

Summary

This doctoral dissertation examines English Medium Instruction (EMI) in higher education, with particular attention to the Polish university context and to lecturers who teach academic subjects through English without formal language-teaching training. The study is grounded in the growing internationalisation of higher education and the increasing demand for English-mediated teaching, which has created new linguistic, methodological and institutional challenges for university staff.

The main aim of the thesis is to characterise EMI as an educational phenomenon, identify the principal difficulties faced by EMI lecturers, and explore the linguistic, pedagogical and organisational conditions that shape the delivery of content through English at university level. Particular emphasis is placed on issues such as lecturers' language proficiency, limited methodological preparation, insufficient subject-specific resources, and the need for stronger institutional support.

The empirical part of the dissertation is based on a pilot study and a main study conducted among EMI practitioners and students attending EMI classes. The empirical investigation drew on data collected from 108 lecturers and 92 students representing 9 Polish higher education institutions. The research employed a mixed-methods approach, including online questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The pilot study served to identify potential research problems, refine the instruments and generate preliminary assumptions, while the main study provided detailed insight into the experiences, needs and challenges of those involved in EMI teaching and learning.

The dissertation is organised into seven chapters. The opening chapters present the theoretical background, including developments in foreign language teaching, the global rise of English, and the relevance of English for Specific Purposes and English for Academic Purposes in higher education. Subsequent chapters focus on EMI itself, the role of the university teacher as an EMI practitioner, the pilot study, and the findings of the main research. The final chapter outlines implications for future practice and research.

The findings revealed that effective EMI in Polish higher education depends not only on teachers' English proficiency, but also on sustained institutional support, oracy-focused development, context-sensitive pedagogy, and assessment practices aligned with instructional formats. This doctoral dissertation offers a nuanced, empirically grounded account of EMI at Polish universities by combining teacher questionnaires, interviews, student perspectives, and classroom observations to show how language, pedagogy, and institutional conditions interact

in practice. In doing so, it fills a key gap in EMI research by moving beyond policy-level and self-reported generalisations to illuminate the underexplored realities of EMI implementation in Polish technical and disciplinary contexts. Overall, the thesis highlights the need for systematic linguistic, methodological and institutional support for lecturers teaching through English.