

# Attitudes of Students of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka Toward EMI

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**ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS OF THE FACULTY OF  
HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN RIJEKA  
TOWARD EMI**

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the M.A. in English Language and  
Literature and Italian Language and Literature at the University of Rijeka

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## **Abstract**

English-medium instruction (EMI) programs are a recent trend in higher education. Although they are gaining popularity all over the world, in Rijeka there are only several EMI programs. This study aims to investigate the attitudes that students of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka have towards the introduction of EMI programs. We wanted to enquire their attitudes towards education in English, student mobility, and their teachers' preparedness for teaching in English. Our subject of interest was also their willingness to participate in an EMI program and their familiarity with EMI. This study also dealt with the use of English in Croatian medium programs. In other words, we wanted to see to what extent English was already used at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

**Keywords:** EMI, attitudes, higher education, humanities, Croatia

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## 1. Introduction

In recent years there is a strong tendency for English to be adopted as a medium of instruction in higher education. At over 400 European universities there were more than 2400 English-medium programs in 2007, which was a 340 percent increase compared to 2002 (Vu and Burns 2014).

Many universities opt for programs in English in order to attract foreign students and lecturers. This shows the impact that the globalization and the “Englishisation” have on the higher education domain (Jenkins 2018). English-medium instruction (EMI) was primarily triggered by the Bologna process. Universities decide to introduce it in order to recruit new students, improve their ranking and be more competitive in the education market (Björkman 2010).

This paper deals with the attitudes that students of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences have toward the introduction of EMI. Regarding undergraduate and graduate study programs, there are currently three EMI programs in Rijeka: undergraduate and graduate *International Business* at the Faculty of Economics and *Medical Studies in English* at the Faculty of Medicine (Drljača Margić and Vodopija-Krstanović 2015; Tulić 2015). At the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka there are currently no programs in English other than the undergraduate and graduate programs of English language and literature. There are ten departments at the Faculty, out of which four are philological, and thus not suitable for the introduction of EMI. At the remaining departments – Philosophy, Cultural Studies, Pedagogy, History, Art History and Psychology – EMI could be implemented. This research was conducted with students of philosophy, pedagogy, history and art history. The number of participants was five from each department. One or two students

from each group had English as their second major, while the remaining participants had other second majors. We wanted to compare the attitudes of students who have English as their second major with the attitudes of those who do not.

The aims of this research were to discover how familiar students were with EMI, what their attitudes were towards it, if they would like to see it introduced at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka and if they would participate in an EMI program. We also enquired into the potential negative influence of the introduction of English as a language of instruction on Croatian and the challenges both teachers and students might face in such a program.

## 2. Previous research

Although EMI is not well developed at UNIRI, there is a certain degree of awareness among the management that steps should be taken to improve the offering of programs in English. They seem to be cognizant of the fact that English (and multilingualism in general) has positive professional implications for graduates (Drljača Margić and Vodopija Krstanović 2015). EMI is still in its early stages in Rijeka; however, according to the research by Drljača Margić and Vodopija Krstanović since 2009, when UNIRI was awarded the Erasmus Charter, the need for EMI programs has been growing. However, it takes some time to introduce an EMI program because there is need for reorganization and training of teachers.

Klaassen and Graaff (2010) investigated EMI programs at Dutch universities, its focus was primarily on the effect training had on teaching staff. The Dutch context is important because the University of Maastricht was the first one to implement modern EMI programs. This study suggests that lecturers faced with the introduction of an innovation in the educational context go through a similar developmental process as non-native speaking novice teaching assistants working in an English-speaking country. The teaching assistants' concerns shift from centring on the "self and survival" to "teaching skills" and "student learning outcomes".

The study conducted by Julie Dearden from EMI Oxford (The Centre for Research and Development in English medium Instruction) in 2013 and 2014 studied the global phenomenon of English medium Instruction. The research included 55 countries and its main conclusions were: a) The general trend is towards a rapid expansion of EMI provision; b) There is official governmental backing for EMI. Although public opinion is not wholeheartedly in support of EMI, especially in the secondary phase, the attitudes can be described as 'equivocal' or 'controversial' rather than being 'against' its introduction and/or

continued use. Where there are concerns, these relate to the potentially socially divisive nature of EMI because instruction through English may limit access for lower socio-economic groups and/or a fear that the first language or national identity will be undermined. The research suggests that there is an ongoing trend in EMI, there is institutional support, which is stronger than the public support, however we cannot say that the public is against it. This research also suggests that English being a global language influences the public's view on EMI making it more positive as time progresses. However, during formal elementary and secondary education students work more on receptive than on productive skills, while at university level they need to be equally competent in receptive and productive skills.

In her 2019 study, Kuteeva looked at the development of EMI in Sweden in the past 10 years. Sweden is one of the first countries to introduce EMI and the second country in Europe and in the world in terms of English proficiency. What Kuteeva discovered was that “in light of recent sociolinguistic developments resulting from increased migration, language policies may be adapted to reflect this change. The student population is also likely to diversify as universities in Sweden are striving to implement the policies of internationalization on one hand and widening participation on the other. In this context, English-medium instruction in Sweden and elsewhere is likely to evolve in new directions which will open up venues for further research.” (Kuteeva, 2019, p. 13).

Dearden's 2014 study enquired into how certain countries promote EMI programs. In Croatia, for example, in the context of the Bologna process and with increased international mobility as one of its priorities, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport has developed an Action Plan for the removal of obstacles and strengthening of the international mobility in education, which includes the increase in the number of study programs offered in foreign languages as one of its measures (Dearden 2014, p. 16).

When it comes to EMI in the Korean context, a 2015 study suggests that EMI provides



challenges for students, however it also provides new opportunities (Williams 2015). In Turkey, EMI is as popular as in other countries because the majority of teachers there believe that Turkish is better for educational purposes than English, so they opted to teach in Turkish (Kiliçkaya 2006).

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Aims

The aim of the study was to investigate the attitudes of students of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka towards the introduction of EMI at their faculty. First, we wanted to find out how familiar they were with the notion of EMI and if they were familiar with other similar programs at their university. We also wanted to find out if they would like to have a possibility to enroll into an EMI program in their area of study. The study seeks to discover the positive and negative attitudes that students have towards EMI. Another aspect that we wanted to investigate was the relationship with Croatian, as a mother tongue of most of the participants, and EMI as a potential threat to its development.

Another aspect that we wanted to investigate during this study were the opinions that students have regarding the implementation of EMI at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka. We investigated the prerequisites for both teachers and students. We also inquired about the teachers' and students' willingness and motivation to participate in an EMI program. Another aspect we wanted to explore was student mobility, mostly through the Erasmus student network and the benefits EMI might have for this exchange program. We also looked at the extent to which English is used today in Croatian-taught programs.

Lastly, we asked our participants how likely they think the realization of this project was. We also asked about the way they think it should be implemented, and whether EMI programs should have their Croatian-medium counterparts.

### 3.2. Research questions

This study seeks to investigate the student's attitudes about the introduction of EMI. We want to investigate if the participants are familiar with EMI and to what extent. We also ask if they think EMI should be introduced at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka. We inquire into the positive and negative sides of the introduction of EMI. The study also seeks to answer how many participants would be interested to take part in an EMI program and if they think it could potentially jeopardize their mother tongue, that is, Croatian.

The second important question this research seeks to answer is: „What are the students' perceptions about the implementation of EMI?“ We ask the participants if they think their teacher would be willing to teach in English and what the necessary prerequisites are. We also investigate if they think that teachers need additional education in order to be able to teach in English. This research also seeks to investigate to what level a different language of instruction would influence the learning process, test taking and lectures. One of the aspects we are interested in is student mobility and the benefits that EMI programs can offer it. We also want to find out to what extent the English language is used in Croatian programs at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka.

Lastly, we want to find out if our participants think the introduction of EMI at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka is feasible. We ask at what level EMI should be introduced and to what extent. We want to know if students think that there should be both Croatian and English counterparts or that English programs should completely replace the Croatian programs.

### 3.3. Context

The research was conducted with students of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka. The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences educates students in pursuit of bachelors, masters and PhD degrees in the field of social sciences and humanities. In the academic year 2005/2006, the Faculty introduced comprehensive changes in line with the objectives defined by the Bologna Declaration and adopted the three cycles of higher education qualification using the ECTS standard. At undergraduate and graduate levels, it is possible to study single or double major in free combinations. All the courses are one semester long, which allows students to participate in student exchange programs at various Croatian and European universities.

### 3.4. Research method and procedure

The data were collected by means of an interview. Initially, we conducted two pilot interviews with one student of Pedagogy and one student of Philosophy and English. After the pilot phase some questions were modified, while others were added. After the first interview, several questions were added, mainly concerning personal opinions about EMI and the interest participants have. After the second interview, some questions were modified and simplified.

The interview comprised 22 questions, both open-ended and closed-ended. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: the first dealing with the attitudes students have towards EMI, the second dealing with students' perception of EMI and the third with the implementation of EMI at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka.

The interviews were conducted in the period of April, May and June 2019 at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka. The average duration of an interview was around 15 minutes, and they were audio -recorded. All participants signed a consent form, allowing for the interview to be used only for the purposes of this study. After completing the interviews, the interviewer listened to the recordings and transcribed the most relevant parts of the interview, which were subsequently coded to identify the salient topics.

### 3.5. Hypotheses

The study was based on the following hypotheses:

1. Students think that EMI should be introduced at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka and have positive attitudes towards the introduction of EMI.
2. Students fear that their and their teachers' language competences are not sufficient for an engagement in EMI.
3. Students think that EMI is not going to be introduced at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka in the near future because the organization of EMI and support for teachers would take a considerable amount of time.

## 4. Results

Out of the 20 participants that we interviewed, ten participants were familiar with EMI, six participants heard about it and four participants have never heard about it. All the students that have English as their second major mentioned that they were familiar with it because they had a course “English as a global language” in which they discussed EMI programs. Other students were mostly familiar with it because they knew someone who studied in an EMI program at the Faculty of Economy or the Faculty of Medicine in Rijeka. This is clearly indicated in the following comments (translated from Croatian by the author):

*I am. We had a course about it, English is used to transmit knowledge in other subjects, the focus is not on English and its grammar, but it is used to transmit other knowledge instead. (3)*

*I am. It is a course in English for foreign students. I took one in Italy and it helped me a lot, because even though I speak Italian, my other colleagues did not so it helped us communicate and study in English. (12)*

*I was not until now. (18)*

We asked the participants if EMI should be introduced at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The answers to this question varied but were mostly positive toward the introduction of EMI at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Most of philosophy students had mixed and negative attitudes, while pedagogy students had predominantly positive attitudes. Some participants mentioned that EMI would be more useful for interdisciplinary sciences like psychology, pedagogy and cultural sciences. Many participants mentioned the importance of EMI for Erasmus students who would finally have an opportunity to listen to lectures in English. Some participants mentioned that students who

wished to enroll in an English study program would more promptly decide to study abroad. Some participants mentioned the importance of good organization and quality of the program. Most participants also mentioned that it was a great way to improve collaboration with other European universities. One other aspect that was mentioned was the literature that is mainly in English, even in programs that are in Croatian. That is why some participants think it would be easy to translate the whole program in English. Some mentioned concerns about the lack of teachers with adequate abilities to teach in such a program.

*I think we should introduce it because it is necessary to be up to date with other universities and trends. I have doubts about its quality implementation. It should add to the quality of the program, and not reduce it. (7)*

*It depends, we had an Erasmus student, so we had one lesson in “Philosophy of politics” in English, and it was difficult for us even in Croatian. So maybe, but it should be organized much better. Maybe minorities would also find it easier to study in English. (12)*

*I think it is complicated, I do not think everyone would agree for there to be just the English option. (20)*

When asked about the positive aspects of EMI, the participants mentioned student mobility, literature in English, language use, foreign student integration, learning new vocabulary and more experienced teachers. They also mentioned that EMI programs would prepare student better for future jobs on a global level, it would make students more skilled in writing scientific papers and presenting on international conferences. Participants stated that EMI would also improve the visibility and the attractiveness of the faculty on a global level, it would improve the collaboration with foreign universities, Erasmus students would finally get to participate in all lectures. Some participants also mentioned that with introducing such a program, the university would probably get some boost from the EU funds. Some participants

suggested that there should be one course in English every semester even in programs that are held in Croatian. This clearly stated in the following comments:

*Probably more adequate preparedness for work on international level, if someone is doing scientific research, most congresses are being held outside Croatia, so it requires a more professional level of English. If not a whole program, it would be good if there was at least one course held in English each semester. (6)*

*The visibility of the university, students from other countries, and it would all add to the interculturality. It could motivate students to participate in exchange programs more, improve their language skills. Today English is a global language and many employers demand it. (7)*

*A positive aspect would be that students could choose to study completely in a foreign language, which would prepare them for work outside Croatia, I am not sure how much we should strive toward that, but given the current situation, it is a good thing. I am studying history, which is not a prosperous occupation, so I will have a hard time finding a job. If they are going to establish faculties with EMI, then they will surely establish elementary schools and high schools in English, and I only see the positive side of it. (8)*

When asked about the possible problems with the introduction of EMI, the participants mentioned scarce knowledge of English, especially related to scientific vocabulary. Some participants also mentioned that there could be problems with logistics and financing, lack of time and will, the adjustment and lack of students as all departments have approximately 30 to 40 students a year. They also mentioned the lack of textbooks in English. One participant was concerned about the unpreparedness of everyone involved if it were to be introduced too quickly, while another participant worries that because of linguistic problems there might be too much focus on language rather than on the subject.



*Lack of language knowledge among teachers and students, lack of knowledge of academic English and the professional vocabulary. (6)*

*I am not sure how many teachers are competent enough to teach in English. And when it comes to students, if it would be optional, then students that know English well would enroll in that program. Teacher should probably get paid more as EMI would represent a burden. (5)*

*Purely logistics, lack of students, the departments are small in number, 20 people a year maximum. I believe there are teachers that are ready to teach in English, because they have a degree in English, so I believe that lecturers would not be a problem. (3)*

We asked the participants if they would personally take part in an EMI study program and why. We also asked why they thought their colleagues might decide differently. The majority of participants stated that given the chance, they would enroll in an EMI program, three of them were indecisive, while five of them said they would not enroll in that program. All the participants who study English as one of their majors stated that they would study their second major in an EMI program given the chance. When it comes to departments, all the departments had favorable attitudes towards EMI; however, Pedagogy and History have shown greater tendency towards it than Philosophy and Art history.

Participants who stated that they would study in an EMI program said they would do it because it would only enrich the program, they mentioned that they felt that English language use was insufficient in their current study programs. They also mentioned that it would be easier because most of the literature was already in English, they would like to be familiarized with English vocabulary in their field of study, they felt there would have more job opportunities if they got a degree in an EMI program. One participant said that his Croatian was not very good so he would find it easier to study in English.

They said their colleagues might not be interested in an EMI program because of their lack of

knowledge of English, their disinterest. lack of advertisement for EMI programs, their wish to study in Croatian or their wish to stay in Croatia.

Participants who stated that they would not study in an EMI program said that they would not do it because they have lost contact with English, it would take too much time and effort or that their field of study has a lot of terminology, so it would be difficult to work in Croatia not knowing the necessary terminology. One participant said she would not participate in an EMI program because Philosophy is her second major and she has no intention of continuing with it after finishing her studies. Other participants stated that it would be too difficult for them, because they have troubles even studying in Croatian.

They stated that some of their colleagues might want to decide to study in an EMI program because they plan to work or continue their studies abroad after finishing their degree, they want to focus on a specific field like for example English history or their other major is English.

This is clearly indicated in the following comments:

*I might, it depends on how it is organized, if it would coexist with pedagogy in Croatian, it would only enrich the program. I do not know a lot of colleagues who would not like to study in English, we lack English and we need to use English literature. (1)*

*I would, it seems interesting, I think it would be a good experience and it does not seem too difficult to accomplish, I would just need to try harder. Some of my colleagues would not accept it because of scarce knowledge of English, but I do not think it would be received negatively. (14)*

*I would not, because philosophy is difficult enough in Croatian, maybe it is not to some, but I believe it is really complex. We had a part of a course in English because of an Erasmus student and it was difficult to follow because of terminology that we did not know*

*how to translate into Croatian for the test we are taking in Croatian. If the whole literature were in English, it would be easier. Some of my colleagues who have English as their other major might not find it difficult. (19)*

We asked the participants if the introduction of study programs in English could jeopardize the Croatian language. Most of the participants stated that the introduction of EMI would not jeopardize the Croatian language, while some participants think it would or they are simply not sure. The participants who study Art History all answered that it could not jeopardize the Croatian language, while most participants that think it could jeopardize the Croatian language or are not sure study pedagogy. Most students who study English as their second major think that it could jeopardize Croatian.

Participants who said it could jeopardize the Croatian language stated that if more students decide to enroll in an EMI program it could cause problems for teachers who teach within the Croatian equivalent and that in order for a language to be fully developed it should be present in all domains, including the academia.

Participants who stated that they were not sure about EMI programs jeopardizing the Croatian language said that it could jeopardize it if more students decide to study in EMI programs rather than the Croatian ones, but they mostly see good outcomes. They suggested more action to be taken for the protection of the Croatian language.

Participants who stated that EMI programs would not jeopardize the Croatian language stated that we should keep up with the current trends, that EMI would prepare students for a global job market, that we should be more open to different languages and that Croatian people are too sensitive about their language.

This is clearly indicated in the following comments:

*Not if there is a balance between the Croatian and the English program and if there is*

*always an alternative, that is the possibility to choose (either English or Croatian). (11)*

*Yes, because people like me would enroll in an English program which is more useful. If it would branch into two groups, I believe the majority of better students would choose the English version and this would cause the teachers that teach within the Croatian version would complain. (4)*

*Both yes and no. English is becoming more expanded today, so it might gradually become a problem, because people know English better today, they learn it from the first year of elementary school, so they might decide to study in English. But on the other hand, we must have something to support Croatian. We should have some actions to preserve Croatian. (3)*

We asked the participants if they thought that the teachers would be reluctant to teach in English. The participants were divided on this question, while the majority (ten participants) thought that teachers would be reluctant to teach in English, five participants thought that they would not be reluctant, and five participants were not sure. All participants who had English as one of their majors stated that teachers would be reluctant to teach in English. Most participants who study Art History thought that teachers would be reluctant to teach in English, while most of participants who study Philosophy thought that they would not be reluctant to teach in English.

Students who said that teachers would be reluctant to teach in English stated that they would be more confident teaching in Croatian and that they do not necessarily know all the specific vocabulary. They also stated that even though teachers use English a lot while reading and writing, they might not be experienced in speaking English and they will have a hard time explaining some concepts. Most participants stated that they think that mostly older teachers will be reluctant to teach in English because they are inflexible and refuse innovations.

Participants who were not sure if teachers would be reluctant to teach in English stated that it

depended on the teacher's competence, how much he or she collaborated with foreign universities, that the teachers might be uncertain about their knowledge of English. They also mentioned that some teachers got their degree in English as well as in the subject they are currently teaching so these teachers might have an advantage.

Participants who think that teacher will not be reluctant to teach in English stated that teachers already teach Erasmus students using English and that teachers are very flexible.

*At my department I do not think they would. I see that everybody is extremely prepared, for example a teacher translated a course into English in an instant because a student from Italy attended classes. (19)*

*There is probably a generation of teachers who will be against it, but we should focus on young people who can only profit teaching in a global language. (8)*

*I think that, for example at the History department it would be a problem for some to teach in English, but it depends on the teacher, maybe some of them do not know English enough or they are simply used to teaching in Croatian, so they would have problems with changing that. (16)*

We asked the participants about their opinions on the prerequisites for students and for teachers. We asked how they think they should be tested and what would happen if teachers failed to fulfill the requirements, and the university was highly inclined to introduce EMI programs. Some participants suggested that there should be an entrance exam to test the student's knowledge of English, while other said that the state exam (matura) would be enough. Some suggested that only students who got A or B in the state exam could enroll in an EMI program. The participants suggested that the language level should be from B2 to C2. They also stated that it is very important to test the speaking skills because most of the communication in class is done orally. Some participants stated that the first step should be

good preparation for EMI programs in high school and good marketing and advertisement.

As for the teachers, some participants suggested that content knowledge should be tested in English. They also suggested that there should be additional courses organized for the teachers. Some also suggested that each teacher should hold a lecture in English in front of their peers and language teachers. Participants also said that it was important for teachers to be constantly collaborating with different institutions outside their department.

Participants gave various answers when asked what would happen if teachers failed to fulfill the requirements for teaching in EMI programs. Some said that the university would probably just give up on the projects, others stated that the university would organize courses in order to train teachers. Some participants stated that maybe new teachers would be employed so teachers who are fluent in English would have greater advantages and teachers who do not might get fired. Several participants worried that if that program was introduced “overnight” without good preparation it would be a waste of time and money because the quality would be poor.

This is clearly indicated in the following comments:

*Students could take a general knowledge test. The teachers could prepare a lecture related to their subject and teach it in front of a committee. Maybe we should employ new teachers, and some might get fired. (3)*

*For students the state exam, higher level of English. Maybe if they plan to enroll in this program, they should also choose a high school with a good linguistic program. It is easiest for teachers that got their degree in English alongside the subject they are teaching. There could be problems for other teachers, but if they are interested and willing to develop further, there should not be any problem. The university should organize English courses, as it has more funds than the faculty. (17)*

*I think that the language level should be B2-C1. I think that below B2 it would be difficult especially with seminar presentations. I think that the state exam would be enough for students, higher level of English, it is unnecessary to ask for an additional IELTS test which students would have to pay. For the teachers I think an IELTS test should be taken because they finished school a long time ago and might have never taken English on their state exam. I do not know, because asking teachers to take lessons in English would be funny, maybe there could be a collaboration with the Department of English. (9)*

We asked the participants if they thought teachers would be able to teach in English without additional training or tests. Most participants answered that their teachers would not be able to teach in English without additional training or tests. Some of them stated that it depended on the individual teacher, while a small number of participants stated that they would be able to do it. The majority of students of philosophy and art history stated that their teachers would be able to teach in English, while students of history all stated that they would not be able to do it without additional training.

Participants stated that teachers who have a degree in English would not need to take tests or additional training, while others should. Some participants stated that some teachers have problems with their accent while teaching in English.

This is clearly indicated in the following comments:

*I do not think so, it is a big change. It is not easy for students to present in English and here we are talking about complete lectures. Also, oral exams could be problematic if the teacher and the students did not understand each other. (7)*

*I think it depends on the respective teacher. Not everybody has the same knowledge and personality. However, a professional training would be good. (11)*

*It depends, for example in the field of art history teachers have good knowledge*

*because to finish their studies, they must have good command of English, but I am not against the introduction of additional training. (14)*

We asked the participants if they thought that students would have poorer knowledge of the subject. Most participants stated that students would not have poorer knowledge, only a few of them stated that there could be some problems. The majority of participants that study philosophy stated that students of EMI programs would not have poorer knowledge, while most participants who stated that it was possible for students to have poorer knowledge study pedagogy.

Participants who stated that students might have poorer knowledge of the subject in an EMI program said that it was due to student's poor knowledge of English which would unable them to understand certain concepts. They also stated that there could be too much focus on the language and the content might be neglected. Some participants stated that the depth of the teaching would never be the same as in the mother tongue, the students would only get the surface level of knowledge.

Participants who stated that students would not have poorer knowledge in an EMI program said that it all depends on the teacher and the student. They added that materials in English are more accessible and numerous and that translations might be used in class, which would enrich the learning process.

*It could happen. They do not understand some aspects that would need further explanation, and explanations in English would not be enough. They would learn with greater difficulty. (2)*

*Maybe, it depends on the teacher. If we are talking about the same level of competence, the materials are more accessible, and the learning potential is higher. (t 4)*

*No, but they might not get the depth and some details that students would get in a*



*Croatian program. (16)*

We asked the participants if they thought that linguistic issues could hinder the quality of student's education. Most participants stated that linguistic issues would hinder the quality of education. A small number said that it would not, and some were undecided. All participants who have English as one of their majors stated that linguistic issues would hinder the quality of education, as well as most students of History. A smaller number of participants who study Art history and Philosophy stated that it would indeed hinder their education.

Participants stated that a short summary in Croatian should be given at the end of each lesson to facilitate the learning process for students, that there might be problems with writing and speaking and that it could be an opportunity for improvement and that for start English should be an obligatory subject in all study programs. They also stated that good teachers could help students deal with their problems and that they work on their language even in other programs, so there would not be a big difference. Participants mentioned that students who do not feel secure in their language abilities can always choose to study in Croatian.

This is clearly indicated in the following comments:

*Well, I think it should be organized as a continuous testing, maybe a summary of the lecture in Croatian so that students could make sure they understood the lesson. (1)*

*I think it would, no matter the level of their language, I think it would improve unconsciously, but I think it would be useful to introduce English in each department as an obligatory subject like Physical Education is now. (6)*

*I think so. If they start over and teachers help, I think they could get good results. (12)*

We asked the participants if they thought that students would find it more difficult to study in English. Most participants answered that it depends on the individual student and his or her

previous knowledge. A few participants stated that it would be more difficult to study in English and one participant said that it would not.

Many participants stated that it would be difficult in the beginning, but students would adjust to this type of learning. They suggested that teachers should insist on communication in English even outside the classroom.

This is clearly indicated in the following comments:

*Initially, I think it would definitely be a challenge, but they would get used to it soon and after a short period of time it would not be a problem. Most of our literature is already in English. (6)*

*I think it is just a matter of adjustment, every beginning is hard, but if you are constantly in contact with teachers who speak English, I think communication in English between students should be encouraged, like we had to do in Italian, so that the language becomes more fluent. (9)*

*It would partially. People have different levels of English, and if you do not learn in your mother tongue it is always harder. (13)*

We asked the participants if they thought that students would prefer taking tests in English as their learning materials are mostly in English. Most of the participants stated that they would prefer taking test in English if their learning materials are in English. A small number of participants said that they would not prefer taking tests in English or were undecided.

Participants who said they would prefer writing tests in English if learning materials were in English stated that it would make the learning process easier, that students would not have problems with different terminology and with translation.

Participants who said they would not prefer writing tests in English if learning materials were

in English stated that writing tests in English could force students to learn by heart, that not everybody has the same productive skills and that if the lectures are in Croatian, so should be the tests.

*We had similar courses in History and I personally think that students would rather take tests in English, in the oral exam I found it difficult to present in Croatian what I learned in English. (16)*

*It would be easier for some students because they would not need to translate the text while reading and form sentences in Croatian. In these situations, they would have one less step. But for some, it might not be easier. (11)*

*I do not think so, because taking everything in consideration, I simply believe that individual competences differ in how well someone can understand and read a language, and then the oral or written production is another thing. As we do not have English as an obligatory course, I think it would be better to write tests in Croatian. (4)*

We asked the participants if they thought that EMI would make the student mobility easier. All participants, with no exception, stated that EMI would have a positive impact on student mobility. Participants stated that it would improve the inclusion of Erasmus students in regular classes, that Croatian students would be more confident in their language skills so they would decide to go abroad for a student exchange. Some participants also stated that it would be easier to do an exchange as both programs would be in English, so all credits would be acknowledged. Participants also stated that the mobility would not necessarily occur only on a education level, but also on an employment level. Having finished an EMI program, students would have the possibility to work almost everywhere.

This is clearly indicated in the following comments:

*It definitely would. We had a similar case, but we were against lessons in English, so*

*the student unfortunately had to have individual classes with the teacher. It was really confusing, the teacher taught in English and I did not know if I should write my notes in English or Croatian because I knew the test is going to be in Croatian. I also know about an Erasmus student at the Computer Science department who attended lessons in Croatian, and nobody understood how he managed to do so. It is really badly organized as he is granted an Erasmus exchange, but he does not understand anything. (19)*

*Probably yes, other universities would probably recognize that we offer various possibilities so we would sign more contracts. Our students would probably know English better, so they would do student exchangers like Erasmus more often. (16)*

*Absolutely, they would not be in panic because they know English through movies, videos and Youtube, but there they have to speak the language and listen to lectures, so I believe that this would make the process easier. I think that with Erasmus we aspire to globalization, that is that there are no countries, but an open world. (8)*

We asked the participants if they thought that the introduction of EMI would have an impact on the reputation of teachers and the university. All participants stated that the introduction of EMI would have an impact on the reputation of teachers and the university. They also agreed that that the impact would be positive, it would make the university more attractive to students and teachers could teach at foreign universities.

This is clearly indicated in the following comments:

*Yes, I think it would because it is very important and the visibility of the university itself on a global level depends on the fact that it offers study programs in English. (7)*

*I think it would because they could hold lectures in English, and the literature is often in English. (10)*

*Well yes, a faculty in English, our society would view it as something special. (20)*

We asked our participant if they ever studied in English in their respective study programs. It referred to lectures, materials, tests etc. Fifteen participants stated that English was used in one of those ways in their studies, while five participants states it was not used. Out of these five students, four study Pedagogy. All participants who study Philosophy and Art History stated they used English during their studies. Some participants mentioned they avoided English sources when given a choice, while others had no problems with it. The participants mentioned mostly the literature and guest lectures as their contact with English. Some participants stated that they wrote their notes in Croatian while listening to the lecture in English so that it would be easier for them to study afterwards.

*Not really, we did have some courses where we had a lot of literature in English, especially those dealing with the European dimension of education, but we did not have whole courses in English. (10)*

*Yes, in Art History a large amount of literature is in English, and not in Italian, which is considered to be the language of Art, especially renaissance. Even the guest lectures from teachers who come from Italy to talk about renaissance art are held in English. (4)*

*Yes, and there were even teachers who spoke English better than Croatian because they spent most of their life abroad. I must say that I do not remember these courses any less than those taught in Croatian. (15)*

We asked the participants to what extent English was used during their studies. Pedagogy and History students stated that it was used very little, mostly through literature. However, Art History and Philosophy students stated that it is used a lot in their study programs and that not knowing English could be a big problem for someone studying one of these study programs. Many participants stated that they cannot avoid English literature as most of the recent articles

and books have not been translated into English.

We asked the participants how likely they thought the introduction of EMI was at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka in the next five years. Even though they were divided, most of them said that they did not think it is possible in such a short period. Five participants said it is possible, four of them said they are not sure and 11 of them stated it is not possible. Students of Art History were the most optimistic, while students of History and English were the least optimistic about it. They stated that they are not sure how interested would the teachers be to take part in such a project. They also stated that teachers would need a lot of training and that things tend to move very slowly in Croatia because of bureaucracy. Many participants mentioned money as one of the main problems for the introduction of EMI, they also mentioned that a small number of students could be a problem because there were already small groups of students attending lectures in Croatian, if we would divide that number we might not even have enough students to activate certain programs. The participants who said it would be possible stated that English is becoming more important each day and we must keep up with the world trends. This is clearly indicated in the following comments:

*If we lived in another country, I think it would be possible, however in Croatia every project encounters a problem in the beginning, and it is bureaucracy and it discourages people. I would definitely offer to help such a project, but I really doubt it would be possible in five years. (8)*

*I am not really sure about the next five years. A lot of teacher training is required, maybe it would not be a problem for younger teachers, but if I look at my teachers, they are mostly older and they have some basic knowledge of English, but they need further education. (2)*

*I think there is a huge possibility, especially because we are in the English language sphere, had it been another language, I do not think it would have been received that well. (4)*

We asked the participants in which programs EMI should be introduced in the beginning, the bachelor's program, the master's program or both. 17 participants stated that it should be introduced on both levels. Two participants said it would be better to introduce it only in a master's program as it is more serious, and students can decide if they are interested once they spend three years studying a certain area. One participant stated it would be better to introduce it only in bachelor's programs. Some participants mentioned that if EMI was available only on a master's level then students would avoid it because they already have the content knowledge in Croatian, so it would be difficult to adjust themselves to a new language. Others think that a bachelor's program could serve as a test and if it succeeds, we could open master's and even doctoral programs. Many participants stated that there could be a problem if more students want to apply for an EMI program, so the Croatian program might remain without students. This is why we should have admission limits, so we could avoid these types of problems.

*In both programs, it does not make sense for someone to start in English and then to switch to Croatian, the other way around could work. (7)*

*I would start from the master's program in the beginning, because students are more mature, and they are familiar with literature in English. In the bachelor's program it could be a bit of a shock, but I think that with time it should be introduced at both levels. (4)*

*I do not know, as we had literature in English since the first year I believe it should be introduced from the first year of the Bachelor's program, because the majority of students come from high schools that have good English programs, so I think that it would take a little time for them to learn the new terminology. (14)*

We asked the participants if EMI should only be introduced for courses that exclusively use literature in English. Most of the participants agreed that it would be a good start to introduce EMI in courses where there is already enough literature in English. Some said that it did not matter and that it should be introduced in all courses, while others said that it should not be introduced at all. They also suggested that there should be an English course in all study programs because it was important for the future employment of students. Some participants stated that teachers might have problems with teaching in English, even though they use literature in English. Other participants saw benefits this might have for Erasmus students who would then be able to attend and follow the lectures. This is clearly indicated in the following comments:

*For all courses if we are talking about Erasmus students. I think all students should be offered that possibility, if we have competent teachers. I think it would benefit the students that want to get a job abroad. (9)*

*It depends, maybe in the beginning. I think we should take things slow, we must not rush it, in the beginning I would choose the courses where the implementation is most practical. (17)*

*I think it could be done because some teachers are ready to hold lectures in English, but all students must be ready too. It is stated in the executive plans of all courses that it is possible to hold lectures in English, but no one ever does it. When Erasmus students come to Croatia, they mostly have consultations with the teacher, which is bad in my opinion, because when you go to Erasmus you want to meet other students. (13)*

We asked the participants if they think EMI and Croatian programs should coexist at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Most of the participants stated that there should be two options so that there was no discrimination. Only a few students said it would not be a



good idea, but a lot of them said that there would be problems. Some of these problems would be finances, lack of teachers, lack of students for either EMI or Croatian programs. They stated it would be good so students who plan to work abroad could choose the EMI program, while students who are not confident in their language skill could stick to the programs in their mother tongue.

*Yes, if there are sufficient resources, if there are 20 students in a classroom, the quality is going to be higher. But I am not sure if the teachers could do it. (18)*

*It would be great, but a little bit utopian. I would definitely choose to study History in English. It would be great because there would be a choice, someone who is bad at English and does not want to do it, could choose to study in Croatian. (3)*

*I think it would be really difficult because of the number of students, it might be possible on larger universities. (15)*

We asked the participants if there should be a program exclusively in English. 11 participants stated that there should not be programs exclusively in English, six participants stated that there should be programs exclusively in English, and three participants were not sure. Those who stated that there should not be programs exclusively in English stated that there should always be a choice and that eliminating the Croatian program could jeopardize the Croatian language, The participants that said it is a good idea, and that programs such as International Business, Medicine, Engineering, Computer Science and Philosophy would benefit from it. This is clearly indicated in the following comments:

*No, I believe that the choice should be left to the students. Only if there would be a small number for the Croatian program, then it would be a problem. But if we want to have educated students, we have to think about everyone. (5)*

*Yes, for example Medicine or some kind of Civil Engineering because with that you*

*can work anywhere in Europe, the science is the same, the physics is the same, even in English we can all understand each other. (16)*

*Absolutely, where there is a need for it. These programs could only have positive outcomes. (17)*

## 5. Discussion

The findings indicate that only half of the participants knew what EMI was. The rest either heard of it or were not familiar with it. The reason may be scarce EMI programs in Rijeka. EMI is fairly new in Croatia, and there are only two programs available in Rijeka, and students are not really familiar with it.

Our first hypothesis was confirmed, as students had positive attitudes towards the introduction of EMI at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka. They see the opportunities that EMI program could bring them and the Erasmus students, such as better collaboration with other European universities and better job opportunities.

As expected, the participants recognized the positive aspects of EMI such as student mobility, language use, better collaboration with other universities and the visibility of the University on a global level. They also mentioned some possible problems, like the insufficient teachers and students' knowledge of English, organization, small number of students and others. This was also mentioned in Yildiz, Soruc and Griffiths (2017): "Understanding technical terms is a well-recognized challenge among EMI students and lecturers' inadequate professional use of English has become widely recognized as one of the main factors producing negative outcomes in many EMI settings.

Most participants stated that they would enroll into an EMI program because of the previously mentioned reasons. They also mentioned that they were not exposed enough to English in their current academic life, which should be further investigated. The participants who said they would not choose an EMI program said that they either want to stay in Croatia, are not confident in their English language skills or that they are not interested in continuing their studies abroad. Students have given reasons both for and against EMI programs, which proves

that there is a need for both programs because students have different needs and aspirations.

Most participants stated that EMI would not jeopardize the Croatian language as the function of English would be reduced only to academic purpose. However, some participants feel that it might jeopardize the Croatian language if more students decide to study in English than in Croatian. Martinez (2016) deals with the cultural implications that EMI program may have such as in Italy where attempts at EMI policy implementation have provoked fears of "the creation of an Anglophone élite to the detriment of the Italian language and culture, which are the cornerstones of our richest and enviable tradition and intellectual identity.

When asked about the willingness of their teachers to teach in English, most participants stated that their teachers would not be willing to switch to English as it is easier to teach in Croatian and they might not be competent enough. This may be because they never had the chance to listen to their teachers teach in English, so they just assume they would not be able to do it. However, almost half of the participants stated that they would be able to teach in English or that they are not sure. That means that our hypothesis was partially confirmed.

When it comes to prerequisites, the participants stated that there should either be an entrance exam or that the state exam in English should be enough to test the applicant's proficiency.

Most participants believe that a good knowledge of English is enough and that it can be developed during elementary school and high school education. The fact that English is increasingly used in this era of globalization for social, academic, and professional purposes would certainly stimulate both students and teachers to improve their proficiency in the language. This instrumental motivation is undoubtedly a valuable asset for successful language learning (Ibrahim 2001). The participants suggested that the teachers should also be tested in English and that they should get additional education that would help them adjust their teaching to the EMI practices. The participants agreed that additional education would

be helpful to teachers; however, they stated that teachers that have a degree in English could easily teach their other subject without additional education. The participants also said that the Department of English could organize these courses. This would help teachers with their confidence, and it would help them refresh their grammar knowledge.

Most students stated that they do not think EMI students would have poorer knowledge of the subject. However, this is not always the case. According to Ibrahim (2001), academically, teachers' and students' low proficiency may lead to inefficient and ineffective teaching and learning processes. Teachers who cannot speak English fluently and accurately will probably be rendered incompetent to perform one of their chief traditional roles, lecturing. Pauses, hesitations, circumlocutions, wordiness, and grammatical, lexical, and pronunciation inaccuracies may characterize much of their explanation, and this certainly will slow down or even hamper their students' grasp of the content of instruction. This study shows that low proficiency in English could cause a lot of problems for teachers and students in EMI programs. That is why entrance exams and teacher education is very important.

The participants stated that learning in another language is generally more difficult; however, it depends on the individual. It depends on the previous experience that the individual had with the said language. If he or she developed their reading and listening skills, they would probably get used to this new type of learning in a short period of time. However, students who were less exposed to English might need more time to accommodate to this type of learning.

Even though most participants stated that they would prefer taking tests in English if their materials were in English, some stated that even though they used materials in English, they were not as confident in their productive skills so they would prefer to write their tests in English. The courses comprising materials in English could be good pilot projects for EMI. There should be an option in English and if the course shows good results, it could open the

door for other courses to be in English.

The participants stated that the student mobility would benefit the most from the introduction of EMI programs. Erasmus students in Rijeka would be able to attend and follow lectures, and local students would be more motivated to spend a semester abroad as they have a similar program at home, so it would not be a big change. As stated by Baker (2016), the growth of ELF in academia and an expansion of English medium instruction (EMI) programs have proceeded in parallel to the rise in student mobility and internationalization. However, it is crucial that we recognize that this is not Anglophone English but English owned by all who use it in academia. Thus, education for student mobility in EMI should reflect the twin goals of awareness of the transcultural nature of internationally orientated universities and the use of English as an academic lingua franca alongside local languages.

All participants agreed that EMI would have a positive impact on the University's and teacher's personal reputation. As mentioned before, it would provide new job opportunities, it would help the visibility of the University on a global scale and it would popularize student mobility. The University of Rijeka lacks EMI programs, so introducing them would be a great opportunity and it would certainly add to the ranking and visibility of the University.

The participants said that they were exposed to English during their studies. It was mostly through guest lectures or literature. It was not surprising that English was already in use at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka in different areas of study.

We asked the participants if the implementation of EMI at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences would be possible in the next five years. Most participants stated that it was unlikely to happen as the period that we suggested is too short. They suggested that a lot of teacher training was needed, and that the bureaucracy would be a big problem. They also stated that they were not sure if there would be enough students who would choose to study in

an EMI program. These are all real issues that the implementation of EMI would face, so it would surely take more time than five years to introduce it.

When we asked at which level EMI should be introduced, most participants stated that it should be introduced at both bachelor's and master's programs because if someone chooses an EMI program, they should be able to complete their program without having to switch to Croatian. Some participants stated that in the beginning only master's programs should be in English because students are more likely to choose to study in an EMI program after completing their bachelor's program in Croatian. EMI is usually introduced in both bachelor's and master's programs. However, if there are no resources for both programs, master's and particularly doctoral programs would be a good start.

The participants stated that EMI programs should coexist with the Croatian programs at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. However, they stated that there could be problems with financing. They think that there are not enough teachers to teach in both Croatian and EMI programs. They also stated that there was a small number of applicants, so there would not be enough students for both Croatian and EMI programs. Doubling the number of lectures would also increase the teacher's workload, so more people would have to be employed.

Most participants stated that there should not be programs exclusively in English, without the counterpart in Croatian. They stated that everyone should have the possibility to study in the official language of the country. The participants stated that some programs could be exclusively in English mentioning International Business, Medicine, Engineering and Computer Science. Some participants stated that there was no need for these programs to be in Croatian, as these professions are highly profitable on a global level, so having a degree in an EMI program would be more useful for students of these programs.

## 6. Conclusion

We can conclude that EMI programs will continue developing at an even faster rate in the future. They represent a global trend, which is still in its early stages in Rijeka and Croatia. Even though there are no plans at the moment to introduce EMI at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka, our study has shown that there is an interest in and a need for it. More and more students are seeking employment abroad, so they want to be better prepared for the global job market. EMI programs are considered to be a good start for a global career.

In the present study, we asked their opinions about EMI programs. It would be useful, however, to conduct research in which teachers' attitudes and perceptions would be investigated. It would be interesting to see if they would be willing to participate in that kind of a program and if they would see themselves as prepared and capable to teach in English.

Finally, the findings would have been more consistent and representative if the study had been conducted on a larger sample and if it had also included students of psychology and cultural studies.



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## Appendix

### Research Questions

- I. What are the attitudes of the students about the introduction of EMI?
  - a) Are you familiar with EMI (English medium instruction)?
  - b) Should EMI be introduced at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka?
  - c) What could be the positive aspects of EMI?
  - d) What could be the possible problems of the introduction of EMI?
  - e) Would you personally take part in an EMI study program? Why/ Why not? Why do you think your colleagues might decide differently?
  - f) Could the introduction of study programs in English jeopardize the Croatian language?
  
- II. What are the students' perceptions about the implementation of EMI?
  - a) Do you think that the teachers be reluctant to teach in English?
  - b) What should the prerequisites be for students and what for the teachers? How do you think they should be tested? What would happen if the teachers failed to fulfill the requirements but the university is highly inclined to introduce EMI programs?
  - c) Do you think teachers would be able to teach in English without additional training or tests?
  - d) Do you think that students would have poorer knowledge of the subject?
  - e) Do you think that linguistic issues would hinder the quality of student's education?
  - f) Do you think that students would find it more difficult to study in English?

g) Do you think that students would prefer taking tests in English as their learning materials are mostly in English?

h) Do you think that EMI would make the student mobility easier?

i) Do you think the introduction of EMI would have an impact on the reputation of teachers and the university?

j) Were you ever taught in English during your studies?

k) To what extent did you use English in your studies so far?

III. To what extent should EMI be introduced at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka?

a) How likely do you think is the realization of this project in the near future?

b) Should EMI be introduced in Bachelor's programs, Master's programs or both?

c) Should EMI be introduced only for certain courses where all the literature is in English?

d) Should some study programs be both in English and Croatian? Could you elaborate on that?

e) Should there be programs exclusively in English?