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Using English as a Medium of Instruction in Erbil Private schools: Advantages and Disadvantages

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Abstract

This research digs into how private schools in Erbil, within the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, are using English as a Medium of Instruction. It examines both the good stuff and the hard parts of this method. EMI is becoming more popular, especially in private schools, so this study looks at how it impacts teaching quality, students' grades, and their English skills. Using surveys and interviews, the study finds some good things about EMI. Students get better language skills, schools become more academically competitive, and they match up better with international education standards. However, there are also some problems. Students and parents may face language barriers, teachers may not be properly trained to teach in English, and schools may lack cultural and linguistic inclusiveness. These issues can make lessons hard to understand and keep students from staying interested. The study suggests some ways to fix these problems. It recommends ongoing teacher training, introducing EMI gradually, and creating support programs for parents. This helps make education fairer for everyone. EMI could really boost education standards and link Erbil's private schools more closely with the world. But to keep it successful, careful planning, clear policies, and approaches that respect local culture are needed.

Keywords:

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About the Journal

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1. Introduction

In the last few years, schools and teaching methods in Erbil and other Kurdistan areas of Iraq have changed a lot. Many private schools have started using English as the main language for teaching. This shift is part of a global trend where speaking English is seen as really important for doing well in school and landing good jobs. While teaching in English has lots of benefits, it also brings a fair share of problems for both students and teachers.

The use of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in private schools within Erbil Governorate has created numerous difficulties. A significant number of students find it hard to grasp the subject material because of their limited proficiency in English, which can adversely impact their academic success. Teachers frequently struggle to teach effectively in English, especially when their language abilities are lacking. Moreover, many parents face challenges supporting their children's education due to a lack of understanding of English, leading to a communication barrier between home and school. There is also a shortage of localized empirical studies regarding the effects of English as a medium of instruction in Erbil's private basic education system. The research inquiries for this study are:

- What is the significance of using English in delivering the subjects in Erbil private schools?
- What problems do teachers and students face in English-medium classrooms?
- How does using English affect students' language skills, thinking abilities, and exposure to different cultures?

This study's goals are to:

- Explore the good sides of using English for teaching in private schools in Erbil.
- Find out the bad sides and problems that students and teachers have.
- Suggest ways to improve using English as the main language in these schools.

The study hypothesizes the use of English as the language of instruction in private schools in Erbil notably impacts how subject material is presented, influencing teaching styles, student understanding, and their overall involvement in classroom activities. And the primary challenge faced by teachers in private schools in Erbil when using English as a medium of instruction is insufficient English proficiency and inadequate teacher training. And also, students in private schools in Erbil experience cognitive overload when learning academic subjects in English, leading to difficulties in content comprehension and academic performance.

A mixed methods approach is employed as the subject encompasses both qualitative insights (such as perceptions, challenges, and attitudes) and quantitative data (like statistics on language proficiency or EMI effectiveness). In this context, questionnaires represent the qualitative method, while the quantitative aspect involves semi-structured interviews.

2. Literature Review

In places where English isn't the main language, like in multilingual spots such as Erbil, there's been a big jump in using English for teaching. People think this helps students get better at speaking English and opens up more global opportunities. But it also brings up problems like how ready teachers are, whether students understand, and how it affects their cultural roots.

Many research papers discuss using English in schools, but not many focus on private elementary schools in Erbil. This review goes over key past studies, explaining what methods were used, what was found out, and what was overlooked. It also highlights new research aiming to understand local issues better, filling in gaps in our knowledge.

In the study "In English Medium Instruction in Multilingual Contexts: Empirical Evidence from Ethiopia," (Woldehanna, T. and Hagos, B. and Mulugeta, A., 2024) reveal insights from their research on the impact of English as the main language of instruction in primary schools. They utilized a value-added model to gather data, comparing the performance of students taught in English to those taught in their native languages. The findings indicate a significant issue: students who learn in English perform notably worse in mathematics—around 0.25 standard deviations lower—compared to those taught in their native language. This situation arises because students frequently find it difficult to understand the material while also trying to comprehend English. The

research suggests that EMI may negatively impact students' academic growth unless they possess strong English skills. Although their study centers on Ethiopia, it emphasizes a broader issue that pertains to other multilingual environments, such as private schools in Erbil. While the research primarily addresses primary education, its findings suggest a critical need for increased language support prior to the transition to English instruction. While the study is current and significant, it primarily focuses on public schools in Ethiopia and does not specifically explore the private school environment or areas with unique linguistic diversity, such as Erbil. Nonetheless, it offers valuable insights into how early English Medium Instruction (EMI), lacking adequate English support, can harm learning achievements.

In their study titled "English-Medium Instruction and Its Impact on Academic Performance: A Randomized Control Study," (Bälter, O., Kann, V., Mutimukwe, C. and Malmström, H., 2023) analyzed data from a randomized trial that compared students learning programming in English versus Swedish. The research involved 2,263 participants and highlighted a significant finding: students instructed in English answered 73% fewer test questions correctly and had a 25% increased dropout rate. This occurs because students spend extra mental effort trying to comprehend English, which undermines their grasp of the subject matter. The authors suggest that strong English skills are essential before starting English Medium Instruction (EMI), as poor language abilities can greatly affect academic success. This study, focused on higher education in Sweden, does not specifically explore how similar language challenges appear in primary or secondary education, especially in private institutions or multilingual areas like Erbil. However, the results imply that inadequate English assistance could also impede content learning in earlier educational stages.

In the study titled "English medium of instruction in science learning: A path analysis" (Pun, J. and Jin, X., 2022), researchers engaged with 356 secondary students from eight English-medium schools in Hong Kong to investigate the influence of English language skills on science education. The research revealed that students with better English proficiency tended to perform better in science subjects, while those who found English challenging had lower self-esteem in science and poorer outcomes. Interestingly, the findings indicated that using a bilingual teaching method was more beneficial for grasping scientific concepts than solely teaching in English. This research reflects Coleman's (2010) concerns: students with limited English skills prioritize decoding over grasping subject content. However, while Coleman focused on higher education, this 2022 study specifically investigates the secondary school setting. Like many studies on English as a Medium of Instruction, it overlooks the scenarios in private schools or linguistically diverse areas such as Erbil—a gap that your research could address.

In the study titled "Classroom interaction in EMI high schools: Do teachers who are native speakers of English make a difference?" (Jiangshan An, Ernesto Macaro & Ann Childs, 2021), researchers examined 15 secondary science teachers in English-medium instruction (EMI) high schools in China, focusing on native English-speaking teachers. They identified ongoing challenges, noting that classroom interactions tended to be dominated by teachers, while students consistently provided linguistically basic responses. Even in private environments with skilled EMI teachers, students often find it hard to engage effectively because their English communication skills are lacking. This reflects Coleman's (2010) concern that limited English skills cause students to concentrate more on deciphering language rather than learning essential subjects. Importantly, while Coleman focused on higher education, this study specifically targets secondary schools, demonstrating that such issues remain even with native-speaking teachers. However, it primarily examines public Chinese schools and does not delve into private institutions or multilingual contexts like Erbil—areas where your research could provide valuable insights.

Next, (Macaro, 2018) study, "English Medium Instruction: Content and Language in Policy and Practice," blends policy analysis with case studies from places like East Asia, Europe, and Latin America. Macaro found that EMI works best when there are good language support systems, like specific language lessons, helping students along the way, and using bilingual teaching methods. He suggests a plan that helps with both language learning and understanding subjects. But Macaro's study skips data from the Middle East and private schools that teach basic subjects.

(Cummins, 2017) work, "Language, Power and Pedagogy: Bilingual Children in the Crossfire," takes a different route. He lays out a theory based on lots of research about bilingual education without gathering new information. Cummins highlights something called cognitive overload. This means when students learn in a language that's not their own, they might get mentally exhausted, lose interest, and forget things more easily. His ideas shed light on the mental hurdles of learning another language. However, he doesn't include data from Kurdistan, a place with many languages and evolving education policies.

In their article "English Language Teaching in the Kurdistan Region: Challenges and Opportunities," (H. Rajab & A. Pentina, 2015) look at primary and high schools. They use a case study method, talking to teachers, watching classes, and holding group chats to understand teachers' experiences with teaching in English. They find that while teaching in English connects the local education system with global standards, teachers face serious challenges because they often don't speak English well enough or haven't been trained to teach in English effectively. A big gap in their study is that it only looks at the teachers' views. They don't include what students and parents think, or how teaching in English affects the community or long-term academic success.

(Dearden, 2014), in her report "English as a Medium of Instruction - A Growing Global Phenomenon," looks into policies by interviewing lawmakers and school leaders and reviewing documents from 55 countries about using English to teach other subjects. She seeks global patterns, reasons behind this trend, and schools' readiness. She finds that using English for instruction is viewed as a way to join the international community and boost the economy. Still, it often fails because teachers aren't skilled enough in English, there's a lack of training for specific subjects, and materials aren't suitable for local needs. A big flaw in her research is that it doesn't really look at what happens in classrooms in developing or conflict-affected places like Kurdistan, where policies might not match what actually occurs in schools.

(Ghaith, G. & Yaghi, H., 2013) study, "EMI in Private Schools in Kurdistan: A Case Study," looks at how teaching in English affects students in Kurdistan's private schools. They talked to both students and teachers and also watched what happened in classrooms. They discovered that using English improved students' skills in the language. But there was a downside - students found it harder to grasp subjects like science and math. The study gave a good peek into classroom life but only covered one school and didn't mix numbers with stories to show a broader view of different schools in Kurdistan.

In "Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism," (Baker, 2011) deeply explores theories, gathering examples from all over the world where schools teach in two or more languages. He covers case studies, teaching styles, and theories showing that learning a second language early helps kids become better with languages, understand how language works, and mix well with other cultures. However, Baker's work is broad and misses the local challenges. It overlooks how hard it is to apply these ideas in places like Erbil, which faces issues like building conditions and teacher readiness due to its post-conflict situation.

This new research takes a fresh look at EMI in multilingual settings, mixing survey numbers with stories and insights from conversations with parents. By getting views from teachers, students, and families, it gives a fuller picture of how EMI impacts students in private basic schools in Erbil. Other studies usually focus on teacher struggles or government policies. This one digs deeper, exploring how EMI shapes students' academic growth, language skills, cultural identity, and family support. The focus on Erbil is important since EMI in this area hasn't been well-studied, despite its diverse languages and the rapid growth of private schools. This study fills an important gap and gives useful tips for teachers, school leaders, and policymakers who want to make EMI more effective in similar schools.

3. Methodology and Data Collection

This research mixed different ways to explore the good and bad sides of using English for teaching in private schools in Erbil. By blending statistics and personal perceptions, the study was able to see both the overall trends and personal experiences.

Prior to gathering the main data, the research tools were tested on a small group of individuals who

shared similar characteristics with the primary study participants. This testing phase included a group of students, teachers, and parents from private basic schools, none of whom participated in the final research. The goal was to pinpoint any vague or puzzling questions, evaluate the format and duration of the surveys and interviews, and implement necessary changes to enhance understanding and relevance. To make sure our tools worked well, we asked experts to take a look at them. Professors in education, language studies, and course planning went over our questions and interview guides. What they found out helped us know our tools correctly captured what we aimed for - including what students went through, teachers' struggles, and parents' opinions on using English as the teaching language.

The survey included 330 students, 71 teachers from private English-medium schools in Erbil, and 16 parents, all chosen using a random sampling approach. While random sampling aimed to improve representativeness, the results can only be generalized to a limited extent due to the small number of parent participants and the emphasis on certain private schools in Erbil. They were specifically chosen from a variety of backgrounds, educational levels, and experiences, letting the study gather plenty of different opinions on teaching in English. Data came from surveys and interviews. Students and teachers filled out surveys to talk about their experiences and views on using English for teaching. They answered using a five-point scale, and their answers were then examined with SPSS software.

Besides that, semi-structured interviews were done with 16 parents to understand how using English affected their kids' learning, language use at home, and cultural identity. These talks were recorded with their Permission, written down, and checked for common ideas and insights. By using both surveys and interviews, the study got a complete view, catching the big trends as well as personal stories. It provided a detailed look at how teaching in English works in private schools in Erbil.

3.1 Data Analysis Procedures

This study combined different methods to explore how using English for teaching affects students and teachers in private schools in the Erbil Governorate. By mixing numbers with personal stories, it created a complete picture of the situation.

For the quantitative data, 330 students and 71 teachers filled out detailed surveys using a five-point scale. The information was then analyzed with SPSS software, revealing frequencies, percentages, mean scores and standard deviations. Comparing the answers from students and teachers helped reveal where their opinions agree and where they don't when it comes to using English for teaching. This gave a broad view of their attitudes and highlighted patterns in how teaching and learning are affected by English.

To make the findings even richer, the study also gathered personal insights from open-ended questions in the teachers' surveys and had semi-structured interviews with 16 parents. By looking closely at these discussions, the study identified key themes like language challenges, teaching difficulties, student motivation, and parents' involvement. These answers were sorted and grouped to reflect the study's goals, offering a closer look at the social and cultural aspects of using English in schools.

By mixing these two kinds of data, the study got stronger and more meaningful results. The numbers showed general patterns, while personal stories added context and feelings, showing the real-world effects on students' learning and family dynamics. This balanced approach ensured that the research didn't just measure outcomes but also understood the experiences behind them, leading to more believable and useful conclusions.

3.2 Ethical Considerations

The study stuck to good ethical practices and put a lot of emphasis on getting participants' clear permission. They kept everyone's personal information secret and ensured everything was private. People knew they could drop out of the study whenever they wanted without any issues. All the data was stored securely and only used for school purposes.

By setting things up like this, the research really helped the researcher and the readers of the work

understand what the participants think and feel about using English for teaching. To dig deeper, the study collected different types of information and used various methods to analyze it. This gave us lots of interesting details about how English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) works in private schools in Erbil.

4. Results and Discussion

This section covers what was discovered from asking students and teachers questions, as well as chatting with parents, about the use of English for teaching in private schools for young children around the Erbil Governorate area. It uses statistics and simple explanations to show the good and bad sides of using English in these schools.

To guarantee the results' dependability and trustworthiness, the researcher implemented various techniques. Initially, internal consistency was evaluated with statistical methods, including Cronbach's alpha, to verify the scales' reliability. This clarified if the items consistently measured the intended concepts. Furthermore, the research utilized triangulation by gathering information from three distinct groups—students, teachers, and parents—enabling verification of results from various viewpoints. This approach enhanced the legitimacy of the findings. Moreover, thorough protocols for gathering and analyzing data were implemented to guarantee openness and reproducibility. Ethical aspects, such as voluntary participation and confidentiality, were upheld to enhance the credibility of the data.

4.1 Students' Perspectives

The survey results from students revealed that they found it quite tough and had all sorts of thoughts about EMI.

Table (1). Teachers help us by making difficult subjects less complicated, especially in science and math.

Category	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	105	31.8%		
Agree	88	26.7%		
Neutral	72	21.8%		
Disagree	40	12.1%		
Strongly Disagree	25	7.6%	2.37	1.231
Total	330	100%		

In Table 1, students shared how they feel about the statement, "Teachers explain tricky topics in a way we understand, especially in science and math." Among 330 students asked, the survey findings indicate a mean score of 2.37 on a scale where 1 means Strongly Agree and 5 means Strongly Disagree. This suggests that respondents predominantly lean towards agreement, as the mean is closer to 2 (Agree) than to 3 (Neutral). Over half of the participants, around 58%, either "strongly agree" (31.8%) or "agree" (26.7%) with the statement we're talking about, as shown in the frequency distribution. There's a chunk of participants, about 21.8%, who are neutral on this matter. Smaller groups either "disagree" (12.1%) or "strongly disagree" (7.6%). A standard deviation of 1.231 points to some variation in the answers, showing that while most are on the positive side, there are different opinions within the group. The findings indicate a mostly favorable view on the matter, although various opinions are represented.

Table (2). I understand the school materials a lot better when teachers explain them in my own language.

Category	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	40	40%		
Agree	28	28%		
Neutral	15	15%		
Disagree	10	10%		
Strongly Disagree	7	7%	2.16	1.178
Total	330	100%		

Table 2 outlines students' reactions when asked if they grasp the subject better when the teacher speaks their first language. The survey results show an average score of 2.16, which suggests most people agree with the statement. With a 2 being "Agree", a 2.16 is so close. Looking at the numbers, 40% of people strongly agree, and another 28% agree, making up 68% who have a positive view. Meanwhile, 15% are on the fence, not picking a side, and just 17% do not agree or really disagree. The standard deviation of 1.178 indicates a moderate variation in responses, suggesting that while opinions differ, most individuals tend to agree. Overall, the findings point to a broadly supportive view, with a notable majority in favor and only a small segment dissenting.

Table (3). I'm really comfortable speaking English in our lessons and activities.

Category	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	66	20%	3.15	1.35
Agree	82	25%	3.15	1.35
Neutral	66	20%	3.15	1.35
Disagree	66	20%	3.15	1.35
Strongly Disagree	50	15%	3.15	1.35
Total	330	100%	3.15	1.35

Table 3 highlights students' feelings about the phrase, "I feel confident speaking English during classroom discussions and activities." Out of 330 students, 20% felt super confident, another 25% said they feel good, and 20% stayed on the fence, showing different levels of confidence. Additionally, 20% stated they don't feel confident, and 15% strongly disagreed, indicating a lack of confidence for some students. A mean score of 3.15 indicates that students are mostly neutral to slightly confident in speaking English during class. The responses show considerable variation, reflected in a high standard deviation of 1.35. While some students are assured, many still encounter difficulties, signaling a need for targeted language assistance.

Table (4). I most often use English when I'm working on school projects or spending time with friends outside of class.

Category	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	66	20%	2.90	1.48
Agree	82	25%	2.90	1.48
Neutral	99	30%	2.90	1.48
Disagree	49	15%	2.90	1.48
Strongly Disagree	33	10%	2.90	1.48
Total	330	100%	2.90	1.48

Out of the 330 students who joined the survey, one-fifth said they "strongly agree" and a quarter said they "agree" that they use English more than Kurdish while studying or hanging out with friends after school. On the flip side, 30% didn't have a strong opinion, 15% disagreed, and 10% strongly disagreed. This indicates a blend of preferences, with some students still leaning toward Kurdish for their studies.

On average, the score was 2.90, suggesting a slight preference for English. There was a fair amount of difference too, with a standard deviation of 1.48 - showing that students use both languages in various ways.

Table (5). Studying in English allows me to explore various cultures.

Category	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	33	10.0%		
Agree	0	0.0%		
Neutral	66	20.0%		
Disagree	0	0.0%		
Strongly Disagree	231	70.0%		
Total	330	100.0%	4.2	1.33

Table 5 shows that 70% of the 330 students strongly believe that using English as the medium of instruction improves their understanding of different cultures, while 20% remain neutral. A smaller fraction, 10%, strongly disagrees, and no students either disagreed or simply agreed. The average score of 4.2 indicates strong support for this concept, with a standard deviation of 1.33, suggesting some diversity in opinions regarding how English contributes to cultural comprehension.

Table (6). I struggle to ask questions or share my thoughts as English is not my first language.

Category	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	50	15.2%		
Agree	0	0.0%		
Neutral	99	30.0%		
Disagree	0	0.0%		
Strongly Disagree	181	54.8%		
Total	330	100.0%	3.79	1.47

In Table 6, it shows that more than half of the 330 students, specifically 54.8%, feel very strongly that their non-native English status makes it hard to ask questions or share their thoughts. About 30% are undecided on this issue. On the other hand, 15.2% strongly disagree. Interestingly, no students simply disagreed or agreed with how the statement was worded.

The average rating is 3.79, indicating that students generally find it difficult to express themselves in English. With a standard deviation of 1.47, the students' answers show a moderate range of opinions.

Table (7). Using English in school makes me feel separated from my cultural roots.

Category	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	83	25.2%		
Agree	0	0.0%		
Neutral	116	35.2%		
Disagree	0	0.0%		
Strongly Disagree	132	40.0%		
Total	330	100.0%	3.64	1.44

Table 7 reveals that from a group of 330 students, 40% feel like speaking English at school makes them feel separated from their culture. Another 35.2% don't really feel strongly about it one way or the other. On the other hand, 25.2% strongly disagree with this idea, and nobody simply disagrees or agrees. An average score of 3.64 suggests that students tend to feel a bit disconnected because of using English. With a standard deviation of 1.44, it shows that students have different views on this topic.

4.2 Teachers' Insights

The data gathered from the teacher survey provides useful knowledge about how teachers engage with students, the difficulties they encounter, and their opinions on making English the primary language in their classrooms. Below, you'll find tables displaying what teachers in private schools in Erbil shared about their experiences with this method.

Table (1): I feel quite sure about teaching my subject using English.

Category	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	14	19.7%		
Agree	25	35.2%		
Neutral	18	25.4%		
Disagree	10	14.1%		
Strongly Disagree	4	5.6%		
Total	71	100.0%	3.50	1.11

More than half the teachers, about 54.9%, are confident about teaching their subjects in English. Within this group, 19.7% are very sure of their skills while another 35.2% just feel they can handle it. Conversely, 25.4% aren't too sure and are kind of on the fence about their confidence, and 19.7% feel they aren't up to the task. Overall, the collective confidence score comes to an average of 3.50, which suggests that teachers feel moderately confident about using English in their classes.

Table (2): I have received sufficient training to teach effectively in English.

Category	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	8	11.3%		
Agree	13	18.3%		
Neutral	14	19.7%		
Disagree	20	28.2%		
Strongly Disagree	16	22.5%		
Total	71	100.0%	2.68	1.23

Just over half of the teachers, about 50.7%, think they didn't get enough practice to teach in English well. But 28.2% don't feel this way, and 22.5% strongly disagree with this thought. Only 29.6% feel confident about their practice, as shown by an average score of 2.68. This means that most people aren't happy with the current EMI practice.

Table (3): I find it tough to put complex thoughts into English words.

Category	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	14	19.7%		
Agree	22	31.0%		
Neutral	17	23.9%		
Disagree	13	18.3%		
Strongly Disagree	5	7.0%		
Total	71	100.0%	3.38	1.15

Educators indicate significant challenges in conveying complex ideas in English, with 50.7% acknowledging or strongly acknowledging their difficulty in achieving clarity. While a smaller segment of teachers (25.3%) report fewer issues, most face hurdles in communicating intricate concepts. The average score of 3.38 points to a moderate level of difficulty in this regard.

Table (4): Many students struggle to grasp lessons presented in English.

Category	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	15	21.1%		
Agree	21	29.6%		
Neutral	17	23.9%		
Disagree	12	16.9%		
Strongly Disagree	6	8.5%		
Total	71	100.0%	3.39	1.18

Over 50% of teachers (50.7%) feel that students often struggle to grasp lessons taught in English. Out of these teachers, 21.1% strongly believe this, while another 29.6% somewhat agree. About 25.4% are neutral and don't lean one way or the other. An average score of 3.39 suggests many teachers notice that students have a hard time understanding when lessons are in English.

Table (5): I do not have the resources or materials needed for teaching in English.

Category	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	14	19.7%		
Agree	23	32.4%		
Neutral	20	28.2%		
Disagree	11	15.5%		
Strongly Disagree	3	4.2%		
Total	71	100.0%	3.48	1.05

More than half of the teachers we spoke to (51.9%) mentioned they don't have enough good English teaching materials. A portion, 19.7%, felt unsure, and the same number completely disagreed or strongly disagreed. With an average score of 3.48, there's an average level of concern about the lack of resources for English-Medium Instruction (EMI), showing that many struggle to find enough suitable materials for teaching.

Table (6): I require additional professional training to enhance my EMI teaching abilities.

Category	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	23	32.4%		
Agree	25	35.2%		
Neutral	14	19.7%		
Disagree	7	9.9%		
Strongly Disagree	2	2.8%		
Total	71	100.0%	3.85	1.00

A significant portion of educators, specifically 67.6%, indicates a strong desire for increased professional development to improve their skills in English Medium Instruction (EMI). Among them, 32.4% strongly agree while 35.2% agree, resulting in a mean score of 3.85 that highlights the urgent need for training in this field.

4.3 Parental Perspectives

The analysis of the semi-structured interviews conducted with parents identified three key themes related to the implementation of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in Erbil private schools: (1) Decreased parental engagement due to language difficulties, (2) Perceived educational benefits associated with EMI, and (3) Worries regarding cultural identity and the preservation of native languages.

1. Reduced Parental Involvement Due to Language Barrier

Many parents frequently raised concerns about their limited ability to help their children with schoolwork because of their lack of English skills. This often resulted in feelings of frustration, as they struggled to support homework tasks or participate in educational conversations, which in turn reduced their involvement in their children's learning. One parent mentioned, "My son has English homework each day, but I struggle to assist him because I don't grasp most of it. I feel powerless." Such feelings highlight an increasing gap between home and school, with parents feeling excluded from the educational experience due to the emphasis on English in teaching.

This theme reflects results from other contexts of English Medium Instruction (EMI): for example, (Paudel, 2024) conducted a qualitative study on community schools in Nepal and found that parents often felt excluded from academic involvement due to their limited English skills, which weakened the collaboration between home and school. This data indicates that while EMI may benefit students, it can unintentionally marginalize parents lacking proficiency in English.

2. Perceived Academic Advantages of EMI

Many parents acknowledged the ongoing educational and professional advantages of using English as a medium of instruction (EMI). They viewed English as a global language that could open up better opportunities for their children's futures.

One parent remarked: "English is crucial today. If my daughter masters it, she will have greater opportunities in university and in her career, possibly even overseas."

This indicates that many parents prefer EMI as they believe it can assist their children in achieving success in the future. This perspective is also supported by findings from recent research. For instance, (Batool, S.S. & Ali, M.K., 2024) revealed that numerous parents in Pakistan were in favor of English medium instruction, as they believed it would grant their children better chances of attending prestigious universities and securing improved job prospects.

3. Concerns Over Cultural Identity and Language Preservation

A key worry is that an overemphasis on English could weaken children's ties to their native language and culture. Some parents expressed concern that their children are speaking more English than Kurdish at home. One parent expressed concern, saying: "My child now speaks more English than Kurdish at home. I worry about the impact on his appreciation for our culture."

Parents feel it's vital for schools to uphold the Kurdish language and traditions while also offering English lessons. They suggested that schools should teach Kurdish alongside English.

This concern is backed by additional research like, (Alrashidi, O., Smith, L. & Jones, P., 2023) reported that parents in the UAE expressed concerns that extensive use of English in educational settings might diminish children's engagement with their cultural heritage.

The results indicate that although parents recognize the importance of English for their children's future, it also poses challenges—particularly regarding parental engagement and cultural identity. To address these issues, schools ought to aid parents by providing English classes and incorporating Kurdish language and culture into the curriculum to maintain a balance.

Discussion of the findings

This study explored the benefits and drawbacks of implementing English as the medium of instruction (EMI) in private schools located in Erbil. Results show varied experiences among students, insights from teachers, and opinions from parents.

Students usually get that English-Medium Instruction (EMI) really helps improve their English skills, setting them up for opportunities abroad. However, not all students feel equally confident using English. Quite a few struggle with understanding their lessons because their English isn't strong enough. This shows that while EMI can improve language ability, not being good enough in English can make learning hard. These findings match studies by (Coleman, 2010) and recent work by Woldehanna et al. (2024), pointing out that being ready in terms of language skills is crucial in EMI programs.

Educators generally agree that using English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) can greatly improve students' English proficiency. However, it also brings several challenges within classrooms, such as the necessity of slowing down lesson speed and frequently alternating between English and students' first languages to aid in comprehension. (Pun, J. & Jin, X., 2022) support this observation through their path analysis of English Medium Instruction (EMI) in science classrooms. They discovered that low English proficiency in both students and teachers often obstructs understanding of the content. Consequently, teachers tend to simplify their explanations or switch to the local language, which slows academic content delivery. Their findings emphasize that although EMI offers linguistic advantages, it may reduce instructional efficacy in multilingual settings, particularly when there is a lack of language support systems.

The discussion thoroughly examines the research inquiries by analyzing the perceived benefits and drawbacks of using English as a medium of instruction from the viewpoints of students, teachers, and parents. It underscores the importance of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in improving language skills and preparing for a global future while also recognizing the difficulties

it presents in content understanding and teaching methods.

The results also support the study's hypotheses by showing that EMI impacts the presentation of subject matter, affects classroom interactions, and poses challenges for both students and teachers when their English language skills are limited or their professional training is insufficient.

5. Conclusion

This study explored the role of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in private primary schools in Erbil, with the goal of assessing its benefits and drawbacks from the viewpoints of students, teachers, and parents. It highlighted that using English as the main language for instruction is seen as a key tool to boost students' English abilities and prepare them for academic and career opportunities in the global job market. It stresses that this approach helps students get better at English and is beneficial for their future studies and work in an interconnected world.

The results also indicated that English Medium Instruction (EMI) presents notable difficulties, especially among students with limited English skills. Numerous students find it hard to understand the material, and teachers frequently resort to switching languages to explain lessons. Parents are aware of the long-term advantages of English Medium Instruction (EMI), but they worry about their limited capacity to support their children due to language obstacles. This highlights that while EMI aids in language growth, it may limit subject learning and classroom participation without sufficient support. The research highlights the need for a more inclusive and supportive EMI method—ensuring that students receive adequate language support and that teachers have proper training to handle multilingual classrooms. Additionally, effective strategies for involving parents, even if they lack English proficiency, are vital in fostering a nurturing educational atmosphere.

While the study provides useful findings, it's crucial to recognize certain limitations, especially the limited number of parent participants, which might influence how broadly we can apply their opinions. Future studies could build on this research by examining the lasting impacts of EMI on student success or by contrasting EMI with bilingual or transitional approaches in alike multilingual situations. The research adds valuable insights to the expanding literature on English Medium Instruction in non-English-speaking areas and suggests actionable steps for enhancing language policies and educational practices in private schools in Erbil.

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به کارهیتانی زمانی ئینگلیزی وهک ئامرازی فیرکردن له قوتابخانه تاییه ته کانی ههولیر: سوود و زیانه کانی

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پوخته

ئهم توێژینه وهیه به دواداچوون بۆ جیبه جیکردنی زمانی ئینگلیزی وهک ئامرازی فیرکاری (EMI) له قوتابخانه تاییه ته کانی ههولیر- عیراق دهکات، تیشک دهخاته سه ر سوود و ئاسته نگه کانی. له گه ل په ره سه ندنی EMI له سه رانه سه ری هه ریمی کوردستان، به تاییه تی له ناو که رتی پهروه دهی تاییه تدا، توێژینه وهکه به دواداچوون بۆ کاریگه ریه کانی له سه ر کاریگه ری وانه وتنه وه، ئه دای ئه کادیمی خویندکار، و توانای زمانی ئینگلیزی دهکات. به به کارهیتانی پێبازی شیوازی تیکه لاو- له وانه ش پاپرسی و چاو پیکه وتن - توێژینه وهکه چه ندین سوودی EMI دهستیشان دهکات، وهک باشترکردنی توانا کانی زمان، به رزبوونه وهی توانای کتیرکینی ئه کادیمی، و هاوته ریبی باشتر له گه ل ستاندارده کانی پهروه دهی جیهان . هه رچونیک بی، توێژینه وهکه تیشک دهخاته سه ر ئاسته نگه دیاره کان: به ره به ستی زمان بۆ خویندکاران و دایک و باوکان، راهیتانی ماموستایانی تاییه ت ته نها به EMI، و که مبوونه وهی گشتگیری کولتوری و زمانه وانی. ئهم پرسانه ده توانن رێگری له تیکه یشتن بکه ن و به شداریکردنی خویندکاران سنووردار بکه ن. توێژینه وهکه پێشنیاری ده ستیوه ردانی ستراتییژی دهکات وهک گه شه پیدانی پیشه بی به رده وام (CPD) بۆ ماموستایان، شیوازیکی جیبه جیکردنی EMI قوناغه ندی، و به رنامه کانی پشتگیری دایک و باوک بۆ دلنیا بوون له ده ستره گه یشتنیکی دادپه روه رانه تر بۆ فیربوون. به گشتی، له کاتی که EMI توانای به هیزی هه یه بۆ به رزکردنه وهی ستانداردی پهروه دهی و په یوه ندی جیهانی له قوتابخانه تاییه ته کانی ههولیر، سه رکه وتنی درێخایه نی به نده به پلاننانی گشتگیر، په کخستنی سیاسه ت و هه ستیاری دهق .

وشه سه ره کیه کان: ئینگلیزی، ئامراز، ئاستی ئه کادیمی، سیاسه تی زمان و خویندنی تاییه ت

استخدام اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة تعليمية في مدارس أربيل الاهلية: المزايا والعيوب

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الملخص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في تطبيق اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة تدريس (EMI) في المدارس الاهلية في أربيل، العراق، مع التركيز على فوائدها وتحدياتها. ومع تزايد انتشار EMI في جميع أنحاء إقليم كردستان، وخاصة في قطاع التعليم الخاص، يدرس البحث تأثيره على فعالية التدريس والأداء الأكاديمي للطلاب وكفاءة اللغة الإنجليزية. وباستخدام نهج متعدد الأساليب - بما في ذلك الاستبيانات والمقابلات - تحدد الدراسة العديد من مزايا EMI، مثل تحسين المهارات اللغوية وتعزيز القدرة التنافسية الأكاديمية والتوافق بشكل أفضل مع معايير التعليم العالمية. ومع ذلك، يسلط البحث الضوء أيضًا على تحديات ملحوظة: الحواجز اللغوية للطلاب وأولياء الأمور، وعدم كفاية تدريب المعلمين على EMI، وانخفاض الشمول الثقافي واللغوي. يمكن أن تعيق هذه المشكلات الفهم وتحد من مشاركة الطلاب. توصي الدراسة بتدخلات استراتيجية، مثل التطوير المهني المستمر للمعلمين، ونموذج تطبيق تدريجي لمبادرة إدارة التعليم الإلكتروني (EMI)، وبرامج دعم أولياء الأمور، لضمان وصول أكثر عدالة إلى التعليم. عمومًا، مع أن مبادرة إدارة التعليم الإلكتروني (EMI) تتمتع بإمكانيات قوية لرفع المعايير التعليمية وتعزيز التواصل العالمي في مدارس أربيل الاهلية، إلا أن نجاحها على المدى الطويل يعتمد على التخطيط الشامل، ومواءمة السياسات، والحساسية السياقية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة الإنجليزية، والوسيط، والأداء الأكاديمي، وسياسة اللغة، والتعليم الاهلي