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Impact of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in Non-English Speaking Countries

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Abstract:

This study examines how English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) affects educational results, linguistic diversity, socioeconomic variables, and cultural identity in non-English speaking nations. English is being more widely used as a teaching language in schools and colleges around the world as it maintains its position as the de facto universal language. Examining six major areas—academic achievement, language competency, access to global possibilities, cultural identity, local language degradation, and educational equity—this research delves into the complex impacts of EMI. By means of an extensive examination of recent research and case studies, the article underscores the advantages and obstacles associated with the deployment of EMI in non-English speaking nations. It seeks to offer information so that stakeholders, educators, and legislators may decide with knowledge what part EMI should play in educational systems.

Key Words: Medium of Instruction (EMI), Non-English Speaking Countries

1.0 Introduction

Because of globalization, the internationalization of education, and the need to provide students the skills they need to compete in a worldwide economy, the use of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in non-English speaking nations is becoming more and more common. When academic courses are taught in nations where English is not the native tongue, this practice is known as English-medium instruction (EMI) (Dearden, 2014). Because learning English is thought to make it easier to go into higher school, improve professional chances, and engage in the global economy, this strategy has become more and more popular. But there are drawbacks to EMI adoption as well, including as possible harm to regional languages and cultures, unequal access to high-quality education, and problems with instructors' and students' language skills. The purpose of this study paper is to investigate the impacts of EMI on several facets of society and education in non-English speaking nations. The purpose of the study is to provide a balanced viewpoint that can guide future educational policies and practices by examining the advantages and disadvantages of EMI.

1.1 Academic Performance and English Proficiency

The idea that EMI might improve students' academic performance by giving them better access to global information and resources is one of the main drivers behind its implementation. Because English is frequently seen as the language of science, technology, and global communication, being able to speak the language well is essential for success in the classroom (Coleman, 2006). Research indicates that students



participating in English-medium immersion programs can gain from being exposed to top-notch educational materials and resources that are available in English but might not be available in their home languages (Kirkpatrick, 2011).

EMI and academic achievement, however, have a complicated relationship that changes according on the situation. Sometimes, learning difficult subjects in a language other than their native language causes problems for students, which can affect their understanding and retention (Macaro et al., 2018). For instance, it might be difficult for pupils to comprehend technical jargon or successfully communicate in English, which could impair their academic performance. This problem is most noticeable in nations where students are not exposed to English outside of the classroom, which causes learners' English proficiency levels to fluctuate (Macaro, 2018). Therefore, although EMI can be beneficial to academic performance, its efficacy is dependent on instructors' and students' language competency as well as the availability of sufficient resources to support pupils in thriving in an English-medium environment.

1.2 Impact on Local Language Proficiency and Erosion

There are worries that the growing number of schools using English as a teaching language might lead to the loss of regional languages and cultural identities. Students may prioritize studying English above their native tongues as English becomes more widely used in the educational system, which might result in a fall in local language ability and use (Tsui & Tollefson, 2007). Given the tight relationship between language and cultural identity and customs, this change may have substantial effects on linguistic variety and cultural legacy. Local languages may become marginalized as a result of English's dominance in education, which might lead to their ultimate decline or extinction.

Moreover, the focus on English proficiency may contribute to socioeconomic gaps by dividing the population among those who speak the language well and those who do not. English proficiency is frequently linked to improved socioeconomic position, access to better employment possibilities, and social mobility in several non-English speaking nations (Pennycook, 1994). Consequently, learners who lack proficiency in the English language may encounter obstacles in their academic pursuits and career path, so sustaining inequality and restricting prospects for societal progress.



1.3 Socio-Economic Impact and Access to Global Opportunities

The possibility that EMI will provide students more access to international possibilities is one of the primary reasons in favor of it. Many people believe that being able to communicate in English is essential for advancing in one's job, attending college, and participating in the global economy (Graddol, 2006). English language competency is required in many nations in order to be eligible for foreign employment possibilities, scholarships, and admittance to esteemed colleges. Educational institutions want to provide pupils the linguistic abilities they need to thrive in a world that is becoming more and more linked by introducing EMI.

The growing demand for English language instruction and the spread of English-medium programs in higher education institutions around the globe are clear indicators of the socioeconomic effects of EMI (Dearden, 2014). Concerns of access and fairness in education are also brought up by this movement. Only elite schools and pupils from affluent backgrounds often have access to high-quality English language instruction in non-English speaking nations. Because of this, pupils from underprivileged or rural areas would not have the same possibilities to improve their English language skills, which would cause the socioeconomic divide to deepen (Erling & Seargeant, 2013). It is imperative to tackle these discrepancies in order to provide equitable access to the advantages of student aid, irrespective of their financial status.

1.4 Challenges of Implementing EMI in Non-English Speaking Contexts

There are a number of obstacles to overcome when implementing EMI in non-English speaking nations, such as concerns about teacher readiness, language competency, and the availability of appropriate instructional resources. Making sure instructors and students have the English language proficiency needed to engage in EMI programs is one of the biggest obstacles (Dearden, 2014). Teachers frequently lack the necessary training to teach their courses in English, which makes it difficult for them to communicate with students and makes them doubt their own ability as educators (Macaro et al., 2018). This may have a detrimental effect on students' overall learning experience and the standard of instruction.

The accessibility of English-language teaching tools and materials can sometimes be a major obstacle. Effective training may be difficult to provide in some situations due to a shortage of high-quality English-language textbooks, reference materials, and supplemental resources (Kirkpatrick, 2011). In rural or underdeveloped communities, where access to educational resources may be restricted, this problem is



exacerbated. In order to ensure the successful implementation of EMI, it is imperative to make investments in teacher training programs, provide teaching materials that are relevant for the setting, and offer continuing support.

1.5 Cultural Identity and Linguistic Diversity

There are significant concerns over cultural identity and the preservation of language variety when EMI is implemented in non-English speaking nations. Since language is a fundamental part of cultural identity, worries about the disappearance of regional languages and cultures may arise from the use of English as the primary language in the classroom (Pennycook, 1994). Local languages, which may be seen as less significant or relevant in the context of globalization, are frequently sacrificed in the name of English's development as a global language (Tsui & Tollefson, 2007).

Particularly in heterogeneous countries where several languages and ethnic groups coexist, the influence of EMI on cultural identity is noteworthy. In these situations, marginalizing minority languages and cultures through the sole use of English as the medium of education might result in the loss of variety and cultural legacy (Graddol, 2006). It's critical to have a balanced stance that values both local and English languages in order to allay these worries. To help pupils preserve their cultural identity and take advantage of global possibilities, this may entail putting in place bilingual or multilingual education systems that encourage the use of English alongside local tongues.

1.6 Educational Equity and Policy Implications

Adoption of EMI will have a big impact on language policy and educational fairness. Even if EMI can give children access to global information and useful language abilities, it's important to think about the possible inequality it can cause. There are gaps in educational possibilities in many non-English speaking nations since access to high-quality EMI programs is frequently restricted to elite institutions and metropolitan areas (Erling & Seargeant, 2013). It may be difficult for students from underprivileged or rural backgrounds to enroll in EMI programs, which would lead to uneven access to the advantages of English language instruction.



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Policymakers must take into account the variety of demands that students have and guarantee that EMI programs are available to everyone, irrespective of socioeconomic background or geography, in order to advance educational equity. This might entail investing in teacher preparation, offering more assistance to kids with low English proficiency, and creating inclusive language policies that encourage regional languages. Governments may establish an education system that fosters linguistic variety, cultural identity, and access to international possibilities by taking a comprehensive approach to language policy.

1.7 Conclusion

There are many different aspects and facets to the influence of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) on non-English speaking nations. While there are many benefits associated with EMI, including as enhanced professional prospects, access to global information, and involvement in the global economy, there are drawbacks as well, such as issues with educational fairness, cultural identity, and language competency. Policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders must carefully assess the effects of EMI on linguistic diversity and cultural heritage because English continues to be the language of instruction. We can establish an educational system that promotes linguistic variety, honors cultural identity, and offers equal access to the advantages of English language education by taking a balanced, inclusive approach that values both local and English languages. Our capacity to overcome these obstacles and develop a long-term, inclusive approach to language instruction that caters to the requirements of all students will determine EMI's future.



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