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## INTERNATIONALISATION THROUGH ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION (EMI): PERCEPTION OF EMI PRACTITIONERS<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT:** In this study, we address one aspect of internationalisation in higher education in Serbia through the professional development program of *English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI)*, conducted at the University of Kragujevac. The study aims to investigate the teachers' motivation for the EMI training program, their self-perception of EMI competence, as well as the expectations and challenges of teaching in the EMI context. For this purpose, we used a modified questionnaire, integrating closed-ended and open-ended questions to gather both quantitative and qualitative data through methods of descriptive statistics and content analysis. The research results suggest high motivation and various levels of self-perceived competence regardless of insufficient EMI experience.

**Keywords:** higher education, internationalisation, professional development, English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI), EMI teachers, motivation, self-perception, expectations, challenges.

## ИНТЕРНАЦИОНАЛИЗАЦИЈА КРОЗ ЕНГЛЕСКИ КАО ЈЕЗИК ВИСОКОШКОЛСКЕ НАСТАВЕ (ЕЈВИН): ПЕРЦЕПЦИЈА ЕЈВИН НАСТАВНИКА

**АПСТРАКТ:** Ово истраживање усмерено је на један аспект интернационализације у високошколском образовању у Србији, реализован кроз програм професионалног

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усавршавања за енглески као језик високошколске наставе (ЕЈВИН) на Универзитету у Крагујевцу. Циљ истраживања био је да се испита мотивација наставника за пријављивање на ЕЈВИН програме, њихова самопроцењена компетентност за извођење овакве наставе, као и очекивања и изазови које перципирају у извођењу наставе на енглеском језику. У ту сврху коришћен је модификовани упитник који је обухватао питања затвореног и отвореног типа, са циљем прикупљања квантитативних и квалитативних података. Подаци су анализирани применом дескриптивне статистике и анализе садржаја. Резултати истраживања указују на висок степен мотивације учесника обуке и на варијације у самопроцени компетентности иако постоји недостатак искуства у извођењу наставе на енглеском језику.

*Кључне речи:* високо образовање, интернационализација, професионални развој, енглески као језик високошколске наставе (ЕЈВИН), ЕЈВИН наставници, мотивација, самопроцена компетентности, очекивања, изазови.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the world that has witnessed increased connectivity and vast technological development in the past decade, additionally enforced by the global pandemic, the higher education system has also experienced changes in the direction of supporting this connectivity through the internationalisation process. Higher education (HE) institutions (HEIs) have found internationalisation as a response to many contemporary global challenges and as a fruitful ground for enhancing the HE system. It is important to grasp the scope of the process and to indicate that internationalisation refers to

the international process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society. (De Wit & Hunter, 2015: 3)

Internationalisation in HE has thus become an indispensable aspect of HE policies among the universities worldwide and a priority in HEIs, not only for social, political and economical reasons (Knight, 2004), but also to ensure the adequate training (Deardorff 2012) of 'globally-ready' graduates (Simões and Sangiamchit 2023: 1). These graduates are thus capable of examining local, global and intercultural issues; capable of appreciating different perspectives and worldviews; capable of engaging in effective interactions with individuals from different cultures; and being able to act for collective well-being and sustainable

development<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, the university policies are important official documents that enhance the implementation of the internationalisation strategy. They help us to understand the driving forces that encourage different programs that support the HE development of internationalisation.

Recent research has emphasized diversity in the HE policies and practices that are (non)complementary to the institutional policies (Sahan et al. 2021:28). Serbia is among the countries that support internationalisation, implementing it from the top-down – from the institutional policies about internationalisation to the classroom practices, mentioning English or EMI (*English as a Medium of Instruction*) development as a component of the HEI's internationalisation plan. (Sahan K. et al. 2021:28)

Since the focus of this study is to examine the professional development of the professors at the University of Kragujevac in Serbia, in the domain of EMI practice and internationalisation, we will briefly reflect on the University of Kragujevac's official documents. These documents relate to the Internationalisation strategy<sup>3</sup> of the university and its primary aims for the implementation and action delivery in this area. The Internationalisation strategy document (2020-2027) at the University of Kragujevac covers its main areas: its vision, mission, and the specific goals, defining the specific direction of the institutional development. In the light of the previously addressed scope of internationalisation, reflecting on the advancement of the quality of education and research for students and staff (De Wit & Hunter 2015:3), the Internationalisation strategy document of the University of Kragujevac closely aligns the definition of the process, focusing on the following four goals of the strategy implementation: 1) Improvement of study programmes (Internationalisation at home), 2) Increase of the number of incoming and outgoing mobilities (Students, Researchers, Teaching and Administrative staff), 3) Improvement of the cooperation with foreign universities and research institutions, industry and other partner institutions through international projects, and 4) University's commitment to internationalisation (among others through the development of the Action plan for the implementation of the Internationalisation strategy (2020-2027). The first two goals, pertaining to the improvement and development of the study programs in English and the

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<sup>2</sup> OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030

[https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2018/06/the-future-of-education-and-skills\\_5424dd26/54ac7020-en.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2018/06/the-future-of-education-and-skills_5424dd26/54ac7020-en.pdf) (retrieved on 08 September 2025)

<sup>3</sup> [https://kg.ac.rs/Docs/internationalisation\\_strategy.pdf](https://kg.ac.rs/Docs/internationalisation_strategy.pdf) (retrieved on 08.09.2025. at 13.15)

support of the mobility programs, present the foundation of research in this study. They are the basis for the professional development of the university teaching staff, which takes place through the English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) teacher training program.

## 2. ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

It has been well-established that the English language has become a global, universal demand in higher education. While there are other forms of integrating the English language with the content areas in lower education structures<sup>4</sup>, the phenomenon of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) has been particularly present in higher education (Macaro, Curle, Pun & Dearden 2018), offering both undergraduate and postgraduate study programs through the medium of English. Due to the declining enrollment numbers of local students and the ever-present migration trends in Serbia and worldwide, this situation has led to even more emphasis on internationalisation in higher education, with the aim to meet those challenges. In order to accommodate the novel circumstances, higher education institutions worldwide have come to offer their study programs in English, and numerous HE policies have been enacted to support this development of EMI. Several years back, the meeting of Lisbon European Council (2020) raised discussions (Jorgenson & Shultz 2012) about equipping students with qualifications for an internationalized context, to build not only knowledge networks but also create social cohesion, regionally, nationally and internationally (Valcke et al. 2022: 65) Therefore, a need has emerged for addressing the student needs and for continual professional development of the teaching staff. To align with these needs, various EMI teacher training programs have been conducted at HE institutions. They prepare the university professors to deliver their courses in English and therefore target the international student body, but also relate to the domestic student body, to prepare them for global immersion.

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<sup>4</sup> “In North America the phenomenon is sometimes labelled ‘immersion’ or ‘content-based learning’ or ‘content-based language learning’ or ‘content-based language education’. In Europe, but not exclusively in Europe, it is usually labelled ‘content and language integrated learning’ (CLIL) or ‘integrating content and language in higher education’ or ‘English-taught programmes’. EMI is a term used ubiquitously geographically and, usually but not exclusively, applied to HE.” (Macaro, Curle, Pun & Dearden 2018:37)

## 2.1. EMI current trends in the developing countries

As we consider the current trends in Serbia, it is important to note what the status of EMI is in Serbian higher education at the moment. Therefore, we will reflect on one of the recent studies and publications that addresses this issue. Based on the research conducted in collaboration between the British Council and the University of Oxford (Sahan et al. 2021)<sup>5</sup>, primarily funded by the British Council, global mapping of EMI in HEIs in the developing countries has provided a significant insight into the status of EMI at a tertiary level of education. The researchers collected data ‘from the informed respondents, HEI websites and key institutional players’ (Sahan et al. 2021:63) about the language of instruction at HEIs, specifically looking into the courses taught in English. Based on the research findings, in Figure 1, we present the current trends of EMI in higher education.

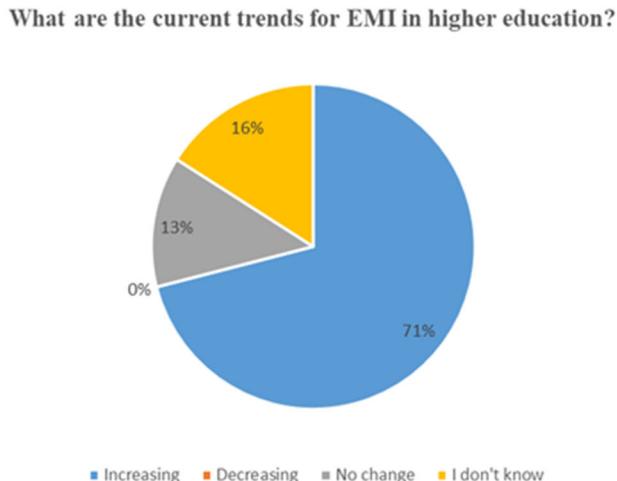


Figure 1. What are the current trends for EMI in higher education in the developing countries?

<sup>5</sup> This report forms part of a larger British Council global project exploring current research, policy, practice, and potential future trends in English-medium education in higher education. The participant countries in the research were: Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Botswana, Brazil, Cameron, China, Columbia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Georgia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Serbia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tanzania, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Vietnam, Zambia, Zimbabwe. (Sahan et al. 2021:18-21)

As the research indicates, there is a firm dominance of the increasing trend (71%) of implementing EMI programs in higher education, whereas no higher education institution (0%), in the developing countries reported the decreasing trend. Based on the results, we may observe that there is a continual development of EMI study programs that indicate a high degree of interest in teaching courses in English. Serbia is among the countries that ensue this trend and since the developing countries are severely under-researched in terms of regionally and nationally specific challenges associated with EMI delivery at the programme, course and classroom level, the authors have concluded that there is a need for more research in this area (Sahan et al. 2021:63). The purpose of this research is to contribute to these findings by reflecting on the present situation of EMI study programs in Serbia, mainly at the University of Kragujevac.

### 3. EMI TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND MOTIVATION FOR EMI

English as a Medium of Instruction is a specific type of teaching practice in international contexts where English is considered an instrument, rather than a subject, more precisely a by-product of attaining academic knowledge in content courses (Alfehaid 2018). Within the context of EMI, teachers' motivation to participate in training programs and their self-perception of EMI competence have been recognized as critical factors determining the success of EMI programs, alongside various linguistic and contextual factors. University teachers' motives for EMI teaching and internationalisation in general are shaped by a combination of personal, professional, and institutional factors. Previous research has suggested that teachers perceive EMI programs as a chance to develop at a personal level, such as the improvement of language competence, the development of pedagogical skills, and the construction of a more globalized professional identity (Aguilar-Pérez & Arnó-Macià 2024; Doiz & Lasagabaster 2018). In this process, teachers are usually intrinsically motivated. From a professional perspective, university teachers often perceive EMI as a way to advance their careers and increase access to global knowledge and the market (Birgün 2023; Farrell 2020). At an institutional level, the inspiration for many instructors to teach EMI lies in the wish to support internationalisation initiatives, fulfill university objectives, and meet institutional requirements (González-Bello et al. 2024; Yuan et al. 2020). One such example of an institutional requirement is the requirement for the application in the Erasmus+ mobility program at the University of Kragujevac. EMI certification, obtained as a successful completion of the professional development program, presents one of

the requirements for the document *Contribution to Internationalisation*<sup>6</sup>, which is valued for the application in the Erasmus+ mobilities.

Teachers' self-perception of their EMI competence is equally important, as it plays an important role in shaping their classroom practice. Teachers who perceive themselves as competent in EMI generally demonstrate more self-efficacy in creating a successful EMI environment, showing increased willingness to implement internationalisation (Macaro et al. 2019; Wang 2021), which in turn boosts their motivation and overall effectiveness in EMI classrooms (Macaro et al. 2019). This highlights the need to consider teachers' motivation and self-perceived EMI competence as important dimensions when designing and implementing EMI training programs.

This study, therefore, aims to explore the factors motivating Serbian HE teachers to apply for the EMI training program as well as their self-perceived competencies in EMI teaching. The findings provide insights into their professional development needs and their readiness to teach in multilingual and intercultural contexts.

#### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

##### 4.1. *Research design and objectives*

The study examines teachers' motivation for applying to the EMI training program and their self-perception of EMI competence in the context of EMI teacher training conducted at the University of Kragujevac, Serbia, during the 2024-2025 academic year.

The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

1. What is the degree of university teachers' motivation for teaching EMI courses, and what are the reasons that encouraged them to apply for the EMI training program?
2. How do teachers perceive their own EMI competence?
3. What are the challenges that EMI teachers might encounter when teaching in international contexts?

The research design was exploratory in nature, given the relatively small sample size (N=21). Consequently, the study does not aim for broad

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<sup>6</sup> [https://www.kg.ac.rs/doc/Lista%20prijavanih%20dokumenata\\_STA\\_1.pdf](https://www.kg.ac.rs/doc/Lista%20prijavanih%20dokumenata_STA_1.pdf) (retrieved on 11.09.2025. at 11.47)

generalizability, but rather seeks to provide insights into tendencies and trends within this particular group of university teachers.

#### 4.2. Participants

The participants were professors enrolled in the EMI training program at the University of Kragujevac during the 2024-2025 academic year. Regarding their scientific fields, the largest group was from the field of medicine (42.9%), followed by the field of natural sciences (23.8%) and humanities and social sciences (23.8%). A smaller proportion of teachers (9.5%) came from the technical fields.

In relation to higher education teaching experience, 42.9% reported over 10 years of experience, 23.8% indicated from 7 to 10 years, and 19% from 4 to 6 years. There were fewer respondents with limited experience, with 9.5% reporting less than a year and 4.8% from 1 to 3 years.

In terms of prior experience with teaching international students, 31.8% of the participants reported in the questionnaire that they had taught international students either in Serbia or abroad, while the majority (61.9%) had not had teaching experience in international contexts.

#### 4.3. Instruments and procedure

The study employed a modified questionnaire developed on the basis of the EMI handbook and the TAEC project (*Transnational Alignment of English Competences for University Lecturers*, co-funded by the Erasmus+ program of the European Union).<sup>7</sup> The instrument covered several key dimensions relevant to EMI-teaching contexts: background information (academic title, field of study, teaching experience, and prior experience with international students), motivation for participation in EMI training (e.g., personal development, internationalisation, and personal challenges), and self-perception of EMI competence (technical and practical skills, and intercultural/multilingual awareness). The questionnaire included both closed-ended and open-ended questions, allowing for the collection of quantitative and qualitative data. Motivation and self-perception were measured using a Likert-scale format, ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree (e.g., *I can use different language strategies when I am uncertain how to say something in English, or I can overcome potential obstacles and*

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<sup>7</sup> [https://cip.ku.dk/english/projects-and-collaborations/taec/TAEC\\_Handbook\\_FEB\\_2020\\_NoEdit.pdf](https://cip.ku.dk/english/projects-and-collaborations/taec/TAEC_Handbook_FEB_2020_NoEdit.pdf) (retrieved on 30.03.2025. at 03:15h)

*misunderstandings in the multilingual classroom).* In addition, several open-ended questions were used to obtain insights into teachers' motivation and experiences (e.g., *Explain in your own words what you are expecting to receive from the course.*).

Participation in the study was voluntary, and all of the participants provided informed consent prior to completing the questionnaire, which aligned with the ethical requirements of the research. They completed the questionnaire during the EMI training program. Responses were collected anonymously to encourage accurate reporting, while the data were used exclusively for research purposes.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while SPSS 20.0 was employed to calculate frequencies and percentages. Qualitative data from open-ended questions were analyzed through content analysis.

## 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present section outlines the obtained quantitative and qualitative results, while relating them to the research questions and providing a contribution in the concluding remarks.

### 5.1. Motivation factor in the quantitative analysis

The first objective of the study was to examine the teachers' motivation for enrolling in the EMI training program (Research Q1: *What is the degree of university teachers' motivation for teaching EMI courses, and what are the reasons that encouraged them to apply for the EMI training program?*). Specifically, the aim was twofold: to assess the degree of their motivation for teaching EMI courses and to explore the reasons behind the decision to participate in the EMI training course. In Table 1, we report the results of EMI teachers' level of motivation to apply for the EMI training course.

Motivation level	Number of respondents	Percent (%)
Highly motivated	8	38.1%
Motivated	10	47.6%
Undecided	2	9.5%
Slightly motivated	1	4.8%
Not motivated at all	0	0%

Table 1. Teachers' self-reported motivation for teaching courses in English

In Table 1, we may observe that the descriptive statistics revealed a significant majority of the participants indicated being motivated (47.6%) or highly motivated (38.1%) to teach in English, while only a small proportion showed hesitation (9%) or low motivation (4.8%) (Table 1).

We extend our findings in Table 2 with the obtained results about the specific motivating factors that may further be examined.

Reason for Participation	Number of respondents	Percent (%)
Professional development	17	81.0
Overcoming personal/professional challenges	17	81.0
Language skills improvement	16	76.2
Applying innovative teaching approaches	16	76.2
Stepping out of comfort zone	15	71.4
Internationalisation /global exposure	8	38.1
Publishing research	7	33.3
Interacting with international students	7	33.3
International recognition	4	19.0
Preparing students for global job market	3	14.3
Institutional obligation	1	4.8

Table 2. Quantitative results on teachers' motivation for the EMI program

When examining specific reasons for participation in the EMI training, intrinsic and developmental factors emerged as the most frequently cited factors, rather than institutional obligations (Table 2). The most frequently reported motives were professional development (81%) and overcoming personal and professional obstacles in teaching in English (81%). For instance, a significant majority of participants affirmed the statement, '*I want to overcome personal barriers in teaching through English*', which suggests that self-development and the desire to improve classroom performance were strong internal motivators. Previous research similarly showed that the primary motivators for teachers' EMI engagement include their desire to develop their pedagogical skills, the challenge of instructing in English, and the increase of their confidence in teaching through English (Hariyanti 2023; Zhao et al. 2023). Likewise, 76.2% of the respondents affirmed that the training would contribute to the improvement of their language skills, and the same percentage agreed with the statement, '*I view EMI as an opportunity to investigate innovative teaching methodologies*', reflecting an orientation towards pedagogical experimentation. The findings align with recent studies suggesting that intrinsic motivation and innovation significantly influence

teachers' engagement with EMI (Macaro et al. 2018). Moreover, a significant majority of the participants (71.4%) viewed the EMI training as an opportunity to move beyond their comfort zones. The results suggest that the EMI training was perceived both as a challenge and a chance for professional growth and career development, as observed in prior research (Wang et al. 2025; Yuan 2020).

At the same time, more externally oriented motives were less common. Only 38.1% viewed EMI as related to internationalization or global exposure, whereas one-third associated it with publishing research in English (33.3%) and interacting with international students (33.3%). These factors, although less significant, indicate an awareness of EMI's role in global academic collaboration and intercultural interaction. Interestingly, a significant minority of the respondents reported that their motivation emerged from international recognition (19%), preparing students for the global job market (14%), or fulfilling institutional standards (4.8%). The results differ from those reported in other contexts, where institutional initiatives and internationalization were recognized as the main motivators for EMI training participation (González-Bello et al., 2024). In contrast, the variation observed in the study suggests that, in the Serbian context, where EMI training is recent, educators tend to view it less as a tool for institutional development and more as an opportunity for professional and personal growth.

### 5.2. *Self-perception factor in the quantitative analysis*

The second objective of the study was to examine the participants' self-perception of EMI-related competence (Research Q2: *How do teachers perceive their own EMI competence?*). The findings of the descriptive statistics indicated a balanced perspective regarding their perceived EMI competence. Although they expressed high motivation for professional and personal development, their self-perception of particular skills was marked both by confidence in certain domains and by a more reserved stance in other aspects (Table 3).

No.	Questionnaire item	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)
1.	I can design and prepare English-language presentation slides for my classes.	-	-	9.5	42.9	47.6
2.	I can effectively use English to draw attention to key points in my EMI lessons.	-	-	9.5	61.9	28.6

3.	I can deliver interactive EMI lectures successfully.		14.3	33.3	52.4	-
4.	I can rely on various language strategies when unsure how to phrase something in English	-	4.8	28.6	38.1	28.6
5.	I can speak English clearly and use correct pronunciation.	4.8	4.8	42.9	42.9	4.8
6.	I use intonation and linguistic elements to emphasize important details in EMI lectures.	-	14.3	61.9	23.8	-
7.	I use English to highlight the learning objectives of EMI lessons.	4.8	4.8	71.4	19.0	-
8.	I can organize complex subject matter into smaller, coherent sections for EMI instruction.	-	-	61.9	28.6	9.5
9.	I adapt classroom activities in EMI instruction to ensure cultural diversity.	4.8	-	85.7	9.5	-
10.	I adjust my teaching content in multilingual EMI instruction to foster a culturally inclusive classroom.	4.8	4.8	71.4	14.3	4.8
11.	I am aware of the benefits that EMI instruction provides.	-	-	9.5	28.6	61.9
12.	I understand the significance of cultural influences in multilingual environments.	4.8	-	14.3	42.9	38.1
13.	I can effectively face challenges when teaching in a multilingual environment.	4.8	-	19.0	47.6	28.6
14.	I design EMI lessons to promote collaboration, inclusivity, and mutual exchange of knowledge and skills.	-	4.8	66.7	28.6	-

Table 3: Selected items on self-perceived EMI competence among university teachers

The strongest confidence appeared in the areas related to the technical and practical aspects of EMI instruction. The majority of the participants (90.5%)

expressed confidence in preparing and using English-language presentations and materials. Approximately 52.4% believed that they were able to deliver interactive lectures successfully, and about two-thirds (66.7%) reported that they could rely on various language strategies when unsure how to phrase something in English. These patterns suggest that many of the teachers already had a solid base for the practical application of English in the classroom and, as stated previously, teachers with a positive outlook on their EMI competence tend to demonstrate more self-efficacy in establishing a fruitful EMI context and are inclined to contribute to internationalisation (Macaro et al. 2019; Wang 2021).

However, for certain language skills such as pronunciation, intonation, and clarity of speaking, confidence levels were diminished. For example, 47.7% agreed that their pronunciation is clear, whereas 42.9% maintained a neutral stance. Regarding intonation, merely 23.8% expressed confidence, whereas 61.9% remained uncertain. This suggests that these technical skills in EMI instruction require further development and support.

Lesson preparation and instructional design also appeared as areas of uncertainty and neutrality. A significant proportion of the participants were hesitant about their capacity to define clear learning objectives adapted to EMI contexts (71.4% neutral) and to divide teaching content into meaningful sections effectively (61.9% neutral). Similarly, the adaptation of educational activities and content to EMI contexts produced a significant percentage of neutral responses (85.7% neutral for activities, 71.4% for content). These findings show that while teachers have a moderate degree of confidence in lesson delivery, they experience uncertainty in designing and organizing materials in ways that align with the pedagogical requirements of EMI instruction, particularly in terms of content adaptation and lesson structuring.

The results further showed that the participants exhibited significant confidence in facing multilingual and intercultural aspects of EMI instruction. Almost all participants recognized the benefits of multilingual classrooms (90.5%), while a significant majority reported that they understood the significance of cultural influences in multilingual environments (81%). Furthermore, 76.2% confirmed that they were capable of effectively responding to challenges arising in multicultural classes. On the other hand, a considerable number of the participants (66.7%) expressed uncertainty regarding their ability to foster a collaborative and inclusive EMI classroom, while less than one-third (28.6%) showed confidence in this skill. The neutral responses may reflect the lack of experience or uncertainty in practical EMI implementation, thus suggesting that even when teachers recognize

the importance of certain EMI aspects, they may not feel fully competent to apply these standards.

In general, besides the language-related aspects, these findings indicate that the teachers also recognize the cultural dimension as an integral part of effective EMI instruction. This discrepancy between their confidence in intercultural and multilingual awareness and their hesitancy in lesson planning highlights the need for targeted professional development that would enable them to adapt their general teaching competence into EMI practices.

### 5.3. Expectations and challenges in qualitative content analysis

For the purpose of the qualitative component of this study, the objective was to examine two aspects addressed in the open-ended survey questions: participants' expectations regarding the EMI course they applied for (Q: '*Explain in your own words what you expect to receive from the course.*') and the challenges they expect to encounter while teaching in an EMI setting (Q: '*Explain in your own words what may be potential challenges in preparing an EMI lecture.*'). These aspects were analyzed in relation to Research Q3: *What challenges might EMI teachers encounter when teaching in international contexts?* The open-ended questions were included because they provide insight into participants' motivation for applying for the EMI course. In addition, we expected that challenges reported by the participants may align with their self-perception and their skills and knowledge in the EMI field, thus complementing the results of the quantitative analysis.

The method used in this part of the research was content analysis, and we were able to obtain 74 written responses in these open-ended questions, as the participants were able to include as many items as they felt necessary to express their standpoints. Among them, we extracted 27 content items in total, 12 related to expectations and 15 related to challenges. We identified the three most dominant content item responses, both for the expectations and for the challenges, and we present them in Table 7. Frequency refers to the total number of times a particular theme was mentioned across all responses. Percentages were calculated against the total number of collected responses (74), as the participants frequently included more individual item responses for these questions.

EXPECTATIONS	Frequency	Percent (%)	CHALLENGES	Frequency	Percent (%)
To learn the pedagogical skills/approaches for teaching international students	10	13.5%	Managing ESP (English for Specific Purposes) vocabulary	6	8.1%
To enhance language skills for communication with the international students (vocabulary)	9	12.2%	Taking specific action in managing cultural aspects of an EMI class (e.g. avoiding discrimination)	6	8.1%
To gain confidence for speaking and discussion in English	7	9.5%	Assessment design for EMI class (addressing students' different English language proficiency)	4	5.4%

Table 4. Key content item responses for *expectations* of the EMI program and *challenges* in teaching EMI

Although most of the HE teachers reported using English for research purposes, the participants' responses reveal that they recognize that EMI teaching involves more than translating the L1 lecture into the L2 lecture. For example, the data indicate that the most common respondents' expectations (35.2%) from the EMI professional development program relate to the support in pedagogical skills/approaches, to the support to enhance their English language proficiency, and thereby obtain more confidence to speak in front of a larger student body. This perspective may also be found (Macaro et al. 2015) in research:

Most importantly for quality of education, there is considerable research evidence that many EMI teachers do not feel linguistically confident to teach their subjects through English. We should stress the word 'teach' here. Most teachers, it would appear, feel confident to read or write about their subject in English or even to present at conferences. (Sahan 2021:11)

EMI lecture is predominantly based on applying different pedagogical skills and approaches that are specifically designed for an international teaching context, and where L2 English is used as a tool to deliver the content for international students. "The key difference in teaching in an EMI context is that

they [HE teachers] have to dig deep to find the linguistic resources to adequately convey information to students who themselves may have low levels of English proficiency" (Sahan et al. 2021:11). The obtained results validate the quantitative research findings, indicating that the most prominent motives for applying to the EMI program were to overcome personal and professional obstacles to teaching in English (81%) and to improve classroom performance and English language skills.

Thereby, the challenges identified were related to different driving motivational forces, specifically concerning EMI methodology. The most dominant challenges and obstacles (21.6%) were related to language skills that are discipline-specific (ESP vocabulary), ensuring linguistic inclusivity for a culturally diverse student body, and finally, the assessment methodology aspects addressing tailor-made assessment instruments to meet the diverse student needs in an international context. As indicated earlier, EMI training is perceived by teachers as both a challenge and a chance for professional growth (Wang et al. 2025, Yuan 2020). It should be emphasized that within the internationalization strategy, institutional support in providing professional development programs such as EMI teacher training significantly enhances the personal and professional development of HE teachers. Consistent with the findings of our study, recent research highlighted numerous and various challenges associated with implementing EMI programs, including the lack of qualified teachers, both linguistically and in terms of pedagogical training for EMI, the need to improve English for EMI communication and the need for an inclusive approach (Sahan et al. 2021:12). We may conclude that there is evidently a growth in academic subjects that are taught in English worldwide and HE teachers have the need for professional development and support to teach their EMI classes effectively.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Serbia is among the developing countries where English as a Medium of Instruction is in its developmental stages, contributing to the internationalization of higher education institutions. State universities in Serbia have been providing the necessary institutional support for the professional development of HE teachers through policies, practical application, EMI teacher training programs, and certification of EMI practitioners. This initiative has resulted in the accreditation of university study programs in English, attracting a number of international students in recent years.

This exploratory study aimed to explore the motivation and self-perception of university teaching staff who have obtained EMI certification and to identify

developmental tendencies and trends at the University of Kragujevac in Serbia regarding the use of English as a Medium of Instruction.

The results revealed that the primary teachers' motives for participation in the EMI training encompass their personal and professional development, including the improvement of their language skills, the implementation of innovative pedagogical approaches, and overcoming personal and professional challenges. However, the findings revealed that there was a lack of motivation from the perspective of contribution at the global and institutional level. This has led us to believe that it may be significant to establish a cohesive relationship between global, institutional requirements and personal and professional development through continual support and access to EMI resources, raising motivation for internationalization at the institutional level.

The findings related to the self-perceived EMI-related competence indicate the teachers' high confidence in technical and practical aspects of EMI teaching, including preparing and using English-language presentations and materials. In contrast, the participants expressed uncertainty in planning EMI lessons, micro-managing content, and supporting inclusive teaching practice. The participants expressed increased awareness of multicultural and multilingual aspects of EMI teaching, but have also emphasized challenges in the domain of particular aspects of cultural inclusivity, in communication, linguistic choices, as well as assessment practices.

The research has provided significant insight into the status of EMI at the University of Kragujevac, from the vertical perspective, systematic institutional HE policies to practical implementation, as well as through horizontal perspectives, analyzing the needs, motivation, but also self-perception of EMI practitioners. Due to the preliminary scope of research, the study is limited by a relatively small sample size and its focus on a single training program. Consequently, the results may only indicate general trends and tendencies. Extending the sample size and including various groups of EMI certified teachers may increase the reliability and generalizability of the findings. In addition, as the study relied on the self-reported data by the EMI participants, the findings may reflect personal perceptions. Future research could integrate observational methods to strengthen the validity of the results and thereby provide a more comprehensive insight into the implementation of English as a Medium of Instruction at the tertiary level of education.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

[https://cip.ku.dk/english/projects-and-collaborations/taec/TAEC\\_Handbook\\_FEB\\_2020\\_NoEdit.pdf](https://cip.ku.dk/english/projects-and-collaborations/taec/TAEC_Handbook_FEB_2020_NoEdit.pdf) (accessed on 30 March 2025)

OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030  
[https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2018/06/the-future-of-education-and-skills\\_5424dd26/54ac7020-en.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2018/06/the-future-of-education-and-skills_5424dd26/54ac7020-en.pdf) (accessed on 08 September 2025)

[https://kg.ac.rs/Docs/internationalisation\\_strategy.pdf](https://kg.ac.rs/Docs/internationalisation_strategy.pdf) (accessed on 08 September 2025)

<https://en.kg.ac.rs/courses.php> (accessed on 09 September 2025)

[https://en.kg.ac.rs/study\\_programmes.php](https://en.kg.ac.rs/study_programmes.php) (accessed on 09 September 2025)

[https://www.kg.ac.rs/doc/Lista%20prijavnih%20dokumenata\\_STA\\_1.pdf](https://www.kg.ac.rs/doc/Lista%20prijavnih%20dokumenata_STA_1.pdf) (accessed on 11 September 2025)

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## ИНТЕРНАЦИОНАЛИЗАЦИЈА КРОЗ ЕНГЛЕСКИ КАО ЈЕЗИК ВИСОКОШКОЛСКЕ НАСТАВЕ (ЕЈВИН): ПЕРЦЕПЦИЈЕ НАСТАВНИКА УКЉУЧЕНИХ У ЕЈВИН

### Сажетак

Ово истраживање усмерено је на један аспект интернационализације у високошколском образовању у Србији, реализован кроз програм професионалног усавршавања за енглески као језик високошколске наставе (ЕЈВИН) на Универзитету у Крагујевцу. Циљ истраживања био је да се испита мотивација наставника за пријављивање на програме на ЕЈВИН-у, њихова самопроцењена компетентност за извођење овакве наставе, као и очекивања и изазови које перцепирају у извођењу наставе на енглеском језику. У ту сврху спроведено је анкетно истраживање експлоративног типа међу наставницима који су похађали обуку за ЕЈВИН током академске 2024/2025. године. За потребе истраживања коришћен је модификовани упитник (ЕЈВИН приручник заснован на ТАЕС пројекту: *Transnational Alignment of English Competences for University Lecturers*, суфинансиран у оквиру Erasmus+ програма Европске уније), који је обухватао питања затвореног и отвореног типа, са циљем прикупљања квантитативних и квалитативних података. Подаци су анализирани применом дескриптивне статистике и анализе садржаја. Резултати истраживања показују да је основни извор мотивације наставника лични и професионални развој, укључујући усавршавање језичких компетенција, примену иновативних наставних приступа и превазилажење професионалних изазова. Самопроцењена компетентност указује на високо самопоуздање у техничким и практичним аспектима наставе на ЕЈВИН-у, као што су припрема материјала и

презентација на енглеском језику, али и на изражену несигурност у планирању часова и подстицању инклузивне наставне праксе. Поред тога, наставници су показали изражену свест о интеркултурним и мултилингвалним аспектима наставе, али су исказали и потребу за подршком у примени инклузивних поступака у настави. Из ових увида произлазе импликације које указују на потребу пажљивог осмишљавања програма обуке за ЕЈВИН, као и додатне подршке у развоју педагошких компетенција ових наставника.

*Кључне речи:* високо образовање, интернационализација, професионални развој, енглески као језик високошколске наставе (ЕЈВИН), ЕЈВИН наставници, мотивација, самопроцена компетентности, очекивања, изазови.

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