings by Werther et al. (2014), Erling and Hilgendorf (2006) and Tange (2010).

Overall, respondents believed that EMI programs are borrowed from other HEIs and that the provision of instruction clearly lacks detailed guidelines in terms of content lecturers' language use in the classroom and language management. This finding concurs with Tri and Moskovky (2019), who also suggested that existing EMI policies need more clear guidelines or recommendations for language management. The respondents widely believed that the recruitment of a diverse group of international students will force lecturers and local students to use English more often. This strategic goal of attracting international scholars and students to EMI programs as part of universities' internationalisation process was also welcomed by Aguilar (2017), Rose and McKinley (2018), Taquini et al. (2017) and Werther et al. (2014). What is interesting about this finding is that it can be inferred that students and lecturers prefer to use English for two principal reasons: there is an advantage in having an award from an English-medium degree program in the competitive employment market, and having international students in the classroom.

The needs of students enrolled in courses traditionally considered to be more numerical will differ from needs of students taking traditionally more verbal courses, which is in accordance with the general belief. Dafouz, Camacho and Urquia (2014), however, did not find that traditionally more verbal subjects had a limiting effect on EMI students' academic performance. According to a few of the respondents in this current study, being unable to provide improvised teaching through English, that is to say, limited linguistic flexibility, was one of their concerns which resonates with findings by Ba ıbek et al. (2014), Chen (2018) and Tange (2010).

Many lecturers felt that there is a continuing need for pre-service and in-service training. Similarly, Ba ıbek et al. (2014), Belyaeva and Kuznetsova (2018), Cots (2013), Helm and Guarda (2015) and O'Dowd (2018) also specified the importance of such training. It is obvious from the respondents' answers that even lecturers with prior experience of teaching in Turkish have difficulties in teaching and believe that teaching through English requires continuing professional development and active support from the administration. Speaking fluency and communicative skills were matters of widespread concern to the respondents, a finding in line with Helm and Guarda (2015). Several respondents believed that the university administration should be responsible for monitoring lecturers' teaching performance and providing regular support in the forms of pedagogy, methodology and English language training. Expectation about establishment of a monitoring mechanism also resonates with previous research findings (Aguilar, 2017; Huang & Singh, 2014; Macaro & Han, 2020). With regard to linguistic training, most of the respondents preferred to receive training to improve their communicative skills and fluency. Their interest in language-specific training was similar to findings by Aguilar (2017), Ba ıbek et al. (2014); Klaassen (2008) and Soruç & Griffiths (2018). Given the fact that most lecturers certify their English language proficiency by obtaining scores in national standardised tests such as YDS or YÖKD L (Ekoç, 2018), mainly covering vocabulary, grammatical structures and reading comprehension (Kılıçkaya, 2018), this situation is one of the primary sources of concern and it necessitates HEIs planning both in-service and pre-service training for lecturers.

Another major finding here is that collaboration between non-language lecturers and language lecturers is a necessity for effective EMI delivery. This finding matches those by Belyaeva and Kuznetsova (2018), Cots (2013), Kir and Akyüz (2020) and Macaro, Akincioglu and Dearden (2016). Cots (2013) further suggested that introducing EMI requires a fundamental shift in methodology and the coordination of tandem teaching which involves a collaboration between content experts and language teaching experts.

In general, English as a medium of instruction, despite reported difficulties related to lecture comprehension, is viewed as contributing to institutional prestige, or as a necessary step towards the internationalisation of Turkish HE. Notwithstanding this conspicuous responsibility incumbent on the institution, no systematic mechanism seems to be in operation for the purpose of monitoring the provision of EMI courses and identifying the needs of lecturers relating to perceptions, language proficiency and teaching practices.

Conclusion

This study delved into content lecturers' attitudes to and experiences with the courses which they deliver through English. Content lecturers are the bridge between the objectives of an HEI and students' expectations. Any feedback which the lecturers hint at could play a key role in the effective implementation of institutional language policy. Lecturers are therefore the principal agents capable of checking whether the EMI system is working for the students. By allowing lecturers from all the EMI programs at one state university to articulate their opinions, the findings here can add a distinctive dimension to the existing knowledge about EMI undergraduate programs.

The findings of the present study enable us to hypothesise that one-size-fits-all language policies across an institution are bound to create both short-term and long-term problems in an EMI university. Every HEI is unique and therefore its needs are different from those of others. Emulating prominent Turkish HEIs in which the medium of instruction is English, a trend which has been popular in Turkey in recent years, might create a number of problems for institutions. Before attempting to tailor any training or establish a mechanism for monitoring teaching quality, the first action must be identifying the needs of students, lecturers and the HEI. An overarching theme which emerged from the survey is that the university should establish a teaching support centre to offer help such as in-house training to content lecturers. Another theme which emerged emphasised the importance of recruiting more international students, which is believed to be beneficial for motivating both students and lecturers to use English-only in EMI classes. The researcher argues that all the EMI courses available in a university should be underpinned by language experts and that the courses should be aligned with the institutional language policy. Even though the rapid growth of EMI undergraduate programs in Turkey is evident, balance in evaluating the teaching quality and quantity should be achieved.

In conclusion, this study set out to promote a heightened awareness of the language-conscious provision of teaching through English among institutional language policy-makers. The effective implementation of EMI programs will place heavy responsibilities on content lecturers as well as language lecturers in a preparatory year program. Collaboration between non-language lecturers and language lecturers is of vital importance, yet such an approach has the potential risk of creating bottom-up and top-down challenges within the institution. This concern has been voiced in several previous studies (Corrales et al., 2016; Mancho-Barés & Arnó-Macià, 2017; Schmidt-Unterberger, 2018; Yıldız et al., 2017).

The present study is limited in various respects. There were no mechanisms available for measuring lecturers' proficiency in teaching through English, so it is not known whether the participants' answers were affected by the risk of inappropriate confidence, which might be indicative of the Dunning-Kruger effect (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). Even though this paper focuses on a university in a local context, the number of respondents in the survey suggests that the results may have general relevance to EMI undergraduate programs in other universities.

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