Opportunities and constraints: phenomenological insights into students' experiences of learning through English-medium instruction (EMI) in Bangladeshi higher education

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Abstract

English medium instruction (EMI) is analogous to internationalisation in higher education (HE) today. The present study contributes to a growing body of literature in EMI by focusing on Bangladeshi students' beliefs and a sociocultural perspective of their identity in a private university in Bangladesh. In examining how Bangladeshi HE students conceptualise learning using English as a second language (ESL), this study employs a qualitative inquiry to explore complex social phenomena, as experienced by students, for a more profound and meaningful understanding. As the current study aims to describe experiences, events, processes or culture from the perspective of HE students at a private university, a hermeneutic phenomenological approach was taken to interpret the students' overlapping version of reality. The data consisted of eighteen student interviews, six teacher interviews, twenty-one documents, and eight sets of field notes. Findings confirmed that students' view of EMI is construed by the perceived benefits of English in providing enhanced job prospects by creating a global workforce. The findings have important implications for developing explicit language-in-education policies at Bangladeshi higher education institutions (HEIs) conducive to acquiring bilingual language competence. It also has implications for ELT, EAP practitioners, and content teachers to advance the internationalisation agenda in HEIs through the adoption and implementation of EMI through translanguaging practices.

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Finally, I dedicate this thesis to the love of my life, my children – Samara and Irhan. I owe everything to them for the times not shared.

List of abbreviations

CBI	Content-based Instruction
CLIL	Content and language integrated learning
ELF	English as lingua franca
EMI	English-medium instruction
EAL/ESL	English as an/a additional/second language
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
L1	Mother tongue/native language
L2	Second language
LEP	Language-in-education policy
LPP	Language planning and policy
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOI	Medium of instruction
NEP	National Education Policy 2010
UoB	University of Bangladesh

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Deeply influenced by globalisation, a key reality in the 21st century, higher education (HE) is increasingly being placed high on the policy agenda in many developing nations, enabling the transfer of knowledge, driven by technological innovation. This is further shaped by an increasingly integrated world economy, digital communication, the emergence of an international knowledge network, and the unprecedented rise of the English language as the dominant language of scientific communication (Altbach et al., 2009; Altbach, 2009). Promoted as 'a desirable attribute' by national governments in various parts of the world, proficiency in English, in particular, is perceived to be 'intertwined with the overall economic development of a country' (Ali, 2013). This entails the provision of English teaching as a subject (Baldauf et al., 2012) and English as a medium of instruction (Tollefson & Tsui, 2004; Tsui & Tollefson, 2007) while maintaining the status of local languages (Graham & Eslami, 2019) at various levels of education in non-dominant English-speaking countries. Considering the crucial role of English language skills in economic success and international mobility, governments and higher education institutions (HEIs) have repositioned their English-medium instruction (EMI) policies as a bi-/multilingual language-planning tool to ensure equitable quality education, one of the key United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) while connecting local workforce and industries to the global economy.

It stands to reason that the emergence of English as an international language has considerably impacted educational policies and pedagogical practices across the globe in the past decades (Nunan, 2003). The implementation of EMI in national education policies are considered to be closely linked to modernisation agendas, particularly with regard to the internationalisation of HE (Galloway & Rose, 2021). Adopting English-medium instruction or EMI in higher education in non-Anglophone countries has become a growing global phenomenon (Galloway, Numajiri, et al., 2020). This significant trend in HE has gained prominence in many European nations and Asian countries, including Indonesia, Korea, and China, where English is traditionally taught as a foreign language. EMI has been introduced into courses and programmes in most private universities in Bangladesh over the past three decades. Despite its widening adoption, the effectiveness of EMI programmes appears to vary owing to Bangladeshi students' overall English language proficiency and the absence of an explicit national educational language policy.

The current study focuses on students' experiences of EMI in a private Bangladeshi university, undertaking EMI courses and programmes in the field of Business Studies, Computer Science and Engineering, English language teaching, social and biological sciences. The study aims to unearth how translanguaging practices used in the classroom enhance learners' academic literacy and contribute to positive identity development. The study also examines lecturers' attitudes towards EMI and fluid, translingual practices while teaching these students.

1.1 Research background and context

In the following section, the background to the current research on EMI in higher education (HE) is discussed with reference to the social, political, and educational context of Bangladesh.

1.1.1 Bangladesh- challenges and development prospects

Home to a vast population of more than 164 million inhabitants, Bangladesh is a low-lying, riverine country located in South Asia, on the northern littoral areas of the Bay of Bengal, making the nation extremely susceptible to flooding annually due to monsoon and tropical storm surges besides heavy runoff compounded by climate-change-induced sea-level rise. A large part of the nation lies in Asia's largest delta stretched from the Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Meghna rivers while being surrounded by India on the west, north, and east sides, the Bay of Bengal on the south, and the mountainous border of Myanmar in the south-east (see Figure 1.1). Despite worsening environmental conditions and ominous poverty challenges, Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in reducing the same and has experienced strong and steady Gross Domestic Product growth rates of above six percent in the past few years.
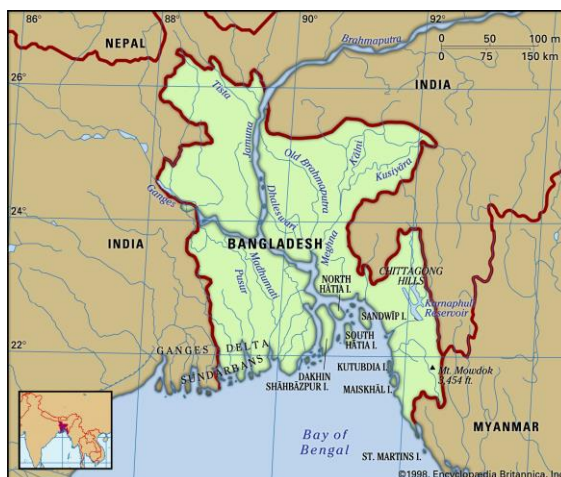
Figure 1.1: Location of Bangladesh
Source: Encyclopaedia Britannica

In realising an inspiring vision of Bangladesh's future, the UN General Assembly has recently adopted a resolution allowing the nation to graduate to become a developing country in 2026 from a least developed country. Looking towards the future, Vision 2041 is the blueprint for Bangladesh's ambitious economic transformation providing a roadmap for the nation's development over a period of 20 years. Among various strategic objectives comprising futureproofing the service sector, export-oriented manufacturing and agriculture, the major transformation is primarily driven by establishing Bangladesh as a knowledge hub country. Having envisioned to build a 'knowledgeable, fair and just society and digital Bangladesh', the Bangladeshi government continues to make 'great effort in modernising Bangladesh's education system through the use of ICT, promoting technology-based teaching and learning as a strategic lever to achieving Bangladesh's Vision 2021' (Ministry of Education, 2019).

1.1.2 Language ecology and the attitude towards English

In Bangladesh, Bengali is spoken as the du jure national language (Banu & Sussex, 2001) amongst a linguistically homogenous population in domains of governance, education, law, mass media, and everyday communication (Imam, 2005). English was brought to the Indian subcontinent as part of the colonial rule (Jenkins, 2009, p. 16) as a language of power and social mobility (Erling et al., 2013). Following the decolonisation in 1947, India was divided as the state of Pakistan was formed. While its two regions, West and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), were split along geographical lines of over 1000 miles of Indian territory, the cultural and linguistic rift grew wider with the Language Movement on 21 February 1952 that sparked protests as well as bloodshed to uphold not Urdu but Bengali, also known by its endonym Bangla, as the only state language.

This Bengali-only language movement was instrumental in shaping the linguistic identity that forged a national identity that eventually created Bangladesh as an independent nation in 1971(Mohsin, 2003; Musa, 1996). Between national identity and learning, resistance towards the standing of English eventually resulted in a severe lack of English proficiency among the people in general (Hamid & Baldauf, 2014). Neither did English fulfil a lingua franca function within society as in other South Asian countries (Banu & Sussex, 2001). Later in 1992, the English language was reintroduced into the national curriculum as a mandatory subject from Class 1- 12 and then

simultaneously as an MOI, besides Bengali, at the primary, secondary and tertiary level of education (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014). However, policymakers started realising the 'damage' (Hamid, Jahan, et al., 2013b, p. 150) done to English teaching and learning due to such nationalist policies over the next decade.

1.1.3 Bangladeshi HE and the development of EMI

In the same year, the government of Bangladesh legislated the privatization of HE through the promulgation of the Private University Act owing to escalating social demand for HE, resulting from domestic socio-economic factors and global trends. As a pathway to HE reforms through a shift towards neoliberalism in education (Harvey, 2006; Kabir, 2012), this privatisation of HE is considered a milestone in the exclusive usage of English-medium instruction (EMI) as almost all the private universities have proclaimed its adoption even though there is no clear directive in the Act apart from the choice of using either Bengali or English reading resources in HE teaching and learning. As of now, Bangladesh's HE system comprises 46 publicly funded and 105 private universities which enrolled more than 1.17 million in 2020 (please see Table 1.1), commensurate with an increase in the Gross Enrolment Ratio from 13.7 percent to 22.8 percent, as estimated by UNESCO Institute of Statistics, in the HE sectors in Bangladesh between 2011 and 2020.

Type of University	No. of University	Students (Million)
Public	46	0.82
Private (with EMI provisions)	105	0.35
International	2	0.003
Total	**153**	**1.17**

Table 1:1 Higher education institutions and student numbers, Bangladesh 2019/20

Despite improvements in access and participation (Ahmed, 2016), millions of youths face the prospect of lost opportunity and lower wages because the education system, particularly at the tertiary level, is failing to ensure learning outcomes and basic English language proficiency. In spite of continued economic growth, Bangladesh faces challenges in relation to a skills gap in its vast human capital and there are growing concerns about the employment prospects of recent university graduates in Bangladesh. According to a recent World Bank report (Haven, 2019), nearly 39 percent of graduates remain unemployed for as long as two years. employers found graduates lacking skills that mainly include English language and communication skills, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), and the essential, transferable skills (see Figure 1.2) that scaffold the utilisation of theoretical learning into real-world problems (World Bank, 2018).

ICT = information and communication technology.
Note: Total number of employer-respondents is 853, and multiple answers were allowed.
Source: Asian Development Bank.
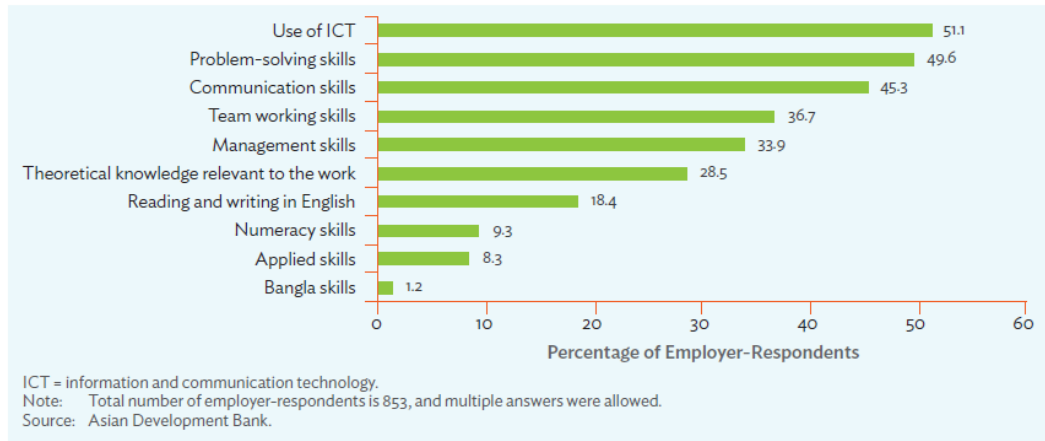
Figure 1.2: Skill areas where universities need more focus
Source: Asian Development Bank (2019)

This high rate of prolonged unemployment among graduates raises concerns about the job-readiness of graduates and the relevance of skills, putting pressure on Bangladeshi universities to be relevant and responsive to societal needs through quality teaching, learning and research. Studies have also exhibited the dire state of teaching and learning in English (Hamid, 2011) in the context of Bangladesh and have indicated that the average English language skill level of a university student is equivalent to Grade 7 at the secondary level (Imam, 2005), while their ability to engage in academic writing across disciplines is predominantly found to be very unsatisfactory and full of grammatical, lexico-syntactic and organisational inaccuracies (Afrin, 2016; Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014; Uddin, 2014).

Evidently, the quality of HE in Bangladesh also remains low in comparison to international standards, given that only two public HEIs out of four universities

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made it to the QS World University Rankings 2022 and one in the top World University Rankings 2022 listed by The Times Higher Education, ranked between 801-1200 among 1300 and 1600 universities respectively from around the world. Comparatively, thirty-five Indian universities, eleven Pakistani and two Sri Lankan universities have found their place in the world league table in 2022. In contrast, eight Bangladeshi private universities were featured in the QS Asia University Rankings 2022. Only two Bangladeshi private universities appeared on the list of the top universities worldwide. Still, there was no Bangladeshi university in the list of Top 100 world universities in Asia in 2022 (QS University Rankings, 2022), owing to low academic rankings and reputation. Clearly, Bangladeshi HEIs lags behind universities from several other South-East Asian countries such as Singapore, China (Mainland), Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Taiwan, South Korea, Thailand, besides India and Pakistan, whose research productivity and global rankings are significantly higher than that of Bangladesh.

Nonetheless, through quality education provisions following international standards, the Bangladeshi government should strategically choose its pathways to nurture enlightened, globally competent and 'internetized' (Pesando et al., 2021) citizens fulfilling its development goals. To do so by enhancing the quality of HE through the implementation of EMI, the government should promote the internationalisation of Bangladeshi HE, raising the reputation and competitiveness of Bangladeshi universities in the regional and global HE market.

Addressing these issues, the government of Bangladesh enacted the first-ever National Education Policy (Ministry of Education, 2010) and subsequently developed a Quality Assurance Framework as part of its Strategic Plan for Higher Education 2018–2030 to foster quality assurance and enhancement in line with international HE standards. Despite placing internationalisation at the top of its HE reformation agenda, the nation should recognise the centrality of English as an international language as it stands at the crossroads of a transformative society founded by strengthening and fostering greater national and international collaborative partnerships with HEIs by sharing knowledge and ideas to achieve common goals.

1.1.4 Internationalisation and English medium instruction (EMI)

The growing trend of using an EMI policy (Doiz et al., 2012; Tollefson & Tsui, 2014) in education among polities that try to enhance the capabilities of English usage in the university setting has become important in the determination of the internationalisation index of HE (Galloway & Rose, 2015, p. 230; Maringe, 2010; Mok, 2007). Adopted as an explicit policy by universities to improve rankings and gain a worldwide reputation, internationalisation aims to increase the number of alliances and agreements with universities based in different nation-states worldwide (Moncada-Comas & Block, 2019). And occurring outside of English-speaking countries, this internationalisation process has been considered to be synonymous with 'Englishisation' (Galloway, Numajiri, et al., 2020), more pertinent particularly to

HE institutions where non-language academic subjects are taught in English. In particular, the agenda of internationalisation has widened its focus from student and teacher mobility to more vital linkage between international research and education network through the establishment of consortia besides curriculum and staff development, quality assurance mechanisms, and the use of ICT (van Der Wende, 2001).

Notably, the drive for EMI primarily comes from the link between internationalisation and English in HE (Jenkins, 2014; Liddicoat, 2016), wherein programmes taught in English are perceived as 'higher' status and thus more attractive to increasingly mobile student populations (OECD, 2014) across geographical boundaries. Therefore, universities adopt EMI as a top-down strategy to improve their international profiles and curricula (Kuteeva & Airey, 2014) to enhance the academic reputation manifested by global and regional rankings within the international academic community.

1.2 Aims of the study and research questions

The main aims of this current study are to present an overview of the challenges experienced by Bangladeshi HE students and their attitudes towards EMI, besides providing insight into the current practices of EMI in Bangladeshi universities. While gaining insight into how their previous learning experiences impact the way they learn through EMI and shape their identity, the study was guided by the following overarching research questions:

1. What are the perceived challenges students face that affect teaching and learning practices in an English medium instructional context and how do students respond to these challenges?

2. How do students' perceptions about their identities and previous learning influence their learning experiences through English as a second/additional language?

3. How do state and institutional influences impact EMI adoption in Bangladeshi HEIs?

1.3 Rationale for the study

In recent years, the EMI trend has increasingly gained prominence in many European nations and received much research attention (Macaro et al., 2017) than in Asian countries (Baker & Hüttner, 2019; Fenton-Smith, Humphreys, et al., 2017), particularly in South Asia. While this leaves a considerable geographical gap in EMI research, it also indicates a need to understand the various perceptions of learning through EMI, particularly among Bangladeshi students.

Despite an upsurge in the provision of EMI programmes and courses globally, the adoption of EMI programmes in Bangladesh has been spurred through the establishment of private HEIs. Even though all the private universities in Bangladesh have officially adopted EMI practices, it is indispensable to investigate the challenges faced by the students as the majority of students in

these private universities come from Bangla medium schooling with overall inadequate national competence in English (Mahmud & Gazi, 2012). This indicates a need to understand the various perceptions of EMI that exist among Bangladeshi HE students. In addition, this current study addresses the realities of education, training, assessment, and support needs from the different stakeholders' perspectives (Chang et al., 2017; Guarda & Helm, 2017), including academics, administrators, students, researchers, policymakers besides community members, about the impact of EMI on students' access to HE, their identities, various aspects of learning, teaching and content delivery besides the educational implications of learning through ESL/EAL. Considering the paucity of studies investigating Bangladeshi HE students' learning experiences through EMI, this study primarily aims to fill research gaps and is expected to add value while being beneficial to academics and practitioners at the meso level pertaining to EMI implementation and the design and delivery of university courses in English.

However, the rationales of this study originated from the author's personal experiences of English language teaching in the Bangladeshi HE context. Having been involved in language teaching in private HEIs since 2007 and having first-hand experiences of students' poor language proficiency, the author's affiliation with the institution under scrutiny allowed emic perspectives.

Following the privatisation of Bangladeshi HE, EMI has gathered momentum, as seen by an increased number of EMI programmes and courses in

Bangladeshi private tertiary institutions in the absence of explicit EMI policies at the national policymaking level. However, the current practice of EMI in the Bangladeshi context is not fully informed by research evidence. There has not been much learner-focused research (Hamid, Jahan, et al., 2013a; Hamid, Jahan, et al., 2013b; Islam, 2013; Murtaza, 2016; Sultana, 2014a) to understand teaching and learning practices in the light of student interpretations and conceptualisations of using EMI (Rahman & Singh, 2019, 2021; Rahman et al., 2020), in a Bangladeshi HEI setting Hamid et al. (2014).

A few studies have investigated Bangladeshi university teachers' preferences for using Bengali as an MOI in public universities, contrary to the usage of EMI in private universities (Karim et al., 2021). Other studies have noted the misalignment between clear language-in-education policies and language teaching and learning (Rahman, Islam, et al., 2019) and have looked at teachers' perceptions of using MOI as a tool for universities to produce knowledgeable and skilled graduates (Karim et al., 2021). Apart from these studies, little research has investigated how students perceive EMI, their academic challenges, and how they think EMI will benefit their learning and future careers.

Hence, the focus of this study originated from a desire to underpin the need for a policy of language across the curriculum where all subject teachers ought to play a pivotal role in the enhancement of linguistic, communicative, pragmatic, and cognitive competence of their students. Given the state of affairs in the

local Bangladeshi context, there is a pressing need to seek evidence to see whether EMI programmes in Bangladeshi private universities prove beneficial for students or create more challenges than benefits for students. As such, the current study aims to provide deep insight into the effectiveness of EMI programmes in Bangladeshi HE from students' perspectives. This study will also explore the macro-, meso- and micro-level policy implementation of EMI in Bangladesh, alongside an investigation of implementation challenges.

1.4 Significance of the study

The current study contributes to the limited research on EMI in universities in Bangladesh, providing insights into students' experiences of EMI in HEIs. While exploring the perspectives and experiences of students at a large EMI tertiary institution in Bangladesh, this study will address the challenges that students experience in constructing their preferred identities in an EMI environment and how they negotiate such challenges. More specifically, lessons learned from these experiences will assist in informing practices regarding macro, meso, and micro-level language planning for Bangladeshi HEIs. Since the growth in student mobility requires HEIs and governments to increasingly adopt English-taught programmes, not solely as a linguistic change in HE but as a geopolitical and economic phenomenon that impact HEIs more broadly, the critical role EMI now plays within the political framing of the knowledge economy is worth attention.

Using conclusions drawn from the data, this study will help respond to the inevitability of explicit national language policy goals in monolingual states like Bangladesh regarding EMI provision, operationalised at the institutional and classroom level, with consideration to the quality of provision and the stakeholders' perceptions of this burgeoning trend (Galloway, Numajiri, et al., 2020). Providing governments, university administrators, curriculum, and course designers with insights into ways to implement successful EMI programmes, this study will enable policymakers to address the inadequacy of explicit macro-level EMI language-in-education planning policies throughout Asia and beyond.

1.5 Overview of the thesis

The thesis consists of seven chapters. This first chapter outlines the research rationale, the overarching research questions, and the sociolinguistic background in Bangladesh regarding the use of English in Bangladesh's HE. Following this, the structure of the thesis is provided. Chapter two reviews the relevant literature in relation to EMI, internationalisation, language planning, and experiences of learning through EMI. Chapter three presents the theoretical framework of this study and embraces translanguaging theory and linguistic capital while theorising the notion of identity to explain the influence of students' socio-economic backgrounds in their learning experiences. This is followed by chapter four which introduces the methodology of the study. It

begins with a discussion of the epistemological and ontological position that informs the inquiry.

Chapter four then presents phenomenology as a research approach, the choice of documents analysis, observation, and interviews as data collection methods, approaches used for data analysis in the institutional context, sampling strategies, participants' profile, and the researcher's position. Prior to data management and analysis, preliminary research in the form of a pilot study is discussed. Issues of trustworthiness and authenticity are also discussed in this chapter. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical considerations and limitations of the study. Chapter five presents the empirical findings and highlights how institutional policies and practices affect teaching and learning at the university in question. Chapter six explicitly discusses students' learning challenges and translanguaging practices that negotiate their identity in an EMI context. The chapter uses the concept of linguistic capital and presents the findings of the influence of the previous educational background of the students. The chapter explicitly discusses how linguistic capital is transmitted to the students and their learning experiences. The chapter also discusses the findings of the influence of teachers' pedagogical strategies on the students' learning experiences in the classroom in the light of relevant literature. The final chapter concludes the thesis with a summary of the essential findings and their implications for language educational practice in EMI. After this, the key themes relating to the main research question are addressed to gain a holistic understanding of the

students' learning experiences through EMI. The contribution of the study is then presented. The chapter concludes by explaining the limitations of the research and offers recommendations for future research for practitioners and policymakers alike.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The overarching aim of this chapter is to provide the rationale for this study and situate it within existing literature related to students' experiences of learning in HE through EMI. By identifying the relationship between ideas and practices and establishing the context of the topic or problem, this literature review section provides the groundwork of the study by highlighting issues related to internationalisation and EMI, the key ideas, themes, debates around its implementation, and seminal research within the field. By synthesising existing literature in terms of their methodologies, research designs, key findings, and their pedagogical and theoretical implications, this section helps gain a new perspective in discovering central themes relevant to this study: students' perceptions of learning in HE through EMI, students' challenges and attitude towards EMI, students' coping strategies and their experiences of the EAL/ESL foundation programmes. In sum, this section aims to establish a gap in the literature that this present study attempts to address.

2.1 English medium instruction (EMI) – Definition, Development Trends and Driving Forces

The medium of instruction (MOI) refers to the adoption of a language used to deliver contents of specialised academic subjects such as Mathematics, Science, Engineering, and Medicine, including Business and Management, amongst other subjects that do not explicitly teach language. A considerable amount of literature, over the last decades, have emphasised that learning achievement is enhanced when children are taught in their first language (L1) for at least the first six years of primary school before the second language (L2) is introduced as a medium of instruction (Ball, 2011; Benson, 2004). In such bilingual education models, students use both L1 and L2 as languages of instruction for various academic subjects throughout primary and secondary schooling. Although there is convincing evidence that use of the L1 in the initial years of schooling helps reach socially and educationally marginalised populations, improving their enrollment, attendance, and achievement (Pinnock, 2009), bilingual and/or multilingual education has been found to increase a student's self-confidence and self-esteem and is now the recommended strategy for primary and secondary education in fulfilling learning goals (Cots et al., 2014; UNESCO, 2016).

English medium instruction or EMI encompasses the teaching of academic contents across various disciplines or subjects exclusively in English 'in countries or jurisdictions where the first language of the majority of the

population is not English' (Dearden, 2015). More commonly being used for educational programmes at tertiary levels, EMI practices involve teaching informational content through English to enhance students' discipline-specific academic knowledge and skills and English (Altbach et al., 2009; Coleman, 2006). The adoption of EMI covers a range of different linguistic situations such as international preschools and kindergartens, immersions schools, university courses in English besides multilingual situations that uses English as a lingua franca (ELF) for education and daily communication in academic contexts (Ducker, 2019). Recent decades have seen an unprecedented spread of ELF to foster multilingual communication among non-native speakers of English in a profoundly interconnected world (Seidlhofer, 2017). As a consequence, there is a 'fast-moving worldwide shift' from English being taught as a foreign language (EFL) to English being the medium of instruction (MOI) for specialised academic subjects such as science, mathematics, geography, and medicine, especially in HE (Dearden, 2015, p. 4). Owing to globalisation, English-taught programmes as opposed to exclusive native language MOI only for communicative purposes has become a 'new normal' in HE (Fenton-Smith, Humphreys, et al., 2017, p. 2).

The teaching of content through the medium of English has evolved over the past three decades, from Content-based Instruction (CBI) to Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). The use of both CBI and CLIL refers to programmes where academic content is taught through a second or an additional language. Defined as 'the concurrent study of language and subject

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matter, with the form and sequence of language presentation dictated by content material' ([Brinton et al., 1989, p. vii](#)), CBI's origins are associated with Canadian immersion programmes ([Cenoz, 2015](#)). As defined by [Snow (2014)](#), CBI is

> ….an umbrella term for a multifaceted approach to [second/foreign language] teaching that differs in terms of factors such as educational setting, program objectives, and target population but shares a common point of departure—the integration of language teaching aims with content instruction. (p. 439)

Originated in Europe ([Costa & Coleman, 2013](#); [Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009](#); [Wannagat, 2007](#)), CLIL has '...a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language' ([Coyle et al., 2010, p. 1](#)), particularly in primary and secondary schools but could also be taught through any L2 besides English. Both the approaches of CBI and CLIL are on a continuum that ranges from the most content-driven end to the most language-driven end, as shown in the continuum of EMI in Figure 2.1 below ([Thompson & McKinley, 2018, p. 3](#)).
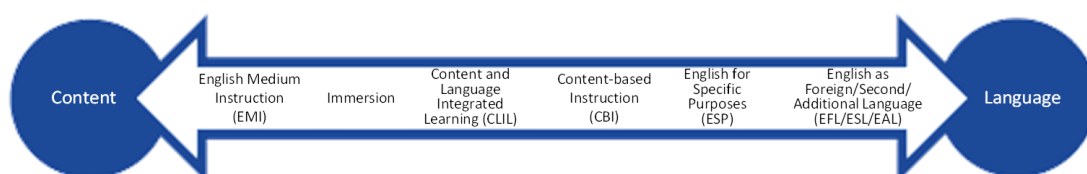
Figure 2.1: Language and Content Continuum
Adapted from: [Thompson and McKinley (2018)](#)

However, how these instructional approaches are interpreted and implemented varies. A more recent CBI model based on Brinton and Snow's (2017) visual representation, further developed by Miller et al. (2021), redefines how CBI approaches vary owing to the integration of language and content as new contexts emerge in different polities (see Figure 2.2). More recently, EMI has become popular in HE in countries where English is not an official language and '…is labelled in a variety of ways, such as content-based learning, content, and language integrated learning (CLIL), immersion education, theme-based language teaching, and bilingual education' (Richards & Pun, 2021).
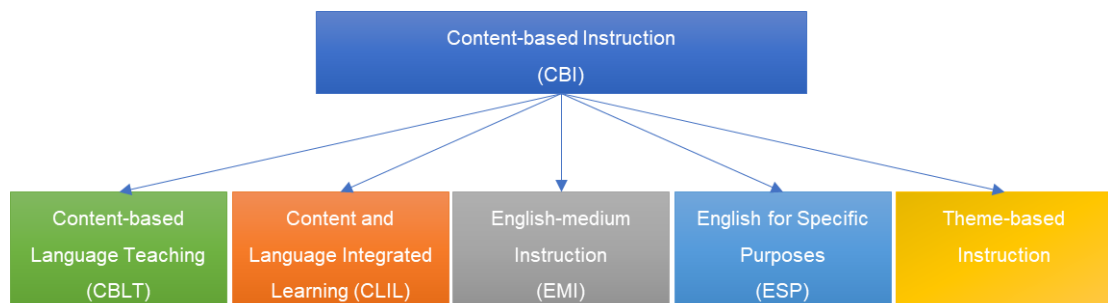
Figure 2.2: Framework of content-based instruction models (Miller et al., 2021)

Often referred to as a tertiary education variant of CLIL, EMI refers to content instruction delivered in the students' second or additional language (Pecorari & Malmström, 2018). Although the emergence of EMI is a growing global phenomenon, it is more widely used in private rather than public education

(Dearden, 2015) and is part of the broader role of English as a lingua franca, particularly in the academic domain (Galloway et al., 2017).

2.1.1 The development of EMI in higher education as a global trend

A rapid expansion of English-medium instruction (EMI), predominantly in HE, is legitimated in many countries, where English is not the first language (L1), to support students' mobility (Jenkins, 2014; Wächter & Maiworm, 2014), opportunities of studying and working abroad to increase national competitiveness (Dearden, 2015) as well as cultural exchange across borders. The prime objectives of EMI provisions are to equip human resources with competency in professional knowledge and proficiency in the English language for global integration (Vo, 2017). The phenomenal growth of EMI worldwide has been described as an 'unstoppable train' (Macaro, 2015), heading towards an internationalised future in HE. Owing to a remarkable upsurge in EMI programmes across European universities, driven primarily by internationalisation (Kirkpatrick, 2011), a multitude of approximately 8,100 courses were offered in English in 2014, compared to 725 in 2001 as reported in a survey conducted by Wächter and Maiworm (2014). Further survey studies on EMI conducted in Italy (Broggini & Costa, 2017; Costa & Coleman, 2013) highlighted the benefits of English-taught courses in improving international profiles of Italian HEIs while preparing Italian students for global markets with strong English proficiency and intercultural communication. Through a questionnaire differentiating between CLIL and EMI, followed by

lecturer interviews, another study conducted by Aguilar (2017) shed light on how engineering EMI lecturers teaching at a Spanish university viewed their teaching practices through language integration within the current internationalisation trend of offering English courses and programmes.

Originated in Europe in countries such as Germany, Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Turkey since the early 2000s (Björkman, 2008; Healey, 2008), EMI is increasingly being adopted over content and language integrated learning (CLIL) in HEIs across non-native, English-speaking, East Asian nations like Hong Kong, China, Japan, Taiwan, and Korea (Chang, 2010; Cho, 2012; Kym & Kym, 2014; Nunan, 2003; Pun & Macaro, 2019) besides Singapore, Malaysia, and Vietnam.

Over the past few decades, setting ambitious targets for future growth in HE in becoming a knowledge-based economy, there has been an emerging trend of using EMI across HE in East Asian countries, reported through studies conducted in China (Fang, 2018; Hu & Lei, 2014; Jiang et al., 2019; Song, 2018; Yang, 2019; Zhang, 2018), Hong Kong (Evans & Morrison, 2018; Lo & Lo, 2014; Wannagat, 2007), Japan (Aizawa & Rose, 2019), Korea (Kim, Choi, et al., 2017), Taiwan (Chang, 2010; Wu, 2006; Yang, 2015; Yeh, 2014), Singapore (Bolton et al., 2017), Malaysia (Ali, 2013; Gill, 2006), Vietnam (Manh, 2012; Phan, 2018; Vu & Burns, 2014) and Pakistan (Khan, 2013).

Singapore has long been seen within the Asian region to have 'an unmatched record of success' in implementing EMI at all levels of education, including

colleges and universities (Bolton et al., 2017). It stands out as a country that has long promoted internationalisation as a national policy (Daquila, 2013). An inherently international character of policymaking in Singapore, and the state's approach to capitalising on globalisation as a means to national economic development, brought the global knowledge economy front and centre in its educational priorities (Sanders, 2019). And having quality education to nurture a talented workforce in attracting multinational companies as the economic means of survival (Koh, 2011) has been peremptory for Singapore's existence. As part of a retooling of its national education system to effectively meet the needs of the global knowledge economy, Thinking Schools, Learning Nation initiative was launched in 1997. Borrowed heavily from Gardner's models of teaching and learning – wherein the content areas of the curriculum were taught through the English language, the initiative was extensively supported by tools of instructional technology (Gopinathan, 2007; Saravanan, 2005). In light of this, English was promoted as the sole teaching medium at all levels of education (Bolton et al., 2017), contributing to Singapore's noteworthy achievement of the highest levels of English proficiency in the Asian region (Bolton, 2008). As Singapore's economy has developed over the past five decades, educational priorities have shifted accordingly from labour-intensive manufacturing to skill-intensive production and eventually excelling in the global knowledge economy while attracting innovative engineering and scientific companies to establish themselves in Singapore (OECD, 2011, p. 160). Language planning and language management have played an

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indispensable role in developing Singapore's knowledge economy (Cavallaro & Ng, 2014). Moreover, English 'has contributed to the making of modern Singapore' as the preference for English in education contributed to the rapid development of Singapore as an international financial and technological hub (Chew, 2014, pp. 28-31). While English education has valorised the Singapore government's strategic cosmopolitanism (Choo, 2014, p. 677), it has also shaped the discursive practices of Singapore's HEIs by emphasising societal aspirations of being internationally competitive and globally oriented (Teo, 2007).

Owing to globalisation and the global spread of English, the adoption of EMI in private HEIs has made Malaysia one of the first Asian countries to rigorously internationalise its HE (Gill & Kirkpatrick, 2013). Education and language-in-education policy has been reinvented in Malaysia as part of Vision 2020 to transform Malaysia into an international education hub by establishing EMI programmes in private HEIs, prompting public universities to transition to EMI through the enactment of the Education Act, 1996. English language, however, is offered as a compulsory subject at all levels of education, implying its existence as an additional language in a pluralist society, widely used in speaking besides official usages in 'politics, the media, jurisdiction, higher education, and other such domains' (Thirusanku & Melor, 2013).

EMI has witnessed an unprecedented expansion in China over the last two decades (Tong et al., 2020) and has shifted away from bilingual education

models towards English-only programmes between 2003 to 2019 (Rose, McKinley, et al., 2020). The Chinese government has actively promoted EMI in private and state-funded public universities. This was administered by the Chinese MOE that stipulated 5-10% of university courses to be taught in English, recognising EMI as an essential component of internationalising the nation's HE sector to gain access to cutting-edge science and technology (Hu et al., 2014).

Japan also faces a growing push to foster local students with calibre to participate in the international workforce (Aizawa & Rose, 2019), averting the pervasive 'sakoku' attitude of exclusiveness and insularity (Morita, 2015). As a preliminary initiative in 2009, Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology launched the heavily funded Global 30 Project, which aimed to increase the number of international students and internationalise Japanese HE with an explicit emphasis on an increase in EMI. Recent HE policies have been developed to attract high-quality researchers, teachers, and students from abroad (Doiz et al., 2011). Additionally, Japan has taken up the Top Global University Project, intending to enhance the international compatibility and competitiveness of its HE as EMI increasingly gains momentum. Despite the widespread adoption of EMI policies, little research has been conducted to examine the implications of such macro language planning, even amongst Japanese students (Bradford & Brown, 2017; Rose & McKinley, 2018).

Likewise, in Korean HE, the notion of internationalisation has been translated into the policy of English usage in classroom teaching. Initiated and implemented by the government and the policymakers of individual universities, EMI has been viewed as a primary instrument to ultimately raise the universities' competitiveness in the global educational market and draw more international students into the campuses (Byun et al., 2011). As the trend of EMI becomes more prominent in Korean HE, studies, mostly conducted through survey questionnaires and interviews, have looked into Korean students' anxiety with acculturation (Kim, Choi, et al., 2017), both students and instructors' reactions to EMI courses (Chang et al., 2017; Cho, 2012; Jon & Kim, 2011; Kim, 2011) and issues regarding its successful implementation.

In summary, this section has described the development of EMI as a global trend in HE. Even though many Asian countries have experienced this surging trend in the development and growth of EMI implementation, there is a pressing need to examine how EMI provisions are operationalised at the national, institutional and classroom levels and their impact on students' disciplinary and language learning (Galloway, Numajiri, et al., 2020). The following section will refer to the development of EMI to drive the internationalisation of HE worldwide, providing the rationale behind the development of a global knowledge economy.

2.1.2 EMI as an internationalisation agenda in the development of a global knowledge economy

The Englishisation of HE (Galloway & McKinley, 2021; Kirkpatrick, 2011) as a global phenomenon is built on the notion that EMI and internationalisation are inseparably intertwined (Aizawa & McKinley, 2020).With the spread of globalisation over the past four decades, the emergence of a global knowledge-based economy, marketisation and massification have dramatically changed the face of HE, bringing internationalisation to the forefront of many agendas (Sanders, 2019). As a global knowledge economy is foregrounded, internationalisation has become a key meta-discourse in education policy (Vidovich, 2004). Significantly, it has been 'one of the most prevailing forces at work within higher education around the world during the last two decades' (Rumbley et al., 2012). Knight (2004) suggests a detailed interpretation of the whole process of internationalisation which influences an HEI's mission, core values, purpose and functions, evident through its quality assurance exercises, staffing, admission, research, curriculum, student support, contract, project work, and finances. Advancing the internationalisation agenda in HEIs involves adding an international dimension to HEI with 'a perspective, activity or programme which introduces or integrates an international/intercultural/global outlook into the major functions of a university or college' (Knight & De Wit, 1995, p. 15). As a 'process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary

education' ([Knight, 2003, p. 2](#)), internationalisation is critically positioned in university agenda, not only in the West but also in Asia ([Knight, 2004](#)).

[Sanders (2019)](#) further elucidates that the narrower interpretation of the process emphasises the traditional international activities of student, faculty and staff mobility, internationalisation of the curriculum, transnational education (i.e., branch campuses), international partnerships (research, joint programs, etc.), and more significantly the adoption of English for teaching, research, and administration. On the other hand, the broader interpretation could reposition an institution's frame of reference and operational context from the local or national to the international ([Hawawini, 2016](#)), taking advantage of globalisation ([Altbach & Knight, 2007b](#)). Hence, [The International Association of Universities (2012)](#) notes:

> Irrespective of contextual differences within and between countries, nearly all higher education institutions worldwide are engaged in international activities and are seeking to expand them. Engaging with the world is now considered part of the very definition of quality in education and research.

Arguably, the internationalisation of education involves complex interrelationships of economic, cultural, and social dimensions within a multicultural, international context governed by a common lingua franca ([Galloway & Rose, 2015](#)). The impact of internationalisation on the language planning and management of universities can be seen in all

areas of academic work, from administration to teaching and learning and research. In teaching and learning, the primary language-planning issue confronting institutions in many countries is the question of the medium of instruction (Liddicoat, 2016), as elaborated in the subsequent section (see 2.1.5).

2.1.3 World Englishes and EMI

In reality, the internationalisation of universities has become one of the main drivers of global English (Graddol, 2006), attracting a more significant number of international students as a key indicator of HEI internationalisation (QS Intelligence Unit, 2019). Hence, the work of universities driving internationalisation is fundamentally mediated by the diverse linguistic context in which they operate, and there has been growing interest in how universities should plan their language use (Bull, 2012; Cots et al., 2012; Gill, 2006; Källkvist & Hult, 2016). As elucidated in the next section, the focus on universities as language-planning actors represents how language is planned at the meso and micro-levels (Baldauf, 2006; Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997a), where universities as institutions are conceptualised as language-planning actors at many levels.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) emerge as language-planning actors in linguistically diverse societies to develop more explicit language policies in response to a changing language context. Kachru's model of 'World

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Englishes' ([Kachru, 1985](#)) depicted the worldwide spread of the English language through three concentric circles: the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle (see Figure 2.3 below).
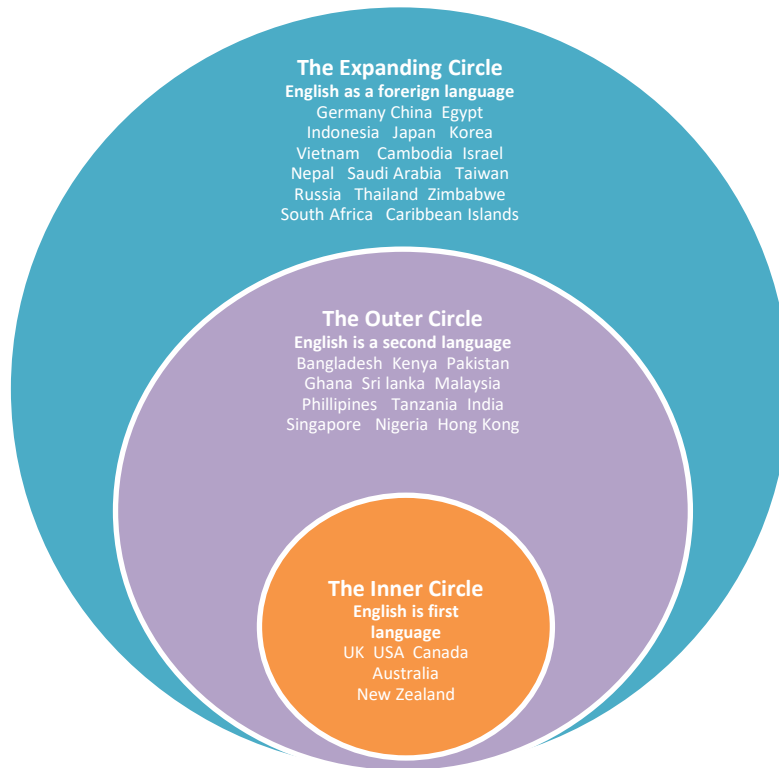
Figure 2.3: World Englishes- Kachru's Three Concentric Circles of English ([1985](#))

The Circles model manifest 'the type of spread, the pattern of acquisition, and the functional domains in which the English language is used across cultures and languages' (p. 12). The innermost circle represents countries that use English as the primary language in government institutions and daily social communication: the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and Australia. The expanding outer circle

is made up of countries in the 'periphery' ([Canagarajah, 2000](#)) such as China, Egypt, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Korea, Nepal, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, and various South American countries where people learn English as a foreign language (EFL). Historically, countries in the outer circle are former and current colonies of Anglophone colonial powers which use 'English as an additional institutionalised, official language, though not a mother tongue' ([Kachru, 1998](#); [Xiaoqiong & Xianxing, 2011](#)). These English societies include East Asian nations such as Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Hong Kong and Singapore, and South Asian countries such as Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, among other African nations such as Tanzania and Kenya, Zambia, Nigeria and South Africa.

English has been retained as an institutionalised additional or second language (EAL/ESL) in most outer-circle countries with some degree of official recognition as an official, legal, or academic language ([Bolton, 2006](#)). Characteristically, English is also widely used throughout the mass media besides government, law, and educational domains in some of these nations, such as Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore, all of which have a lively daily life press. In addition to print media, such societies often have English-language radio and television channels, such as Hong Kong, Singapore, and the Philippines. Such linguistically diverse communities are also characterised by the functional utilisation of a high frequency of code-switching, code-mixing, borrowing,

and translanguaging between English and regional varieties of native languages in informal domains (Bolton, 2008), leading to the emergence of different variants of world Englishes.

Translanguaging, in particular, has become almost commonplace in everyday life as languages are no longer considered to be interfering with one another or are kept markedly separate and pure (Wei, 2014, p. 172), emanating from firmly rooted purist language ideologies (Lin, 2013). Aimed at improving content and multilingual language competencies using resources from multilingual learners' 'whole linguistic repertoire' (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022), translingual practices like 'pedagogical translanguaging' is an instructional and theoretical approach further discussed in the next chapter. While the changing of the language through translanguaging is strategic and deliberate, the aim is to engage the dominant language helping learners develop the weaker language towards a balanced language proficiency (Tai, 2021a).

2.1.4 EMI as a language planning and policy tool in a transnational world

Language planning and policy decisions significantly impact language ecology by establishing and regulating linguistic practices. Drawing on the relationship between a language and its social and political context, language planning involves 'deliberate efforts to influence the behaviour of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes' (Cooper, 1989, p. 45). As a long-term, sustained and complex, 'activity

undertaken by the state,' language planning is carried out by a well-coordinated team of critical stakeholders typically led by governments or official administrative bodies (Ho & Wong, 2000, p. 1) and is therefore considered as (Baldauf, 2005b);

> systematic, future-oriented change in language code (corpus planning), use (status planning), learning and speaking (language-in-education planning) and/or language promotion (prestige planning) undertaken by some authoritative organisation – most frequently by governments, but increasingly by other organisations – with some community of speakers

Corpus planning deals with the development and modification of the writing of grammar and the standardisation of spelling. In contrast, status planning deals with the official decision about the choice of language, including attitudes toward alternative languages and the political implications of such decisions .

However, the most crucial language planning decision in education is language acquisition planning and the choice of medium of instruction (Tollefson & Tsui, 2004). First used by Einar Haugen, the term 'language planning' has broadened its scope and is nowadays associated with multilingual societies (Davies & Ziegler, 2015) while being increasingly driven by internationalisation and globalisation issues in the 21st century. Kaplan and Baldauf (2003) clarify that 'language planning' and 'language policy' are different processes where language planning refers to the preparatory work that leads to the formulation of a language policy. To further contextualise this,

a fourfold matrix (see Figure 2.4), initially developed by Haugen (1983), elaborates the four stages or processes with regards to conscious and explicit efforts of language planning, executed mainly by governments alongside institutions, groups, and individuals.

Having had incorporated the work of Cooper (1989), Ferguson (1968), Hornberger (1994b), Kloss (1968), Nahir (1984) and Neustupny (1974), this evolving framework reinforces the idea that language maintenance is both about the relations between language and society. Not necessarily following any logical progression or linear sequence, language planning and policymaking is a massive and complex exercise, authorised by the government but in the presence of language specialists, expert curriculum developers and educational officials involved in language-in-education planning. Since governments worldwide increasingly regard the education system as a vital component of the nation-building process, language policy

Approaches	Form (Policy Planning)	Function (language cultivation)
Status planning (about uses of language in society)	Standardisation of status Officialisation Nationalisation	Revival Maintenance Interlingual communication International Intranational Spread
Corpus planning (about language)	**Codification** *Language's form* *(standardisation procedures)*	**Elaboration** *Language's function* *(functional development)*
	Corpus Graphisation Grammatication Lexication Auxiliary code Graphisation Grammatication Lexication	Lexical Modernisation Stylistic Modernisation Renovation (new forms, old functions) Purification Reform Stylistic simplification Terminology unification Internationalisation
Language-in-education planning (about language acquisition and learning)	**Selection** *Language's formal role in society*	**Implementation** *Language's functional role in society*
	Education • Access Policy • Curriculum Policy • Methods and Materials Policy Community Policy • Literary • Religious • Mass media • Work	Reacquisition Maintenance Foreign/Second/Additional Language/ Literacy Shift
Prestige planning (about image)	Language Promotion Official/Government Institutional Individual	Intellectualisation Language of Science Language of Professions Language of High Culture Language of Diplomacy

Figure 2.4: Language policy and planning goals- an integrative framework

Source: Baldauf (2005a, p. 960)

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plays a crucial role in developing a common lingua franca, a language for

international communication and languages to focus on identity (Chua, 2004).

Figure 2.5 illustrates a non-linear process of language planning and policy

(LPP) where the multiple forces, as exhibited by different actors, explicit and

hidden alike, at different levels, coherently facilitate and shape language

management in other nation-states. The three distinct groups of actors in the

process of LPP are the state at the macro/national level, the institutions, such

as schools, universities, media, private and public and business organisations

at the meso level and teachers at the micro-level.
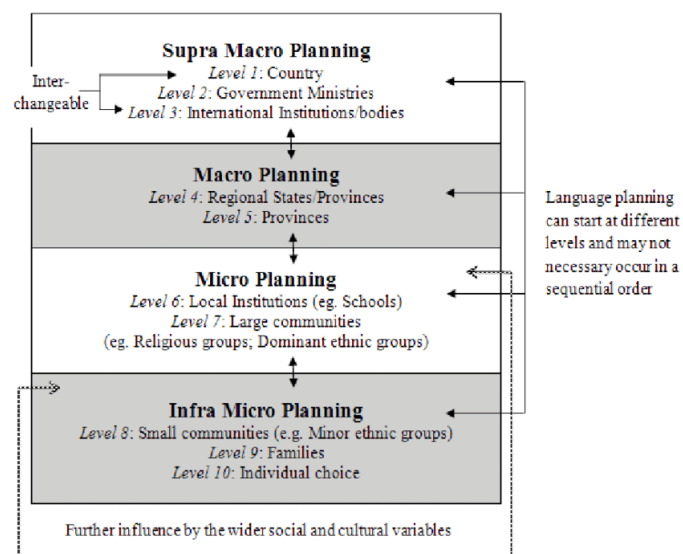
Figure 2.5: Stages and Levels of Language Planning

Source: Catherine Chua Siew and Baldauf Jr. (2011, p. 940)

In view of the stages of language planning as mentioned above, a number of

six key issues have been suggested which language planning efforts typically

include (Baldauf, 2012, pp. 238-239):

…migration and the treatment of new minorities, re-emerging polities and the emergence of supra-states, deconstructing monolingual identities, micro language planning, agency and language power, and medium of instruction

Much research on EMI policy implementation focuses on both constraints and opportunities. Several studies investigating the policy implementation have been carried out in the European context (Doiz et al., 2012; Smit, 2012) alongside Brazil (Guimarães, 2020; Martinez, 2016) and a few Arabic-speaking countries (Al-Bakri, 2013; Belhiah & Elhami, 2015). Numerous studies have conducted an investigation of EMI implementation affordances and challenges in the East Asian context, in countries such as Korea (Byun et al., 2011; Cho, 2012; Kim, Kweon, et al., 2017), Malaysia (Ali, 2013), Japan (Rose & McKinley, 2018), China (Jiang et al., 2019; Zhang, 2018), Indonesia (Zacharias, 2013), and Vietnam (Nguyen et al., 2017).

On the contrary, a few researchers have sought to examine the nature of language-in-education policies in Bangladesh to investigate how it is enacted at the macro (national), meso (university) and micro (individual) levels in practice. In the past decade, a small number of studies in the context of Bangladesh has provided a historical overview of English in education policy from British colonial rule to Pakistani rule to the post-independence period to contextualise the English language-in-education policies, its implementation and 'dismal' outcomes (Hamid & Erling, 2016; Hamid & Nguyen, 2016). To that

end, the following section addresses, in greater detail, the standing of English as a medium of instruction and the driving forces behind its implementation under the realities of economic globalisation and the internationalisation of HE.

2.1.5 Driving forces behind the implementation of EMI

Reasons which have driven universities in non-Anglophone educational contexts, as well as regional or national governments towards Englishisation, allude to seven essential aspects of EMI (Coleman, 2006, p. 4):

> CLIL (content and language integrated learning), internationalisation, student exchanges, teaching and research materials, staff mobility, graduate employability and the market in international students.

EMI is often chosen as many universities see it as a 'two for one approach' (Lightbown, 2014, p. 10) - an opportunity for students to develop a foreign language and content knowledge efficiently as they enter an increasingly competitive global labour market. However, much of the spread of EMI has been driven by various societal factors such as improved quality of education, higher domestic enrollment, potential revenue from international students, proficiency in intercultural communication, increased employment/mobility opportunities, domestic enrollment, etc. (Airey et al., 2017; Galloway, Numajiri, et al., 2020). Government policy is often the impetus for such EMI implementation (Graham & Eslami, 2019). For instance, the MOE's policy in China stipulates that 5–10% of a university's undergraduate courses are

taught in English (Walkinshaw et al., 2017, p. 4). Likewise, the MOE in Japan has made funding available to universities stipulating that the universities increase the 'ratio of foreign faculty and students' and the number of 'lectures in English' (MEXT Ministry of Education, 2014). Similarly, the MOE in Taiwan offers incentives to drive universities to create EMI programmes by providing funding for teaching assistants and overseas training to instructors who run these EMI courses (Fenton-Smith, Stillwell, et al., 2017).

In the same way, many programmes throughout the Gulf are exclusively taught in English, such as science-based majors in Kuwait (Malallah, 2000) and Oman (Al-Issa, 2006, 2020) and a flagship initiative of Education City in Qatar (Anderson, 2015) with branch campuses of some of the world's leading educational institutes. In the United Arab Emirates, however, EMI has been dominant since the 1980s (Cook, 2016) as the nation has shifted towards English as a lingua franca (ELF) over the past 40 years (Burden-Leahy, 2009). Even in Saudi Arabia, where language policy dictates instruction to be offered in Arabic, universities have moved towards implementing EMI to catalyse a transition toward a knowledge-based economy (Al-Kahtany et al., 2016).

In general, governments worldwide have pushed universities to offer EMI courses to raise global profiles of universities as a response to international HE competition (Graham & Eslami, 2019). With students and programmes gaining mobility across borders in a globalised knowledge-based economy, universities in many nations have been inevitably driven to implement

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internationalisation strategies to improve quality and build an international reputation by attracting talented students from abroad while retaining local students (Hou et al., 2013).

With HEIs around the world seeking to internationalise by introducing or expanding their EMI programmes, the need for change at the policy (macro), institutional (meso), and classroom (micro) level is vital as enablers of effective and sustainable language policy implementation. Accordingly, Macaro and Akincioglu (2018, p. 256) maintains,

> EMI is inextricably linked to the establishment of English as an international language of communication resulting in greater student mobility across countries leading to the need for the Medium of Instruction (MOI) to be English.

Many non-English-speaking countries in Asia have adopted EMI as one of the essential strategies to internationalise their universities, leading to rapid growth in EMI courses and degree programmes (Altbach & Knight, 2007a; Tamtam et al., 2012). As education is a powerful driver of language change (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997b), nations employ a language-in-education planning (LEP) framework and apply policies by stipulating a primary medium of instruction (MOI) besides local languages, which impact students' social, academic, occupational and economic prospects (Tollefson & Tsui, 2004). To further elaborate, language planning occurs at three different levels: at a macro level, governments predominantly stipulate a particular MOI in institutions; at a meso

level, institutions plan for implementation of the prescribed MOI; and at a micro-level, academics and students use the mandated MOI in formal educational settings within the LEP framework (Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003).

2.2 Perceived benefits of EMI

Driven by internationalisation (Galloway, Numajiri, et al., 2020), EMI in HE is perceived to bring several benefits to students, such as enabling local students to acquire a good command of English due to prolonged exposure, equipping them with intercultural competency and adaptability besides global competency, facilitating them to study abroad, as well as to get better positions in the job market (Kelly, 2010; Tamtam et al., 2012). It is also seen to create a favourable learning environment with extensive exposure to English besides opportunities for its meaningful use to negotiate the curricular content, thus leading to better acquisition (Galloway et al., 2017).

Despite issues such as funding, lack of qualified teaching staff, lack of students' understanding, interest and cultural opposition, the adoption of EMI witnessed tremendous success in non-English-speaking European countries than universities in Asia and Africa, as examined in a comparative study conducted by Tamtam et al. (2012) exploring the implementation of EMI in Europe, Asia and Africa. Widely adopted by universities in Europe, EMI is perceived to have several benefits that include an improved international profile of the institution, student exchanges, staff mobility (Knight, 2008), graduate employability, strengthening of collaboration with foreign partner

HEIs and greater assistance for international students (Wächter & Maiworm, 2014). The primary objective of such EMI programmes is to equip national human capital with both competencies in professional knowledge and proficiency in the English language, enhancing students' learning satisfaction, increasing employability, facilitating international mobility as well as promoting long-term national development (Chang, 2006; Coleman, 2011; Coleman, 2006; Kym & Kym, 2014). Moreover, the ever-increasing dominance of English in academic publishing (Lillis & Curry, 2013) means that students' access to contemporary learning resources is often mediated by their competence in the language.

Additionally, EMI is often perceived to help push HEIs upwards while contesting for a place in domestic, regional, and global league tables (Hu, 2019), playing a crucial role in university rankings and eligibility for government funding while attracting high-quality academics and enhancing the employability of graduates.

2.3 Students' perceptions and attitudes towards EMI in higher education

Over the past decades, several studies on EMI in HE in non-dominant English-speaking countries have investigated perceptions and attitudes of students and lecturers towards EMI through quantitative surveys (Aguilar & Rodríguez, 2012; Airey, 2011b; Başıbek et al., 2014; Collins, 2010; Jensen & Thøgersen, 2011; Tatzl, 2011). Existing literature on students' perceptions of EMI have primarily drawn evidence from Turkey (Ekoç, 2020; Kirkgöz, 2014; Sert, 2008),

Hong Kong (Flowerdew & Miller, 1992; Li et al., 2001; Lo & Macaro, 2012; Pun, 2017, 2021), Taiwan (Chang, 2010; Huang, 2009; Wu, 2006), the Emirates (Solloway, 2016; Troudi & Jendli, 2011), Oman (Ali, 2017), Pakistan (Ahmed, 2012) but little from South Asian nations like India, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh (Hasan & Sultana, 2021; Islam, 2013; Murtaza, 2016; Rahman & Singh, 2019; Rahman et al., 2020; Sultana, 2014a).

A considerable amount of EMI literature has examined teachers and students' perceptions regarding EMI. Previous research on students' perceptions of EMI has shown an overall positive attitude towards the effectiveness of EMI, particularly in improving English proficiency (Chang, 2010; Huang, 2009; Hudson, 2009; Kym & Kym, 2014). Studies have reported that teachers and students believe that EMI brings better career prospects of working in international businesses and organisations (Zhang, 2018) and have examined students' motivation to enrol in EMI programmes (Belhiah & Elhami, 2015; Ellili-Cherif & Alkhateeb, 2015; Graham & Eslami, 2019; Kim, Kweon, et al., 2017; Lasagabaster et al., 2018). Similarly, students and lecturers in non-dominant English-speaking European countries acknowledged the benefits of EMI provision in HE in terms of career prospects, academic mobility, study-abroad opportunities, and overall linguistic proficiency (Ball & Lindsay, 2012; Coleman, 2006; Costa & Coleman, 2013; Doiz et al., 2012). Tatzl (2011), for example, conducted a survey on sixty-six students and eight lecturers, followed by lecturer interviews, from three EMI graduate programmes in the faculty of Engineering and Business Studies at an Austrian university.

Respondents voiced support for EMI programmes, instrumental in the enhancement of institutional profile. They recapitulated several benefits of EMI in preparing graduates for the global workplace and further education while increasing their self-confidence through higher English language proficiency.

In contrast, learning challenges, primarily language-related, are perceived to be 'insurmountable, if not unmanageable' in EMI classrooms, where the learning of English is 'not prioritised nor usually supported' (Soruç et al., 2021). Challenges faced by students in EMI classrooms are typologically characterised in four major categories, namely language-related challenges, institutional/organisational challenges, nationality/culture-related challenges, and materials-related challenges (Aizawa et al., 2020; Bolton & Kuteeva, 2012). Students' insufficient English language proficiency is seen to have detrimental consequences on students' learning (Galloway, Curle, et al., 2020) and students face challenges mostly in the productive skills area, namely speaking and writing (Rose, Curle, et al., 2020). Yıldız et al. (2017) identified the biggest student language-related problems to be difficulties in the comprehension of technical vocabulary, lecturers' speech, and continuous lecturer code-switching. EMI students have reported linguistic challenges associated with reading and understanding lectures and teaching materials besides using appropriate academic styles to articulate ideas in class (Cho, 2012; Evans & Morrison, 2011). Students with self-perceived inadequate English proficiency have been found to experience high levels of learning anxiety (Huang, 2015), leading to lower academic attainment in EMI courses.

Ekoç (2020) investigated challenges faced by students enrolled in EMI programmes at a technical university in Turkey and evaluated their perceptions of lecturers' English proficiency, the majority of whom mainly teach contents in Turkish after explaining in English or teaching EMI courses in Turkish throughout. The study, administered through a questionnaire, revealed students' discontentment about EMI courses offered at the HEI.

While EMI has gained widespread popularity, particularly throughout East Asia and the Gulf, a few studies have shown that it has some undesirable effects on the effectiveness of learning (Hou et al., 2013), leading to less interaction between faculty and students, lower comprehension of subject content (Jon & Kim, 2011; Marsh et al., 2000), hindered discussions among students in class and low English proficient students strongly feeling disadvantaged besides lowered graduation rates (Byun et al., 2011; Collins, 2010). Even though probing into students' learning experiences in educational programmes has been of great interest to HE specialists, policymakers and drivers, there is a scarcity of evidence that delves deep into the educational implications that learning through EMI can have for students.

2.4 EMI research in Bangladesh

While teaching English as a second language has received much attention from many researchers in Bangladesh, there is a general lack of research in EMI studies related to its adoption and implementation or the lack thereof. Given that there is a lack of an explicit medium of instruction (MOI) policy in

Bangladesh's HE, the practice observed across institutions shows that Bangla dominates humanities and social sciences. Even though English is prevalent in science, technology, engineering, and medicine (Hamid, 2006), it is not officially implemented as the medium of instruction in most Bangladeshi public universities (Hamid & Jahan, 2015), creating an axiomatic divide between the public and private sectors in Bangladeshi HE. However, since the Bangladeshi government maintains a nationalist ideology of monolingualism and does not promote the exclusive use of EMI in state-funded (public) universities, most EMI research in Bangladesh is based on the context of private universities, which have adopted English exclusively as an MOI since their inception.

Language education research has started to experience a 'social turn' (Block, 2003) from traditional second language acquisition research in the twentieth century. It has shown immense interest in L2 learners and their biographies (Benson, 2005) with a focus on their language learning experiences, beliefs, views of classroom instruction and pedagogy, learning strategies, learner agency, investment, and identity (Cervatiuc, 2009; Norton & Kamal, 2003; Norton & Toohey, 2002) mainly from native English-speaking countries. Despite several attempts at understanding students' interpretations of teaching and learning practices in EMI in Bangladeshi HE (Hamid, Jahan, et al., 2013b; Islam, 2013; Murtaza, 2016; Rahman & Singh, 2021; Rahman et al., 2020; Sultana, 2014b), there is a lack of evidence that addresses how fluidic social identities are constructed in the utilisation of EMI using translanguaging as a theoretical framework (Rahman & Singh, 2021; Sultana, 2015).

A significant study on EMI explored the policy and practice of using English as an MOI in ten Asian polities, including Bangladesh, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Maldives, Nepal, Timor-Leste and Vietnam (Hamid, Nguyen, et al., 2013). Using a framework to elucidate the context, goals, actors, implementation process, and outcomes of EMI, this study emphasised the significance of using English as an MOI from a language policy and planning and an educational perspective. In another significant study, Sultana (2014a) found that Bangladeshi HE students perceived themselves as being deficient and felt that they were 'systematically excluded from the classroom discussions and activities' due to the usage of EMI. Taking a mixed-method approach that explored the effect of EMI, a questionnaire survey of 115 students and interviews with first-year students from three private and two public universities were conducted. The paper proposed the need for a balanced English language policy in Bangladeshi HE as EMI was seen to severely hinder students' possibilities of learning and the development of identity.

In recent times, however, EMI research in Bangladesh has focused on analysing publicly available HE institutional policy statements of private universities besides interviewing policymakers, faculty members and students to understand the management and practices of languages in HEIs (Rahman & Singh, 2019; Rahman et al., 2020). A more recent study by Rahman et al. (2021) explores the beliefs and attitudes of lecturers towards EMI in Bangladeshi and Malaysian HE. While lecturers from both Bangladesh and

Malaysia supported the adoption of EMI in HE, Malaysian lecturers acknowledged its implementation rooted in the 'motive to internationalise HE' owing to 'Malaysia's aspiration to become a global leader in research and teaching at the tertiary level' (p. 1222). Considering Malaysia's desire to become a regional hub of quality HE to recruit international students, this small-scale study reported how the national government's adoption of EMI policies has positively shaped Malaysian lecturers' beliefs towards its implementation. However, the implementation of EMI in the privately-owned Bangladeshi HEIs is primarily driven by the aspiration of 'producing local English-speaking students who will be capable of global mobility' (p.1223). Despite this, the Bangladeshi lecturers are unwilling to focus on students' English-related problems and feel they should only focus on content. Although EMI has been exclusively adopted in the private sector of Bangladesh's HE since the early 1990s (Macaro et al., 2017), the findings of the study show that the participating lecturers used Bengali as an MOI in the classroom due to the English proficiency of the students and the lecturers themselves. It was evident that the Malaysian lecturers mostly used English in class as they believed it would be inappropriate to use the official Malay language as it might preclude the participation of international students.

Most EMI research in Bangladesh has mainly drawn on studies conducted in private universities with EMI provisions (Hamid, Jahan, et al., 2013b; Islam, 2013; Rahman & Singh, 2019; Rahman et al., 2020) to examine how students and teachers constructed their perception towards the adoption of EMI policy

while viewing English proficiency development to be efficacious and beneficial for individuals and societies. In contrast, a few studies have examined lecturers' perceptions of using EMI in state-owned universities by critically examining English language practice and the implementation of EMI policy within the context of Bangladeshi HE. Rahman, Singh, et al. (2019) studied the linguistic, ideological stance lecturers take in public and private HEIs and found a deep sense of nationalism driving strong support towards Bengali as the preferred MOI in HE. The lecturers viewed mother tongue as conducive to knowledge construction and innovative thinking rather than 'teaching in a foreign tongue' as the internationalisation agenda did not drive the focal public university.

Recent evidence based on a spoken discourse analysis of a daylong seminar on the "MOI Policy for HEIs" (Karim et al., 2021) highlighted university teachers' preferences for using Bengali as the MOI in public and private HEIs. Even though the findings demonstrate that the participating teachers, who had taught in both public and private universities for more than 15 years, consider the positive role of mother tongue to produce knowledgeable and skilful graduates with critical thinking ability, the study recommends implementing a national language-in-education policy to promote a bilingual curriculum in which instruction is delivered in both English and Bengali.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided a snapshot of current developments and research in the field of EMI, exploring the driving forces behind its expansion in the global context to provide the rationales for the adoption of EMI in HE across non-dominant English-speaking countries with different sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds. While a review of the seminal research on EMI in HE across nations has manifested that there is bulk research on EMI conducted in European contexts, it has become a significant trend in Asian countries, including Bangladesh. However, there is a lack of research in South Asian countries where there has been a noticeable increase in EMI provision in HE over the last decades. Few studies report a comprehensive account of students and teachers' negotiated practices in EMI, particularly in EMI contexts in Bangladesh.

In terms of the methodological approach to EMI research investigating students' perceptions, most studies used surveys and small-scale case studies to gather data instead of a phenomenological approach. Hence, it is essential to undertake more research on EMI in Asia, specifically in South Asia, besides other countries outside Europe, to corroborate the existing findings in the current literature.

In brief, the effect of internationalisation, driven by language planning within a monolingual linguistic ecology, is the most relevant to the aims of this interpretative phenomenological study, which provided a detailed examination of the lived experience through participant's personal experiences and

perceptions of objects and events related to the phenomenon of learning

through EMI in HE. Therefore, this study moves from a review of the literature

of internationalisation at the conceptual level down to an in-depth review of

EMI as a means of internationalisation, drawing on previous studies that

highlighted English-only programmes in European and East Asian nations.

Given the global stature of English as a linguistic capital, this study further

draws on translanguaging as a theoretical framework, enabling students'

identities and mediating knowledge construction in a fluid academic literacy

space. In the following chapter, the theoretical framework of this research

study is discussed in greater detail.

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework

This chapter begins by laying out the theoretical dimensions of the research

that will be instrumental in investigating Bangladeshi students' experiences of

learning by using EMI in HE. Following the literature review, the theoretical

underpinnings are used to logically develop and understand the different but

interconnected parts of the literature review. By gaining insights about a

phenomenon, researchers use a set of logically related propositions together

while forming a 'theory' ([White & Klein, 2008](#)). Serving as a structural

'blueprint', the theoretical framework is one of the most important aspects in

the research process in relation to the development of research questions, the

conceptualisation of the literature review, the methodology and analysis of the

findings. A bricolage approach was taken to develop a multi-theoretical framework that reshaped the research questions and 'pieced together' a set of complex representations originating in different interpretive paradigms (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 45) that connected the research to the field (Agee, 2009, p. 437) of EMI, EAP/ESP and applied linguistics as a whole. As discussed in the next section, multiple theories were deployed to comprehend the transformative characteristics of related concepts such as pedagogical translanguaging, academic literacy, linguistic capital and shifts in identity, which no longer remain confined within boundaries of traditional disciplines (Kincheloe, 2001, p. 683).

3.1 Pedagogical translanguaging in EMI

In this fast-changing world, which is exceedingly open to learning, English as a lingua franca is increasingly being used as a tool to communicate and construct knowledge that transcends geographical boundaries to form more equitable societies. Standing on the brink of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, such geographical boundaries increasingly seems to become blurred. With phenomena like human labour substitution, resulting from an impact of emerging technologies and automation, education systems are extremely in need of being reshaped beside governments, institutions, public health, manufacturing industries, and services, among many others (Schwab, 2016). Hence, monoglossic language ideologies are now contested, which drive educational policies that legitimise a primary language of instruction and

knowledge besides native language(s) in bilingual/multilingual contexts (Mazak & Herbas-Donoso, 2014).

Translanguaging has been considered to be an effective pedagogical practice in facilitating language and content integrated learning (Coleman et al., 2018; García, 2009). In addition, translanguaging as a theoretical framework has recently encouraged EMI and CLIL researchers to analyse the tension between English as the only language in classrooms and the reality of multilingual students speaking multiple languages to facilitate the meaning-making processes (Macaro, 2018). As a 'rapidly expanding conceptual-cum-theoretical, analytical and pedagogical lens' (Leung & Valdés, 2019), translanguaging challenges the monolingual pedagogical principle in EMI while encouraging the learner and the teacher to draw on their familiar and available linguistic, semiotic, and multimodal resources to facilitate the processes of meaning-making in the classroom (Tai & Wei, 2020b, p. 607). Replacing the monolingual view, the bilingual/multilingual view sees languages reinforcing each other with no rigid boundaries between languages.

In previous bilingualism frameworks (Collier, 1995), sociocultural, linguistic, academic, and cognitive development are linked as interdependent processes. Any one of the components depends critically on the simultaneous development of the three. Because of this, applied linguists have begun to theorise more fluidic conceptualisations of language practices across bilingual communities that refer to 'translanguaging' as a starting point, where mixing

and blending two different languages simultaneously in communication are no longer seen as a problem (Flores & Schissel, 2014).

Coined initially as part of language research undertaken in a Welsh context in the 1980s by Cen Williams, translanguaging is a 'framework for conceptualising the education of bilinguals as a democratic endeavour for social justice' (Velasco & García, 2014, p. 7) that reflect nation-state ideologies (Heller, 2007). Hornberger (2002) further supports the pedagogical practices of translanguaging and elaborates:

> Bi/multilinguals' learning is maximized when they are allowed and enabled to draw from across all their existing language skills (in two + languages), rather than being constrained and inhibited from doing so by monolingual instructional assumptions and practices. (p. 607)

García (2009) further advocates this dynamic coexistence of languages that supports 'the development of multiple linguistic identities to keep a linguistic ecology for efficiency, equity and integration, and responding to both local and global contexts' (p. 119). However, it differs from the notion of code-switching in the sense that it refers not purely to 'a shift or a shuttle' between two languages,

> …but to the speakers' construction and use of original and complex interrelated discursive practices that cannot be easily assigned to one

or another traditional definition of a language, but that make up the

speakers' complete language repertoire. (Garcia & Wei, 2014, p. 22)

Such translanguaging approaches to language practices have been proposed

to be integrated as a resource for learning in bilingualism pedagogies that

foster the development of the target language proficiency. As language

accelerates the process of developing abilities for understanding and thinking,

it is rational to believe that bilingual individuals will use all their linguistic and

experiential resources to achieve understanding and develop metacognitive

skills and critical thinking, key dispositions needed for the future workplace

(Velasco & García, 2014).

Previous research on HE students in multilingual contexts has documented

approaches that create learning opportunities where 'students are encouraged

to draw on their various languages (even if complete fluency is not available)

as resources, rather than as barriers . . .' (Van Der Walt & Dornbrack, 2011).

More recently, research has demonstrated that translanguaging practices can

support language development, including metalinguistic awareness and cross-

linguistic flexibility (Cenoz, 2019; García-Mateus & Palmer, 2017) and more

significant language development in the second language (L2) (Allard, 2017).

Resulting in a strengthening of metalinguistic awareness, the self-directed use

of translanguaging strategies offers possibilities for developing proficiency in

negotiating language usage (Cenoz, 2019). These translanguaging practices

are, however, not viewed as a deficiency in linguistic, cognitive, or social

capacities but rather demonstrated as a high level of skill in multilingual or transnational students.

Further shaped and constrained by social norms, expectations and language ideologies, translanguaging encompasses a range of communicative and cultural practices through which bilinguals create identities in different social contexts (Sayer, 2013). This maximises communicative potential while indicating social standing, class, prestige, and access to various forms of human capital (Bourdieu, 1991). These situating approaches of translanguaging practices are seen to be dynamic and malleable within an ecology of language framework, influenced by naturalistic opportunities in the environment that help develop academic literacies among bilingual learners through their participation in language and literacy activities (Leather & van Dam, 2003) as discussed below.

3.2 Measures of academic literacy (AL) and deep learning

Central to understanding issues related to students' learning experiences in HE, academic literacy (AL) practices have been developed from the idea of 'new literacy studies' (Barton, 1994; Baynham, 1995; Street, 1984). The concept of AL was originally developed regarding multiplicity as manifested through variations in disciplinary and subject matter courses in academic contexts. This approach to literacy focuses on the cultural and contextual component of writing and reading practices to facilitate students to adapt to the norms and conventions prevalent in socially positioned discourse practices

that vary with the milieu, culture, and genre (Barton, 1998; Street, 1984, 1995). As theories of reading, writing and literacy have been further developed as New Literacy Studies (Barton, 1994; Gee, 1996) and reconceptualised employing cultural and social practices, it is important to comprehend how academic practices are contested among students, staff and institutions in non-English speaking countries.

More specifically, the significant component of AL constitutes meaningful social practices bounded by knowledge of English, understanding of the content topic, and knowledge of how the tasks are to be accomplished across disciplines. In many countries, the development of AL (Lea & Street, 1998) encompasses two or more languages - the local language and English, where a balance between the two disciplinary languages is directly influenced by the acquisition of disciplinary knowledge (Airey, 2011b). In view of this, disciplinary literacy has been conceptualised as 'the ability to appropriately participate in the communicative practices of a discipline' that entails developing communicative competence for the academy, the workplace, and society (Airey, 2011a).

The variation in contextual usage of language has significant educational implications, unfolding into two dimensions of language proficiency: Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) and Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) (Cummins, 1980). CALP stands in contrast to everyday informal speech students use outside the classroom environment. It

is used in more abstract, context-reduced communications to understand and discuss academic topics in the classroom and to read and write about them in university assignments and examinations while showing a deeper understanding of concepts. On the contrary, BICS, purely context-embedded, is used in everyday life, such as in conversations with family members and friends, informal interactions with shop assistants during shopping or casual conversation on Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter or various internet forums. As non-academic language, for that matter, BICS has been termed invariably as 'everyday, ordinary, informal, conversational, contextualised, cognitively undemanding, interpersonal, basic, playground, and even street language' (Bunch, 2014). By creating meaningful activities or experiences that are cognitively challenging (Baker, 2001), it is important to provide ample support and explicit guidance to students as they embrace the fluid nature of language practices (Garcia & Wei, 2014), moving from the everyday spoken mode to the formal academic written or speaking mode in their academic studies.

In reality, CALP proficiency does not come naturally and requires explicit instruction even for native learners (Derewianka, 2014, p. 165). This CALP, as suggested by Cummins, is associated with cognitive and memory skills that impact critical thinking and deep learning (see Figure 3.1), and is thus a major determinant of educational success, driving student learning experiences, which this research study primarily endeavours to address. However, often overlooked by many educators, knowledge of the English language is a prerequisite to academic success and attainment of content standards.

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Acquiring English language skills is analogous to the acquisition of literacy skills in standard varieties (Ferguson, 2006).
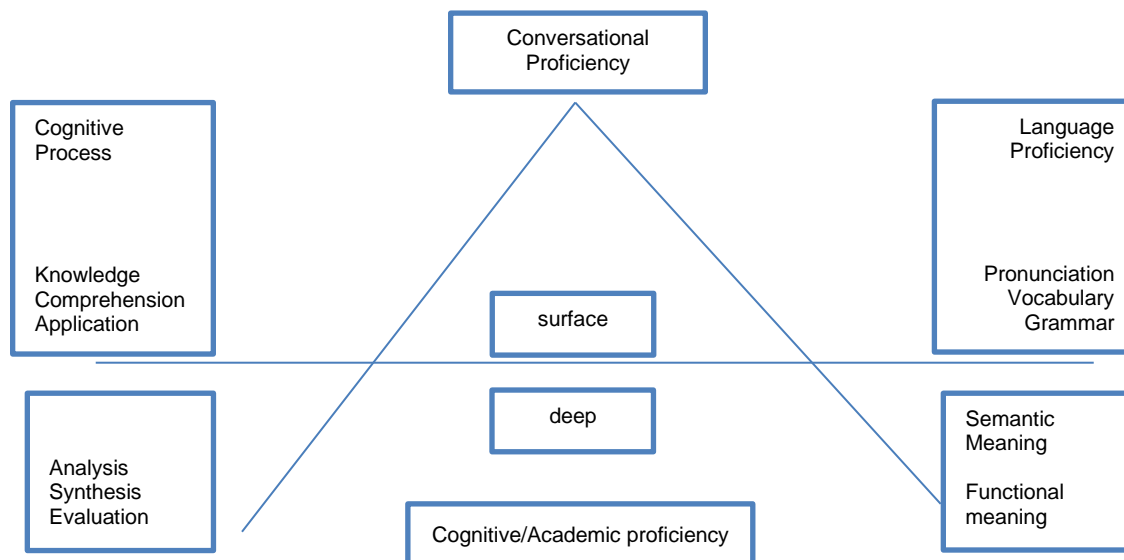
Figure 3.1: The 'iceberg' representation of language proficiency (Cummins, 1984, p. 138)

Students who take a surface approach, on the other hand, tend to memorise concepts/ideas without understanding and are strictly constrained by specific learning tasks. The main difference between deep and surface learning approaches lies in how learners conceptualize learning and why they do so (Marton & Säljö, 1976). A deep approach to learning is more likely to result in effective learning. In contrast, a surface approach - strongly driven by fear of failure- is expected to lead to a low level of understanding and ineffective learning (Entwistle & Ramsden, 2015) exacerbated by students' language comprehension inabilities. In essence, students must acquire the language related to the academic topics, learn the content concepts and perform the tasks associated with the subject area (Short, 2002):

….using English, students must read and understand expository prose found in textbooks and reference materials, take notes, write persuasively, and discuss information from multiple perspectives. They must also articulate their thinking skills through English—make predictions, interpret information, draw conclusions… generate the format of an outline, negotiate roles in cooperative learning groups, analyze charts and tables. (p. 18)

As 'language is the dominant medium' through which academic subjects are taught and students' knowledge of the concepts tested (Lemke, 1988, p. 81), a Language-Content-Task (LCT) framework (see Figure 3.2) highlights the three areas of AL around which teachers should essentially organise their instruction that directly impacts the teaching, learning and assessment process. This discussion of the LCT framework is pertinent to demonstrate the impact of overall language competence in helping students gain access to knowledge and learning. More specifically, the language circle within this LCT framework recognise the need for content teachers to deliver explicit instruction for students learning how to read, write, listen, and speak in English, including language functions that students must use within various social practices as in clarifying, persuading, justifying, negotiating meaning, and summarising beside other language learning strategies, such as self-monitoring and using contexts.
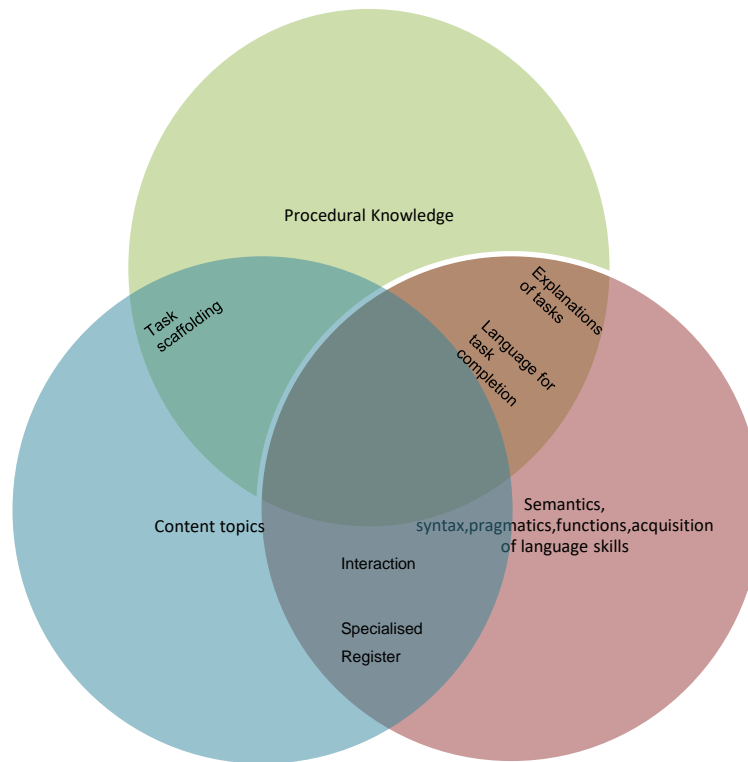
Figure 3.2: The LCT framework model of academic literacy (*Short, 2002*)

The content circle, on the other hand, refers to the higher concepts and topics

taught in classrooms while the tasks test their comprehension and learning

through the usage of language. Interaction, in contrast, lies at the core of the

three overlapping circles, which reinforces the active role students must take,

and the explicit guidance teachers must provide in the co-construction of

knowledge in the classroom. As a whole, the language, procedural knowledge

and task circles converge, reminding teachers to focus on both the language

and process in their instructional practices of content subjects besides

providing targeted instructions for tasks while contributing to deep learning.

Therefore, the goal of instruction using English as an MOI should be to

encourage students to adopt a deep approach, contributing positively to learning outcomes (Zeegers, 2001) for the subjects that are important for their professional or personal development (Felder & Brent, 2005).

To this end, several academic languages and learning studies (Gollin, 1998; Skillen, 2006; Skillen et al., 1998) have highlighted the importance of academic literacies having to be embedded within specific discipline courses as part of the core curriculum, especially in the first year in HE. While EMI researchers continue to discuss approaches as to how academic literacy can be embedded into teaching and learning practices, there is a clear gap in the research of second language learners' academic literacy while studying in an EMI context. A few studies have addressed academic literacy and examined student writing practices (Cheng, 2008; Wingate, 2018; Yung & Fong, 2019) and the role of content teachers in students' academic literacy development (Lasagabaster, 2018; McGrath et al., 2019). However, there appears to be a shortage of literature that highlight challenges faced by students regarding academic literacy practices in EMI programmes and researchers continue to explore approaches as to how academic literacy can be embedded into a range of remedial mainstream courses students are required to take.

3.3 The linguistic ecology, identity and Bourdieusian linguistic capital

The perceived status of English as the lingua franca (ELF), indexed with internationalisation, set forth the parameters of language policies and management in many nations. In today's globalized world, at the core of

language ecology paradigm, multilingualism is increasingly viewed as a resource rather than as a problem. Hornberger (2002) focuses on three critical aspects of the language ecology metaphor: language evolution, language environment, and language endangerment. She suggests that languages are understood to live and evolve in an ecosystem along with other languages, interact with their socio-political, economic and cultural environments, and become endangered if there is inadequate environmental support for them in relation to other languages in the ecosystem (p. 323). Hornberger (2002) extends the concept of ecology of language to the field of language planning, pointing out that the ecology of language metaphor underpins a multilingual approach to language planning and policy. However, language policy and planning research must deal with language behaviour and identity issues at the micro, individual level, and at the level of macro investigations (Ricento, 2000, p. 208). By all means, language ideologies include values, practices and beliefs associated with the language used by speakers and the discourse that constructs values and beliefs at state, institutional and global levels. Therefore, debates about language are not about language alone (Woolard, 1998) but are socially situated and tied to questions of identity and power in societies.

In view of the above, Bourdieu argues that the official language is bound up with the state, both in its genesis and in its social uses: 'It is in the process of state formation that the conditions are created for constitution of a unified linguistic market, dominated by the official language' (1991, p. 45). For one language to impose itself as the only legitimate one, the linguistic market has

to be unified and the different languages (and dialects) of the people

measured practically against the legitimate language ([Bourdieu, 1991, p. 46](#)):

> Integration into a single 'linguistic community', which is a product of
> the political domination that is endlessly reproduced by institutions
> capable of imposing universal recognition of the dominant language, is
> the condition for the establishment of relations of linguistic domination.

This linking of language, literacy, and national identity happens in several

sites, which include language planning, standardisation and educational policy,

through which it is decided which standard languages are to be employed—

and thus legitimised as capital—in the public school system ([Blackledge,](#)

[2005](#)). Bourdieu (1991) further elaborates that capital is 'knowledge, skills and

other cultural acquisitions, as exemplified by educational or technical

qualifications.' In the same way, linguistic capital is one of the forms of cultural

capital. As later discussed in the next chapter, it is inherited or acquired over

time, not transferable and influences one's habitus, which is an inclusion of

attitude and dispositions.

Broadly speaking, while habitus is structured mostly by one's past and present

situation, which includes family and the most important agency education, it is

this structuring that habitus affect in the shaping of one's present and future

practices. As individuals are socially embedded, one is able to recognise the

power of social values, cultural beliefs and linguistic features and is able to

acquire the skills and internalise the values and beliefs while being a dweller of

that 'defining community' ([Taylor, 1989](#)). Such a community is instrumental in providing the language in which individuals understand themselves and construe their world while 'entering into ongoing conversations between ... people with a particular role or status in the web of relationships that make up [the] community' ([Taylor, 1989](#)). Through social interactions, negotiations and transactions, an individual can construct his true identity within the community ([Mead, 1934](#)).

In essence, identity is defined as 'the way we make sense of ourselves and the image of ourselves that we present to others' ([Day, 2011, p. 48](#)). Fundamentally, identity is seen as something which is fragmentarily constructed, inherently multifaceted and hence 'impermanent' and fluidic in nature ([Bendle, 2002](#)). [Giddens (1991, p. 5)](#) further conceptualises identity as a 'reflexively organised project' orchestrated primarily by the individual and multiple individual choices that are 'filtered through abstract systems' as distinct from local or visible institutions. Adding to this definition, [Bucholtz and Hall (2005)](#) broadly describe identity as 'the social positioning of self and other' (p. 586), co-constructed using language as a tool. In this view of identity, identity emerges from the specific conditions of linguistic interaction:

> Identity is best viewed as the emergent product rather than the pre-existing source of linguistic and other semiotic practices and therefore as fundamentally a social and cultural phenomenon.
>
> (p. 588)

However, in today's fast-paced digital era, the problem of identity is 'primarily how to avoid fixation and keep the options open' (Bauman, 2011, p. 18) as individual identities are reconstructed and redefined while being inherently fluidic, fragmented and transient, 'like a chameleon that changes its colour according to its environment' (Warin, 2011) Thus, Castells (2004, p. 1) sees identity as an active process of construction and illustrates how 'our world, and our lives, are being shaped by the conflicting trends of globalisation and identity'. In view of these concepts, acquiring a particular language in a specific accent, for instance, hinges on how much a speaker is exposed to people around them speaking in a specific accent. However, Bourdieu argues that (in Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992) access to legitimate language is not equal and some monopolise that linguistic competence.

In relation to Bangladeshi HE students' learning experiences through EMI, access to discourses and discursive practices of various subjects/disciplines is negotiated and differentially accessible using English. For those students who enter classrooms with linguistic competence in the discursive practices of English, access to discipline is made more easily. Simultaneously, such students are more likely to be constructed as successful students based on the teacher's judgement of their ability. A language background is a form of capital that can be transformed into an academic reward within this context.

However, for students with low linguistic competence in English, identity formation can be a distressing process that requires them to adopt an altered

worldview with different values and emotional orientations (Costello, 2005). This internal experience of psychological conflict has been termed identity dissonance. Identity dissonance occurs when an individual encounters difficulty as he seeks to reconcile the identity of himself as he becomes 'aware of disharmonious experiences of self' (Warin et al., 2006, p. 237). Creating a significant emotional disruption, identity dissonance can contribute to students questioning their values, ambitions, abilities, and 'their very self-worth' (Costello, 2005, p. 26). 'Self-building' in nature, identity can be created through 'increased social awareness' (Warin, 2011, p. 811) involving life experiences, thoughts and beliefs, relationships and connections as well as human disposition itself. On the whole, identity is constructed by marking difference by using binary oppositions of self and the other '…through the symbolic systems of representation, and through forms of social exclusion' (Woodward, 1997, p. 29). While identity dissonance can be significant emotional disruption arising from a negative experience of learning through EMI, it can contribute to students questioning their values, ambitions, abilities, and their very self-worth (Joseph et al., 2017). Such experience of discordance can activate a more complex narrative sensitivity of self which then functions to accommodate competing feelings about past, present and future as well as mismatches between existing and preferred selves (Warin et al., 2006, p. 237).

Exploring the impact of English on students' EMI learning experiences in HE, this research study further shed light on how students from diverse gender, region and educational backgrounds interacted with peers, teachers in ESL

classrooms as influenced by the HEI and how these interactions affected their learning experiences. In order to examine HE students' learning experiences, the study utilised the Bourdieusian notion of cultural capital in a structural, institutionalised form to understand the influence of academic credentials and qualifications and linguistic competence (Sullivan, 2001), among other factors. Viewing learning as a social phenomenon (Becher & Trowler, 2001), learning experiences are influenced by various elements of social structures, such as power relations, identity, social class, gender and ethnicity (Trowler, 2009).

Moreover, viewed as 'intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style' (Yosso, 2005), linguistic capital can be defined as 'fluency in, and comfort with, a high status…language which is used by groups who possess economic, social and political power and status in local and global society' (Morrison & Lui, 2000). According to Bourdieu, a field is a social space, where social relations regulate actions and behaviours of actors through sets of rules or 'regularities, that are not explicit or codified' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 98). Within tthese adjacent and 'overlapping social fields' (Albright & Luke, 2007), rules are instead interpreted and practised by social actors and not predetermined scripts guiding action and behaviour.

Capital, in contrast, comes in a range of forms, from economic, cultural to social capital, including cultural goods, educational qualifications, familial and social networks (Bourdieu, 1986). A social actor is considered to have

linguistic capital that can be utilised to accrue other forms of capital when he can use the field's legitimate language with appropriate linguistic registers (Bourdieu, 1991). In the field of education, actors gain insider knowledge and understandings of a field over time and can generate strategies that conform to rules of the game as part of the machinery and mastery of a feel of the game (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

As a whole, language has been viewed as a special kind of field transcending all fields as being the medium for communication (Grenfell, 2012) through which agents gain access to employment and other aspects of social and economic marketplace through the ownership of linguistic capital (Goldstein, 2008). 'Language forms a kind of wealth' (Bourdieu, 2000), evolving into linguistic capital that has numerous manifestations in individuals' lives as well as within surrounding social systems, having the power to empower or disempower individuals (Abrar-ul-Hassan, 2021). Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital in its embodied, objectified and institutionalised form, refers to the collection of symbolic elements, such as, languages, skills, tastes, mannerisms, credentials and so on, that one acquires through being part of a particular community or social class, giving them a sense of collective identity. In view of language as a capital, it is argued that language competence is 'a statutory ability' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 146) that will have a substantial impact on academic literacy, which, in succession, will enable access to knowledge, leading to academic success. Thus, this study drew upon the emancipatory roles played by linguistic capital as a form of cultural

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wealth in explaining the learning experiences of HE students, drawing on their attitudes as they strived through their academic journey using EMI.

3.4 Chapter Summary

As the overarching aim of this study is to understand teaching and learning practices in the light of student interpretations and conceptualisations of using EMI in Bangladeshi HE institutional settings, this research study operationalised concepts from academic literacy and translanguaging pedagogy while employing a theoretical lens of linguistic capital as visually laid out in Figure 3.3.
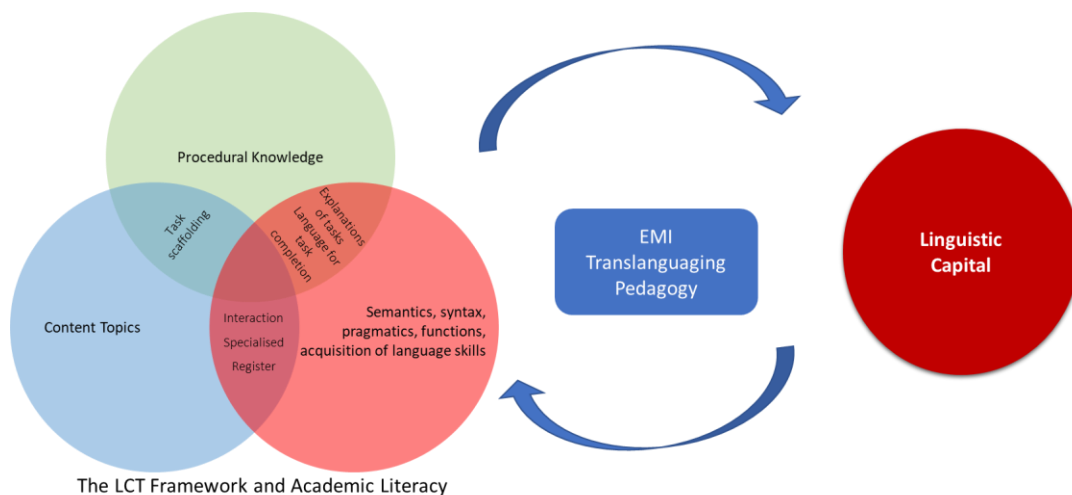
Figure 3.3: Theoretical Framework

This is to provide a meta-interpretation of the way the 'educational transactions or encounters' (Pring, 2004, p. 229) of ESL students are constituted and how they engage themselves into making sense of their own learning experiences in EMI through translanguaging practices in the light of 'teaching approaches,

learning resources', as evident in the LCT framework, and other relevant institutional factors that 'shape their encounters with the curriculum' (Ashwin & Mcvitty, 2015). Following a deep and thoughtful understanding of the way these theories connected to the research problem, this conceptual framework served as the foundation for and guided the choice of research design and data analysis (Grant & Osanloo, 2015, p. 17) as discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Research Design and Methodology

This chapter describes the research design by detailing the methodological approach used in this study and describing the procedures of data generation, collection, and analysis procedures. It begins by outlining the epistemological and ontological stance of the researcher that informs the research inquiry while providing a rationale as to why interviews and observations were mainly employed as a research approach besides document analysis. The chapter then details participant profiles and sampling strategies while discussing the tools that were considered appropriate for data collection and the approaches used for data analysis, followed by a discussion of the institutional context of the study. The chapter concludes by focusing on the ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

4.1 Research design

This study examines the learning experiences of HE students through English-medium instruction (EMI) in a private university in Bangladesh. The study simultaneously explores the various actors, as subjects of the learning activity system, who have different roles within the hierarchy of the University of Bangladesh (pseudonym). Exploring distinct settings to EMI practices in Bangladesh, this thesis addresses the lack of empirical research on students' perceptions of learning through English. Guided by the following research questions that outline the stages of the research process and illustrate the overall approach to the study, the following table (Table 4.1) highlights the datasets used in addressing the research questions:

Research questions	Datasets
1. What are the perceived challenges students face that affect teaching and learning practices in an English medium instructional context and how do these students respond to the challenges?	Observations
2. How do students' perceptions about their identities and previous learning influence their learning experiences through English as a second/additional language?	Interviews (n=24)

3. How do state and institutional influences impact EMI adoption in Bangladeshi HEIs?	Documents

Table 4:1: Datasets used in addressing the research questions

4.2 The essence of EMI experiences- a phenomenological perspective

In examining how Bangladeshi HE students conceptualise learning through EMI, this study employed qualitative modes of inquiry, consistent with the study's objective to explore complex social phenomena - as experienced by EMI students - for more profound and meaningful understanding (Creswell, 2007). As the current study aims to describe experiences, events, or culture from the perspective of HE students, qualitative methodological techniques were utilised to interpret the students' overlapping versions of reality. Intended to generate knowledge grounded in human experience (Sandelowski, 2004), a qualitative researcher does not ask about any context but instead asks about 'the delicacy of its distinctions' (Geertz, 1973, p. 25). In essence, qualitative researchers take a holistic perspective in studying phenomena in their natural settings through a series of interpretive representations, including field notes, interviews, documents, recordings, and memos (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 43), providing rich and detailed insights into participants' experiences of the world. At the core of this approach lie methods for representing what Geertz

(1973, p. 10) termed the 'microscopic' details of the social and cultural aspects of individual lives.

Since the present study was exploratory and interpretative in nature, a phenomenological perspective was adopted to understand the meanings of human experiences (Creswell, 2012). Bounded by 'an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of (qualitative) inquiry that explore a social or human problem' (Creswell, 2007, p. 5), such a phenomenological approach was taken to gain deep insights into life-world experiences (Moustakas, 1995) of the students and teachers. Consequently, by generating a wide variety of data from multiple sources such as interviews, observation, and documents (Denscombe, 2017; Denzin & Lincoln, 2013), 'efforts [was] made to get inside… and to understand from within' (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 22) how the social realities of student learning were constantly 'in the making' (Elliott, 2005).

Developed as a method of inquiry by the German philosophers Edmund Husserl (1859 -1938) and Martin Heidegger (1889 -1976), the concept of phenomenology was introduced as 'Dasein' or 'Being there' in a dialogue between a person and their 'lived-world' (Groenewald, 2004). Enabling the researchers to reveal the 'essence' or 'commonalities' (Fraenkel et al., 2015, p. 432) of multiple perceptions, phenomenology is concerned with the lived experiences of the people (Greene, 1997; Kvale, 1996; Maypole & Davies, 2001) involved or the social phenomenon being researched. Nevertheless, in

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contrast to positivists, phenomenologists believe that the researcher cannot be detached from their own presuppositions and that the researcher should not pretend otherwise (Hammersley, 2000).

This methodological approach enabled the researcher to gain a thorough and in-depth understanding of the EMI students' experiences and perspectives of learning through EMI in a natural context (Dhillon et al., 2008) of HE. The essential inner nature of a thing is what makes a thing what it is, and phenomenology is a systematic attempt to uncover and describe the internal meaning structures of lived experience (van Manen, 1990, p. 10). This approach is based on several assumptions, such as evolving social constructions of meaning where the researcher becomes a part of the experience being studied through an interpretive hermeneutic methodological approach, sharing knowledge with the participants as partners even though the meanings may not be shared by everyone (Boss et al., 1996). Unlike transcendental or psychological phenomenology, a hermeneutic phenomenological approach describes the participants' 'consciousness' of experiences as interpreted by the researcher's understanding of the lifeworld phenomenon (Reiners, 2012). It refers to how 'people interpret and make sense of experiences … according to their pre-existing values and ways of seeing the world' (Willis, 2001, p. 5). As endorsed by Heidegger, researchers become 'enmeshed' with the experience and do not bracket their biases and the prior engagement with the question under study, thus gaining understanding and interpretation of phenomenon through shared knowledge

and shared experiences. Thus, meaning-making of the 'lived experiences' (Creswell, 2007) is further driven by the researcher's positionality, as discussed later (p. 86). The horizon of universal essence between the researcher and participants is fused to provide a broader understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

In recent years, few studies in EMI have taken a phenomenological approach to explore the language ideologies of lecturers besides students regarding the implementation and administration of EMI in HEIs. Hasirci and Cosgun (2018) took a phenomenological approach to report on an investigation of Turkish English-medium university students' perceptions of developments in their language ability in an EMI context. Results revealed students' effectual use of English in their studies owing to high exposure to English and their perception of the effectiveness of corrective feedback playing 'a crucial role' in helping them refocus their attention on structure and forms. However, the study found speaking to be perceived as the 'weakest and least improved skill' in students' views. However, Ozer (2020) conducted a phenomenological study of Turkish lecturers' (n=102) perception of EMI undergraduate programmes through an open-ended questionnaire that examined teaching practices and training preferences and challenges encountered while teaching content through EMI. Through a thematic analysis of the data collected from lecturers, findings demonstrated that most of the participants sought EMI language provision and support system within their HEI. Even though the lecturers favoured the university's EMI policy and strived to use English to the best of their ability,

they envisioned the university administration to provide EMI training in accordance with the implementation and administration of institutional language policy.

More recently, Sarkar et al. (2021) explored the language ideology of lecturers and students regarding the benefits of EMI through a small-scale phenomenological study (n = 8) conducted in Bangladeshi private universities. Using semi-structured interviews and classroom observations, the study's findings revealed lecturers and students' challenges due to their limited proficiency in the English language despite their beliefs about the perceived benefits of EMI in producing globally competent workforces with English language proficiency.

Another recent study by Cason (2021) carried out a phenomenological study to describe the experience of cultural identity in an EMI context for Black university students in South Africa. Drawn from data collected from 10 students through in-depth individual interviews, focus group interviews, and self-reflection letters written to an imaginary new student, the findings demonstrated contradictions, complexities, and tensions amidst students negotiating with their cultural and national identity in an EMI context.

Furthermore, several recent studies have used interpretative phenomenological analysis and multimodal conversation analysis to study the use of translanguaging to achieve pedagogical goals in EMI mathematics classrooms in secondary schools in Hong Kong (Tai & Wei, 2021; Tai, 2021b;

Tai & Wei, 2020a, 2020b). Findings from these studies suggest the role of translanguaging in fostering 'equity in knowledge construction' by creating a safe space for learning that challenges 'the hierarchical relationship' between teachers and learners (Tai & Wei, 2021, p. 241).

Overall, taking a phenomenological approach, this current study enabled viewing an overlapping version of reality as constructed by individual students while examining the realities of learning in HE through EMI. Hence, to capture the meanings behind social interactions of individual participants, a variety of research protocols were developed, from document reviews and observations to interviews, drawn from research questions that are concerned with factors that impact students' learning experiences through EMI. In achieving its overarching aim by offering the potential to explore a rich nexus of social and cultural issues that profoundly affected the participants, this array of data functioned as lenses to capture the nuances of the experiences and perspectives of the students.

4.3 The researcher's philosophical stance and position

In qualitative research, researchers adhere to a particular philosophical paradigm making assumptions upon which research in a field of inquiry is based. According to Guba (1990, p. 17), paradigms equate with theory and bear the researcher's 'epistemological, ontological and methodological premises'. While ontology embodies understanding 'what is', epistemology tries to understand 'what it means to know'. Epistemology provides a

philosophical background for deciding what kinds of knowledge are legitimate and adequate (Gray, 2014). To understand how students experience learning through EMI, the current study adopts an interpretive paradigm instead of a scientific or positivist paradigm of studying the social world as experienced subjectively by each person in their own way. The interpretive or constructivist paradigm is informed by a belief that knowledge is inter-subjectively constructed. The study of phenomena in their natural environment is key to the interpretivist philosophy where individuals see, build and interpret reality through their individual lenses within the context of social practices. By studying 'interactive human behaviour' and their actions, researchers seek to make sense of the world 'through interpretive schemes or frameworks' (Scott & Usher, 2011, p. 29). This emphasises that the interpretivist paradigm highlights the impact that the social context has in shaping the respondents' perceptions about reality, underlining their views and perceptions of EMI within the construction and reconceptualisation of institutional policies and practices.

Furthermore, taking a hermeneutic approach as discussed previously (p.80), this interpretivist-constructivist philosophical stance helped contextualise students' learning experiences in the light of family, educational, social, and institutional background within an interpretive loop of human action. Drawn from theology, the term 'hermeneutics' is a method of interpretive inquiry focusing on biblical and philosophical texts (Packer & Addison, 1989). This approach is concerned with 'the theory and method of the interpretation of

human action' (Bryman, 2012, p. 28), emphasising the need to understand from the perspective of the social actors.

Since 'a phenomenological study investigates various reactions to, or perceptions of, a particular phenomenon' (Fraenkel et al., 2015, p. 432), this approach matches with the aims of the present study to undertake an in-depth investigation of experiences and perceptions of Bangladeshi HE students' in an EMI context. Hence, interviews conducted through a series of open-ended questions enabled the participant to provide a composite 'description of the authentic experience' (Denscombe, 2017, p. 98) in order to unearth the underlying essence of the phenomenon.

Phenomenological research is often regarded as 'a form of deep learning, leading to a transformation of consciousness, heightened perceptiveness, increased thoughtfulness' (van Manen, 1990, p. 163), integrating not only the participants' sense of their lived experience but also the researcher's attempt in understanding how the participant makes sense of their personal and social world (Smith et al., 2012). Therefore, the researcher's position has a significant impact on the study as a whole as it affects both the way research questions are formulated and how data is collected and interpreted (Ganga & Scott, 2006).

Positionality is the notion that personal values, views, and location in time and space influence how one understands the world. Emphasising critical and reflective practice (Mason, 2018; Reinharz, 1997), a researcher's positioning

involves personal characteristics such as gender, race, class, culture, political affiliation, religion, age, biases, personal experiences, language, preferences, ideological stances and emotional responses to participants (Bradbury-Jones, 2007; Oliver, 2010). As Foote and Bartell (2011, p. 46) further noted,

> The positionality that researchers bring to their work, and the personal experiences through which positionality is shaped, may influence what researchers may bring to research encounters, their choice of processes, and their interpretation of outcomes.

It is crucial, therefore, to pay close attention to the researcher's positionality to undertake ethical research (Sultana, 2007), widely conceptualised in terms of 'insider' and 'outsider' positions (Creswell, 2012; Merriam et al., 2001) utilising the position researchers may hold in relation to other elements in the setting in which the research is being formulated and carried out. As an insider researcher, 'who belongs to the groups / communities they are researching' (Clarke & Braun, 2013, p. 332), the role of the researcher in making meaning of their lifeworld is a vital aspect that distinguishes a hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry. Instead of bracketing off the researcher's subjective perspective, the researcher's past experiences, reflexivity, education, and knowledge are valuable guides to the interpretive process of the inquiry, which has been deemed worthy of investigation (Neubauer et al., 2019). Thus, in the hermeneutic approach to phenomenology, researchers 'capture their reflections in writing and then reflect and write again, creating continuous,

iterative cycles to develop increasingly robust and nuanced analyses' while maintaining 'strong orientation' to the socially constructed phenomenon studied through 'interactions between the parts and the whole' (Bynum & Varpio, 2018).

In the present study, the researcher's role as an insider and position as an ESL teacher provided greater accessibility to the HEI (field) as the participants were more willing to share their experiences, thoughts, and beliefs with someone they perceived to be more aware of their situation concerning the various social and cultural factors. Consistent with the hermeneutic phenomenology's philosophical roots, her view of the lifeworld of English language teaching and learning and subjectivity allowed her to investigate students' experiences as lived rather than conceptualised. In a further attempt to get an emic point-of-view, her background as an experienced ESL teacher influenced the way language was meaningfully used while conducting interviews, taking field notes during observations, choosing the suitable theoretical lens to filter the gathered data as well as making meaning of it (Berger, 2015, p. 219). Even though the interpretation of various life experiences 'is mediated by the interaction of a complex set of status variables, such as gender, social class, age, political affiliation, religion, and region' (Banks, 1998, p. 5), as researchers, one can be outsiders to a community of participants at different levels and times while being able to see things not evident to the insiders, depicting a more objective portrayal of the reality under study.

4.4 Data Collection

In order to analyse students' learning experiences in the ESL programme, data were collected using documentary review, observation, and interviews. The data for the study were collected in two phases at a private Bangladeshi HEI. In the initial phase, signed approval was sought from the chancellor of the university, and the bureaucratic process lasted from mid-June to mid-September 2019. During the first phase of the data collection, official documents about the university, the existing ESL programme and state education policies were gathered and scrutinised in the absence of the state and institutional language policy documents. The second phase of the data collection ran from January 2020 to September 2020. During this phase, all observations and formal interviews were conducted. The following sections discuss these tools in more detail, with a particular focus on how they enabled the collection of the data.

4.4.1 Documents

In the preliminary stage of data collection, document analysis was undertaken as a complementary data collection procedure supporting data triangulation and theory building (Bowen, 2009). Qualitative researchers commonly use different methods and at least two data sources to seek convergence and corroboration while providing 'a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility' (Eisner, 1991) through triangulation. Data sources may include physical artefacts and documents, apart from interviews, participant or non-participant

observations (Yin, 2003, p. 83). In essence, document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents – both printed and electronic materials- to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Documents, therefore, are viewed as 'social facts' which are produced, presented, shared, used, and interpreted in socially organised ways, informing researchers about the reality and context in which the study is situated (Atkinson & Coffey, 1997).

Addressing the state and institutional influences that affect teaching and learning practices in an EMI instructional context in HE, the document analysis designed in this current study intended to study the linguistic ecology in Bangladesh while analysing the social world within which the research participants operated. Only documents in English were used for analysis. Hence, analyses of institutional artefacts, comprising of a wide range of textual documents, were undertaken to get a deeper insight into the existing EMI context at a Bangladeshi HEI: syllabi, lecture slides and notes, handbooks, monthly newsletter, university website, mission statements, Facebook and Twitter updates, agendas, minutes of meetings, memoranda, training materials and advertisements for faculty teaching positions. This systematic and critical analysis of documents, both in hard or digital forms, provided insight into the prevailing ESL programme, highlighting instructional aims, activities, and challenges (Bowen, 2009). However, in the dearth of a full-text university EMI policy document, an analysis of publicly available records such as state education policies, strategic action plans, quality assurance manuals, reports,

and newspaper articles were conducted to associate social elements such as power, ideologies, institutions and social identities to that of language policy and political discourse.

In the context of this study, analyses of documents offered an insight into the institution, driven by its policies and practices and the effects of its policies on students learning experiences, putting the HEI into context in the field of Bangladeshi HE. Besides understanding the official positioning of the institution, this document analysis further aided in formulating questions for the interview guides.

While documentary research is often regarded as a single type of source, it offers several different perspectives from which to view a given problem or topic (McCulloch, 2004, p. 129), being instrumental in revealing accurate and meaningful data about the phenomena under investigation (Bryman, 2012). Certainly, discourse is constructed by cultural norms and disciplines that administrate a set of rules governing discursive formations (Hajer, 1995). Language constructs and is constructed by society (Hyatt, 2013) where meaning '…is socially constructed [and] can be deconstructed and reconstructed' (McKenzie, 1992, p. 226).The investigation of both the substance and the function of language from the construction phase of an institutional policy to the whole policy-making process constitutes representation, implementation, and even appraisal of existing policies (Gabriel & Lester, 2013), or lack thereof. Essentially, language studies are

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instrumental in educational research, which can illuminate the process and the impact of a given policy relevant to processes of social transformation and change.

4.4.2 Observations

Observations were conducted prior to interviews as observation 'enables researchers to understand the context…, and to see things that might, unconsciously, be missed, and to discover things that participants might not freely talk about in interview situations…(e.g., opinions in interviews), and to access personal knowledge' (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 305). Commonly used in educational research, observations are used to underpin other methods while 'getting information which can help us make sense of educational situations, gauge the effectiveness of educational practices, and plan attempts for improvements' (Malderez, 2003). One of the advantages of such observation is its directness; 'You do not ask people about their views, feelings or attitudes; you watch what they do and listen to what they say' (Robson & McCartan, 2019, p. 316). Additionally, observation allowed the researcher to observe things that participants were unwilling to talk about during the interviews (Denscombe, 2017, p. 196). Furthermore, observations helped record behaviour that might not otherwise be recorded (Cohen et al., 2000). The observation was chosen to understand how informants made sense of the cultural and social world they find themselves enmeshed in through their lived experiences. In this way, researchers can 'get at the inside' to gain 'a deeper

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understanding of practice realities' ([Henderson, 2016](#)) constructed by the research participants. Therefore, the field observations utilised in the current study were conducted to gain deeper insights into the actual behaviour of students in their real-world institutional settings of the classroom and beyond. To bridge the research-practice gap in ESL teaching and research in Bangladesh, this methodological approach was informed by evidence, based on the meanings behind the actions of students and academic staff alike.

In the initial stage of data collection in this study, the data collected from observations served several purposes. The classroom observations were crucial in contextualising the study and to further complement and support the subsequent data. Five classes were observed, and each class was about 90 minutes in duration. The classroom observations utilised in the current study were conducted to verify what students said they did and what they did in the social settings of the classroom and beyond. Notes (Appendix Four) were made as soon as possible following each episode of observation, relating to EMI challenges and students' coping strategies in the subject and English language classes, their interactions using Bengali and English in instructional settings. Data further obtained through naturalistic observations of student interaction patterns in social spaces such as the cafeteria and learning zones besides teachers' participation in a formal meeting, served as a supporting source of evidence as such observation allowed complete immersion within the physical and social environment of the research setting and allowed access to information that was happening rapidly ([Mason, 2018](#)). This direct

field observation helped in the study of behaviours, events and physical characteristics in the context of the study environment (Bryman, 2012).

As noted previously, observational methods allow researchers to record features of everyday life that the informants did not feel relevant to disclose in interviews adding to the context of data (Green & Thorogood, 2004). Since it was crucial to observe and understand a context before designing questionnaires and interviews (Jorgensen, 1989), observations were simultaneously carried out to understand the interactions between EMI teachers and students of different genders besides interactions between EMI teachers and administrators. This approach assisted with uncovering the meaning besides lessons learnt from the participants' past experiences while framing and communicating language policy implementation readiness and its practical efficacy in the Bangladeshi linguistic ecology.

4.4.3 Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted to examine the key research questions that this research seeks to address regarding students' challenges of learning through EMI, their identities, and previous learning experiences. To approach the research questions in greater depth, interviews were also used in tandem to ensure methodological triangulation (Flick, 2018). Responses from open-ended interviews offered deep insights into how the respondents viewed the world. An interview guide was designed to understand students' motivations for studying in a HE that utilizes EMI, their perceptions of themselves, their

peers, their perceptions of teachers, assessment practices, syllabus, available learning resources, and their interactions with teachers and peers. A similar interview guide was designed for teachers relating to issues of teachers' perception of EMI teaching, their views on the ESL foundation programme, its syllabus, assessment criteria, group activities, their relations with students of different genders and educational backgrounds as well as their rapport with university administrators. While engaging the participants in an extended conversation, short follow-up questions were asked to delve deeper into what the respondents had to say.

All student and teacher interviews were conducted in English. However, some follow-up questions were elucidated in Bengali to counter students' comprehension difficulties which were then translated into English. A few students opted to exercise 'translanguaging' practices and ventured into the boundaries between Bengali and English, which were accepted, adjusted, and translated to overcome the 'lingua bias' of communication (Wei, 2018). The interviews, which lasted between 45 minutes to an hour, were recorded, transcribed verbatim to accurately reflect the emotions and emphasis of the participants (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000). Notes were created after each interview in an interview summary form (Appendix Seven) as a guide to what key topics and issues were raised, not merely a paraphrase of what the interviewee actually said, in relation to students' experiences of learning through EMI. The writing of field notes during the research process assists the researcher to clarify further each interview setting (Miles et al., 2014). What is

more, field notes are considered 'a step toward data analysis' (Morgan, 1997, p. 57) as they involve interpretation and are 'part of the analysis rather than the data collection'. However, steps were taken to prevent the data from being prematurely categorised into the researcher's bias (Groenewald, 2004) about the potential causes of students' language challenges.

Subsequently, the audio recording of each interview was repeatedly played to become familiar with the words of the respondents to develop a holistic sense of the unique experiences of the research participants in the here and now dimensions. The raw data of all interviews were then converted to text and transcribed through a speech-to-text transcription application Otter.ai. After each interview, the transcription was edited manually to correct any errors or missing segments. Since verbatim transcription has been cited as critical to the reliability (Seale & Silverman, 1997) and the validity and trustworthiness (Easton et al., 2000) of qualitative research, a naturalised approach to transcription was adopted that attempted a verbatim depiction of speech (Oliver et al., 2005). However, grammatical errors and word order errors were corrected to strike a balance between the readability and accuracy of transcripts. Similarly, idiosyncratic elements of speech such as false starts, stutters, repetitions, nonverbal and involuntary vocalisations were omitted to avoid cluttering the transcribed text (Tilley, 2003). Since transcription is 'a selective process reflecting theoretical goals and definitions' (Ochs, 1979, p. 44), decisions were made regarding features of the interactional utterances, guided by the methodological assumptions underpinning the research project.

Verbal interaction being hugely complex in its entirety, data were reduced with emphasis on the informational content, laden with sociocultural and political practices (Bucholtz, 2007) but related to the aims of the research project (Bailey, 2008, p. 128).

The Otter.ai transcription application automatically generated summary keywords frequently repeated in the interviews, which in turn assisted in creating codes. A few interviews were immediately transcribed and analysed after they were conducted to identify as well as counter any unprecedented issues arising from both data collection and analysis. The interview files, regarded as raw data, were named to represent each of the student cases with a unique identifier as a participant code following numbers between S001 - S018. The data was stored electronically in the institutional OneDrive cloud storage. Data, however, stored on laptops were encrypted as well as password protected, archived with dates to provide an audit trail.

4.5 Sampling

The importance of sampling lies in selecting 'information-rich cases' whose study illuminates the research questions under in-depth study. Sampling refers to the process of looking at a segment of a population closely, as it is difficult to study an entire population (Punch, 2005, p. 187). As the focus of qualitative research is not ordinarily concerned with 'how much' and 'how many' but rather with 'how' and 'why' people interpret the world in specific ways (Yin, 2012), it tends to study small samples where participants are recruited owing

to their experience of the phenomenon in question. It is through the understanding of the uniqueness of 'how' and 'why' of the particular cases that a researcher is able to develop their understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

In order to explore the different ways students perceive their learning experiences, emphasis was placed to ensure would a 'maximum variation sampling strategy' (Patton, 1990, p. 172) that captures the core experiences and shared impacts of the EMI learning phenomenon. To set the criteria for constructing the sample, balanced participation of male and female participants, variation in the age distribution of participants, variation in course structures (graduate/undergraduate), disciplines (arts and humanities/social sciences/ natural sciences/applied sciences), and educational background was ensured.

As 'the phenomenon dictates the method (not vice-versa) including even the type of participants' (Hycner, 1985, p. 294), the study, drawing on the method of purposive sampling, selected a number of eighteen students from the institutional student list for participation in individual, in-depth interviews while making them apprised of the research questions and aims. A number of fifteen teachers from different faculty/departments was also randomly selected from the staff directory of the HEI and invited to volunteer in participating in a face-to-face interview. A total of six faculty members volunteered to participate in

the interview. The teachers selected for the study similarly represented different genders and levels of teaching experiences.

The interview process started with students and after interviewing three students, one teacher was interviewed to assess teachers' perspectives on issues raised by students in their interviews. An Excel spreadsheet was used for logging the details of research participants, which was later embedded in NVivo 12 Plus as cases. Table 4.2 summarises student participants' profiles, providing information about their major and the year of study while ensuring that their anonymity is maintained.

	Gender	Occupation	Level of Education	Major
S001	Female	Student Tutor	Year 4	English Language Teaching
S002	Female	Student Tutor	Postgraduate	English Language Teaching
S003	Female	Student	Postgraduate	Finance
S004	Male	Student	Year 3	Computer Science and Engineering
S005	Male	Student	Year 3	Finance
S006	Male	Student	Year 3	Marketing
S007	Male	Student	Year 3	Computer Science and Engineering
S008	Female	Student	Year 3	Accounting
S009	Male	Student	Year 2	Computer Science and Engineering
S010	Male	Student	Year 4	Finance
S011	Male	Student	Year 3	Accounting
S012	Male	Student	Year 4	Computer Science and Engineering
S013	Female	Student	Year 3	Computer Science and Engineering
S014	Male	Student	Year 2	Accounting
S015	Male	Student	Year 3	Economics
S016	Female	Student	Year 3	Microbiology
S017	Male	Student	Year 4	Human Resources Management
S018	Female	Student	Year 2	Biochemistry and Biotechnology

Table 4:2: Student Participants' Profiles

Similarly, Table 4.3 illustrates details of the teachers who took part in this study, with information regarding their years of teaching experiences and the disciplinary background they come from, such as Marketing, Computer Science and Engineering, Environmental Management, English, Pharmacy

and Media and Communication. Teaching courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels through the medium of English, they shared their views on students' challenges in learning through the medium of English.

	Gender	Specialisation	Years of experience	School
T001	Female	Media and Communication	5 - 10 years	Liberal Arts and Social Sciences
T002	Male	English Language Teaching	15 - 20 years	Liberal Arts and Social Sciences
T003	Female	Pharmacy	Less than 5 years	Pharmacy and Public Health
T004	Female	Computer Science and Engineering	Less than 5 years	Engineering and Technology
T005	Male	Environmental Science	10 - 15 years	Environment and Life Sciences
T006	Male	Marketing	5 - 10 years	Business

Table 4:3: Teacher Participants' Profiles

This sample population of eighteen students and six teachers was deemed appropriate to attain data saturation as phenomenological studies should ideally be conducted with a group of a minimum of five to a maximum of twenty-five individuals (Creswell, 2007). More importantly, a 'consensus across views expressed' (Turner et al., 2002) was evident with this sample size of twenty-four participants.

4.6 Piloting of the interviews

Piloting is imperative as it can help improve the quality of the information obtained. Nunan (2000, p. 56) states that 'piloting gives the researcher the opportunity to determine if the questions yield the kind of data required and to eliminate any questions that may be ambiguous or confounding'. Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010, p. 8) reaffirm that 'the purpose of piloting is to allow the researcher to collect feedback about how the instrument works and whether it

performs the job it has been designed for'. Therefore, prior to conducting the interview phase of the research, a pilot study (see Appendix Seven for pilot instruments) was carried out, observing necessary ethical considerations. The teacher's interviews were piloted with two teachers who volunteered to participate, being randomly selected from the Academic Staff Directory. The student interview was piloted with three students, selected from the currently enrolled students' list, who consented to participate in a face-to-face interview.

The piloting stage was helpful for several reasons. The transcripts of the pilot interviews, particularly, enabled the identification of some of the initial emerging themes arising from the data. At the piloting phase of the students' interviews, it was evident that a few questions had to be asked in Bengali, their first language, which posed some challenges of translating the interviews directly into English to identify specific patterns while categorising the data into themes. This offered insight into the translation of students' interviews from Bengali into English so that all the potential problems related to the translation of a specific concept/phrase from English into Bengali were avoided. However, as a Bangladeshi bilingual researcher proficient in both English and Bengali, care was also taken of being mindful of culturally derived interpretations of the social life world. The piloting finally aided in the reconstruction and rephrasing of the language used during interviews with students and teachers. Modifications and changes were accordingly made to the interview guide, making the research instruments of interviews more credible.

4.7 Data Analysis

Qualitative studies are more complex in many ways than quantitative research, which follows a structured, rigid, predetermined design. It has been recommended that the majority of effort in the design phase of data collection in a qualitative study should be spent on developing a systematic, well-developed, data-collection protocol comprising of three essential components: 1) developing a clear collection strategy, 2) identifying and sampling the population of interest, and 3) obtaining rich and detailed data (by observation, interview, or focus group) which is reproducible (Ranney et al., 2015, p. 1103). Even though a varied format of qualitative data, comprising documents, field notes, audio recordings, and transcriptions, was collected using multiple techniques, all were useful and imperative for conducting a comprehensive analysis despite exclusions in consistent structure (Dey, 1993). Thus, during these stages of data collection, appropriate activities were undertaken to ensure that rigour had been attended to in the research process rather than only adhering to set criteria for rigour after the completion of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In essence, rigour has been defined in various dictionaries as the quality of being detailed, thorough and complete. Considering that qualitative research is a journey of explanation and discovery that does not lend to stiff boundaries (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011), this notion of qualitative rigour itself is an oxymoron. Yet, without rigour, qualitative research is considered insignificant

which becomes fiction and loses its utility (Morse et al., 2002, p. 14). In the light of this discussion, the following sections precisely elucidate how the data, collected through different tools, were managed and analysed, mindful of the challenges and difficulties faced while analysing data.

4.7.1 Documents

The data in the first phase consisted of twenty-one documents, ranging from state education policy documents to institutional strategic documents, newspaper reports, and reports published by international donor bodies. Without following any consistent structure, the documents originated in multiple forms: Word, Excel, and PDF. Through a systematic analysis of texts, a focused reading, re-reading, selection, and review of the data was undertaken, which aided in the exposition of themes pertinent to the discussion of national monolingual ideology, macro, meso and micro language management and MOI in HE, which profoundly impact the phenomenon of students' learning experiences through EMI. Taking a closer look at the textual data, contents were coded into themes similar to how the interview transcripts were analysed to reveal the hidden ideologies that impact individual learning and demonstrate social inequities. Representative excerpts from documents were thus organised into major emerging themes, becoming the categories for analysis to other methods employed in the study (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). These emergent codes and themes served to integrate data that were later gathered from field observations and interview transcripts.

4.7.2 Observations

Informed by evidence gathered from analyses of documents, participation observations, happening concurrently, involved conducting classes and facilitating in class activities while non-participant observations included 'hanging out' (Pader, 2006) in the institution to observe student groups, being present during teachers' formal meetings and primarily observing classes being taught in different faculty and the interactions between students and teachers. The data collected in this phase consisted of eight observation field notes. Field notes (see Appendix Four) were taken in real-time to capture the full complexities of an observed episode/event. The points to be observed were explicitly structured. The field notes focused on students' perceived challenges in an EMI classroom, lecturer comprehension difficulties, interaction patterns, and coping strategies like using mother tongue/first language (L1) in class. A successive summary document was created immediately at the end of an observation session, serving as an interim form of analysis, which later helped with iterative refinement (Ranney et al., 2015, p. 1108) of the interview guide. The observation sessions allowed the researcher to 'place greater emphasis on depth rather than breadth of data'(Denscombe, 2017, p. 206). For instance, one of the major concerns of this study was to understand the implementation of EMI in the HE through classroom observations and interviews. During classroom observations, it was evident that lecturers frequently switched to Bengali to further elucidate on unknown, technical terms or concepts. However, most of the students preferred to use

Bengali during classroom interactions. This was later evident during interviews as both the students and lecturers reported frequent use of Bengali besides English for better understanding and clarification. Such information deepened and enriched the following data collection through interviews, allowing comparisons over other modes of inquiry previously undertaken through textual and content analysis.

4.7.3 Interviews

Data from audio recordings, derived from eighteen student and six teacher interviews, were fully transcribed and deidentified while ensuring qualitative coding and analysis rigour. Students' interviews were primarily conducted in English. However, since a few student responses were in Bengali, the relevant accounts were translated into English and transcribed verbatim. A semi-structured approach to interviewing with a series of pre-determined but open-ended questions (see Appendix Nine and Ten) provided flexibility for follow-up probe questions allowing the researcher to ask questions not included within the prepared interview protocol, based on the nature of the conversation. To facilitate constant immersion in the data, the transcribed interviews were scrutinised line-by-line and re-examined by reading and re-reading, and listening to the recorded interviews to get a sense of the whole with all the possible nuances. Engaging deeply with the data to construct and describe the essence of the lived experience, an iterative process of reading, writing and

reflexivity provided a detailed and in-depth description of experiences while establishing research rigour and trustworthiness.

Following a phenomenological approach using an interpretative process, data analysis comprised of iterative reading of interview transcripts to 'identify significant phrases or sentences that pertained directly to the experience'. While 'formulating meanings and clustering them into themes common to all participants' transcripts' (Creswell, 2012), a detailed description of the individual experience was generated. Indicative of the interpretive or hermeneutic method, a priori categories were identified through an extensive literature review which included students' EMI learning challenges besides emerging themes (p. 108) such as identity and being, perceived benefits and quality of EMI and its provisions as a language planning tool.

The interview transcripts were treated as a whole within a framework of codes created out of the participants' words, phrases or sentences, which facilitated the process of understanding how the students made meaning of their exchanges in an EMI context. This enabled an iterative process of data analysis within the same conversational context while helping mark 'utterances found to be of interest' for the question being investigated and to attend closely to the participants' experiences (Marton, 1986). The research questions were used to guide the data analysis to narrow the scope of the study.

Systematic thematic analysis of the qualitative interview data was subsequently conducted using NVivo12 as a data management tool, allowing

for the creation new themes or 'codes' arising from the analysis. The process of coding the data was repeated and conducted separately for each interview data set. The process was initiated with line-by-line coding of the interview data until no new codes emerged from the data and the dataset fully resonated with the existing codes. All the coded interviews were reviewed and re-read several times and the codes were visually analysed to ensure that the created codes accurately described the coded data. Thematic analysis is a common interpretive strategy to synthesise the meanings of a studied phenomenon in hermeneutic phenomenology. Identifying themes in this phenomenological approach does not reveal recurring thematic patterns but reduces the structure of meanings embodied in human experiences in texts (van Manen, 2014). Following rigorous decontextualising and recontextualising of data, while being honest and vigilant about own perspectives, pre-existing thoughts and beliefs (Starks & Trinidad, 2007), the data was categorised and coded corresponding to relevant ideas by using NVivo. This expedited the identification of themes and the essence of issues or trends which emerged from the data (Cameron et al., 2001) and were not extracted by force or effort, providing in-depth insights into the perceptual experiences of tertiary L2 learners', their identities, and needs in an EMI institutional setting.

To this point, Braun and Clarke's (2006) five phases of thematic analysis were primarily employed to code and analyse the data: 'familiarising with data', 'generating initial themes,' 'searching for themes', 'reviewing themes' and 'defining and naming themes'. Taking an inductive thematic approach, the data

coding followed a series of open and selective coding that developed through reflective immersion in the data, guided by the researcher's values, interests, and growing insights about the research topic. This form of inductive thematic analysis is data-driven without fitting it into a pre-existing coding frame or the researcher's analytic preconceptions. Yet the researcher conducting inductive thematic analysis is not free from theoretical commitments and must have emerging themes developing under the influence of a researcher's presuppositions as language and human understandings are historically conditioned with prior structure (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

From an initial stage of identification and labelling as part of open or inductive coding and then as axial or deductive coding using emergent concepts or a priori codes, the process of coding moved through a subsequent stage of refining or interpretation having had developed a more focused coding (Saldaña, 2009) comprised of analytical categories or thematic clusters. These clusters of themes were presented along with a meaningful description, identified as units of significance (Sadala & Adorno, 2002). Therefore, in the open coding stage, the data were coded into categories with labels such as 'coping with learning through English', 'linking self-construals to language competence', 'improving student learning through EMI by supporting quality teaching' and 'institutional language attitudes and policies towards EMI', reflecting the actual language used by the interview participants (Saldaña, 2011). In the axial coding process, connections between codes were drawn to create concepts while connecting concepts to develop hierarchical themes

(Corbin & Strauss, 2015). At this stage, it was important not to abandon any codes (Table 4.4) as it was still uncertain whether some themes would hold or be combined, refined, separated, or discarded (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Some themes, however, that seemed marginally relevant played a significant role in adding to the background detail of the study (King, 2004).

Parent Nodes	Child Nodes	Description
English language and academic literacy challenges	Communication difficulties Comprehension difficulties - misunderstood minds Issues with academic writing and grammar skills Knowledge of technical vocabulary	Perceived challenges students face which affect teaching and learning practices in an EMI context
Coping with learning through English	Adapting to English medium education Students' motivation for retention and their academic achievement Alternating between Bengali and English	Drive to actively engage in the process of learning Applies to factors that influence a participant to follow up on their intention to learn something new
Identity	Feeling othered or empowered by English Low self-esteem Lost talents	Positive identities and access through translanguaging practices
Previous learning experiences	Access, quality and equity issues in primary and secondary language education Parental involvement in academic decisions	Influence of prior language learning experiences, impact of learning on the self and family
Perceived importance of English	English as lingua franca - standing of English in HE English language skills as important graduate attribute	Learners' belief about the importance of English
Implementing official institutional language policies towards EMI	ESL foundation programme (EAP/ESP) English in content areas Quality of academic staff Using language in context Available language support	Explicit/implicit institution-wide language-in-education policy
Improving student learning by quality teaching	Facilitating learner-centred teaching over lecture-based pedagogy Facilitating negotiation of meaning, interaction and feedback Promoting classroom discussion Learning by doing - learning as the end goal of education	Creating a student-centred learning environment

Table 4:4: Excerpt from Codebook

Subsequently, these descriptive codes were organised into a 'parent-child' relationship following a hierarchical organisation of codes. The codes which formed the main themes - pertaining to several interview questions were represented as parent nodes, while the subthemes, formed inductively without following a pre-existing coding framework, were represented as child nodes in NVivo (see Figure 4.1 below). In selective coding, the emergent themes were

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categorised, pertaining to the research questions, within broad categories such

as students' self-perceived identities, their previous learning experiences and

coping mechanisms while facing EMI challenges.
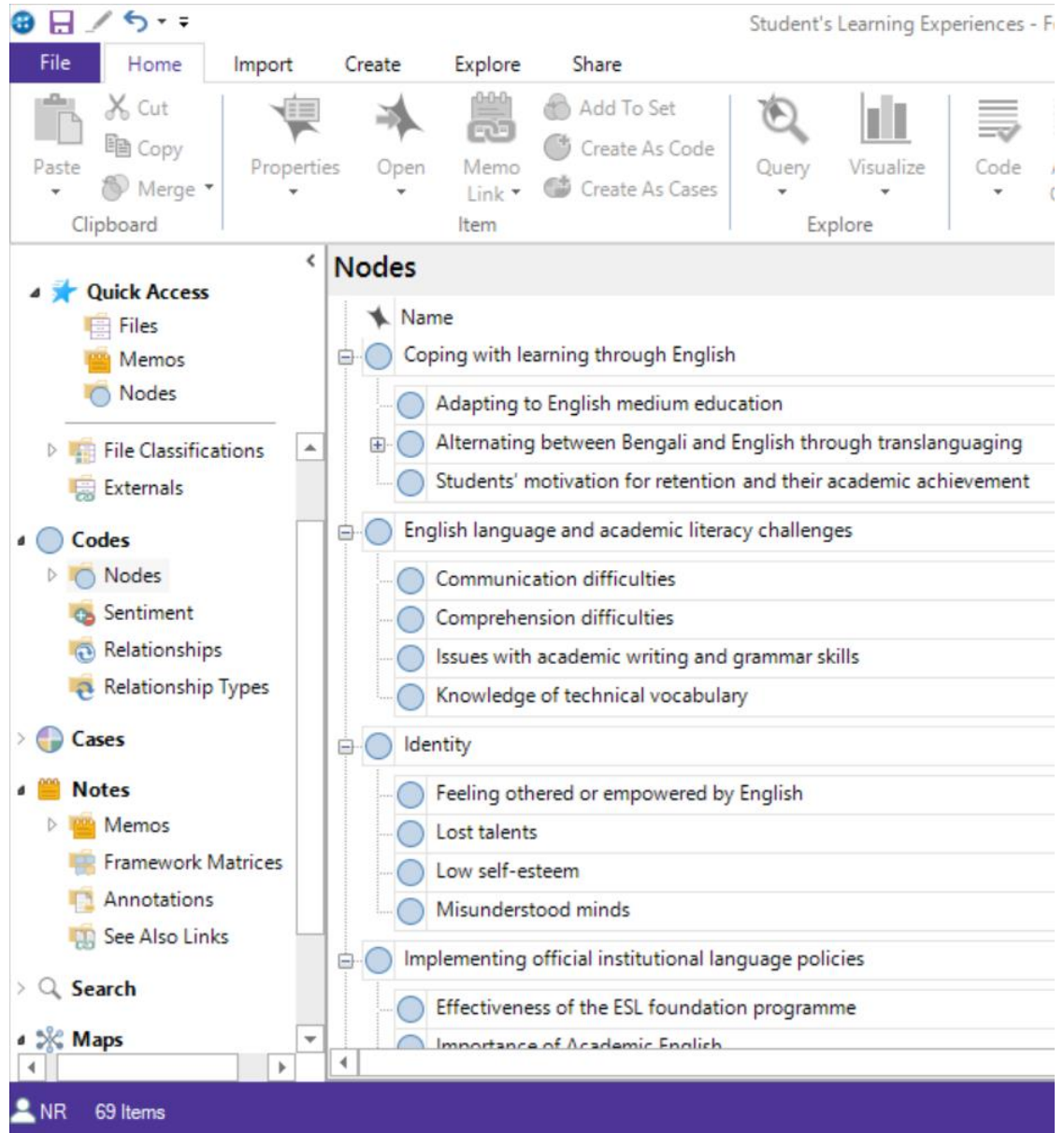
Figure 4.1: A screenshot of the coding framework in NVivo

Finally, data collected from interviews and observations were triangulated with data obtained from document analyses, linking them to emerging dominant themes (Ryan & Bernard, 2000), 'which express(ed) the essence of these clusters' (Hycner, 1999, p. 153), derived from representative quotations from the data as will be elaborated later in the findings chapter.

4.8 Ensuring trustworthiness and authenticity

Corresponding to the discussion about the rigour of qualitative research in the previous section, it is important to highlight its correlation to the measures of trustworthiness, credibility, and authenticity (Lincoln & Guba, 1986), which are necessary components of quality. The quality of research in the interpretivist paradigm is measured by these issues of trustworthiness and authenticity that researchers establish through the research design process and the phases of data collection. This trustworthiness can be demonstrated through the researcher's reflexivity, the use of appropriate methodology, the methods of data collection, theoretical triangulation and even participant checking. To establish trustworthiness, qualitative research address credibility, dependability, and confirmability. For establishing credibility in the research findings, researchers need to triangulate and ensure prolonged engagement with data sources, respondent validation and in-depth description of the phenomenon. On the other hand, dependability can be achieved through the use of 'overlapping methods' such as interviews, focus groups, and observations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Confirmability within qualitative research

is further ensured by triangulating different data collection sources and the researchers' reflexivity ([Miles & Huberman, 1994](#)).

Therefore, preliminary data were collected using documentary analysis and observation prior to interviewing to establish trustworthiness through data source triangulation in the current study. Reliability and validity of the methods, approaches and techniques related to the issues being explored were considered and reflected upon at all stages of the research (see Table 4.5). In relation to further addressing trustworthiness in the issues of interview transcription, a specific transcription protocol was outlined to ensure consistency in transcripts developed for undertaking qualitative analysis through a computer-assisted software package called NVIVO. These issues of transcription quality and trustworthiness are central in qualitative research as transcripts are used not only for analysis ([Duranti, 2006](#)) but also the researcher's analytic claims ([Ashmore, 2005](#)).

Phases of thematic analysis	Means of establishing trustworthiness
Phase 1: Familiarising yourself with your data	Engaging with data Triangulating different data collection modes Documenting theoretical and reflective thoughts Documenting judgments about potential codes/themes Storing raw data in well-organised archives Keeping records of all data – documents, field notes, transcripts, and reflexive journals
Phase 2: Generating initial codes	Using a coding framework Auditing trail of code generation

	Keeping a reflexive journal
Phase 3: Searching for themes	Using diagrams to make sense of thematic connections Keeping detailed notes about development and hierarchies of concepts and themes
Phase 4: Reviewing themes	Decontextualising and contextualising themes and subthemes by returning to raw data through an iterative and reflective process
Phase 5: Defining and naming themes	Maintaining documentation of theme naming and rephrasing
Phase 6: Producing the report	Explicitly describing the process of coding and adding details to elaborate on the analysis Providing thick descriptions of the context Reporting on reasons for theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices throughout the entire study

Table 4:5: Establishing trustworthiness during each phase of thematic analysis

Adapted from: Nowell et al. (2017)

4.9 Ethical considerations

Prior to field research, ethical approval was obtained from Lancaster University's Ethics Committee (Appendix One). The study was centred on a private university, the University of Bangladesh (UoB), a pseudonym. The institution itself is a predominately English-medium institution, described further in the following section. The rationale behind the choice was due to accessibility, related to obtaining appropriate permissions of data collection besides geographical considerations. Following university Institutional Research Board approval (Appendix Two and Three), participants were

randomly selected from currently enrolled student lists and recruited through an invitation e-mail sent out by the researcher.

Following issues of ethics, participation in the interviews was completely voluntary, and prior signed informed consent was obtained from all individual participants involved in the study. All participants were provided with a participant information sheet (Appendix Five) and were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix Six). All participants signed two consent forms where the participant retained one copy while the researcher preserved another one. Interviewees also provided verbal consent to participate. The participants were notified about the objective of the research, the nature of the study, what data will be collected, and how the results will be published and used. Their consent was also sought for the interview to be recorded, and they were informed that the interview could last for 30 minutes to an hour. The participants were also ensured that their participation involves no foreseeable social, cultural, political, or institutional risk. All were given the opportunity to decline to partake in the study at any time.

After each interview, the audio file was downloaded into a password-protected laptop and deleted from the mobile phone, which functioned as a recording device. The audio recordings and transcripts were logged with a unique code number so that the human subjects can neither be identified directly nor through any personal identifier even while the findings from the study are disseminated for publication. It was made clear to all participants that neither

their name nor the institution they are affiliated with would be included in any outputs from the research process. To further maximise participant anonymity and protect institutional privacy and confidentiality (Saunders et al., 2015), the HEI was assigned a pseudonym 'University of Bangladesh' (UoB), and other identifying information was accordingly omitted.

The participant observations were conducted while maintaining specific ethical standards. Participant observations can pose ethical problems as the participants are unaware of such covert research and are not required to give informed consent. However, ensuring ethical standards and procedures, the participants' identities in naturalistic and active participation observations were not disclosed. Neither did the participants studied encounter any issues due to being observed since only field notes were collected to examine the interactions between teachers and students and students themselves anonymously in an L2 setting. Active participation observations involved conducting classes and facilitating in-class activities. In contrast, naturalistic observations included observing student groups, being present during teachers' formal meetings, and primarily observing classes taught in different departments by faculty members.

In anticipation of ethical constraints relating to power imbalances between participants and the researcher in her current role as a faculty at the HEI, measures were taken to ensure that the respondents were not directly assessed by the researcher. To further ensure that students' participation or

decision not to participate in the research did not impact their studies or assessments, students directly taught by the researcher were excluded from the research.

4.10 Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic caused many interruptions, and delays as educational institutions in Bangladesh faced sudden closure with lockdown restrictions imposed around the world. Although ethical approval was sought to accommodate a shift from face-to-face interviewing to online interviewing to ensure social distancing measures in April 2020, student participants were initially not keen to participate in online interviews as they were grappling with technology-enhanced learning for the first time, while at the same time keeping themselves safe and trying to juggle and cope with many other things, including studies and family illnesses. A more significant response from students was received three months later, and student interviews (n= 18) were conducted between August and September 2020. However, the responses from the teachers (n=6) to voluntarily participate in the online interviews were nonetheless positive even though the shift to online teaching impacted the academics to a great extent.

4.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the research process, design, and analysis for this research study. Details of the procedures, design, as well as methodology,

sampling method, instruments, and measures for data collection and analysis and their limitations, were outlined. Data gathered from document analysis, observations and participant semi-structured interviews helped answer the overarching research question which guided this research, 'What are the perceived challenges students face which affect teaching and learning practices in an English medium instructional context and how do students respond to these challenges?' Subsequently, data were transcribed, organised, coded and analysed, finding significant statements and revealing themes and subthemes.

The following chapter details the findings from the document analysis, observations, and interviews and presents the key results of the data analysis. As the core of the lived experiences of the twenty-four participants in this research is outlined, the data uncovers five key themes related to students' experiences of learning through EMI: (1) feelings of frustration and anxiety (2) impact of prior learning; (3) experiences of feeling othered; (4) English for employability and mobility and (5) English in mediating access and equity.

Subsequently, a summary of the findings is presented, followed by a discussion of these findings related to the relevant literature and theoretical framework. The themes outlined in chapter five are synthesised into six significant analytical themes: (1) navigating language barriers; (2) linguistic identities and equity issues in translanguaging spaces; (3) the conception of teaching language through content; (4) teacher capacity building and the

quality of EMI provision; (5) EMI in framing Bangladesh's knowledge economy and (6) language-in-education policy in Bangladesh's HE landscapes.

Chapter 5: Findings

This hermeneutic phenomenological research aimed to investigate the perceptions and experiences of students learning through EMI at an HEI in Bangladesh. Rooted in interpretation, a hermeneutic phenomenological tradition interprets 'experiences and phenomena via the individual's lifeworld' (Neubauer et al., 2019). Giving HE students voices to communicate how they viewed their adoption and integration of EMI in learning, this interpretive approach examined 'entities from many sides, angles, and perspectives until a unified vision of the essences of a phenomenon or experience is achieved' (Moustakas, 1994, p. 58).

This chapter presents the findings from document analysis, observations and interviews. It discusses students' perceptions of the challenges they faced while learning through EMI and the institutional influences on teaching and learning in private HEIs in Bangladesh. The findings are structured according to the research questions and then according to the themes that emerged from the respondents — as discussed in the literature review, examining the policies and practices of the educational institution to understand how institutional influences affected students' EMI learning experiences. This

chapter is divided into three sections according to the research questions addressed in the study.

Drawing on data gathered from interviews and observations, the first section aims to answer the first research question: 'What are the perceived challenges students face which affect teaching and learning practices in an English medium instructional context and how do students respond to these challenges?' While presenting students' perceptions and some of the key challenges they encountered during their academic study, this section explores students' coping strategies adopted in response to various EMI challenges faced related to academic literacy skills, verbal communication, writing, issues related to technical vocabulary, comprehension difficulties pertaining to in-class lectures and interactions.

Addressing the second research question, 'How do students' perceptions about their identities and their previous learning influence their learning experiences through English as a second/additional language?', the second section explores the ways students contested with their identity, essentially shaped by their previous learning experiences but reformed by the translanguaging practices they employed.

Using data from document analysis, the final section addresses the third research question, 'How do state and institutional influences impact EMI adoption in Bangladeshi HEIs?' to highlight the state and institutional influences that affect teaching and learning practices in an EMI context and

shed light on the policies about its implementation through an evaluation of the ESL programme at the university while providing implications for the implementation of EMI language policy at macro, meso, and micro levels.

On the whole, in presenting participants' world view of the contextual elements of learning through EMI, six themes emerged from the analysis of the transcribed data: navigating language challenges, linguistic identities, and equity issues in English language education, teacher development and capacity building, the pivotal role of EMI in framing Bangladesh's knowledge economy, language-in-education policy in Bangladesh's HE landscapes and quality mark in English.

5.1 Learning through EMI – challenges of academic literacy

A number of issues were articulated by the students and further corroborated by the teachers that provided important insights into the language and literacy challenges Bangladeshi HE students commonly faced in English-mediated practices like listening to class lectures, speaking at a seminar, reading and writing academic texts, and essays. In the light of this, the following section presents three predominant themes, each containing subthemes concerning Bangladeshi students' experiences of learning through EMI.

5.1.1 Communication challenges

A recurrent theme in the interviews was a sense amongst student interviewees that the most important generic competency required by the students was the acquisition of verbal communication skills:

> I am not comfortable speaking in English – I have some problems as I am from Bangla medium, it is very hard for me to communicate in English. It was very difficult when I first joined. I am a little better than before. But whenever I give a viva or any presentation, I still face many problems as I cannot speak well in English.   (S016)

The student further noted how these communication challenges negatively affected his confidence and self-esteem:

> I am constantly thinking, how to express myself, what to say and what words I should use to express my feelings.   (S016)

The struggle is evident when another student described his communication apprehension and 'fear of losing face' whenever he stood up to voice his opinion:

> Whenever I have to present something, and I can't use my first language… I had a lot of things on my mind, but I couldn't express all those. So, I then thought, okay why are we using English? If I could use

Bengali, I could have expressed more than I possibly could, and I could

have scored better grades or more marks during presentations or viva.

(S002)

Most of the students reported that they found it difficult to understand or 'process' tasks due to a high level of anxiety rooted in their language deficiency. They often did not understand what a particular task entailed and lacked confidence whether or not they were doing it right. The challenges students had to embrace are evident while transitioning to an only-English programme after studying academic subjects through Bengali for a large part of their lives. However, nearly all the students reported how teachers in the ESL courses offered at UoB encouraged them to 'speak and make mistakes' in class and ensured that they always worked in pairs or groups and performed collaborative language activities as they had never experienced before. They testified feeling at ease and frequently participating in debates and thoughtful discussions with their peers while engaging with their teacher in the language classes, a stark contrast to their experiences in classes that focused on academic subjects. In a relatively safe space, the teachers provided opportunities to make mistakes while practising language through various tasks and activities, ensuring positive identity through meaningful interactions.

Contrary to language classes, it became evident from the content teachers' comments regarding limited interactions in class, where students most often

refrained from asking questions for further clarification, did not participate in classroom discussion and were reluctant to give any academic presentations owing to their limited language skills:

> Mostly in presentations, they cannot speak up as much as they would like to… If students spoke in Bengali, they could express their views and opinions more, but it becomes difficult for them to express their ideas in English. (T003)

Hence, the classes usually tended to be more 'one-sided and lecture-based', which did not encourage interaction and collaboration amongst students plagued by self-doubt, worsened by a sense of linguistic insecurity.

5.1.2 Vocabulary gap

Several students noted that they found difficulty in expressing themselves in English and getting around the discipline-specific, technical vocabulary posed as a great challenge for them:

> Studying at an English medium university, for example, taking Physics or Mathematics - all the terms were in English. I basically had to learn all the Bengali terms in English. That was a major setback. I had to memorise quite a few of them, but most of them I tried to understand. (S005)

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EMI seemed to have a detrimental effect on students' comprehension of classroom lectures. They found it challenging to understand new concepts and jargon in discipline-specific contexts, which were commonly presented in a decontextualized manner without any reference to prior learning. They pointed out how it took them 'a while' to understand, absorb and recall such knowledge:

> Due to comprehension difficulties, many concepts never became clear to us. Gradually we started to get used to everything and it became easier for us to understand topics or concepts in English.
>
> (S001)

Student comments indicated that most of them preferred to be taught in Bengali and expected summaries translated into Bengali after EMI lectures, suggestive of the difficulties they were facing. Hence, a student noted:

> When the faculty is giving lectures, I think the mindset is like the whole class comes from an English medium background - they present lessons that way. There are many terminologies used in English that we are not familiar with. So, we face a lot of problems.   (S016)

Even though the EMI teachers acknowledged the reality of bilingual classrooms and often used Bengali in lectures, they essentially attributed students' insufficiency of language proficiency to learning difficulty.

5.1.3 Academic writing struggles

Numerous students voiced their struggles with academic writing and felt the need for writing courses. While students faced challenges due to linguistic difficulties, grammar, text structure, lexicon, logical sequencing of ideas and sentences, issues with genre-specific writing conventions, plagiarism and citation further exacerbated their problems in coping with their content courses. Students also faced significant challenges in receiving oral directions regarding assignment tasks and often did not understand how to complete tasks without clear, expository samples. These difficulties and the overall incapability of Bangladeshi students to read and write in academia manifest the ineffectiveness of the pre-university English language education and the ESL courses. Thus, one student stated:

> I think there should be a writing course in our university because even I struggled a lot. When I write something, it is important, for example, to pay attention to the structure, signposting, cohesion, coherence – all these elements. For the last 12 years of our primary and secondary education in Bengali medium background, we just memorised and wrote the things as best we could. We didn't have anything called creative writing. So, whenever I came across academic writing, I struggled.   (S002)

However, one of the teachers considered academic writing as a 'set of skills' improved and enhanced with thorough practice of process-oriented activities of creativity.

> …I think the most challenging part is writing because it's not about grammar skills or anything, a certain amount of creativity must be there. In writing an essay, I think, one of the elements is grammar, but another key component is creativity. So, writing requires a lot more creativity. Only by taking writing courses, you cannot just assess or say someone is not good at writing in English because maybe he is very good at writing but does not have great ideas. I think the courses should be designed in such ways so that students can enhance and develop these skills of ideas generation. (T006)

Some of them testified of the self-deprecating feelings they occasionally had as they struggled to decipher how to write assignments using English. A few of the students expressed how they always 'put off' and delayed writing assignments and 'worried unnecessarily' after which they found themselves plunging into a frenzy of anxiety almost near the deadline when they were left with no option but to ask for an extension.

5.1.4 Challenges in academic reading

Students' responses indicated significant challenges in dealing with academic reading. Even though students are assigned readings from various books and

occasionally from journals, most preferred handouts that summarise key concepts and topics covered in each lesson. Hence, a student felt a strong need for another academic reading and composition course to help improve her critical reading skills in reading articles from scholarly journals:

> I think we need another English course based on readings. When I read articles from international publications and journals, I still face difficulty reading and understanding. English is so enriched – we need an extra English course based on academic reading to improve our critical reading skills. (S013)

A teacher's view, on the contrary, indicated the extent of the problems students face with academic reading despite institutional language support:

> Presently, 99% of the students really don't care about reading a letter out of any books. It doesn't matter how much resources you provide, if their mentality and mindset are such that they do not want to read, they don't want to utilise it, I can give them the entire world of Agrabah from Aladdin, and they are still not going to understand a letter out it! (T005)

This lack of interest in reading, according to the teachers, hinders development in students' writing abilities as it is not attainable to learn writing solely by writing but rather by reading. When students lack skills in reading comprehension skills, it inevitably negatively impacts writing which is a complex task involving many metacognitive component skills.

5.2 Language and identity

The choice of language and the repositioning from Bengali-speaking monolingualism to bilingualism with a growing preference for English in Bangladeshi private HE sparked a sense of alienation and disempowerment besides creating socio-economic opportunities, as evident in the students' accounts below.

5.2.1 The disempowered narratives – the case of linguistic capital

While most of the students contested with their identity within an EMI setting, indicative of emotional and mental distress, a few students' narratives further manifested these inner psychological struggles deep-rooted in their notion of language and culture:

> When I go to university, I hear others speak such excellent English. I cannot talk nicely like that. I am not sure if I am using grammatically correct sentences or the right word - all these make me more nervous and I cannot speak at all. I am constantly thinking about expressing myself, what to say, and what words I should use to express my feelings. (S016)

Another student acknowledged the ubiquitous presence of English in every professional domain that impacts an individual's social standing and see it as a language that legitimises systems of knowledge:

Well, learning to communicate in English is so crucial in today's world that I regret not studying in an English medium school. It will be detrimental to our progression and professional development if we go backwards and study in Bengali at the university level. It is important for universities to help develop students' proficiency in English through language courses and support so that students can eventually thrive and succeed in an English medium university.   (S017)

Yet, in some cases, students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds felt compelled to leave, unable to construct and negotiate social identities through limited language usage due to low-level proficiency in English. This scaled down student participation in EMI class, arising from feelings of alienation and separation while being unable to endure the challenges of learning in an EMI context. Thus, a student narrated:

One of my classmates literally has a phobia with English courses. Even he left UoB for this reason, and he couldn't cope with the English language-based teaching and learning. He didn't understand what the teachers were saying, and he never asked any questions. And he left UoB because he was not used to this system of education and could not cope with the situation.

While it is extremely challenging to enhance access and ensure equity in one of the world's most populous countries with an estimated 164 million people, the major setback is the quality of primary and secondary education which is

heavily reliant on exams and rote learning due to lack of teacher training, supervision and accountability. Visibly, differences between the school-leavers from Bengali and English medium backgrounds are exaggerated by social and economic disparities. Thus, a teacher observes:

> A student coming from a very poor village, who does not have proper schooling or cannot afford private tutoring, versus someone who comes from an affluent family and had studied in one of the best English medium schools - both studying in the same class. The advantage of a university is it doesn't matter what your background is, if you qualify, both of you sit together side by side… And if that student is paying for his education and you are also paying for your education, in terms of monetary values, you are equal in the eyes of university. But when it comes to the knowledge base – then it's not equal – there we have to have far more equity. (T005)

UoB, however, gives admission, following strict admission requirements, to students from disadvantaged backgrounds to ensure access to HE by providing financial aid and tuition fee discounts besides merit scholarships. As students are placed in an English-only classroom, they are provided with several English language courses in their first academic year, with opportunities to engage in language learning. Equitable classroom practices are thus implemented to ensure that students with low English proficiency get

a fair chance at learning and can enjoy better employment benefits and more advancement opportunities, as explicitly pointed out by a teacher:

> They have bad English- I agree, they cannot write well- I agree, but once they graduate from UoB, half of them do get into a decent job... For them, it is more than survival as their family has probably sold a huge percent of their land and everything- they have to try to give something back to their family, which is very, very important for them.
>
> (T005)

Viewing these individuals as being symbolical in constructing communities, it was imperative to understand students' interactions in the classroom with a focus on how pedagogic strategies affected or enhanced their participation and legitimacy in the EMI community. However, the micro-sociological aspect of these taken-for-granted behaviours and teaching-learning interactions between students and between students and teachers in HE were influenced by institutional norms and previous learning practices, as noted below.

5.2.2 Previous learning experiences

The majority of the students described how their struggles with EMI hindered knowledge assimilation and proved insufficient for various learning tasks in their content areas as they could not properly filter and interpret what concepts they were learning. Their prior knowledge did not bear much on new discipline-specific learning as EMI interfered with and impeded new learning leading to a

lack of motivation and low self-esteem. Although English has been taught compulsorily from primary to secondary level, concerns were expressed regarding students lacking the necessary English proficiency levels to cope at the university level, often leading to a lower graduation success rate. As pointed out by an English language teacher, students' performance in English has been generally found to be relatively poor:

> Most of the students come from Bengali medium, and the pre-university English education is almost a failure in Bangladesh. The students are supposed to acquire competence in English because they have been learning English for 12 years before joining the university. But unfortunately, English language pedagogy is not that effective in the pre-university stages. So, when students come with very low proficiency in English to an English-only culture, the struggle is real.
>
> (T002)

As a result, all the teachers who were interviewed reported that they commonly needed to codeswitch to Bengali to clarify concepts while dealing with linguistic challenges faced by students owing to low English proficiency that inhibited comprehension and successful learning:

> One of the things that I always do after every lecture… I keep a specific five to ten minutes segment, summarising everything in Bengali, focusing on keywords and the linkages between different words… I do not teach the entire class in Bengali – out of ninety minutes, probably

seventy to seventy-five minutes in English, the rest ten-fifteen minutes

in Bengali summarising everything.   (T005)

This is further corroborated by a student who voiced her previous experiences

of English language learning owing to the inadequacy of quality instructional

practices and resources:

 Since I studied at a local public school in a small town, speaking

English in class was not practised at all in school – we were only taught

grammar and comprehension. That is the reason why I have a

deficiency in speaking and understanding… You see, before I came to

this university, I didn't need to use or learn how to speak, read or write

in English. It is difficult, but I am managing to cope.   (S016)

She recognised her inability to draw connections between 'pieces of

knowledge' due to her English language comprehension difficulties. Indeed,

she specified the importance of engaging robust prior knowledge to provide a

strong foundation for building new knowledge, which must be stimulated at the

appropriate time, forming meaningful connections between various knowledge

structures.

5.2.3 Students' belief about learning through EMI

Despite facing challenges, most of the students, who previously studied

through Bengali, regarded English to be 'extremely important' and perceived

EMI as a positive experience for themselves at the university level and recognised its dominant role as the language of academia:

> I think that if you know English, you can reach out... you can learn from the latest journals… you can understand what studies have been conducted or what global issues people are facing around the world. But if you stick to one language like Bengali, you won't get everything. As English is an international language, if you are interested in a particular topic, you can search and find out much more about that topic using English as the most suitable medium. (S018)

As evident in the quote above, the participants readily acknowledged the practical value of English in knowledge construction within academia and dissemination through research publication. As most articles are published in English, students can remain updated about the latest research studies through their publication in international journals. Furthermore, as students invariably interacted with classroom instruction, course textbooks, and other learning materials in English, they perceived the need to strive for competence in English consciously:

> Well, teachers give lectures in English, the handouts, books and course materials are all in English. It is much easier to get used to teaching and learning in English. (S017)

Even though numerous students lacked confidence and were aware of their lack of motivation while striving to acquire content-specific knowledge through English, they could eventually overcome their anxiety and fear and become self-confident by continuously operating in an English-only context. Hence, a student participant strongly supported the opportunity for an EMI milieu to raise awareness and sensitivity about language and acknowledged that his English proficiency considerably improved through EMI:

> My opinion is, if the objective is to teach through English, I would think that we should be exclusively taught in English. Students will learn to get through this, with the passage of time, like I did. (S011)

This suggests the efficacy of the English foundation programme besides additional language support to foster greater social equality amongst students, equipping them with academic language skills while enabling them to undertake various discipline-specific learning activities.

Most of the students were aware of the importance of English as the global lingua franca. They considered it a key to a positive self-identity leading to success in their future employment and everyday business. These students viewed English language proficiency to be positively correlated with personal development, leading to exciting job opportunities:

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Definitely, studying in an English medium university is a great advantage for this society because English has evolved as a lingua franca- wherever we go, whatever we say, if we know English, we are in a better position. And if we don't know English, we are, you know, seem like a failure, more so, as we come from a middle-income country.

(S001)

Although, as the following extract reveals, this student has comprehensions problems in English, she still recognised the importance of this global academic lingua franca in her future career in research. She was interested in getting herself enrolled in additional language courses to achieve more excellent language proficiency.

I want to go abroad and would like to work in a research institute - that's why I have become very mindful and I am trying hard to learn English by myself. Now I understand that if I manage to learn English, everything will become easier for me in the future. Since I cannot write well, I usually get poor marks. And to do better in the higher-level courses, I am preparing myself and trying to improve my English language skills. I think I will get myself enrolled in a language course- I never gave this a thought earlier because I didn't realise that I would face language problems like these. Since this is one of the leading private universities in Bangladesh, I think, if I can manage well to

complete my studies here in English, it will really help me in my

professional life in the future.   (S016)

Owing to a lack of proficiency in English, the same student faced a lower

learning achievement in an EMI context which negatively impacted her self-

image.

In courses where I had to present in English, I scored a low mark in the

presentations. I did not manage well during the exams - it would have

been easier for us if everything was taught in Bangla.

When I go to university, I hear others speak such nice English. I cannot

talk nicely like that – not sure if I am using grammatically correct

sentences, all these make me more nervous, and I cannot speak.

(S016)

While the usage of EMI at Bangladeshi HEIs has often been linked to broader

issues of social inequality, English has been utilised as a means to gain

access to opportunities and social capital, as reported by a teacher in the

excerpt below.

One of my students was recruited by a company to work in its

international business unit. Just because she is good in English, all

queries from European clients are being handled by her! Despite having

no previous experiences, she has been given opportunities instead of

her more experienced colleagues just because their English is not that

good. So yes, English can open greater possibilities for you. Even if you go abroad for higher education, you need a certain IELTS score. Otherwise, you can't go to good universities. So, if you do not have the English skills, you are already lagging in competition.

(T006)

Yet, students acknowledged the importance of English in bridging the social chasm in the new face of globalisation and internationalisation, leading to greater mobility across their national boundaries:

We need to learn English if we want to go abroad or for higher studies. We are not that advanced like China or Russia - they have their own standard education system, language, and research opportunities or research facilities, but we don't have that. So, if we want to undertake research, employment or further studies, we need to learn English so that we can move abroad. (S018)

Students agreed that EMI would prepare them for future cross-border employment and support the acquisition of both English proficiency and professional knowledge, leading to enhanced job mobility in local, regional and international workplaces that would offer higher salaries, a better working environment, and more growth opportunities:

It may be possible to pass the university barely or to get a bachelor's degree without being fluent or good in English, but, in my opinion, it's

impossible to get a job with a high salary here or abroad without any

proficiency in English.   (S011)

5.2.4 Translanguaging strategies

However, it is interesting to note how some participants, both students and

teachers, shared their experiences regarding the use of their native language

Bengali in EMI classrooms to counter the challenges of learning through EMI.

A few teachers acknowledged their stance on taking a student-centred

approach and having to often oscillate between using English and Bengali to

facilitate greater comprehension of a concept. Even though students

acknowledged the significance of English in a more closely connected

globalised world, they also believed that their first language (L1) played an

essential role in their learning and comprehension.

> I think if students face difficulties in English, then teachers should mix
>
> languages. They should follow the language, and if they do, then they
>
> should use English because it will be helpful for us in the future. We will
>
> be used to it. Four years is a long time to get used to English, so it will
>
> be helpful, I think if teachers use both English and some Bengali to
>
> deliver their lecture or speech.   (S013)

Some of the teachers also pointed out how they often have to mediate and use

Bengali to deal with the language challenges their students face in class.

What was interesting, however, was one student coming from an English medium educational background, who noted a need for teacher professional development that require competence in the language and commented on how 'frustrating' it was for him to understand terms being explained in Bengali rather than English as part of classroom lectures. He further noted:

> This happens mainly in the foundation courses. I guess teachers teaching the major courses have a higher degree of education, mostly from abroad. It is more manageable for them to continue speaking in English than teachers of the foundation courses who don't have PhDs.

> (S014)

As new global education agenda of equity, access, and lifelong learning is adopted by Bangladeshi private HEIs, language seems to produce complex patterns of compounded disadvantages that need to be addressed to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning in EMI courses.

5.3 State and institutional influences on the implementation of EMI

In the light of findings drawn from document analysis that address state and institutional influences relating to EMI adoption in Bangladeshi HEIs, this section presents current EMI practices, new insights, and emerging EMI trends in Bangladeshi private HEIs. The following section focuses on the policies about EMI implementation and an evaluation of the English as a second language (ESL) programme at the university. Considering the position of the

University of Bangladesh (UoB) on its pathway to internationalisation while seeking to address economic imperatives of globalisation through HE, the institutional influences were analysed that led to the adoption of EMI. Moreover, the institutional influences were analysed by examining different components of the ESL programme, which comprised of the entry requirements for the ESL programme, teachers' perceptions of students, the use of English inside and outside the classroom, the availability of learning resources and the inter-relation between ESL teachers and administrators. The data gathered from documents showed that the components mentioned above have a significant impact on teaching and learning in the various programmes at the HEI, as revealed by observations (field notes) and interview data.

5.3.1 Macro-language planning, institutional realities and EMI

The country's first education policy, published in 1974, affirmed Bengali as the sole MOI from primary to higher education level. Owing to its British colonial history, English was officially acknowledged as a second language (L2) as a means of international communicative exchange in international business, commerce, diplomacy, and scholarship across language and cultures, placing Bangladesh inside the outer circle (Kirkpatrick, 2007, p. 28). Founded on a significant nationalistic ideological consensus, the Bengali Language Introduction Act 1987 was enacted, and it was adopted as the state language to be used exclusively for official, social and educational purposes

In 2003, in its commission report, the National Education Committee regrettably pointed out the lack of an explicit language policy for Bangladesh, leading to a lack of proficiency in both Bengali and English amongst HE students in general. The report acknowledged the widening breach between Bengali and English. It recommended the government take immediate measures in mobilising a committee to formulate a National Language Policy to resolve the prevailing confusion surrounding the issue of language usage, particularly at the HE level, which was delivered exclusively through Bengali.

Implementing HE policy reforms, the government enacted quality assurance, enhancement and accreditation mechanisms to strengthen governance and develop accountability for the performance of every HEI in relation to teaching, learning and research. As part of the vision laid out in the Strategic Plan for HE 2018- 2030 (SPHE), the nation affirms its goal to -

> … achieve excellence in higher education comparable to global standards; to establish equity and guarantee access to higher education by anyone qualified to pursue it, and to prepare the learners as ideal citizens   (SPHE, p. 19)

The SPHE stipulated that 'higher education should ensure social mobility, increased living standards, and internal and international harmony and peace, based on human rights and the principles of democracy' (University Grants Commission of Bangladesh, 2018, p. 13). However, the document does not address the role of language in achieving educational goals at national and

international levels, required to develop 'skills and competence and communication abilities to be globally competitive' (p. 19).

As mentioned earlier in the introduction, the privatisation of HE in Bangladesh has been a milestone in the exclusive usage of EMI. Following the enactment of the latest National Education Policy (NEP) 2010, a variation of explicit language practices from primary to the tertiary level were explicitly stated for the first time, recognising the significance of English as an essential tool in building an advanced knowledge-based and technology-driven society backed by digitisation. However, the ubiquitous adoption of EMI in meeting societal and economic needs of students through the privatisation of Bangladesh's HE did not involve any government bodies or official LPP agency but a group of 'invisible planners' (Pakir, 1994). Having their language ideology, all private universities in Bangladesh offer programmes entirely taught through EMI in some if not all departments. Almost all these private universities offer various English language programmes to develop English language skills among learners. As a majority population of prospective students comes from Bengali medium institutions, these ESL programmes make the students university-ready so that they can follow classroom instruction besides textbooks and study resources in English in their university courses. The National Education Policy (Ministry of Education, 2010) also recommend the obligatory teaching of the English language:

English will be taught as a compulsory subject at the degree level of all colleges and universities. It will carry 100 marks/3 credits.

English language programmes were therefore made compulsory in all undergraduate programmes at universities. The ESL programme in all private universities ranged from one to three courses, while several universities offered students a non-credited introductory Remedial English course. The NEP further acknowledged the true value of an education system which is of 'high standard' being 'uniform', 'universal' and 'science oriented' with emphasis on:

information and communication technology (ICT) along with maths, science and English in order to build up a digital Bangladesh based on knowledge-orientation and cultivation of ICT

(Ministry of Education, 2010)

In view of the above, public universities in Bangladesh have begun to optimise their EMI practices, ensued from the privatisation of HE, allowing departments to introduce foundation courses on the English language to develop English language skills amongst its students set to compete with local and global demands (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014).

Quite the contrary, the National Education Policy further endorsed that English would remain as a medium of instruction (MOI) in HE besides Bengali. Because of this policy, EMI in HE has emerged as a core

educational issue in Bangladesh, where the state does not officially endorse the exclusive use of EMI and maintains post-independence nationalist ideologies regarding the status of Bengali as the sole official language. In the absence of macro language-in-education initiatives by the national government as a response to bi-/multilingualism, the inception of private universities has paved the way to counter the Bengali-based MOI in the state-funded universities by incorporating EMI in their undergraduate and graduate programmes. Even though a covert policy shift to EMI education has seen its share of problems over the past three decades, Bangladesh's private universities are still grappling with achieving the broader HE goals of internationalisation (Law & Hoey, 2018).

To this end, the ESL programmes are offered in all Bangladeshi private universities, which offer several English courses that focus on speaking, listening, reading and writing in the academic context. Based on a placement test, most private HEIs funnel students, having low English language proficiency due to their previous education, into prerequisite non-credit Remedial English courses. Since most of the students who enter the universities are underprepared in basic English usage besides reading and writing, the length and intensity of these preparatory ESL programmes differ according to respective universities' policies regarding the use of EMI.

5.3.2 EMI provisions in teaching and learning practices in UoB

In contexts where macro-level language planning and policy (LPP) do not exist, LPP decisions are often taken at institutional levels driven by internationalisation in a globalised world dominated by neoliberalism. UoB was established more than two decades ago with a mission of achieving the goals of HE by producing 'graduates of international standards'. Its academic curriculum is modelled after the North American liberal arts education model that focuses on studying literature, languages, philosophy, mathematics, and science as the basis of general education. The HEI adopted EMI even though it does not have an official positioning paper on its language policies defining the use of English in teaching, research and administration. Lectures and assessments are conducted in English, and all instructional materials are in English. Under six academic faculty, the University of Bangladesh (UoB) has ten departments: English, Media Studies, Social Sciences, Law, Public Health, Pharmacy, Engineering, Physical Sciences, Environmental Science and Life Sciences. It currently enrols more than 9000 undergraduate and graduate students and has over 12,000 alumni. More than 45% of the academic staff hold PhD and postgraduate degrees from 'globally reputed universities' in English-speaking countries.

In its mission statement, the HEI acknowledges its 'third mission' to achieve the goals of HE and sustainable economic growth in the country through a two-pronged relationship between the societal needs of the community and the

institution. With over 500 faculty and staff, the university outlines its teaching and research activities as enterprising and innovative, linking its activities with the socio-economic context providing public service while working towards social welfare. The university further engages with global and national market demands by developing strategies to offer academic programmes of societal relevance to develop students' communication and leadership skills and critical ability.

English is the primary medium of instruction at UoB. Despite functioning in a monoglossic society that only values monolingualism deeply rooted in purist language ideologies (Lin, 2013), HE in Bangladesh is driven by a growing focus on internationalisation, promoting EMI for linguistic diversity in HEIs like UoB (see Figure 5.1).

To support the usage of English in teaching and learning, it offers a mandatory university-readiness English language programme for students who gain admission through an English and Mathematics placement test, fulfilling strict entry requirements. Even though clear institutional language-in-education policies have not been laid down explicitly in strategic documents of UoB, prospective students with a minimum SAT score of 1000, and a minimum IELTS score of 5.5 or TOEFL score of 550 (paper-based) are exempted from the entry admission test.

Upon admission, students are required to complete a sequence of three academic English courses and two mathematics courses as part of a general

education foundation programme. These courses run alongside the specialised content courses in the first one to two years from admission. The foundation programme offers four other major areas of education besides communication skills and numeracy- computer skills, natural sciences, social sciences and humanities.
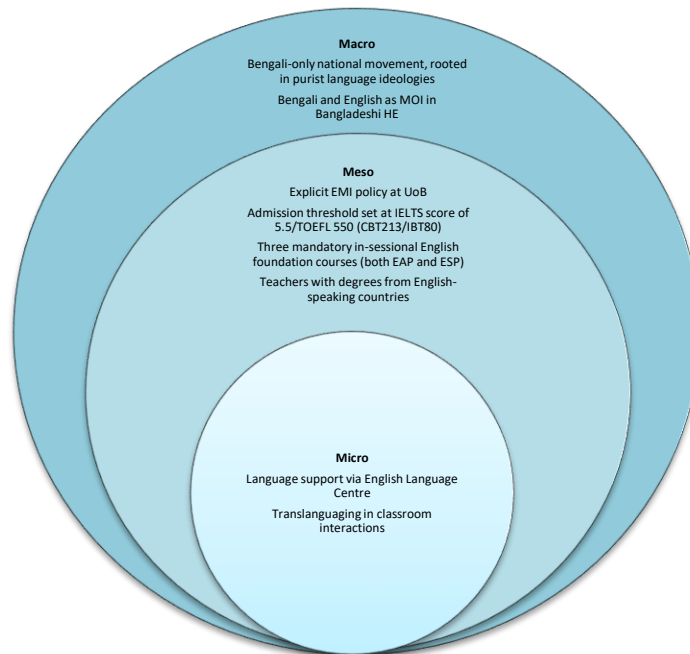
Figure 5.1 The adoption of EMI in a Bangladeshi private HEI

The English programme at the foundation level consists of three levels: elementary, intermediate and advanced. The programme is designed to help students achieve an intermediate level of language proficiency before registering for major courses. Thus, the newly admitted students are allocated to these levels based on the admission test results. All the three English

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foundation courses earn students credits: Listening and Speaking Skills, Reading and Composition and Business English. The primary purposes of these courses are to equip students, regardless of their specialisation, with the necessary language skills that will help them cope with learning in their respective academic subjects and the potential challenges of EMI. Each English course offers three contact hours a week, two hours of tutorial and an hour of practice at the English Language Centre every week besides guided self-study and English language practice over the weekends for students in need of support.

Established in 2016 to support UoB in the internationalisation process, the English Language Centre constitutes a training and research unit to enhance English language skills among students. All students at the UoB can avail themselves of the various academic English courses in communication skills, academic reading and writing. One-to-one or closed group language support is provided to students based on diagnostic language tests and needs analyses. The tutorial classes in the language centre are free of charge for students in any given year.

In effect, UoB values, supports, benefits from and includes the diversity of its people and communities in terms of gender, social class, geography, skills and talents, being committed to being an inclusive and culturally diverse study environment. UoB is also committed to equity, providing individualised and inclusive higher educational opportunities for students, who are often at an

unfair advantage compared to their peers from upper socioeconomic backgrounds with intellectual abilities. More specifically, UoB plays a crucial role in promoting stewardship of enhancing knowledge, skills and motivation through education amongst students corresponding to human capital, central to a flourishing economy. The sustainable impact of the societal contributions of UoB as part of social capital in ensuring access towards equitable opportunities for HE to those from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds is positive. Hence, students from many underprivileged areas, and particularly from remote locations, even with disadvantaged educational backgrounds and limited financial resources, are granted admission to UoB, as articulated by a teacher:

> The most significant advantage of UoB is that it has a lot of students coming from every criss-cross corner of Bangladesh. If the students, who come from remote areas, finish their education and if they can get into a job, then I believe that is a huge success. (T005)

UoB is also a viable option for students who seek financial assistance. In the form of economic benefit, employment opportunities, particularly for female students, are provided as they can work as teaching assistants or graduate assistants.

> As I didn't get a chance in any public university, I was really depressed. And then, when I got a chance in a private university like UoB, my father couldn't afford to support me. So, it was tough for me to make

ends meet. Afterwards, when I earned a scholarship during the first semester, I was really motivated from then onwards. I thought I must maintain the scholarship if I wanted to continue my studies. And I did complete my full undergraduate studies on this scholarship!

<div align="right">(S002)</div>

Furthermore, UoB recognises the consequences of educational inequalities among students and addresses issues of varying levels of university readiness to transform these human capitals into resourceful workplace gains in a globalised world. Thus, students must complete three academic English courses and two mathematics courses as part of a general education foundation programme besides computer skills, natural sciences, social sciences and humanities. However, students still struggled with English throughout their senior years while enrolled in different major programmes, as elucidated by a teacher:

Well, their problem is understanding- they have a huge lack in understanding words – their vocabulary is very minimal. So, that's a very big problem. If I say, for example, let's look at examples from archaeology, this is something they don't understand or even the word excavate! So, in a university setting, it sometimes becomes very difficult when you have to come down to very fundamental usage of English.

<div align="right">(T001)</div>

All the core subject teachers who were interviewed have repeatedly reported that a majority of students who have completed the English foundation courses still encounter many difficulties with comprehension of lectures.

> When we deliver our lecture in English, the problem is that most of the time, they cannot concentrate because of their lack of confidence- they think that, okay, as it is in English, it is not possible for us to understand…They do not want to listen to the lectures because automatically, they think that it is not possible for them to understand the lecture properly. So, either they request us to use Bengali, as it is the native language, come to our office and ask for further explanations in Bengali, or just give up and just rely on the slides and memorise everything that are given in the slides.   (T006)

Nevertheless, the content teachers did not feel any sense of responsibility to guide students in dealing with their English language comprehension challenges, which became evident in learning concepts that students failed to grasp. They pointed out that it is the university's responsibility to offer more English courses at the ESL foundation level and even at the exit so that students can attain the minimum level of language proficiency needed to cope in their specialised academic subjects and their professional life.

5.4   Chapter Summary

The study attempted to answer two main research questions regarding the perceived challenges students faced while learning through EMI and how their previous learning experiences further shaped their identities which in turn influenced their learning experiences through English as a second/additional language. The key findings of this chapter were based on the analysis and interpretation of qualitative data gathered from students and teachers through semi-structured interviews and observation, further contextualised through document analyses that investigated the state and institutional influences which impacted EMI adoption in Bangladeshi HEIs. Following analysis, in moving from open to selective coding, emergent from an iteration of data, six core themes were identified that impacted students' learning experiences through EMI at a Bangladeshi HEI: navigating language challenges, linguistic identities, and equity issues in translanguaging spaces, the conception of teaching through content, teacher development and the quality of EMI, the role of EMI in framing Bangladesh's knowledge economy and language-in-policy in Bangladesh's HE.

Answering the first research question, the findings revealed that students experienced a range of linguistic challenges which appeared to impact their overall academic performance in the EMI programmes negatively. The students' main difficulties in EMI classrooms were related to their inability to comprehend concepts and topics from classroom lectures and readings,

exacerbated by unknown technical words. They found speaking to be the most challenging skill and indicated their unwillingness to participate in class discussions due to a lack of self-confidence. While the majority of the students preferred to work towards improving their speaking skills, they also reported difficulty arising from academic writing and voiced the need for writing support.

In answer to the second research question, students elaborated how their previous learning experiences in a Bengali medium education system shaped their identity of otherness within an English social space. While the students faced formidable language-related challenges, the majority of them perceived the positive benefits of EMI in attaining English linguistic capital towards academic success, economic development and greater prosperity through enhanced employability and mobility. However, both the students and teachers adopted translanguaging strategies, using all their linguistic repertoires in English and Bengali to encourage meaningful discussions to achieve a shared understanding of the content through the co-construction of knowledge.

Addressing the final research question, the findings revealed the absence of a macro language policy towards the promotion of bi-/multilingualism, which clearly did not trickle down to the meso level to mediate explicit institutional language policy that guides teaching and learning practices adopted by EMI teachers at UoB. The findings also discussed the social and economic imperatives that drive the Bangladeshi HE reformation agenda of

internationalisation and its contestation over the nationalist ideology of Bengali.

In summary, showing a clear preference for the utilisation of English, perceived as the language of upward social, economic and global mobility, these findings led to the understanding of the potentials and limitations of using EMI in the teaching and learning context of Bangladesh's HE. Drawing on the existing literature on EMI teaching and students' perceptions, their perceived beliefs are further scrutinised and discussed in the following chapter against the teaching practices reported by the participants to examine the congruence and disparity between their beliefs and practices as well as the influencing factors at personal and contextual levels.

Chapter 6: Discussion

This small-scale study investigated university students' perceptions of EMI in an HEI in Bangladesh. The overall findings contributed to an understanding of Bangladeshi HE students' learning experiences through EMI. Their perceptions of the experiences highlighted the challenges of English as a lingua franca in the ecological and socio-cultural context of Bangladesh while providing a perspective on its relationship with Bengali to guide a clear language-in-education policy to achieve a harmonious balance (Hornberger, 2003; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2003). The findings highlighted the key linguistic

challenges Bangladeshi students faced while learning in their respective content areas, ranging from challenges with vocabulary, grammar, academic reading and writing to comprehension difficulties besides communicative competence issues that encompass linguistic competence, sociolinguistic and sociocultural knowledge (Canale & Swain, 1980). Secondly, the results demonstrated contestation with their identities influenced by their linguistic capital that adversely affected educational attainment. Based on the findings derived from documented education policies, written artefacts, field observations, and interviews, the following section elucidates the natures of students' beliefs and their interpretation of learning challenges through EMI, providing implications for the implementation of EMI language policy at macro, meso and micro level in Bangladesh.

Building on the discussion above, the study set forth a range of possible priority actions to address the challenges and produce an adaptive skilled workforce that meets the needs of a fast-changing, technology-driven economy. Other key factors that impacted students' learning experiences through EMI were identified: construction of social identities through EMI, teacher capacity building, language-in-education planning, and the quality of EMI provision to forge pathways towards a knowledge economy. These findings concur with previous literature on EMI implementation in Europe, Asia, and Africa. Even though the purposes of its implementation are rarely clearly articulated by policymakers and drivers, owing to an overall lack of

understanding, there are differences in the way it is accepted by various stakeholders in different linguistic environments (Dearden & Macaro, 2016).

6.1 Students' challenges of learning through EMI

The findings from the study raised important issues regarding the provision of sufficient academic, social, and emotional supports provided at Bangladeshi private HEI in terms of providing access to a curriculum that presents opportunities for English language and literacy development besides knowledge of disciplinary contents. Some teachers pointed to potential tensions surrounding translanguaging practices during classroom instruction, especially in lower-level courses, where they must constantly shift between Bengali and English. This supports evidence from previous observations, which emphasised that students need 'a safe, welcoming classroom environment with minimal anxiety about performing in a second language' (Lucas et al., 2008, p. 363). In accordance with the present findings surrounding space, previous studies (Lucas et al., 2008; Pappamihiel, 2002) have echoed the importance of providing a safe space catering to the needs of the students to feel emotionally comfortable to facilitate oral participation for maximising learning.

In view of the above, it is essential to consider the role of the EAL/ESL foundation programmes, which help create safe spaces for new students, providing them with an environment that facilitates peer interaction and risk-taking with language which supports students' socioemotional well-being and

academic success (Lang, 2019). An educational, safe place aims to create an 'inclusive and effective learning environment where opportunities for complex cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal development exist for all students' (Magolda, 2000, p. 94). This notion of safe space is an educational metaphor for designing classrooms that address challenging learning encounters, such as grappling with a difficult concept through an L2. Only in a positive and open learning environment can students learn and flourish because they feel empowered to take risks by expressing their unique insights and disagreeing with others' points of view, often in their native language, even in an EMI setting (Holley & Steiner, 2005). Without question, opportunities for students to draw on their native language resources are indispensable for developing English language and literacy practices in facilitating access to content.

Consistent with previous literature on pedagogical practices in multilingual classrooms (García & Sylvan, 2011), this research found that content teachers who reported incorporating verbal translanguaging practices towards the end of their EMI class could gauge students' understanding and engage them in dialogues while encouraging questions about academic content. As risk-taking is part of academic life and intellectual growth, nurturing this kind of risk-taking involves understanding and building on students' existing linguistic dexterity towards developing intercultural awareness to use language innovatively in an EMI academic context (Paris, 2009, p. 431). In line with this participatory inquiry in HE pedagogy that promotes deep learning, such 'fluid language practices' (García & Wei, 2014) merge and mesh two different linguistic

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resources as part of a more expansive semiotic repertoire and construct meaning (Goodwin, 2000).

In this study, the three Academic English courses offered to students at the UoB aimed to facilitate English language and literacy development to build their language proficiency. Evidently, students' content area knowledge hinged on this Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (Cummins, 1984), which some students developed over a period of one year while others struggled for the whole course of their university study. And language played a significant role in assisting the students to become rich resources for others and themselves, transforming themselves as self-actualisers, independent, self-motivated, and highly determined to drive their learning activities.

6.2 Translanguaging spaces in EMI – exploring issues of identity and linguistic equity

A recurring theme among the HE students was the shortfalls in English language education under the national curriculum at the primary and secondary levels. Researchers (Roshid & Webb, 2013) have contended that university graduates in Bangladesh are still not well trained in English to the extent that they could enhance graduate opportunities and invest in their performance in the industry. As the urban-rural split in Bangladesh created a widening educational divide, a disparity was evident in teaching staff, infrastructural resources, and facilities besides inequalities in primary and secondary students' academic and cultural backgrounds. Having studied in a

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heavily centralised system of education taught solely in their native/first language (L1) Bengali within a purist, monolingual linguistic societal context, these students faced more significant problems when they were unable to gain access to the highly competitive public universities in Bangladesh and instead have had no choice but to join the private universities that operated through EMI. Not only must they learn new academic concepts and skills, but they must also do so using words they do not understand (Bühmann & Trudell, 2007). Even though Bangladesh is an example of this public-private dichotomy, there is evidence of perpetuating social and economic inequalities amongst students who mainly come from the private HE sector (Hamid, Jahan, et al., 2013b), where English has been imposed as 'a natural and neutral medium of academic excellence' (Piller & Cho, 2013).

While Bangladesh makes a societal shift towards ELF, a translanguaging perspective focuses on HE students' complex cognitive and linguistic skillsets when participating in classroom activities, mediated by their dual-language use between Bengali and English. Research demonstrates that translanguaging helps create genuinely inclusive classrooms in which equitable, empowering language learning can occur (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017; Dutton & Rushton, 2021; Gort & Sembiante, 2015) while negotiating greater integration between language and content in EMI classrooms (Arthur & Martin, 2006). This step towards social justice in an educational context (García-Mateus & Palmer, 2017) transforms the power relations between teachers and students (Creese & Blackledge, 2015). And this shift can become the basis of a new way to

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establish connections between the home and school (Pacheco & Miller, 2016) through the authentic development of bilingual identities. Even though there are widespread concerns about the high costs of local-language MOI, not always backed up by enough evidence (Trudell, 2016), the rewards of schooling in local languages outweigh the costs, with gains in educational quality, lower attrition and drop out, and enhanced inclusion leading to savings from reduced school repetition and dropouts (Trudell, 2016; UNESCO, 2016).

It is important to note at this point that the provision of effective education is crucial in contributing to human capital and could be considered as a developing link between social capital and national development. Social capital is defined as a representation of social resources available to individuals fulfilling collective goals, embedded in feelings of trust, norms, values, reciprocity and participation within a shared network. An interesting feature of social capital is that it can become more and better when appropriately used (Cloete, 2014). In principle, the three capitals - economic, social, and human - operate in tandem where if one fails to operate, then the other two can no longer operate. Therefore, a weak economic base will have a debilitating effect on education (human capital) and ultimately on the cohesion of the state (social capital). A weak social base means that economic life (economic capital) suffers through corruption where state education is neglected. An impaired base in education means that neither economic nor human development is sustainable, which will impact social cohesion again. In understanding the connections between language and the provision of

effective education, which is a crucial factor in economic and human development, it is up to the language professionals to take it up high in the policy agenda to influence matters and drive the nation towards the future (Williams & Cooke, 2002). Aligned with such initiatives, the private education sector in Bangladesh has been leading the way, and the public sector is slowly 'being forced to play catch up' (Macaro, 2015). This rapid shift towards EMI is consistently facing a growing trend, not so much in primary and secondary education, but mostly in private sectors in tertiary institutions (Dearden, 2015, p. 6) in Bangladesh.

This paradigm shift towards EMI could be instrumental in Bangladesh's installation of a multicultural society creating a natural environment for producing students who are proficient in more than one language as it is all the more important to view English as an essential resource for gaining access to global culture, to higher education, to better-paid, white-collar employment and prestigious middle-class identities (Ferguson, 2006). While negotiating identities in a multicultural context can cause problems for HE learners, intercultural communication, if properly negotiated, may help students, both local and international, develop the capability to manage intercultural exchange through linguistic and paralinguistic resources (Kim, Choi, et al., 2017, p. 468). Even though international students may experience discrimination while local students feel disadvantaged due to the imposition of the English language in an EMI classroom, both groups of students may develop an understanding of cultural diversity, conducive to cohesive social

and cognitive growth among students. Owing to institutional management of a diverse and multicultural learning environment, EMI can work as a confounding variable, providing opportunities for improved classroom communication while facilitating a greater level of acculturation in international and local students (Karuppan & Barari, 2010).

Having had assumed the role of a lingua franca in the global business world, commerce and scientific discourse, its critical role in HEIs worldwide can no longer be denied. And it is for this reason, English skills are legitimately regarded as a gatekeeper to positions of status (Ferguson, 2006, p. 140; Pennycook, 1994, p. 54). Knowing the language and understanding and effectively communicating in English is a prerequisite to participating in the globalised marketplace. Therefore, a student graduating from a world-class, highly international university should at the very least have excellent language skills in his native language with equally excellent competence in academic English, ready to partake in intercultural communication in future multilingual professional settings.

Moreover, how identity is co-constructed through linguistic interactions (Reyes & Vallone, 2007) is seen to be instrumental in academic success (Lee et al., 2011; Palmer, 2008; Sayer, 2013). Considering language as a socially situated practice (Pennycook, 2010), contrary to traditional views of language as a set of structures, the notion of 'language practices' perceives language use essentially as a social engagement that organises social life (Lang, 2019). And

drawing from a Bourdieusian (1977) theory of practice, Pennycook (2010) further argues language and literacy to be constituted in practice, embedded in an understanding of transformative identity formation negotiated through lived experience. Embracing the idea that identity is fluid and amorphous and is constantly and endlessly invented and reinvented (Kumaravadivelu, 2012, p. 11), the dynamism of identity formation is perceived as 'the continuous creation of the fragment; a bricolage of the disjointed' (Ferguson, 2009, p. 184). Indeed, social identity is formed when individuals enumerate their surroundings, placing themselves in a group with common characteristics, while distancing themselves from other social groups (Hamers & Blanc, 2000, p. 200). As such, language use can be seen both as a social practice and as a symbolic system through which identity is marked, created, and constantly changing in a social context (Woodward, 1997, p. 23).

However, drawing upon Bangladeshi HE students' contradictions with EMI, it is critical to create a translanguaging space as a pathway towards greater linguistic equity with the explicit goal of reversing a deficit mindset informed by monolinguistic ideologies (Li & Luo, 2017). Taking students' existing linguistic repertoire in Bengali and leveraging them to ensure that they leap forward in their performances and content knowledge, a translanguaging approach can improve fluency and cross-linguistic proficiency as students feel liberated to use the language features that best facilitate their communication and academic discourse. As many students believe that their first language (L1) plays an essential role in their learning and comprehension, it is vital to

empower the students so that they can leverage their linguistic repertoire to customise their language performances in understanding content (García & Kleyn, 2016). Many researchers support this efficacious approach to language education as it effectively taps into students' current language repertoire and background knowledge (Jörgensen, 2011; Leung & Valdés, 2019; Otheguy et al., 2019). In view of this, Hopper (1998, pp. 157-158) points out:

> There is no natural fixed structure to language. Rather, speakers borrow heavily from their previous experiences of communication in similar circumstances, on similar topics, and with similar interlocuters. Systematicity, in this view, is an illusion produced by the partial settling or sedimentation of frequently used forms into temporary subsystems.

In a safe space (Rom, 1998) of translanguaging, both Bengali and English linguistic resources are not separated or treated as distinct systems but are instead creatively transformed into new linguistic realities. Within this translanguaging space, can bilinguals/multilinguals transform language separation into powerful possibilities while entailing 'tension, conflict, competition, difference and change in many spheres, ranging from ideologies, policies, and practices to historical and current contexts' (Garcia & Wei, 2014, p. 24).

Indeed, translanguaging has the potential of unlocking unacknowledged possibilities in classrooms as a process by which students and teachers engage in complex discourse practices that include the language practices of

all students to develop new language practices (García & Kano, 2014, p. 261). In this way, it is possible to provide pedagogic empowerment to students and voice new socio-political realities by interrogating linguistic inequality, impelled by EMI, while sustaining old language practice in communicating and appreciating knowledge. Therefore, through translanguaging, people enact -

> ...different dimensions of their personal history, experience and environment, their attitude, belief and ideology, their cognitive and physical capacity into one coordinated and meaningful performance and making it into a lived experience. (Wei, 2011, p. 1223)

More so, it is a 'transformative, resemiotisation process' through which speakers consciously construct and modify their sociocultural practices because they find the space to be fluidic and constantly evolving as it 'combines and generates new identities, values and practices' (Wei, 2018, p. 23). Therefore, while teaching an academic subject, there is 'a prima facie case' for using all the language resources at the students' disposal to promote effective understanding and learning (Leung & Valdés, 2019, p. 364). As such, in a content classroom where the students and the teacher share similar language repertoires, there is every reason to translanguage, to promote greater communication and effective learning (García et al., 2017), simultaneously encouraging educators to give legitimacy to the fluidic identities of these Bangladeshi bilingual speakers.

As researchers increasingly acknowledge the influence of institutional norms and practices on teaching and learning (Meyer & Rowan, 2006; Scott, 2008), classrooms are viewed as an important site where learners construct different identities that are social, culturally, politically, and historically situated within the classrooms. Understanding how these students participate in their academic communities and acquire discourses in their second language (L2) has become critical (Morita, 2004, p. 573). Notably, identities are 'fluid, shifting and strategically renegotiated according to changing social contexts' (Canagarajah, 2005, p. 438). Against this backdrop, language is often considered to be a 'double-edged sword' of opportunity and marginalisation in constructing identities (Evans, 2014).

6.3 Teaching content or language? - Teacher professional development and capacity building in EMI

In relation to the previous discussion, which addressed pedagogic issues connected to Bangladeshi students' deficit in English language proficiency, some fundamental issues of professional pedagogic preparation and teacher education were raised. Although all the student participants were in favour of the implementation and growth of EMI in HE, the importance of measures to evaluate the effectiveness of its implementation is rather complex, requiring awareness of both its positive and negative implications for students, teachers, institutions, language policy and teaching (Drljača Margić & Vodopija-Krstanović, 2018). One of the critical issues raised by the student respondents

was regarding the linguistic challenges they frequently faced while studying in an EMI context, especially in learning new concepts and while receiving oral instructions from teachers about tasks or written assignments. Students often found it challenging to understand, absorb and apply such knowledge in discipline-specific contexts where teachers presented new target concepts and jargon in a purely decontextualized manner at the very least. Students also raised some concerns about the English language skills of content teachers teaching in the foundation programme, having implications on classroom instruction that was lecture-based in its entirety and did not encourage discussions in class, which impacted learning.

Notably, EMI places a primary focus on content learning, as it is deeply embedded in the acquisition and use of language (Maxwell-Reid, 2020). As observed in prior research (Airey, 2011b), EMI teachers often relied on the traditional, monologic lecturing mode in classroom teaching for fear of exposing their lack of English proficiency in front of students, much less than how some content teachers resisted the notion of EMI owing to its historical past and perceived English as a threat to their linguistic heritage and cultural identity (Yuan et al., 2020).

Additionally, when teachers attempted to embrace EMI in their classroom teaching, they often lacked the awareness of the central role of language in content learning. They were unable to bring the language component into their course design and classroom practices (Coleman et al., 2018). Content

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learning through EMI, on the contrary, cannot take place without dialogic, context-bound, and subject-specific use of language, allowing students to construct knowledge about the subject and world (Yuan et al., 2020). Accomplished teachers may use a wide variety of planned resources about content and language and reinforce or review critical terms in every lesson to accelerate the students' vocabulary acquisition process and comprehension (Short, 2002). Clearly, a language focus is crucial in EMI classrooms, where the teacher draws attention to language through repetitions, code-switching, and semantic elaborations, provided through definitions, glossaries, paraphrases, synonyms, examples, and explanations, to support content learning (Basturkmen, 2018).

Interestingly, all the teachers interviewed unanimously articulated the necessity of increased emphasis on speaking and writing, besides grammar, vocabulary, and spelling focus on the existing language foundation courses. Owing to the lack of concrete language-in-education policies, unwritten social practices, norms and routines enacted by the HEI, the teachers are oblivious to their central role in language planning at the micro institutional level (please refer to Figure 2.5). Hence, they all believed that language teaching was not part of their lesson objective and focused on teaching content ideas only, explicitly focusing on vocabulary rather than language skills development and its functional usage. This manifest contradictions in the institutional EMI policy of UoB that could be further supported through content teachers' instructional practices.

Indeed, when it comes to implementing language policy (see Figure 2.4) inside the classroom, it is the teachers who are the gatekeepers, not the language planners and policymakers (Baldauf et al., 2008). Teachers, in essence, are placed in the position of intermediary between the students and the policy while being in control of how their classes are to be engaged with the texts (Martin, 1999). Furthermore, following the pedagogical LCT framework, as discussed previously, content teachers can conceptualise language development more broadly, considering language embedded in tasks, textbooks and as used by the students themselves to co-construct knowledge (Short, 2002, p. 22):

> Even though many teachers have not been trained to teach language, they can, nonetheless, with practice, identify language features of their content topics and tasks. Language objectives can be related to vocabulary, reading, writing, listening, speaking, grammar, and more.

Identifying language functions, forms, and language learning strategies while integrating non-language content as a vehicle for promoting L2 proficiency (Genesee & Lindholm-Leary, 2013) for greater academic attainment (please see Figure 6.1), teachers can thus help students learn to read, write and partake in discussions through planned and purposeful activities that actively engage students in higher-order, cognitive demanding tasks (CALP) in discipline-specific academic contents (Figure 6.2).

C   **A**   **L**   **P**

```
        Cognitive              Academic               Proficiency
          tasks        ←→       language        ←→
            ↓                      ↓                      ↓
```

Include: • Language of literacy and   Accurate and fluent use of
• Explain   formal writing   language includes:
• Infer   • Narrative and expository   • Ease of comprehension
• Analyze   text structure   and production
• Draw conclusions   • Syntax and sentence   • Automatically in reading
• Synthesize   structure   and writing
• Compare and contrast   • Grammatical features   • Appropriateness of
• Persuade   (parts of speech, tense   discourse style
                           and mood, subject/verb   • Facility of language use
                           agreement)   for a wide range of
                         • Academic vocabulary   purposes

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            ↓                      ↓                      ↓
```

Functions   **Forms**   **Fluency**

Figure 6.1: Dutro and Moran's (2003) conceptual model from CALP to functions,
forms, and fluency

While drawing on various language registers, these students can gain valuable
social tools of vocabulary, audience awareness, cross-cultural awareness,
real-world literacy skills, metalinguistic awareness, teaching and tutoring
skills, civic responsibility, and above all, social maturity (Orellana, 2003).

Cognitively undemanding tasks [BICS]

Copying from the board
Face-to-face conversations
Oral presentations
Directions and instructions with
illustrations

Following a class schedule
Daily Conversations
Directions and instructions without
illustrations

Context embedded

Context reduced

Demonstrations
Experiments
Projects
Maps, models, charts, etc.
Scaffolding activities

Standardised tests
Academic reading and writing
New concepts and applications
Understanding lectures

Cognitively demanding tasks [CALP]

Figure 6.2: BICS and CALP Quadrant of Academic Language

Source: Cummins (2000, p. 68)

Without question, learning is an active process that is influenced by the
'interaction between the mind and environment' (Lajoie, 2008). Successful
learning opportunities, in general, are believed to materialise when learners
can recall and apply the knowledge by using various learning strategies as
they are provided with the right stimuli (Hartley, 2012), leading to deep
learning (Entwistle & Ramsden, 1982). Sociologists, however, perceive
learning as an action outside students' control, influenced by wider social
structural issues, such as power-relations, identity, social class, gender,
ethnicity and even institution, rather than something that can be manipulated in

terms of individual learner motivation and learning strategies (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Lea & Street, 1998; Trowler, 2009).

Additionally, in principle, teachers can help students develop skills to answer factual and higher-order questions through instructional conversations (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988), prompting students to explain and defend their own views and others. And seeking to make students think about thinking and increase metacognition, teachers can provide students positive feedback and model effective problem-solving strategies in content classrooms to increase student self-efficacy. As much content learning occurs in classrooms via discussion, learners need to be involved and encouraged to practice extended academic talk with their peers and the teacher and perform language functions.

However, the teachers' voices in this study maintained how the content teachers are bogged down with a heavy and imbalanced teaching load following a packed teaching schedule with increasing preparation load besides examination pressure. This posed severe obstacles to their implementation of teaching practices that could promote language development through task-based teaching of academic content (Zheng & Borg, 2014). Alternatively, it also meant that content teachers needed more institutional training and support preparing for teaching in an EMI context (Airey, 2011b; Macaro et al., 2017). Arguably, EMI subject-teachers can work with language specialists about language use while employing different activities such as presentations and experiments besides resources such as diagrams and visuals to promote

integrative language and disciplinary content learning in specific subjects (Basturkmen, 2018) as depicted through the Disciplinary Literacy Matrix (Airey, 2011a) in Figure 6.3. Contextualising how language permeates the academy, workplace and society, teachers must rethink the vital role language plays in teaching and learning as well as workplace within socially mediated practices in an EMI context.

		Academy	Workplace	Society
Local Language(s)	Reading			
	Writing			
	Listening			
	Speaking			
	Vocabulary			
English	Reading			
	Writing			
	Listening			
	Speaking			
	Vocabulary			
Results/Interpretations	Graphs			
	Charts			
	Tables			
	Diagrams			
	Mind maps			
	Other modes of visuals			

Figure 6.3: The Disciplinary Literacy Matrix
Adapted from: Airey (2020, p. 345)

As content teachers should ensure appropriate participation in communicative disciplinary practices, collaborative, classroom-based learning can largely contribute towards increasing EMI teachers' teaching competence and expertise, further disseminated through experiential seminars and training-based workshops supporting teachers in relevant disciplines (Bai, 2014)

following the NEP 2010 directives on teachers' training. To this end, prior studies (Dearden & Macaro, 2016) have also highlighted the importance of an infrastructure sufficiently supportive of EMI having even 'an efficient, English-speaking administrative team in place' which could also be the 'agents of change' besides academic staff who are instrumental in 'driving the change'.

This is in line with the NEP 2010, where much emphasis was given on enhancing the quality of the teachers as the key to quality assurance, particularly in HE, by providing continuous in-service training besides incentive and satisfactory remuneration to encourage the best students coming into the teaching profession. Since quality in HE has received significant attention over the years (Brennan & Shah, 2000; Harvey & Williams, 2010), HE accreditation frameworks typically consider academic staff quality as a key element in the success of various study programmes (Sarrico & Alves, 2016). As such, the quality of education is significantly affected by teachers' general academic and discipline-related English language proficiency, as affirmed by previous research (Lei & Hu, 2014). While it is quintessential that teachers should have adequate English language skills to effactually communicate lesson content, manage the classroom, ask and answer questions, give feedback and assess students, the spoken interaction and production descriptors in the Common European Framework of Reference for languages have set their performance to be at the C1 or C2 level (Council of Europe, 2001) to ensure quality teaching in EMI (Freeman et al., 2015).

6.4 Formulating bilingual language planning and policy (LPP)

With reference to findings that assessed state and institutional influences on the standing of EMI, the conclusions of the analysis of policy documents raised some fundamental issues of a system-wide language-in-education policy affordance and constraints under the realities of globalisation in Bangladeshi HE. In the absence of any official, consistent, long-term language planning and policy (LPP) and a well-designed plan for English language education (see Figure 2.2) across primary, secondary, and tertiary education levels, the detrimental effect of neglecting global English in Bangladesh's education is felt now more than ever as students' fundamental educational competencies need much strengthening for communication literacy in English as seen previously in Figure 1.1.

The choice of MOI in the education system has been a critical task for policymakers in postcolonial societies, who have not only had to consider educational factors but have also been confronted with a combination of socio-political, economic, and practical constraints. What is widely debated is the use of English as a favoured MOI in primary and post-primary education in many post-colonial countries. This choice of MOI is not only educationally inefficient where the English language is poorly understood, and hence socially and economically costly (Williams & Cooke, 2002), but also inequitable in that it privileges the relatively well-off urban-based elite and further marginalises the rural poor (Ferguson, 2006). However, to compete in the field

of knowledge within the globalised world, state-nations in the outer and the expanding circles have embedded English into the national education curriculum to empower the future generations to be bilingual or multilingual while maintaining their national identity. Moreover, there is much work to be done in language planning where the policymakers, teachers, students, parents must rethink their previous perspectives on the status of Bengali itself and the new possibilities and outcomes for the teaching and learning of English as an additional language.

As Bangladesh recently celebrated the 50[th] anniversary of its independence in 2021, it is more pertinent now than ever for policymakers to consider EMI as a mechanism for internationalising education, creating opportunities for students to join a global academic and business community while increasing international mobility, ensuring that the students are ready to compete in the global market. While the nation should open its doors to multiculturism, the nation now must take up the mammoth task of upskilling its large population of the workforce, 'opening up possibilities for students to work and study abroad as well as spreading the country's own culture throughout the world' (Dearden, 2015). Thus, it is quintessential to have an explicit language-in-education policy in place aimed at the internationalisation of secondary and tertiary education while upholding mother-tongue teaching in Bengali with student proficiency in English. Having had acknowledged the perceived benefits of using mother-tongue as MOI at the primary level, fine-tuning MOI policy for

secondary schools (Chan, 2013) will enhance students' exposure to English and its parallel use towards a swift transition to EMI in HE.

Following the implementation of institutionalised LPPs at the micro-level (please refer to Figure 2.3), it is crucial to define a monitoring process involving clear responsibilities of faculty as well as staff, through an elaborate cycle of systematic evaluation, with the development of necessary implementation measures communicated clearly to all members of the HEI. However, the development and implementation of LPPs at the meso level present a range of strategic challenges to universities where it is essential to involve all the key stakeholders, from higher management, linguistics departments, language centres, admissions office as well as the office of international students and scholars, in the decision-making process (Kortmann, 2019). While language planning requires a thorough analysis of the sociolinguistic and educational context of the community, it is imperative to mobilise a wide range of stakeholders, including teachers, language specialists, government and non-governmental bodies, parents, and representatives from the elite societies of the community. Language-in-education policy, in contrast, needs to be developed and implemented in line with the goals of the education system, supporting a nation to reach its education goals in terms of learning outcomes, access and equity, and language proficiency (Ball, 2011).

6.5 EMI, linguistic capital and Bangladesh's knowledge-economy initiatives

The underlying belief expressed by the students and teachers in the context of this current study is the domination of English as an inherently international language in today's globalised world. English as a global language has permeated into different societies through music, advertising, broadcasting, technology and above all, education. The most globally mediated language is indeed English and its influence is undeniably vast and complex (Nelson & Kern, 2012) from global business, industry, technology, banking to education. Furthermore, the status of lingua franca has constructed its stature in the global knowledge economy. It is utilised as a gatekeeper in education which is arguably the most critical element in building any nation. To that end, the National Education Policy 2010 identified English education as the tool to create a knowledge-based, digital society. Embracing the emergence of global English in education, the policy explicitly acknowledged the importance of the language and emphasised that,

> Appropriate steps will be taken from the very beginning to ensure
> English Writing and Speaking skills and that will be continued and
> emphasized in the forthcoming classes as per needs

Nonetheless, the MOI at the secondary level has been stipulated to be Bengali, with the possibility of adopting EMI 'as per the competence of any

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educational institution'. In contrast, English has been stipulated to be the MOI in the HE level besides Bengali.

While prior studies have explored the link between language use and the economic status during the last decade (Chakraborty & Bakshi, 2016; Graddol, 2010; Harbert & McConnell-Ginet, 2009), earlier evidence suggests the symbolic functions that English has for people in the context of their future aspirations (Hornberger, 2002; Tembe & Norton, 2011; Vavrus, 2002). Given that the academic success depends to a large extent on students' proficiency of the language of instruction, adopting widespread EMI, particularly in higher secondary level and predominantly in HE, could be a trailblazing move to democratise and bring in greater socioeconomic equity by creating equal opportunities for the marginalised students in Bangladesh (Ahsan et al., 2013).

Owing to the rise of internetization (Pesando et al., 2021), the contemporary face of globalisation that embraces the empowerment of internet access over the last two decades, the domination of English has only increased more with significant growth in numerous online learning platforms with leading universities increasingly democratising learning by making courses globally accessible online, more pertinent than ever since the outbreak of a global pandemic, COVID-19. Likewise, this information and communication technology revolution has led to a surge in demand for more highly skilled workers from developing countries through highly skilled migrant programmes as a solution to the declining and ageing population. Moreover, a shift towards

global business process outsourcing, which was mainly initiated by the American multinationals due to cost advantages, has led to substantial local job opportunities, mainly in Asia. Reshaping business and economics over a decade now, companies have embraced the practices of offshoring to break up their service functions and redistribute their businesses and jobs to offshore overseas locations like India, China, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Russia and Brazil (Khan & Islam, 2006; Presbitero, 2017).

Furthermore, interestingly, English language proficiency, particularly speech fluency with flexed accents, has been found to be significant in call centre performance, especially when most of the clientele are from English-speaking countries (Friginal, 2009). Given the English language skills of the workforce (Oshri et al., 2011) that form one of the key components under the 'People skills and availability' category (please see Figure 6.4), South Asian nations like India hold the first spot while Bangladesh takes 33rd place. However, countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines and Thailand from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) made it to the top 10 in the 2021 Global Services Location Index (AT Kearney, 2021), owing to the regional status of ELF as the principle language of trade, commerce and tourism. In the light of this discussion, it is quintessential to revisit language-in-education policies to respond to the increasing dominance of English and enhance the quality of Bangladesh's HE to ensure greater cross-border mobility of human capital.

GSLI 1–60

Country	Financial attractiveness	People skills and availability	Business environment	Digital resonance	Total
India	2.83	2.18	1.17	0.91	7.09
China	1.99	2.30	1.47	1.04	6.80
Malaysia	2.49	1.26	1.64	0.83	6.22
Indonesia	2.78	1.26	1.34	0.83	6.21
Brazil	2.37	1.69	1.32	0.67	6.05
Vietnam	2.77	1.20	1.40	0.68	6.05
United States	0.40	2.39	2.03	1.15	5.97
United Kingdom	0.85	1.93	2.08	1.11	5.97
Philippines	2.82	1.32	1.15	0.67	5.96
Thailand	2.46	1.24	1.52	0.69	5.91
Mexico	2.33	1.39	1.43	0.67	5.82
Estonia	2.04	0.83	1.95	0.91	5.73
Colombia	2.42	1.18	1.42	0.64	5.66
Poland	2.15	1.18	1.58	0.72	5.63
Egypt	2.75	1.05	1.15	0.67	5.62
Germany	0.79	1.85	1.91	1.04	5.59
Bulgaria	2.52	0.77	1.64	0.66	5.59
Portugal	1.83	1.23	1.79	0.74	5.59
Georgia	2.77	0.66	1.56	0.58	5.57
Latvia	2.34	0.80	1.72	0.69	5.55
Russia	2.26	1.24	1.43	0.69	5.52
Japan	0.74	1.91	1.97	0.90	5.52
Sri Lanka	2.99	0.86	1.14	0.53	5.52
Chile	2.03	1.15	1.70	0.62	5.50
UAE	1.86	0.83	1.92	0.86	5.47
Turkey	2.07	1.41	1.32	0.66	5.46
Mauritius	2.10	0.87	1.73	0.75	5.45
Spain	1.13	1.57	1.83	0.88	5.41
France	0.65	1.82	1.95	0.99	5.41
Lithuania	2.23	0.77	1.70	0.71	5.41
Pakistan	2.90	1.09	0.83	0.55	5.37
Romania	2.27	0.97	1.52	0.60	5.36
Bangladesh	2.84	1.04	0.96	0.49	5.33
Czech Republic	1.91	0.99	1.75	0.66	5.31
Kenya	2.46	0.84	1.29	0.72	5.31
Peru	2.48	1.04	1.33	0.46	5.31
Hungary	2.14	0.94	1.54	0.68	5.30
Singapore	0.55	1.42	2.22	1.10	5.29
Kazakhstan	2.70	0.65	1.36	0.59	5.30
Morocco	2.50	0.81	1.45	0.52	5.28
South Korea	0.90	1.54	1.86	0.94	5.24
Ukraine	2.65	0.87	1.08	0.64	5.24
Ghana	2.64	0.75	1.23	0.57	5.19
Slovakia	2.02	0.82	1.67	0.66	5.17
Argentina	2.17	1.25	1.20	0.53	5.15
Canada	0.51	1.70	1.90	0.99	5.10
Netherlands	0.38	1.54	2.11	1.02	5.05
Uruguay	1.86	0.75	1.65	0.71	4.97
Costa Rica	1.99	0.82	1.61	0.56	4.98
Sweden	0.69	1.11	1.95	1.11	4.86
Ireland	0.48	1.42	1.98	0.97	4.85
New Zealand	0.95	0.95	2.05	0.77	4.72
Israel	0.73	1.19	1.71	1.06	4.69
Panama	2.12	0.66	1.38	0.49	4.65
Trinidad and Tobago	1.98	0.82	1.41	0.42	4.63
Paraguay	2.32	0.68	1.17	0.46	4.63
South Africa	1.71	0.86	1.42	0.61	4.60
Finland	0.61	1.03	1.88	1.03	4.55
Australia	0.27	1.36	1.97	0.91	4.51
Denmark	0.51	1.00	1.92	0.96	4.39

Legend: Financial attractiveness; People skills and availability; Business environment; Digital resonance

Source: Kearney analysis

Figure 6.4: 2021 Global Services Location Index (GSLI)

It is also essential to highlight Bangladesh as the second Southeast Asian country, after India, to be the primary origin of international migrants (see Figure 6.5), with 7.8 million Bangladeshi migrants living abroad as of 2019 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2019). Global migration reached unprecedented levels in human history in the twenty-first century, primarily for work besides being driven away due to conflict, violence

and climate change, 3.5% of the world's population having migrated internationally, 74% of whom are of working age, between 20 to 64 years. Although over 2.2 million young adults join the job market in Bangladesh each year (International Organization for Migration, 2017), the domestic labour market cannot provide employment to all of these individuals. Hence, it is imperative to create a conducive environment through investments in human capital and infrastructure to help attract activities of outsourced firms from developed countries.

Source: UN DESA, 2019a (accessed 18 September 2019).
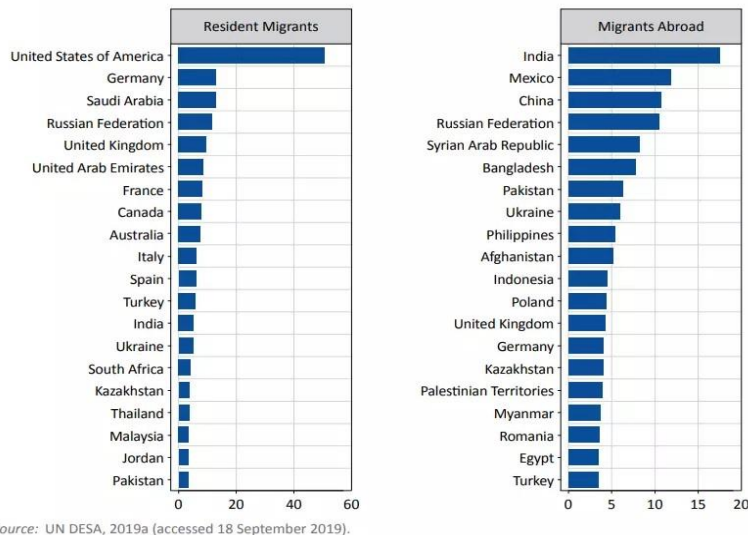
Figure 6.5: Top 20 origins (right) and destinations (left) of international migrants in 2019 (in millions)

Owing to climate change, demographics, instability, growing inequalities and aspirations for a better life and unmet needs in the labour market, many migrate internationally to secure employment and send remittances home,

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which are used to repay loans and support migrant families. These remittances are an important part of the Bangladeshi economy and make up an equivalent of 5.4 percent of the national gross domestic product. However, only 2 percent of migrants are considered 'professional', and 48 percent are deemed low-skilled who work in hazardous jobs in countries of destination (BMET, 2019; International Organization for Migration, 2017). Owing to the gap between the theoretical knowledge and the practical experiences of the workplace, Bangladeshi industrial workers refrained from participating more fully in the fiercely competitive global job market.

However, as Bangladesh avails of its large share of the working-age population owing to the concept of demographic dividend, the nation is projected to harness a more favourable demographic window of opportunity until 2051 (El-Saharty et al., 2014). Therefore, appropriate education and explicit language policies must be formulated pertaining to quality education for the nation to reap economic benefits by utilising such an extremely large proportion of human capital driving economic growth. If explicit policies are not formulated and implemented, this demographic dividend might be a cost leading to unemployment and an unbearable strain on education and prosperity (Matin, 2012).

As English gains global importance, English language education could be seen to constitute the Bourdieusian concept of a linguistic market as an 'extension to the idea of economic markets' (Fowler, 1997, p. 28), granting

individuals a more robust social means of identity-formation. This likelihood of upward mobility to access the economic and cultural capital has somewhat been made available through the 'linguistic appropriation' of English (Canagarajah, 2000, p. 128). Positioning itself in disciplines such as science, engineering, medicine and management that draw upon global best practices and scholarship, EMI thus plays a definitive role in the knowledge construction and global dissemination of research in these fields while gradually becoming embedded into the curriculum, both in public and private HEIs, besides classroom instruction and assessment.

Clearly, human capital has been considered to be based not only on formal education and labour force participation but also on cognitive functioning and skills that rest on educational attainment. Improving education can affect economic growth as a higher-skilled labour force can directly translate into higher productivity and into better and faster take-up of new technologies (Crespo Cuaresma et al., 2014). Without question, to fulfil the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Bangladesh must rethink its HE and make inroads into enacting clear, explicit language and education policy to 'leave no one behind'.

6.6 Chapter Summary

Using translanguaging and academic literacy as a theoretical framework, this research sought to provide deep insights into the perceptions and lived experiences of students and teachers with regard to the utilisation of EMI in a

private HEI in Bangladesh. Using interviews, observations, and document review, an analysis of the data revealed several significant findings. Overall, the participants were satisfied with the choice of their respective EMI major programmes. However, participants experienced feelings of frustration and anxiety arising from a steep learning curve due to their insufficient language proficiency, which negatively affected their academic success. Participants also sought more language support through translanguaging with regards to speaking alongside reading and writing skills besides technical vocabulary of academic subjects, enabling improved attrition rates. The findings of the study also suggested how English is used in the construction of social identities and its role in the promotion of bilingual ideologies to avert exclusion and inequality, leading to a sense of feeling othered. Finally, the study contributes to the discourse around conceptualising EMI in terms of equity while advocating explicit and transparent language-in-education policies to foster a global knowledge society.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and recommendations

The current study aims to provide a deep insight into Bangladeshi students' experiences of learning through EMI, their attitude towards EMI and their perception of identity to support and inform the EMI phenomenon in Bangladesh, an Outer Circle nation. Providing a detailed description of the perceived challenges students faced and their impact on identity construction,

the following section articulates the conclusions drawn and offers recommendations for implementing EMI in line with the HE curriculum besides a language-in-education policy while highlighting the limitations. The findings from this thesis contribute to the existing knowledge base regarding the experiences of L2 students and their teachers and hold the prospect of change while addressing real gaps in qualitative research on EMI and university students' experiences and learning, particularly in South Asia and specifically in Bangladesh. Even though a direct study of these issues has the potential to add some distinctive understanding to the literature, the study builds on the political framing of the knowledge economy and the role that HE, and EMI, plays within this. Even though the domination of EMI is unlikely to be reversed for the foreseeable future (Dearden, 2015), its utility and benefits are not clearly understood by educational stakeholders. Given the lack of solid research evidence, the findings from this research are recommended for practices in EMI in Bangladeshi HE while transmitting their significance to the decision-makers to tackle wicked problems (Rittel & Webber, 1973) related to language planning, policy and practice. Essentially, knowing can be consummated within practice disciplines like teaching, guided by produced knowledge and 'actionability' (Bradbury, 2008), driving actions drawn on the 'primacy of the practical' (Heron, 1996). Besides enabling language policy considerations, the study provides a pathway for future Bangladesh in creating and managing a large, skilled workforce of educated, creative and skilled people towards a knowledge-based economy.

7.1 Limitations

The generalisability of the findings is subject to certain limitations. These include the generalisation of the results, the influence of the researcher in the research process, and the presentation of findings. One of the most significant limitations was that the current study only investigated students' perceptions of one Bangladeshi private university that adopted EMI. Unlike large-scale nomothetic quantitative studies that attempt to establish law-like findings that hold relevance irrespective of time or place, this small-scale ideographic research, confined in a particular context, is much more concerned with the depth and intensity of findings rather than breadth (Gray, 2014, p. 23). Since the research participants (n=24) were chosen from one private university and none from any public university in Bangladesh, it does not allow broad generalisations about language-in-education policy in a larger population. It is also not possible to claim anything in more definitive terms about Bangladeshi students' experiences of learning through EMI since a relatively small sample was chosen for the study. The key was not to generalise findings to a broader population but rather to understand L2 students' shared perceptions while looking for information that elucidates their experiences and significant common patterns to aid the reproducibility of the study in other EMI contexts. Therefore, connections can be made to other EMI contexts through similarities in the research contexts, participants and factors that influence students' attitudes and highlight their learning experiences. Overall, further studies in

different EMI contexts are needed to test the validity of the findings in this study.

A further limitation is the inherent power imbalance between the researcher as a teacher, owing to the 'insider/outsider' dilemma (Hornberger, 1994a), and students respondents, as discussed previously (p. 84). While students taught by the researcher were excluded from the study, the researcher's familiarity with the setting and research context ensured that she was readily accepted as one of their own than an unknown researcher may have been. Students were also given the option to withdraw from the study at any point while maintaining anonymity and were at liberty to express themselves freely.

While the single setting and relatively small number of participants limits the generalisability of the findings, this study triangulated multiple data sources through interviews, observations, and document review to gain a detailed, in-depth description of students' perceptions of learning through EMI. In studying these narratives provided by the students and their experiences of the conditions enabling the acquisition of English in an HEI, the current study can be of importance in laying the foundations for language-in-education policy development while being transferable to other EMI contexts, particularly across Asia. However, ethnographic research would draw more data on students' learning experiences and the shaping of their identity, drawn using research tools such as diary entries and focus group discussions besides multiple interview sessions.

7.2 Contributions of the study to the field of EMI and applied linguistics

The study contributes to the growing field of EMI by documenting and analysing Bangladeshi HE students' EMI learning experiences to situate globally trending EMI studies in Bangladesh. The present study also contributes to knowledge, specifically to the field of EAP/ESP and language education, as it explored the experiences and perceptions of HE students learning through the medium of English and its links with negotiating identities triggered by the realities of globalisation and internetization. Moreover, this study draws on a bricolage approach, which includes translanguaging, academic literacy practices and socio-cultural theory, as an overarching framework of reference to help to illuminate, conceptualise and understand students' narratives of identity formation and learning experiences through the medium of English in HE in Bangladesh.

The current study also draws on the sociology of language education by examining social variables that may affect students' academic experiences and outcomes using EMI. The study attempts to bridge an epistemological gap by taking a sociocultural approach in capturing EAL/ESL students' 'narrative of the self' (Giddens, 1991, p. 244) through reflections of their reconstituted interactions with learning through EMI in Bangladeshi HEI. As such, the study also examines the nature of macro language policy as stated in the Constitution of Bangladesh. It investigates how EMI has been negotiated at the meso (HEIs) level as a strategy for increasing employability prospects by

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improving graduates' English whilst arguing towards the implementation of EMI at all levels of education, including schools, colleges, and universities as a language-planning tool to promote Bangladeshi students' command over English.

In brief, the relevance of this research transcends the fields of EMI, EAP/ESP and applied linguistics, aiming to add value while being beneficial to academics, practitioners and policymakers in the design and delivery of EMI courses and EAP/ESP courses. Besides making a vital contribution to the literature on teaching and learning in HE, the thesis would, more specifically, enable policymakers to reflect upon their language-in-education planning policies, thereby seeking to adopt EMI in HE while addressing the economic imperatives of globalisation. Finally, using conclusions drawn from the data, this study would help address research gaps in the consequences or outcomes of EMI by providing valuable insight into its effects both on the learning of academic subjects and on the acquisition of English proficiency.

7.3 Recommendations

Universities are at the forefront of research and innovation, playing an unparalleled and vital role in educating the next generation of change leaders, prepared to realise a more sustainable future, bridging the gap between global initiatives and local actions in a 'glonacal' (Marginson & Rhoades, 2002, p. 363) context. They today hold greater responsibility for preparing students for the workplace and must address the quality of education offered and its

relevance to the fluidity of 21st-century work. As the world experiences the recent Industry 4.0 revolution, leading industries towards greater flexibility, efficiency, customisation besides incorporating automation, mechanisation and digitalisation in product/service development, its bearing on workforce education, training and ensuing employability is expected to be quite significant. Driving the monumental shift towards an era of Education 4.0, graduates will be required to possess ICT knowledge, understand organisational functions and processes, and interact and evolve with modern interfaces of technology and innovations to be employable across borders. Employability is becoming a key yardstick to assess how successful HEIs are at providing that preparation. And graduate outcomes are as significant as academic excellence, if not more. In view of this, skills and education are immediate concerns for Bangladesh because the imperatives of economic diversification and moving up the value chain will require quality higher education and more and different skillsets besides the internalisation of English as a second/additional language as Bangladesh aims to materialise its Vision 2041 of building the nation (Asian Development Bank, 2016).

Consequently, Bangladesh should rethink its ideological interpretation that tends to equate the nation and national identity with one language - Bengali as the construct of 'mother tongue' (Wiley, 2014), shaping an 'imagined community' of speakers of a common language in a geographical space where the endonym Bangla (Bengali) and the geographic territory of Bangladesh are united as one (Anderson, 1991). While embracing English as

the language of instruction and curriculum, which aligns with established world standards of teaching and assessment, students can contribute to research, education, and the national economy.

English's prominence in language planning and policies (LPP) across various nation-states is due to the enormous prestige of the instrumental and intrinsic value, an inevitable reality most nations must come to terms with (Chang, 2006). In the current world, where more than 70% of English speakers are non-native speakers (Statista, 2021), it is no longer possible to be 'divorced from the reality of how the majority of the world's multilingual populations both use and develop various bundles of communicative resources which they then use successfully in their everyday lives' (Leung & Valdés, 2019). Besides, as nations worldwide move towards using a common linguistic currency of English in a ceaselessly globalising market economy, its widespread use comes from the shared assumption that it can serve both as the measure and means of communicative exchange across cultures. Thus, English can impose itself as the necessary language of diplomacy, international commerce, tourism, scholarship and many other transactions, following its geopolitical reach in the world today.

Given the expanding scale of EMI education globally, Bangladeshi HEIs need to play a pivotal role in facilitating EMI teaching and teacher development besides the development, administration and reformation of EMI curriculums. As a measure for quality assurance and enhancement and as an essential

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strategic instrument in institutional internationalisation, it is equally crucial for each Bangladeshi HEI to design and initiate the implementation of explicit and coherent institutional language policies to foster EMI. In the process of making HEIs more international, language policies are officially developed as 'statements of goals and means for achieving them that constitute guidelines or rules shaping language structure, language use, and language acquisition within educational institutions' (Tollefson, 2008, p. 3). This process incorporates a range of strategic actions mediated by HEIs to specify the level of linguistic competence students, academics and administrative staff should attain to study or work at any university besides providing ESL study programmes aimed at addressing the language needs of students. Such micro-level LPPs ought to be clearly articulated in institutional strategic documents besides obligatory allocation of credits for English language learning to support learning in non-linguistic academic subjects like mathematics, biology, engineering, physics, or history.

Following the suit of various Asian states such as Japan, Malaysia, and Singapore, Bangladesh should develop itself into regional hubs of HE by capturing the opportunities to turn HE into a service industry (Mok, 2007; Morshidi, 2006). Building from the association to Bangladeshi identity, the nation should commit to promoting cross-cultural understanding and move towards developing alternative academic paradigms through a greater regional collaboration of cross-national policy learning both in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region and South Asian Association for

Regional Cooperation (SAARC). To this point, the lingua franca role of English, owing to its status as the official language of APEC, ASEAN or SAARC, has important implications for state language policy and language education as the first language can pose significant challenges in achieving aspired regional cooperation. In support of these future collaborative initiatives for strengthening human resources development, Bangladesh should align with the needs of societies and economies and enhance individual competencies to facilitate the mobility of skilled labour and professionals across the Asia-Pacific region.

Standing at the threshold of reforms by choosing to begin with an overhaul of Bangladesh's HE sectors with the recent implementation of the quality assurance policy, it is pivotal for the nation to gain the international community's confidence through graduate mobility and transnational accreditation. Supplementary to key indicators of teaching, research and knowledge transfer, global universities continue to be evaluated against performance indicators like having an international outlook owing to a particular proportion of international students, faculty, staff besides greater international research collaboration. Aside from world-class teaching and research, two of the notable factors measuring the internationalisation of HEIs are the global mobility of students and staff and the increased proportion of courses and programmes offered in an international language like English other than Bengali. As internationalisation is closely tied to English medium instruction (EMI), where the top-ranked universities belong to nations

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characteristically situated in the inner circle of Kachru's (1985) model of World

Englishes (please refer to Figure 2.1), it provides a utilitarian terrain where

universities can compete and improve their standing in university rankings at a

relatively cost-effective method (Piller & Cho, 2013).

Thus, following 'glonacal' trends (Marginson & Rhoades, 2002), Bangladeshi

HEIs should seek international recognition rather than national and local

accreditations to enhance academic competitiveness globally (Deem et al.,

2008), gaining a reputation to ensure international enrolment (Hou et al., 2014)

just as in East Asian nations such as Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and

Hong Kong. To this end, the Bangladesh Accreditation Council, at its

inception, should also take the initiative for international recognition of its

accreditation process through networking and collaboration with the regional

and globally credible quality assurance and accreditation agencies. The

council will thus be able to provide the quality mark as a guarantee of

standards for its HE sector, comparable at a global level while promoting

increased cross-border mobility of students as well as academic staff and

professionals (OECD, 2005). Moving towards internalisation, Bangladeshi

HEIs will experience a greater mobility of students, creating networks,

opportunities for exchange and partnership in Asia and beyond.

7.4 Suggestions for further research

Nevertheless, this study can indicate possibilities for further investigation at

three levels related to language teaching, policymaking, and the

internationalisation of HE. The effectiveness and possible challenges of EMI programmes offered by Bangladeshi HEIs should also be investigated with many participants in the contexts of state-owned universities. Further detailed research can also shed light on lecturers' perceptions of EMI, and the coping strategies they use to face challenges while teaching course contents in English should be considered. Further research is required to establish whether academic staff's language challenges are critical in implementing EMI in Bangladesh's HE. It would also be useful to conduct a study over a more extended period of time to investigate how students use English in the distant future and how their attitudes change.

7.5 Conclusion

This research addresses a growing concern of ESL practitioners and educators in Bangladesh that HE students do not have the required linguistic dexterity, an integral component of communication, creative and analytical, digital, innovative and organisational skills essential for survival in the dynamic workplace today. It stands to reason that language is the critical element in these skills that employers look for. As English increasingly becomes the medium and vehicle for delivery across nation-states worldwide, this study provides a vital contribution to the literature on students' perceptions of EMI, particularly in South Asia and specifically in Bangladesh. Viewing the concept of translanguaging in measures of academic literacy within a Bourdieusian construct of linguistic capital, this study took a critical stance in examining how

Bangladeshi university students can be better supported in teaching and learning through EMI. By allowing Bangladeshi ESL students to talk about their own experiences, particularly in adapting to writing, reading, listening and speaking practices in HE, this paper revisited the crucial constituents of academic literacy, including critical thinking, negotiation and communication of ideas, which can further support the practitioners in developing their teaching practices. By identifying factors that directly and indirectly affect students' learning behaviours through EMI besides describing the different ways students experience or understand the relationship of language support and academic literacy (Lea & Street, 1998), it could be vital for the development of an educational curriculum that acculturates students in relation to institutional practices, power relations and identities.

Since, globalisation forces have accelerated the pace of internationalisation of higher education, contemporary universities are increasingly influenced by diversification, expansion, privatisation, marketisation, and other trends (Mok, 2007). While universities worldwide increasingly adopt the policy of using EMI alongside their own national language to enhance their competitiveness in research and teaching as part of their internationalisation endeavours, English is now perceived as being indispensable for the development of an emerging nation like Bangladesh.

With Vision 2041 looming ahead, as Bangladesh is looking to diversify and modernise its economy, better education and quality in the workforce are

crucial. Moreover, with large numbers of young people entering the job market in Bangladesh, education is one of the most significant enablers and essential contributing factors to inclusion, benefits and success in life. A paradigm shift towards inclusive HE means that all students see themselves and their cultural and social backgrounds represented. While investing in social cohesion, this diversity should be seen as a richness, not as a threat to nationalism and culture, because everybody has a stake in the community as a whole. As societies today can no longer operate in closed spaces within a monolingual paradigm, it is of paramount importance to have a 'resistance perspective', aptly conceived by Canagarajah (1999), and see the colonial past as a stepping-stone in which,

> post-colonial communities may find ways to negotiate, alter, and oppose political structures and reconstruct their languages, cultures and identities to their advantage...The intention is not to reject English but reconstitute it in more inclusive, ethical and democratic terms…(p. 2)

Since HE is seen as an indispensable catalyst in accelerating economic prosperity and energising social cohesion to steer the nation forward, the Bangladeshi government should plan its language policies to preserve its linguistic identity while investing more heavily in EMI implementation programmes to join the global HE community. As Bangladesh celebrated the 50th anniversary of its independence, it is steadfast in sustaining its economic growth by rebuilding a knowledge-based economy to create more and better

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jobs by improving the quality of its HE through transparent quality assurance systems that promote employability and a student-centred learning environment.

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Appendix One: Institutional Ethics Approval

Educational Research | Lancaster University

31ˢᵗ May 2019

Dear Naureen Rahnuma,

Thank you for submitting your ethics application and additional information for *'Students' experiences of learning through the medium of English'*. The information you provided has been reviewed by Dr Jo Warin and I can confirm that approval has been granted for this project.

As principal investigator your responsibilities include:

- ensuring that (where applicable) all the necessary legal and regulatory requirements in order to conduct the research are met, and the necessary licenses and approvals have been obtained;
- reporting any ethics-related issues that occur during the course of the research or arising from the research (e.g. unforeseen ethical issues, complaints about the conduct of the research, adverse reactions such as extreme distress) to the Research Ethics Officer (Dr Murat Oztok or Dr Natasa Lackovic).
- submitting details of proposed substantive amendments to the protocol to Dr Jo Warin (spvr) for approval.

Please do not hesitate to contact your supervisor if you require further information about this.

Kind regards,

Alison Sedgwick

Programme Administrator
Doctoral Programme in Educational Research

Appendix Two: Institutional Ethics Approval

Department of Educational Research
County South, Lancaster University, LA1 4YD, UK
Tel: +44 (0) 1524 592685

Educational Research | Lancaster University

16 June 2019

Vice Chancellor

PERMISSION REQUEST FOR RESEARCH

I am writing in relation to my doctoral studies, supervised by Professor Jo Warin, within the Department of Educational Research at University of Lancaster, UK. I would like to seek permission to recruit current post and undergraduate students besides academic staff to investigate their perspective on the challenges of teaching and learning through English as medium of instruction (EMI).

The project involves a detailed investigation of students' experiences of learning through EMI, their perceptions of themselves, their perceptions of second language teachers, assessment practices, syllabus, available learning resources as well as their interactions with teachers and peers. The study will draw on observations, analyses of publicly available documents besides the analysis of interview accounts of a number of 25-30 students randomly selected from different concentrations at both graduate and undergraduate level. Several faculty members (10 - 15) will also be interviewed for insights into their perception of teaching through EMI, their views on the existing English as second language foundation programme, its syllabus, class size, assessment criteria, group activities and their relations with students of different genders and educational background.

The participation in my research is completely voluntary – respondents will have the choice to participate or to decline to partake in the study.

Ethical clearance in relation to this research project has already been obtained from the Lancaster University Research Support Office and an Institutional Review Board ethical clearance is being sought from

Please find attached herewith a copy of consent form and participation information sheet to be used in the research process.

If you would like further information about this project, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Please sign below and return to give permission for this research. A copy is attached for your own records

Signed:

Researcher: **Naureen Rahnuma**

2

Appendix Three: Institutional Ethics Approval

4 August 2019
Vice Chancellor

APPROVAL FOR DATA COLLECTION FOR PHD RESEARCH

Dear Sir,

With reference to my previous application (dated 16 June 2019), seeking your permission to begin data collection at _____ as part of my ongoing doctoral research at Lancaster University, UK, I would like to inform you that I have subsequently applied for ____'s Institutional Review Board (IRB) clearance (on June 27, 2019) and have completed the required CITI human subjects online training modules as per requirements.

If approved, may I request you to grant me permission so that I can start collecting data forthwith.

Please find attached herewith a copy of the CITI human subjects research completion report besides other relevant documents to be used in the research project.

Thank you for your kind consideration and support.

Yours sincerely,

Naureen Rahnuma 4/8/19

Email: n.rahnuma@lancaster.ac.uk

naureen@____.edu.bd

Mobile:

Appendix Four: Non-participant observation field notes

Students' learning experiences through EMI – non- participant observation field notes

Date: 29 January 2020 Time of observation: 11:00- 12:30 pm	Place: 7015
Field/situation/class observed: Class	

Persons involved (tick appropriate and specify if applicable):	Number:
√ Students	28
√ Teacher	1
☐ Administrative staff	
☐ Academic Administrator (e.g. HOD, Dean)	

Language of classroom instruction/in official communication: *English and periodic Bengali*

Content subject is delivered in English/Bengali or a mix of both:

Even though the lectures were presented in English, the teacher translated key concepts in Bengali.

Student discussion/participation in class (inviting questions from students, use of humour, inviting student experiences, helping a student respond, acceptance of different views:

Students seemed disinterested as the teacher read out from the slides in English but frequently explained certan terms in Bengali. Only when the teacher spoke in Bengali, did the students participate. Poor participation due to lack of vocabulary and insufficent language proficiency. Some students requested, in Bengali, for some technical terms to be explained.

Instructional strategies (clear direction, explantions, eliciting, variety of learning styles, variety of activities, appropriate level of challenge, scaffolding techniques for clarification):

No learning activities with regards to the technical concept being explained, only lecture-based

Student interaction in English and Bengali (in out-of-classroom settings such as cafeteria, elevators, department office,academic meetings, etc.)

Initial reflections:

The teacher focused on a topic and didn't refer back to other related concepts. Made an effort to make it simplified for students' understanding. Defined technical terms. Could have presented more examples, in mind-maps perhaps to ensure student understanding.

Observation memo:

Appendix Five: Participant Information Sheet

Department of Educational Research
County South, Lancaster University, LA1 4YD, UK
Tel: +44 (0) 1524 592685

EDUCATIONAL Research | Lancaster University

Participant Information Sheet

Research Project: Students' experiences of learning through the medium of English

Researcher: Naureen Rahnuma
> Email: *n.rahnuma@lancaster.ac.uk*

Supervisor: Dr. Jo Warin
> Educational Research Department, County South, Lancaster University, LA1 4YD, UK
> Email: *j.warin@lancaster.ac.uk*

Date:_____

Dear _____,

I would like to invite you to take part in my PhD research project in the Higher Education Research programme in the Department of Educational Research at Lancaster University, UK.

Before you decide if you wish to take part you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Talk to others about the study if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

I would be very grateful if you would agree to take part in this study.

The purpose of the study
The aim of this study is to understand the ways students conceptualize and experience learning at IUB through English as the medium of instruction.

Why have I been invited?
You have been invited because of your role as an important stakeholder in IUB.

Do I have to take part?
No, your participation is entirely voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, then please let me know. If you wish to be interviewed, let me know if you prefer face-to-face or online interview. If you wish to be interviewed but prefer not to be video recorded, you may choose to keep your camera/video switched off. If you change your mind, you are free to withdraw at any time during your participation in this study. Any ideas or information (=data) you provide will be removed consequently. However, it is difficult and often impossible to take out data from one specific participant when this has already been anonymised or pooled together with other people's data. Therefore, you can only withdraw up to 4 weeks after taking part in the study.

What would taking part involve for me?
- The interview conducted face-to-face or remotely, will be recorded by an audio/video recording device.
- The interview will last from 30 minutes to an hour.
- As a participant, you will have the right of access to personal data about yourself only.
- The researcher will use a special code at the time of the interview so that no names or other identifying information exist in the researcher's files.

What will I have to do?
Signing of consent form, being present at the session that will last between 30- 60 minutes.

What will happen to the data?
'Data' here means the researcher's notes, audio and video recordings and any email exchanges we may have had. The data may be securely stored for ten years after the successful completion of the PhD *Viva* as per Lancaster University requirements, and after that any personal data will be destroyed. Audio and video recordings will be stored on my password-protected personal laptop. Identifiable data (including video and audio recordings) on my personal laptop will be encrypted. With devices such as portable recorders where this is not possible identifiable data will be deleted as quickly as possible. In the mean time I will ensure the portable device will be kept safely until the data is deleted.
You can request to view the field notes or transcription after the interview and any parts you are unhappy with will be deleted or disregarded from the data. Data may be used in the reporting of the research (in the thesis and then potentially in journal articles or conference presentations). Please note that if your data is used, it will not identify you in any way or means. You have the right to request this data to be destroyed within a period of 4 weeks from your interview. If used, your data will have full protection via the UK Data Protection Act. Data will only be accessed by myself and my supervisor.

How will my identity be protected?
A unique code will be given to protect your identity in the research report and any identifying information about you will be removed from the report. All pseudonyms will be securely stored and kept by myself.

Who to contact for further information or with <u>any</u> concerns

If you would like further information on this project, the programme within which the research is being conducted or have any concerns about the project, participation or my conduct as a researcher, please contact:
Professor Paul Ashwin – Head of Department
Email: p.ashwin@Lancaster.ac.uk

Thank you for reading this information sheet.

Naureen

Naureen Rahnuma

Appendix Six: Consent Form

Department of Educational Research
County South, Lancaster University, LA1 4YD, UK
Tel: +44 (0) 1524 592685

Educational Research | Lancaster University

CONSENT FORM

Project Title: Students' experiences of learning through the medium of English
Name of Researcher: Naureen Rahnuma
Email: n.rahnuma@lancaster.ac.uk

Please tick each box.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily	☐
2. I understand that my participation(face-to-face/online) is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time during my participation in this study and within 4 weeks after I took part in the study, without giving any reason. If I withdraw within 4 weeks of taking part in the interview, my data will be removed.	☐
3. I understand that any information given by me may be used in future reports, academic articles, publications or presentations by the researcher but my personal information will not be included and I will not be identifiable.	☐
4. I understand that my name/my institution's name will not appear in any reports, articles or presentation without my consent.	☐
5. I understand that my interview will be audio/video recorded and transcribed and that data will be protected on encrypted devices and kept secure.	☐
6. I understand that data will be kept according to University guidelines for a minimum of 10 years after the end of the study.	☐
7. I agree to take part in the above study.	☐

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   Date   Signature

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

Signature of Researcher: *Naureen*   **Date** _____ Day/month/year

One copy of this form will be given to the participant and the original kept in the files of the researcher.

Appendix Seven: Pilot Interview Guides

Students' Interview guide
1.How is your experience of learning at your university through the medium of English?
2.What challenges do you find while learning about various topics through the medium of English?
3.What contributed most significantly to your learning in the university?
4.How do you think the English language courses were helpful in your studies in general?
5.How do you think that the methods your teachers use are appropriate to teaching different courses at your HEI?
6.In what ways do assessment practices, undertaken through English, hinder or help your learning?
7.What are your impressions about the learning resources in the institutions that promote learning in English?
8.How do you think your economic situation influence your English language learning in the past? Does it have any influence in your learning experience at the university?
9.How do you think your family educational background influence your learning experience in past? And in university?
10.What do you think are the advantages of studying in an English medium university?

Teachers' opinion of students' learning experience in English

1. Do you find the teaching language different than teaching of other subjects? How?
2. Why does the university have this assumption that they need remedial and compulsory courses to help students with English?
3. Do you have any alternative solution? How do you think the students could be helped with their deficiency in language?
4. What is the ultimate goal of the course that you are teaching now? What do you think is the goal of students in that course?
5. What purpose do you think the English as second language (ESL) programme serve in the development of students' learning experiences in higher education?
6. What do you think about the assessment criteria? How can it more tailored to the students' needs and deficiencies?
7. How do you define the size of your class? What affects do you think it might have on students learning practices?
8.What is your impression of the learning resources for students in this university? How are these learning resources supportive to your teaching?
9. Do you think that the students from different educational background experience learning in ESL programme differently? If yes, how? And why?
10. What do you think about the rules of teaching, and examination in various programme? What kind of a role does English play amongst such practices?

Appendix Eight: Interview Summary Form

Project: Students' learning experiences through EMI

Researcher: Date of interview:

Interviewee: Time of interview:

Place: Duration:

Where did the interview take place? Was the venue suitable? Does anything

need to be changed for future interviews?

How easy was it to establish rapport? Were there any problems and how can this

be improved for next time?

Did the interview schedule work well? Does it need to be altered or improved?

What were the main themes which arose in the interview? Did any issues arise

which need to be added to the interview schedule for next time?

Is the interviewee willing to be contacted again? Have I promised to send any

information or supply them with the results or a copy of the transcript?

Appendix Nine: Students' Interview Guide

<u>Students' educational and family background</u>

1. Can you tell me about yourself - which year of study are you in and what is your specialization?

2. Tell me about your family, please. How many brothers and sisters do you have? What does your father and mother do?

<u>Students' perception about the UoB</u>

1. Why did you choose UoB?

2. To what extent did UoB fulfill your expectations?

<u>Students' perception and attitude towards the ESL programme</u>

1. What are your views about the English foundation courses being offered at UoB?

2. If you could rank the courses according to their effectiveness, how would you rank them?

3. How does the ESL programme at your university influence your learning practices?

(prompt) How do you prepare for lecture, tests, assignment, homework and any form of assessment?

(prompt) What kind of preparations do you make before you attend lectures?

(prompt) How do handle an interesting topic in classes?

(prompt) How do you feel about doing extra work – studying materials that are recommended by the teachers or just do what have been asked to do?

(prompt) What do you consider to be more important, short –term memorising or long-term understanding of concepts? Why?

<u>Students' perceptions about EMI</u>

1. What challenges do you find while learning about various topics through the medium of English?

2.What contributed most significantly to your learning in the university?

3. How do you think the English language courses were helpful in your studies in general? How do they influence your ways of learning?

Students' learning experiences

1. Explain how does the constant use of English language on campus influence your learning experiences?

2. Explain how does the fact of you have been a student in this university influences your view about yourself?

Students' previous learning experiences

1. How do you think your pre-university learning experience influences your current learning experience?

Students' experiences about teaching, learning and assessment

1.How do you think that the methods your teachers use are appropriate to teaching different courses at your HEI?

(prompt) How do teachers teach in your course? Do they teach for the purpose of assessment or to clarify concepts? Do they encourage discussion?

(*prompt*) Do they start their teaching from the concept you know and build up or they start from concept that you are not familiar with?

(*prompt*) Do they give information that that might be available from a good textbook or they try to go beyond that in their explanation? Could you give an example?

(prompt) Do they encourage you to do more work by yourself and explore other knowledge beyond what has been taught?

(*prompt*) Do you feel they make the course very interesting and make you feel you want to do more work?

2.In what ways do assessment practices, undertaken through English, hinder or help your learning?

Learning resources to aid learning through English

1.What are your impressions about the learning resources (library, English Language Centre, access to computer and internet) in the institutions that promote learning in English? What more help do you think you need?

Experiences of studying in an EMI university

1. What do you think are the advantages of studying in an English medium university?
2. How's your overall experiences of learning at UoB?

Appendix Ten: Teachers' Interview Guide

Participant background information

1. Can you please introduce yourself in a few words?

2. What is your area of specialisation?

3. How long have you been teaching _____ through English?

Challenges of using English-medium instruction (EMI) in teaching

1**.** What challenges and problems do your students usually experience during the delivery of your course?

2. What kind of language problems do your students usually face in the courses you teach?

3. Are they only related to English language or are there other causes for the difficulties? Can you outline some examples of these challenges?

4. How do you deal with your students' difficulties in understanding your subject-related terminologies in English? What do you think causes these challenges?

5. How do you respond to these difficulties related to comprehension of lectures in English?

6. How do you cope with your students' difficulties in giving presentations and expressing their ideas in English?

7. To what extent do you think that teaching ALL courses in English can help your students in dealing with EMI challenges?

Views regarding studying through English

1. What are your views regarding teaching subjects in English to students whose mother tongue is not English?

2. Do the advantages of studying in English justify the effort that must be put into learning and using the language?

3. Do you think that a great deal of students' talent is lost because of learning in a second language?

4. What is your view about the policy of studying at UoB through English?

5. To what extent do you think that the English foundation courses have helped your students in dealing with EMI challenges?

6. To what extent do you think teaching in English influence students' future employability?

Skills/attributes important in succeeding English medium programmes

1. What kind of skills/attributes do you think your students need in order to succeed in programmes taught through the medium of English?

2. What are the skills that your students need to develop so that they can complete their programme successfully in English?

Teaching, learning and assessment

1. How would you define the size of your class? What effects do you think it might have on students learning practices?

2. What is your impression of the learning resources available for students in this university? How are these resources supportive to your teaching?

3. What do you think about the assessment criteria? How can it be more tailored to the students' needs and deficiencies?

4. What impact does the family educational and economic background have on the way students learn?

5. Do you think that the students from different educational and economic background experience learning in ESL programme differently? If yes, how? And why?

Suggestions for dealing with EMI challenges

1. What suggestions would you like to make to help your students overcome their English-related challenges? Do you any comments which you would like to add?