Donald F. Staub *Editor*

Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Foreign Language Education

Global Issues, Models, and Best Practices from the Middle East and Turkey

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Acknowledgements

Contents

Chapter 1
The Increasing Need for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Foreign Language Education

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Abstract The rapid growth of higher educational institutions globally has been well documented. This has been followed by an equally substantial increase in the number of institutions that are offering English as the medium of instruction (EMI). While this may be seen as a welcome development as it suggests increased access to higher education and employment opportunities, it also elevates concerns regarding quality of education. Many argue that the concern is justified given the number of "diploma mills" offering degrees for sale. Indeed, the need to verify institutional and programmatic legitimacy has led to the expansion of the institutional and specialized accreditation industries. This is particularly the case for the EMI segment of the higher education sector. To illustrate, in Turkey, a two-decade expansion of the higher education sector has been accompanied by an increase in the number of schools offering EMI. This trend has generated questions regarding governance, quality assurance, and accreditation of those programs that are preparing students for English language academic programs. In turn, the Turkish Council on Higher Education has supported both external review and accreditation schemes that specifically address these issues. This, however, is not exclusive to Turkey. Throughout the region, and primarily the Middle East, we see emerging and continuing efforts to raise quality in English and foreign language education, which is why this volume is timely. It is during this critical period that the chapters that follow examine global and regional challenges and solutions regarding quality and accreditation in language education.

Higher education, globally, once again finds itself in a unique transitional period. Multinational campuses, MOOCs, microcredentials, and massification (Tight, 2017) characterize many of the conversations around where higher education is, and where it may be going. Despite conversations around the end of higher education as it is currently conceived, the overwhelming impression is one of expansion, whether domestically or internationally (Altbach, 2015). Across developing economies,

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1

access to higher education has experienced a sharp upward trajectory, as policy changes in many countries have created a more welcoming climate for private higher education. Poland is an oft-cited model (Kwiek, 2009), as is Turkey, where nearly half of 200 higher education institutions are private, and have been established in only the last 20 years.

Prior to this growth period, higher education, primarily public higher education, was accessible only to the relatively few that managed to successfully navigate rigorous admittance systems. As higher education opportunities have opened up to greater percentages of populations, we are seeing a transition to a more consumer-driven market. In other words, while there still remains high demand for low-cost public higher education, for a substantial proportion of consumers, "choice" and "quality" are driving higher education decisions. Furthermore, other major stakeholders, be it the government or investors, are also inquiring about quality (Blanco-Ramírez & Berger, 2014; Burke, 2005; Shah, Nair, & Wilson, 2011).

Indeed, while in this period of substantial growth in higher education, we are also experiencing greater emphasis on the activity of quality assurance (Cao & Li, 2014). Whether quality assurance efforts are driven internally by a university administration or externally by a governmental or certifying body, institutions are increasingly turning to accreditation to verify quality; this may take place at the institutional level or the unit (i.e., program) level. This movement is considered to be well-justified, given the emergence of "dubious" and "bogus" institutions (e.g., Levy, 2008; Ozturgut, 2011; UNESCO, 2005) around the globe that are purportedly taking advantage of the widespread desire for a higher education diploma.

This has resulted in rising demand for accrediting bodies, particularly specialized accreditors, that were originally established in the West for the purpose of accrediting schools in that region (Eaton, 2015; Knight, 2015; Morse, 2015; Salmi, 2015). This has been perhaps most visible for the fields of Engineering and Business, with ABET and AACSB standing as the most prevalent schemes. However, the global expansion in higher education institutions is also characterized by the significant percentage of universities that offer instruction through the medium of English (EMI) (Dearden, 2014; Earls, 2016; Doiz, Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2013; Macaro, Curle, Pun, An, & Dearden, 2018). This has resulted in considerable interest in the quality assurance, and subsequently, the specialized accreditation of English language programs.

To some degree, the evidence clearly justifies the need for, even the demand for, a greater focus on quality in English language education. Taking Turkey as an illustration, the collective research picture is one of deep concern in terms of level of English among university students (Başıbek et al., 2014; Dearden, Macaro, & Akincioglu, 2016; Kirkgoz, 2008). A recent analysis of the state of English language education in Turkish higher education noted that a number of deficiencies exist within the current system (British Council, 2015). Namely due to a lack of English language teachers at the tertiary level who are skilled at developing and delivering courses in English for Academic Purposes, and also in part because faculty members in academic programs are not skilled at, or interested in, assisting their students with language needs while delivering content.

The report precipitated a collaborative effort between the British Council and the Turkish Council on Higher Education (CoHec) to address such issues. This partnership has resulted in an external review program to improve the quality of education provided in university-level intensive English language programs. In 2018, the British Council-CoHec collaborative began a process to establish and implement a developmental (i.e., nonpunitive) external review process of English language programs.

Meanwhile, a concurrent effort has been underway to establish an English language program accreditation body within Turkey. This would be the country's first such national language-related accrediting scheme, and the fourth such scheme operating in the country. To date, there have been three external/international schemes associated with quality assurance and accreditation in Turkey: The US-based Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA), the UK/Europe-based Evaluation and Accreditation of Quality Language Services (EAQUALS), and Pearson-Edexcel. As CoHec has stepped up efforts to increase overall quality in higher education, it has done so by encouraging the pursuit of accreditations, as well as the establishment of national, specialized accrediting bodies. It is within this environment that a group of professionals and peers began the establishment of the Association for Language Education Evaluation and Accreditation (DEDAK). Once DEDAK receives formal confirmation from CoHec, its accreditation work will complement that of the British Council-CoHec quality review scheme.

Although this illustration highlights an approach that is underway in Turkey, it is clear that it mirrors the context found in many other developing countries in the region and around the world. As this book aims to show, local issues quite often are a reflection of, or the outcome of, the global context. And while the titles of the chapters or the locales of the case studies presented in this volume may suggest context-relevant anecdotes, they indeed offer messages to a much broader audience.

This book has been divided into three separate sections, with the intent to start broad and eventually drill into the local level with best practices. Section 1 explores the broader, global context around quality and accreditation in language education in higher education. **Yasemin Kırkgöz** begins with an overview of the rapidly expanding field of English Medium Instruction (EMI) with its idealistic vision and realistic outcomes. She takes a look at EMI regionally by highlighting the issues around delivery in Israel, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. Next, **Bassam Alhamad** weighs the challenges and complements of international and national quality assurance and accreditation schemes. Through a specific case study analysis carried out at the University of Bahrain, Bassam asks the question of the benefits and demands of implementing multiple quality assurance systems simultaneously. **Mary Reeves**, executive director of the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA), offers her perspective on the decision-making process of a national, specialized accreditation scheme that has gone international; the questions asked and the responses formulated to increase relevance in other countries. **Ludka Kotarska**, director of accreditation at Eaquals, raises the question of whether accreditation

actually offers value addition to language programs, or is it simply a commodity that language teaching institutions are seeking to acquire for marketing purposes. She does this by conducting a global examination of language program accreditation schemes, building a case that quality can indeed by an outcome of such processes.

Section 2 takes the discussion of quality assurance in language education from the global to the national. In this section, a selection of authors explore pressing issues around quality language education in Turkey, the UAE, Qatar, and Oman. **Hacer Şivil** begins with an overview of Turkey's centralized higher education system, and the impact that it has had on quality assurance, particularly in language education programs. Next, **Burcu Tezcan Unal** examines language education in the United Arab Emirates, with a particular emphasis on the social context that has been created with the substantial number of expatriate workers in the country. **Khalid Elhassan** and **Ahmad Fawzi Kabaha** conduct an analysis of bridging programs in Qatar that are designed to close the gap between secondary and postsecondary education in their country. In particular, they highlight programs that are designed to raise the level of English in students who are transitioning to universities in Qatar. **Khalaf Marhoun Al'Abri**, **Fawzia Al-Seyabi**, and **Mahmoud Imam Amer** of Sultan Qaboos University in Oman describe the process of undergoing ACTFL accreditation through a case study of their program that prepares English language instructors for Oman and the region. In the final chapter of this section, **Engin Ayvaz** and **Didem Mutçalıoğlu** comprehensively analyze the development of a national, specialized accreditation scheme for English language education. Their chapter explores the political, personal, and organizational factors that help or hinder the achievement of a scheme that impacts a country's entire higher education sector.

Section 3 is dedicated to best practices in improving the quality of foreign language education. **Ian Collins** and **Bahar Gün** present the case that professional development of language instructors is an essential piece of the quality assurance puzzle; that an institution cannot consider quality assurance or accreditation without including a plan, and action, around professional development. **Heinz Ulrich Schmidt** takes readers on a tutorial of learning outcomes, providing clear definitions and illustrations of implementation from accreditation case studies. In the volume's final chapter, **Abdullah Al-Bargi** takes readers through the process of applying for and successfully achieving accreditation for the English Language Institute at King Abdulaziz University in Saudi Arabia; specific illustrations are provided on the relationships between standards of the accreditation scheme and actual outcomes realized within the ELI.

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Part I
Global Perspectives on Quality Assurance and Accreditation

Chapter 2
Investigating the Growth of English-Medium Higher Education in Turkey and the Middle East Region

Yasemin Kırkgöz

Abstract This study aims to provide the current landscape in relation to English-medium instruction (EMI) in Turkey and some selected countries in the Middle East region. The study investigates the growth of EMI in higher education, and the internationalization of education policies by Turkey and the Middle East governments. In this context, the very meaning of EMI is presented, and its benefits for the local contexts are given. The chapter also outlines some of the current issues and key challenges relating to EMI encountered at the practical, microlevel, based on research evidence.

2.1   Introduction

The global demand for competent language users has resulted in a growing need for high-quality education for English language learners across the World (Barnawi & Phan, 2014). This continuing demand for English education has led policy makers in Turkey and several countries in the Middle East region to appropriate English as the medium of instruction (EMI) in higher education in the interest of the country. One impetus for this is the fact that English as a global language represents a social, cultural, linguistic, political, educational, and economic capital. As noted by Phan (2013), English as a global language and the language of international communication "is an accepted understanding that internationalization of higher education is based upon and from which localization of knowledge is generated (and disseminated)" (p. 162). Internationalization for higher education institutions in Turkey and in many non-English speaking countries in the Middle East region means adopting English as the medium of instruction (MOI) and constructing knowledge through English language (Phan & Barnawi, 2015). The overarching aim of EMI is given by Macaro (2013–2014) as:

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> To promote knowledge and understanding of an academic subject such as physics or economics, and that historical and geopolitical factors have determined that such a subject (in non-Anglophone countries should be taught through the medium of English rather than in the majority language of the country in which the programme is taking place. (p. 28)

Macaro (2013–2014) claims that adopting the EMI program yields two main benefits to the institution: the first is to internationalize universities. By offering courses through EMI, it is believed that the institution will attract students from all over the world thereby bringing both revenue and prestige to it. Another benefit is considered to be a way of forcing a change in higher education pedagogy. He also describes a number of aims as having potential benefits to the students of the country adopting the EMI program: First, EMI facilitates learning of academic subjects by home students. It is argued that since much academic content is written in English, students will find it easier if the teaching is done through English. It could also improve the English language capacity of the home country in general. In addition, home students can compete in a world market by enhancing their global employability in specific areas. Macaro claims that EMI could do this in a more cost-effective way than ELT/EFL, and it could also do this in a more authentic way (Macaro, 2013–2014).

This chapter first describes in some detail recent developments in the use of EMI in higher education in Turkey and some select Middle East countries: Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. It provides a general description of English education policies in the respective countries, and then it expands on how local EMI education policies play out at the micro level. It, then, critically examines current issues and challenges in policy and practices of EMI in higher education in Turkey and the region.

2.2   Turkey

Turkey is uniquely positioned geographically in both the West and the East, with neighbors in the Middle East. The country occupies a unique position. Nearly 97% of its total land area of 814.578 km^2 is located in Asia, comprising the peninsula of Asia Minor, also known as Anatolia and, the remaining 3% lies in Turkish Thrace (Trakya). As such, Turkey is situated at the crossroads of the Balkans, Caucasus, Middle East, and Eastern Mediterranean.

Turkey has a long-established EMI program. Since the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Turkey has responded to the global influences of English in its education system through planned education policies. With the implementation of the policy to open to the Western world, along with the drive for internationalization, several official measures have been taken to promote English, allowing English as a foreign language (EFL), to spread across the country (Kırkgöz, 2017).

In Turkey, the underlying motivation to prioritize English in higher education could be attributed to the perceived language needs for national development and economic competitiveness in an increasingly globalized world, as in many Middle Eastern countries. At the national level, English serves an instrumental value, a

means of gaining access to better education and a more prestigious job with good benefits and prospects for promotion (Kırkgöz, 2005). The country also has political and economic ambitions to participate in a globalized economy and to internationalize its education.

At the level of higher education, as internationalization and globalization pushed the EMI agenda forward in Turkey; in 1996, the first official attempt to establish a list of criteria that a university or a department desiring English as its MOI had to meet was issued by the Turkish Higher Education Council [Yüksek Öğretim Kurumu (YÖK)] (1996, cited in Kırkgöz, 2009). This encouraged many universities in Turkey to offer EMI programs with the aim of developing national human capital with proficiency in English. The number has significantly increased since the Turkish government allowed officially for private universities along with state universities to offer EMI.

In addition to Turkey's efforts to respond to globalization through EMI in higher education, globalization is also manifested by the internationalization of education, covering a wide range of services, from recruitment of international students, to internationalized curricula, to research and partnerships with foreign universities. An investigation into the web pages of the majority of Turkish universities clearly indicates that universities in Turkey mention internalization in their current mission statements and include it in their strategic plans (Kırkgöz, 2017).

The Turkish government's globalization and internationalization orientations have directly affected universities. The response by most universities to globalization has manifested through the establishment of EMI programs. The trend to use English as a medium of instruction, while offering several instrumental benefits such as higher-paid jobs (Kırkgöz, 2005), has often been criticized for undermining the quality and effectiveness of university teaching and learning, as revealed by a growing body of evidence, which suggests that EFL students experience considerable difficulties in coping with the demands of EMI university studies.

Sert (2008) investigated student and subject lecturers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the use of English/Turkish in the acquisition of disciplinary knowledge in three Turkish universities. Although EMI is found to be effective in developing language skill, the research suggests that EMI fails to convey the academic content effectively. In another study, Karakaş (2014) surveyed 33 lecturers' self-evaluation of their English skills and practices in three long-established prominent EMI universities in Turkey through an online questionnaire. The participants were from the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences and the Faculty of Engineering, delivering EMI courses in the disciplines of international relations, economics, electrical and electronics engineering, computer engineering, and mechanical engineering. Karakaş (2014) reports that "it can be safely put that the lecturers in this study generally assessed their English skills to be of a high level; more than 90% of them identified their overall academic English as either 'good' or 'excellent'. Regarding the micro-skills (e.g. pronunciation, accent, grammar, fluency), lecturers' ratings and markings on attitude scales indicate that they feel or experience no problems in using these skills efficiently while teaching in English"

(p. 122). As concluded by Karakaş, when the findings are considered holistically, Turkish lectures in this particular study felt capable of lecturing through EMI, without any obvious language-related obstruction.

In a related study, Kırkgöz (2014) investigated the perceptions of two comparable groups of final-year engineering students in Turkish higher education where disciplinary knowledge is delivered both through Turkish as the medium of instruction (TMI) and English as the medium of instruction (EMI). The study aimed to compare students' acquisition of disciplinary knowledge in EMI versus TMI. Participants in the study were 130 final-year engineering students (66 TMI and 64 EMI). Through a questionnaire, a picture was drawn of the undergraduate engineering students' perceptions of the benefits, and any perceived challenges to the acquisition, of their disciplinary knowledge in EMI or TMI, and what impact the medium of instruction (English or Turkish) had on their learning. The study revealed positive-oriented perceptions of EMI students in terms of enhancing English language skills, gaining access to primary sources in English and keeping up with global developments in their disciplines. Furthermore, students anticipated instrumental benefits EMI would offer upon graduation, i.e., getting higher-paid jobs. Unlike EMI students, TMI students were found to comprehend disciplinary knowledge more easily, learning in detail, and achieving long-lasting retention.

The findings present a cause for concern in programs where the medium of instruction is in English. EMI students reported experiencing difficulties in understanding, particularly the details of their disciplinary knowledge. As a consequence, they tended to memorize disciplinary knowledge to achieve short-term objectives, e.g., passing examinations, admitting that they adopted superficial rather than effective learning. Also, EMI students explained that what they memorized was likely to be quickly forgotten. In contrast, a majority of the TMI students (86%) agreed that they had a better understanding of disciplinary knowledge, understood it in greater detail, retained it longer, and achieved a higher level of learning. The study confirms earlier research (Sert, 2008) suggesting that EMI is effective in terms of language skills development but is rather ineffective in the acquisition of disciplinary knowledge.

Recently, Turhan and Kırkgöz (2018) investigated motivational variations of mechanical engineering students and lecturers in an EMI university in Turkey, given the idea that motivation may be an influential factor determining the success of EMI implementations. To get an in-depth perspective of the topic, a questionnaire along with focus group interviews were used with both cohorts of participants. The questionnaire results indicated no significant differences among the first, second, third, and fourth year undergraduate engineering students' motivation toward EMI; yet, it was found that the first-year students were slightly more motivated toward EMI. Furthermore, students across the grades seemed to be mostly motivated by both integrative and instrumental reasons toward EMI, confirming the findings of an earlier study (Kırkgöz, 2005). Interview findings showed that both students and lecturers referred greatly to instrumental reasons that EMI offers.

2.3   Israel

Israel, a Middle Eastern country, is located on the south eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea and the northern shore of the Red Sea. To the north, it has land borders with Lebanon, to the northeast with Syria, to the east Jordan, to the East and West to the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and Egypt to the southwest.

In Israel, official languages are Hebrew (80%) and Arabic (20%). The language policy in Israeli higher education favors Hebrew; in universities and colleges, the MOI is mostly Hebrew. English, as a nonofficial language in the country, is valued as an important asset for personal development, social mobility, and success. It is the only foreign language that is used mainly for academic purposes (EAP) in almost all of the disciplines. The academic body includes eight universities, 21 public and 15 academic colleges, and two teacher education institutions, all government-sponsored via the Israeli Council of Higher Education (Or & Shohamy, 2017). Hebrew is used as the MOI in all universities, except for a few teacher education colleges using Arabic. The current MOI in academic institutions in Israel remains largely Hebrew. Proficiency in academic English is also required, since many academic sources are available in English, very similar to the situation in Turkey and other Middle East countries.

It is reported by Or and Shohamy (2017) that in the last two decades there has been an increase in EMI programs mostly at universities and in some teacher education colleges, for local students both at undergraduate and graduate levels. Rothberg International school (RHI) of Hebrew university, Tel-Aviv university, School of overseas students (OSP) and MA programs; International school of Haifa university, and Ginsburg-Ingerman overseas Student program (OSP) of Ben-Gurion University are some examples offering EMI programs. As noted by Doiz, Lasagabaster, and Sierra (2013), during the last decade an overwhelmingly growing number of academic courses are taught in English rather than in the local language.

While English has been used for many years as the MOI for overseas students at Israeli universities, it is recently that EMI has become much more common at universities and academic colleges, offered for local and overseas students (Gonen, 2008). This recent turn towards English is linked, as it is in many other contexts, to continuing globalization, in which knowledge of English, the world's lingua franca, is believed to offer cultural and social capital and economic benefits (Or & Shohamy, 2017). Following this trend, teacher education colleges in the country have begun to attract international students with a view to facilitating social and cultural exchange. Another reason is to encourage prospective teachers to improve their proficiency by studying content courses in English, on the assumption that exposure to such courses will promote local student teachers' level of English; consequently, it will improve their ability to access international resources and participate in international professional communities.

Research related to EMI in the Israeli context remains limited. The first initiative to investigate an EMI context was by Inbar-Lourie and Donitsa-Schmidt (2014),

who conducted two studies to examine from different perspectives the effects of applying the model of EMI to content courses in one of the largest academic teachers' colleges of education in Israel. The college prepares prospective teachers in various disciplines for schools. While the MOI in all courses on the campus is said to be Hebrew, courses offered in the EAP department and those geared for prospective teachers for EFL was in EMI.

Through an online self-report questionnaire, the first study looked at a wide sample of prospective teachers' ($n = 200$) attitudes and motivations towards studying courses in EMI. The study revealed that the strongest motivations to register for an EMI course were to "improve one's English and become more proficient in the language." The second highest motivational factor was gaining "extra credit," followed by "the ability to resort to Hebrew whenever needed," "the desire to communicate with English speakers," and "the desire to experience such a venture" (Inbar-Lourie & Donitsa-Schmidt, 2014, p. 162). Participant students' attitudes towards the importance of English converged into two factors: English as an asset versus English as a threat. The participants did not consider English as a threat to Hebrew or Arabic language and culture, viewing English as a mediocre asset.

The second study focused on a group of students who had participated in a scheduled summer course in English regarding their attitudes towards the course. In an open question, students stated their main motive for joining the course as to relieve the pressure during the school year, followed by curiosity about such a course, the experience of studying a course in English, and finally because of the opportunity to interact with English speakers. It is reported that students did not find the English course difficult. The participants expressed their experience as "mostly challenging, interesting and valuable because of the use of English." It is concluded that students are interested in taking EMI courses, but prefer summer courses rather than courses delivered during the year. Owing to the scarcity of the EMI-related research in the Israeli context, the authors call for further studies involving a greater number of participants.

2.4   Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia, one of the oil-rich Gulf States, is also the largest sovereign state of the Middle East. Saudi Arabia has been highly ambitious in its mission to internationalize the higher education system to promote national, institutional, and individual competitiveness. As confirmed by Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi (2017), policy makers strongly believe that EMI is the primary tool for improving the quality of teaching and learning in the country. In this context, the Saudi government, adopting top-down internationalization policies, has allocated billions of dollars and is offering generous incentives to internationalize its higher education system through various means. The Saudi government has nearly tripled its budget since 2004 and more new universities have been opened with international standards.

Supported by the government, Saudi higher education institutions are establishing international collaboration and partnerships with overseas universities, namely, American, Australian, and British universities in their endeavors of globalization in higher education and benchmarking academic programs. One of the largest organizations, Technical and Vocational Training Cooperation (TVTC), which runs all the Technical Colleges with 35 branches, Girls' Higher Training Institutes with 17 branches, and Vocational Institutes with 70 branches across the country, is now adopting international curricula, syllabi, and assessment practices, and English is considered as MOI in most of the programs. Moreover, the TVTC contracted the interlink Language Centers in 2012–2013, the leading association of intensive English programs in the USA to provide intensive English programs for all TVTC alumni across the KSA. It is also reported that over 4000 Saudi alumni are taking this program every year to help them enhance their overall literacy in English communication and function well in the job markets (Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017).

Recently, the Saudi Government launched the "Colleges of Excellence" Project, involving its technical and vocational education and training. For this Project, international training providers opened branch campuses across the country. It is reported that currently there are 37 international institutes operating in the country. "Of these, 24 colleges are UK-affiliated and the rest are affiliated with colleges and training companies in Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Germany, and Netherlands" (Barnawi & Phan, 2014, p. 6).

EMI is gaining popularity in Saudi higher education. It is anticipated that Saudi universities and colleges will continue to spend more resources on getting the assistance of British/American experts for retraining their cadre. KAUST is a science-and-technology university that has engaged with collaborative ventures with 27 universities worldwide and created five international alliances of academic excellence. These international universities offer advice related to staff selection and curricula in science and engineering and have participated in several collaborative research studies (Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017).

Rapid internationalization of higher education has given rise to several questions related to the national cultural identity of Saudi Arabia. Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi (2017) draw attention to the two critical issues. The government's recent educational initiatives concerning English education policy and practices have generated a number of major issues and challenges. Despite all efforts, studies on EFL education in Saudi schools report the outcomes of English education as below expectations. It is maintained that English education lacks a comprehensive framework that defines the target English proficiency levels of Saudi learners at each stage of their learning. Adopting Western language learning framework at local universities and inviting external agencies to design and assess EFL programs among others was criticized as *Blind Adoption of the International Framework.* They regretfully state that "because of the absence of a clearly defined language framework in the country, local universities and colleges are uncritically using 'the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment' (CEFR) to operate their intensive English language programs as well as the textbooks and other teaching materials by foreign providers" (p. 214).

Barnawi (2012 cited in Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017) investigated pedagogical effectiveness of the CEFR in a Saudi university. He found that the CEFR produced reactions in the prep-year intensive English program in terms of curriculum, syllabus, assessment, and materials at that university. He further reports that "students have become primary victims which transplant inappropriate Western pedagogies into the Saudi context" (p. 215). According to Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi (2017), the current EFL teaching in higher education contexts reflects "disconnected" and "fragmented implementation" endeavors at various stages of education. It is maintained that these practices have also created contradictions in the English education policies and practices, as well as self-doubt among policy makers who often believe that top-down policy changes coupled with internationalization practices would be the most effective approach for promoting mass literacy in English in the country.

Another critical issue is related to the practices of internationalization of the higher education system. The internationalization aspect of higher education is very much influenced by Western ideology, which is very much embedded in educational policies, pedagogy, and practices. It is maintained that "EMI universities are competing against each other to import Western educational knowledge such as the CEFR, franchised programs without taking the role of critical consumers and responsible producers into account" (Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017, p. 216). It is feared that this tendency will inevitably shape policies and practices of internationalizing Saudi higher education system in such a way as to reinforce an English-only mentality, the use of Western pedagogies, and a type of intellectual dependency, and in turn will create a widespread perception of "Western better." This would further adversely affect the values, tradition, and national identity of the country (Phan, 2013).

2.5   Kuwait

Similar to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait is another oil-rich Gulf state country of the Middle East. Arabic is the official language of the State of the Kuwait. Tryzna and Al Sharoufi (2017) report that the discovery of oil in the country and the rapid developing oil-producing industry necessitated the training of the local work force in the 1930s, leading to the development of English for specific purposes (ESP). The economic development of the country linked with the oil production and technology import further strengthened the status of English used as a vehicle for international communication. The current status of English as a second language (ESL) is also reinforced by the labor market model, which heavily relies on the expatriate workforce in the private industries and technological advancements, global trade, and Kuwaiti citizens' international trade for various purposes (Al-Yaseen, 2000).

Higher education institutions comprise public and private colleges and universities. Established in 1966, Kuwait University is a government-sponsored higher education institution comprising 16 colleges; art, science, engineering and petroleum, and social sciences, among others. English is used as the language of instruction in such colleges as medicine, dentistry, engineering, and petroleum (Tryzna & Al Sharoufi, 2017).

Kuwait also offers several private universities modeled on the American style, the most prominent is the American University of Kuwait (AUK) and Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST), both affiliated with American and British universities, respectively. The Australian College of Kuwait, Box Hill College, and the American University of the Middle East are among other English language colleges and universities. Undergraduate programs are offered on a range of subjects including business administration, computer science, engineering, humanities, education, and mass communication. A high level of English language proficiency is required to be admitted to universities from one of the standardized tests such as TOEFL IBT and IELTS.

Tryzna and Al Sharoufi (2017) point out that Kuwaiti foreign language education faces a number of critical issues. The number of non-Kuwaiti teachers at all stages constitutes a higher percent of the cadre compared to Kuwaiti teachers. Given that Kuwaiti teachers are trained under the supervision of the Ministry of Education while expatriate teachers receive their degrees and training from their home countries leads to an imbalance with a higher number of expatriates in need of better training in teaching ESL. Tryzna and Al Sharoufi (2017) argue that developing a regional curriculum would be one of the solutions for ELT problems. Kuwait is part of the Gulf-Co-operation Council (GCC), which includes also Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, and UAE, to enable these countries to be part of a collaborative language teaching program in initial language teacher education program. At higher education, the program necessitates specific requirements for qualified language teachers in schools similar to the European Union.

Tryzna and Al Sharoufi (2017) suggest that (GCC) countries set a common effective language policy so that foreign language teachers take specific courses to gain a pedagogically acceptable qualification in ELT. Also, a standardized language program could be established in initial language teacher education colleges and universities combining modern language methodology and the use of technology, "customizing what is culturally appropriate for Kuwaiti and GCC countries" (p. 88).

2.6 Discussion

Countries including Turkey and those in the Middle East have mainly focused on quantity by instituting a massive expansion of university student numbers into EMI programs. On the other hand, the effect of EMI on the quality of students' learning experiences and their academic performances has largely been overlooked, indicating that quantity does not equal quality. While countries are growing EMI institutions, they should have a plan in place for assessing the quality of those institutions, and the system overall. Enhancing the quality of EMI should therefore be given high priority by the governments of those countries. Initiatives can be launched to enhance the quality of university education for the subject lecturers as well as for the EMI students. As the implementation of EMI poses many challenges particularly for students with low English language proficiency, adjunct courses could be offered in EMI departments to support students with