

## University Teachers' Views on English as the Medium of Instruction in an Iranian Higher Education Institution

**Abbas Zare-ee**

English Department, faculty of Foreign languages and Literature,  
University of Kashan, Iran.

**S. Yahya Hejazi**

English Department, Faculty of Foreign Languages & Literature  
University of Tehran, Iran

### Abstract

The use of English for instruction at the tertiary level of education by nations whose native language is not English has been the subject of considerable debate. This study aims to survey the attitudes of a group of Iranian university teachers at a state university in central Iran towards the possible use of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in Iranian higher education, where Persian is currently the medium of instruction except in English language departments. It also explores whether teachers' attitude towards EMI is affected by their university rank. To this end, 60 teachers were randomly selected from faculties of Humanities, Science, and Engineering, and their perceptions about EMI were explored through questionnaires and interviews. The findings indicated that, in spite of the current emphasis on Persian by authorities, teachers valued English over Persian as the medium of instruction, expressing concerns mainly about inadequacies in resources and English proficiency requirements. Interview results showed that their opinions were divided as they enumerated a variety of economic, academic, cultural, social, and technological reasons both for and against the possible use of EMI at Iranian tertiary levels. The results imply that concerns over the launch of new curricula using EMI are multidimensional. Possible suggestions for future research on EMI are discussed.

**Key words:** EMI, English as a lingua franca, English as medium of instruction, higher education, teachers' perceptions

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