

ROAD-MAPPING ENGLISH MEDIUM EDUCATION IN THE INTERNATIONALISED UNIVERSITY

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As a Spanish academic lecturing in Translation Studies, with a double interest in Sociolinguistics and Postcolonial Literatures in English, I approached Emma Dafouz and Ute Smit's theoretical model of English-Medium Education in Multilingual University Settings (EMEMUS) with curiosity. I was very motivated to read more and explore current proposals and new perspectives offered in this book, as my everyday reality is teaching within a multilingual classroom delivering the Modern Languages and Translation Degree at the University of Alcalá (Madrid). Surprisingly —given my admitted scepticism with regard to related models which often overlook contexts and realities— I was not disappointed; on the contrary, as any reader will see, Dafouz and Smit's high awareness of the diversity of multilingual and multicultural contexts is not only the distinctive aspect of their model, but the main principle which structures it.

Rather than initiating a new theory of the Englishisation of universities, with a newly conceived compilation of strategies, Dafouz and Smit offer a thorough reflection of current practices across higher education institutions (HEIs) which have implemented English as a Medium of Education (EME) and moved towards a conceptualisation which might yield useful applications. As readers may perceive, their honest and perceptive analysis of positive and negative outcomes is the basis of their ROAD-MAPPING model. This is an EME model with solid sociolinguistic foundations, which embraces the present reality of education in

the internationalised university and the need for new language policies and research directions.

The ‘Expanding Circle’ of EME Areas

In their examination of the geographical spread of EME, along with the increasing research on the growth in this field, Smit and Dafouz identify EME areas that “have well-established higher educational systems in their respective national languages” (Smit and Dafouz 2012: 2). These areas, which the authors match with Kachru’s “expanding circle” (1985: 12), constitute indeed no small part of the world: Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, Asia, and Latin America. A quantitative account of the EMEMUS phenomenon is presented, with a qualitative description of six cases: three universities in Europe (Stockholm University, Sweden; Maastricht University, the Netherlands; and the University of the Basque Country, Spain), one in the Middle East (Zayed University, Arab Emirates), one in Asia (Waseda University, Japan) and one in Latin America (Universidad del Norte, Colombia).

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A huge diversity is highlighted regarding funding, social context, lecturer support, motivation of students for whom reading and writing in English poses an extra challenge, or measures to deal with linguistic tensions in certain multilingual settings. In my view, as a suggestion for further research, a more in-depth analysis of *globalisation* and more specifically the impact of economic globalisation would be useful in order to diagnose more accurately the reasons for such diversity within the EME areas along with the accelerated expansion of EME across the Global North. This closer analysis might open the way for initiatives to reach larger areas of Asia, Africa, and Latin America —i.e. the Global South. A further step for Dafouz and Smit might be to appropriate their own ROAD-MAPPING model and design projects to make it work beyond the North-South divide, towards the achievement of equal educational opportunities.

In their “Reflection on the Reasons and Issues for Implementing EME” (Chapter 2.4), the authors offer a thorough review of challenges at global, continental, national, institutional and classroom levels. Interestingly, a shift from a learner-oriented view (English as a Foreign Language) to a user-oriented one (English as a Lingua Franca) is seen as a positive outcome of the continuing geographical spread of EME. Some disadvantages are identified at the continental level: the loss of language diversity and of minority languages (Basque, Catalan, Friulian, and Sami in Europe), the imposition of Anglocentric and Westernised models of education, and the commodification of education.

The authors celebrate the fact that many HEIs are adopting EME, although they observe that a number do not seem to appreciate the reasons behind it. Dafouz and Smit see the need to attract these institutions and help them converge towards common ground —a “shared ontology” (31) is highlighted in the midst of the “collage” (31) of institutions and contexts. Here is where Dafouz and Smit argue for a theoretical framework “that addresses the diversity and complexity of EME in a holistic, dynamic and integrative manner” (31).

ROAD-MAPPING: A New Conceptual Framework

The concept of ‘internationalisation’ has changed since the 1980s. There has been a shift from the simple act of promoting studies abroad to the present-day view of “comprehensive internationalisation” (40), including new perspectives in teaching and research, aiming at high quality education and innovation. Of the HEIs’ different practices in this process (“internationalisation abroad [IA]”, “internationalisation at home [IaH]” and “internationalisation of the curriculum [IoC]” [41]), the latter seems to be the one which situates the disciplines and the curriculum at the centre of this process. The authors acknowledge the insights from the few Applied Linguistics models which have addressed the specific language issues involved in these practices. Previous work mentioned includes Cenoz and Gorter (2010) and Lauridsen and Lillemose (2015), who have studied (1) the multilingual nature of twenty-first century HEIs, (2) the centrality of English in most of them, and (3) the impact of socio-political, linguistic and psychological factors on these contexts. The uniqueness of the ROAD-MAPPING model is that it focuses on the complexity of multilingual and multicultural contexts in the internationalisation of HEIs. Its theoretical foundations draw from Sociolinguistics, Ecolinguistics, Language Policy models, and Discourse Analysis approaches.

The conceptualisations from contemporary sociolinguistics —beyond more static notions of ‘speech community’ or ‘code switching’— which are relevant for the ROAD-MAPPING model include the fluidity of communicational practices in the new “superdiverse” or “emergent” settings (43). For Dafouz and Smit the concepts of “transient multilingual community” and “translanguaging” (43) feel much closer to the present.

The ROAD-MAPPING framework consists of six dimensions: roles of English in relation to other languages, academic disciplines, language management, agents, practices and processes, and internationalisation and glocalisation. All these dimensions are interconnected and equally relevant, as the authors explain in detail. This is perhaps the part of the book which the specialist reader will find

most interesting, and they will appreciate the intricacies of the interplay among these dimensions —this is undoubtedly Dafouz and Smit’s greatest achievement.

Researching EMEMUS

In Part II of the book, Dafouz and Smit explore the research potential of their ROAD-MAPPING model regarding EMEMUS. Two research areas are highlighted: (1) participant expectations and evaluations of relevant educational practices; and (2) English-medium classroom discourse. Individual studies that make use of ROAD-MAPPING are showcased, as are the ways in which the framework is found to be beneficial in allowing for more in-depth conceptualisations. “Stakeholder beliefs” (72) —i.e. lecturers’ and students’ beliefs— are also examined here: how they view and evaluate EMEMUS. Such thoughts and ideas are not easily observable, but they can be contextualised. The authors offer an overview of two studies which show how their model may be used as a methodological framework to support these analyses of stakeholder beliefs in EMEMUS.

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EME classroom discourse is also seen as an area of study where the application of the ROAD-MAPPING model may offer interesting insights. Examples include teacher talk (in lecturing), student talk (in group work), teachers and students in classroom interaction, and classroom events (e.g. presentations). In fact, recent doctoral work applying the model includes the study of students’ use of English as a lingua franca in multicultural teamwork.

All the studies introduced in this part of the book show how the ROAD-MAPPING model is useful for structuring the conceptual framework, and how it functions as a meta-level methodological guideline for the discussion of the findings.

Managing Policies in EMEMUS

Finally, the authors address policy concerns in EMEMUS, paying special attention to teacher professional development at institutional, national, and international levels. The Spanish setting, which has a high level of decentralisation, is a particularly complex one; strategies have been launched to consolidate some very diverse “subsystems” (105) across the autonomous regions. Bilingual regions in Spain where minority languages are spoken have developed specific strategies to include EME. Understandably, their fear is the loss of their own mother tongues (only used as a medium of education after the advent of democracy in 1975) in the

face of a national language (Peninsular Spanish) and more recently a third language, English. The case of the University of the Basque Country is a good illustration of a successful model.

In conclusion, the authors demonstrate how ROAD-MAPPING is a powerful model that is currently assisting HEIs across the world. The EQUiP Project (the transnational Erasmus+ project) is an innovative case in point which aims to support educational developers. This is, in my opinion, one of the most useful applications of the ROAD-MAPPING model: it pays attention to the difficulties of lecturers. These are the central stakeholders in the internationalised university, many of whom feel threatened by these overwhelming changes. Not only do they need support to overcome these difficulties —i.e. by training in multicultural classrooms and resolving specific language issues such as proficiency in English— but also new conceptualisations and directions. This model goes a long way in being able to offer this.

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