

Keynote Lecture

Psychological and Motivational Dynamics in English-Medium Instruction: Empirical Insights and Pedagogical Imperatives

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Outline

This keynote addresses the psychological and motivational challenges faced by students studying through English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI), drawing on empirical evidence from higher education contexts in Turkey, China, and the UK. Curle and colleagues' mixed-methods research in Turkey (n = 143) highlights the significant role of instrumental and integrative motivation in predicting academic success, with English proficiency emerging as the strongest predictor, accounting for around 90% of variance in EMI achievement. Qualitative data from the same study reveal the importance of task value and learner confidence in shaping motivation. Further insights are drawn from Curle et al.'s work in China, which applies Situated Expectancy-Value Theory to examine motivational dynamics in a transnational university. Findings show that both perceived competence and task value independently and interactively influence student outcomes. Finally, Curle's research with Consoli, conducted in a UK language centre during the post-COVID period, explores online learner engagement, identifying cognitive, behavioural, and affective factors—such as emotional investment and reflective depth—as critical to authentic engagement.

Bringing together these studies, the keynote presents a theoretical framing grounded in Expectancy-Value Theory and the L2 Motivational Self System, illustrating how motivation, engagement, and learner emotions interrelate to shape EMI learning outcomes. Practical strategies for EMI educators will be outlined, including approaches to enhance task value, foster self-efficacy, and address learner anxiety. The session will conclude by reflecting on broader policy implications for supporting psychological wellbeing and motivation in EMI classrooms.