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# Internationalization of English in Bangladeshi Higher Education: Evaluating Teachers' Self-Efficacy and Understanding

Alia Rawshan Banu<sup>1\*</sup> , Salma Ainy<sup>2</sup> , and Md. Najmul Huda<sup>3</sup> 

<sup>1,3</sup>Department of English, University of Scholars, Dhaka, Bangladesh

<sup>2</sup>Bangladesh Open University, Gazipur, Bangladesh

\*Correspondence: [alia@ius.edu.bd](mailto:alia@ius.edu.bd) (Alia Rawshan Banu, Sr. Lecturer & Course Coordinator, Department of English, University of Scholars, Dhaka, Bangladesh).

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## Abstract

Internationalization is a relatively recent, wide-ranging, and diverse phenomenon in higher education. Over the past few decades, there has been a huge surge in internationalization in education. It has been made possible by using English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI). The internationalization of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in Bangladeshi higher educational institutions has gained momentum, as institutions aim to align with global academic standards. However, the successful implementation of EMI heavily depends on the readiness, acceptance, and development of teachers, especially early-career teachers who joined in last three years. Despite the focus on teachers' training and language proficiency, very little attention has been given to the role of teachers' self-concept in shaping their attitudes towards EMI. Understanding whether self-concept influences early-career teachers' readiness and acceptance of EMI is crucial for designing effective teacher development programs and policy interventions. The researcher uses a quantitative research design including survey for data collection and a statistical tool for data analysis. This research aims to address the gap by examining the relationship between self-concept, teacher development, and the acceptance of EMI among the faculties in Bangladeshi higher educational institutions.

**Keywords:** Internationalization, EMI, Teachers' readiness and self-efficacy, and BD Private Universities.

## 1. Introduction

In nations where English is not the primary language, English enhances educational quality and makes it easier to access global knowledge networks. Like many other developing countries, Bangladesh has integrated EMI into its tertiary level education to promote the academic possibilities available to the faculties and students both nationally and internationally.

The internationalization of higher education has become a global trend in academia and is becoming a top agenda of the leaders of higher educational institutions 'who want to internationalize their institutions and connect their organizations, their students, and their faculty to a world that has been globalizing at an accelerating pace' (Hawawini, 2016, p. 4). Universities are inclined more towards cross-

border collaboration, academic mobility, and global competitiveness. In this context, English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) has played a change-maker role to ensure internationalization. English facilitates access to international knowledge networks and improve the quality of education in non-English-speaking countries. Bangladesh, like many other developing nations, has incorporated EMI in its higher educational institutions to align with global standards and expand academic opportunities for its students and faculties at home and abroad.

However, the successful implementation of EMI encounters numerous challenges, particularly in terms of lack of teachers' proficiency in English and training, cultural resistance and acceptance, inadequate policy and institutional support, diverse student language proficiency, financial constraints, assessment and evaluation issues, limited access to international resources, teacher workload and adaptation stress. Comprehensive strategies may help overcome these challenges by including targeted teacher development, financial investment, multicultural setting in campus, policy reform etc.

Teachers' expertise, readiness, and acceptance of internationalization are important. Early-career teachers, many of whom joined the profession within last 3 years, are crucial to contribute in the process of internationalization. These teachers face the dual pressure of adapting to educational institutions' mission and vision while also navigating the difficulties of EMI in their classrooms. As a part of teacher development, the role of self-concept how teachers perceive their abilities and professional identity emerges as a critical factor influencing their readiness to adopt EMI and their acceptance of strategies and their long-term benefits.

## 2. Review of Literature

### Internationalization of EMI

According to Manakul, (2007) English plays a pivotal role in the internationalization of higher education. The use of English as a medium of instruction is a strategic tool to attract international students. A program should be designed in a way so that it appeals to students from non-English speaking countries. EMI attracts international students – that means English is

helpful to make inbound mobility happen (Manakul, 2007). Inbound students mobility is to enroll foreigners to any of Bangladeshi universities (Hawawini, 2016; Morales ED., 2025).

EMI enhancing the educational quality and the quality for sure will lead universities to greater international collaboration. This will make an opportunity for Bangladeshi students to participate in English-taught classes abroad to improve academic performance. In Bangladesh, numerous universities provide the same academic program. Since these academic departments use the same curriculum and delivery style, they must be ranked and standardized. Without establishing an internationalization objective, mission, vision, this ranking will not be achievable. Thus, standardization is always pushed by internationalization motivation of the leaders. Since teaching in English language enables comparison with programs of a similar nature around the world, it is eventually considered necessary to preserve global academic standards by raising the caliber of local universities (Duong & Chua, 2016; Gundsambuu, 2019; Lueg, 2018).

The internationalization of English as a medium of instruction is discussed in lot of research articles such as: (Huo, 2020; Kalnbērziņa & Karapetjana, 2021; Kling & Corona, 2020; Manakul, 2007; Mattin, 2020; SHIMAUCHI, 2018; Tejada-Sanchez & Molina-Naar, 2021, 2021; Voerkel, 2024; Wilkinson *et al.*, 2021; Yee, 2014).

### Teachers' Self Concept

The way a teacher views their own efficacy and ability as a teacher is known as their self-concept (Zlatković *et al.*, 2012). It is a complex idea with a range of emotional connotations. The way a teacher views their own educational abilities is favorably correlated with happiness and negatively correlated with anxiety. Anxiety and a teacher's perception of their own subject-matter expertise are inversely correlated. A teacher's happiness at work and sense of self-worth can both be impacted by their self-concept (Glotova & Wilhelm, 2014). For their wellbeing to improve, teachers who struggle with low self-esteem could require psychological treatment. The way a teacher views themselves may have a significant impact on both their own and their students' professional growth.

In addition to assisting children in creating good self-concepts, it may help teachers promote their careers in education (Lourenço, 2018; Merga *et al.*, 2020; Yisihak Ukumo & Damtew Berlie, 2024).

The article entitled 'Internationalizing Teacher Education Curricula: Opportunities for Academic Staff Development' by Mónica Lourenço emphasizes the significant role of teachers in internationalization. One key point related to teachers' self-concept is their professional identity. Teachers' self-beliefs, their teaching experiences, and perceived ideals about their roles as teachers are all considered as teachers' self-concept. The article suggests that internationalization requires teachers to be reflective on their professional identity to strengthen transforming their teaching practices (Lourenço, 2018).

Teachers are always encouraged to reflect on their academic and professional paths. Their beliefs about teaching English should be aligned with the goals of global education (GE). For this alignment, teachers need self-reflection which allows them to justify their pedagogical choices and lets them to understand how these choices contribute to broader goals like global competence and internationalization awareness (Lourenço, 2018).

The article also notes that teachers' self-concept influences their commitment to internationalization. They are more likely to feel confident in their ability to integrate the mission and vision of internationalization into English Language curricula. In this sense, the teachers' self-concept becomes a crucial factor in their acceptance and readiness to adopt internationalized teaching practices. Some studies also discussed about significant role of English teachers' preparedness in contributing teaching English (Merga *et al.*, 2020).

### **Readiness to Implement EMI in Classroom**

Teachers' readiness is a psychological construct which means a teacher's quality of being able or willing to do something (Walter, 2004). Readiness predicts intention to a certain performance. In academic research, there are a lot of studies examining teachers readiness i.e. intention to do a particular academic task such as: readiness to implement entrepreneurship

education (Othman *et al.*, 2012), readiness to develop students' soft skill (Ritter *et al.*, 2017), readiness of teachers for self-directed learning of students (Kek & Huijser, 2011).

The readiness of English teachers to integrate technology into their classrooms has been widely explored in the literature (Hirata, 2022; Seraj *et al.*, 2021; Shohel and Power, 2010). Those studies emphasize the critical role of technology-enhanced teaching in modern education system. However, while technology integration is often viewed as a determinant for internationalisation, there has been less focus on whether English teachers are prepared to engage in the general process of internationalizing their own universities.

### **Teachers' Acceptance of Strategies of Internationalization of Higher Education**

Although the process of internationalization is complex (Moshtari & Safarpour, 2024; Wit, 2013; Zaaba *et al.*, 2011; Zolfaghari *et al.*, 2009) but it may be simplified which is as follows:

**Policies:** To establish guidelines for internationalization, such as how to hire and promote administrative and scholarly personnel.

**Programs:** To establish student visa offices, graduate research programs, study abroad programs, student and faculty exchange programs.

**Alliance Formation:** To establish alliances with other similar educational institutions.

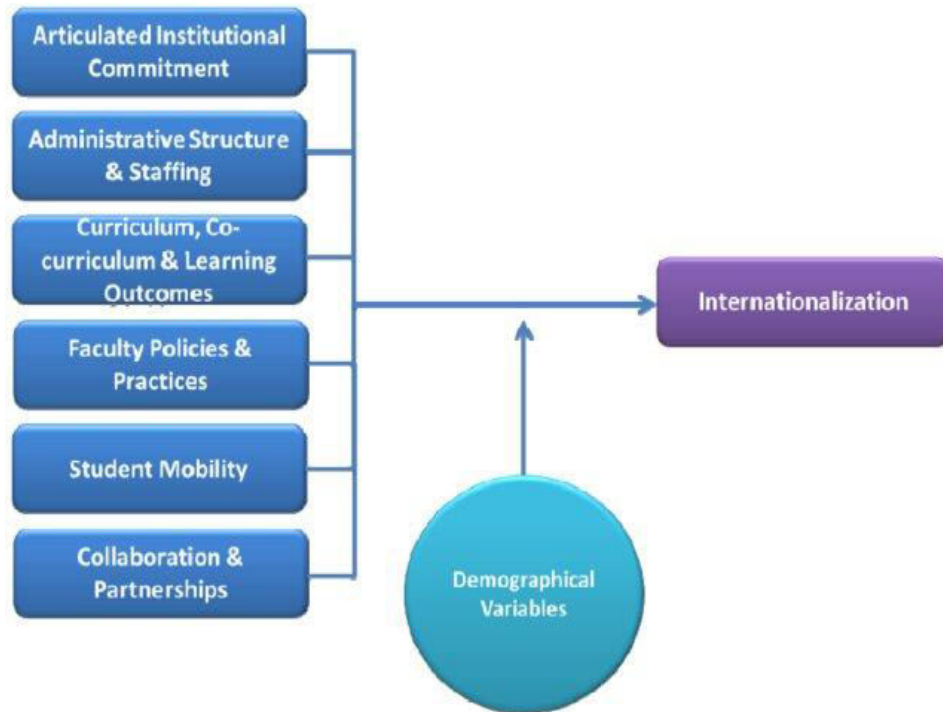
**Faculty involvement:** To encourage academic staff members to participate in cross-border initiatives with other academics, research locations, and organizations.

**Study abroad initiatives:** To provide accessible, reasonably priced, transferable, and study abroad opportunities.

**International students:** To assimilate and enroll these students into the university.

Generally, a simplified explanation leads to quick understanding and consequently enhances acceptance. Therefore, teachers' acceptance is likely to depend on the institutional awareness and inclusiveness of internationalization. The following diagram (**Fig. 1**)

clearly shows the strategic path to the internationalization of higher education.



**Fig. 1:** Strategies of Internationalization (Alhalwaki & Hamdan, 2019).

Teachers may feel resistance or acceptance when the university initiates internationalization. Which is why strategies for internationalization must be clear among teachers of universities. To ensure teachers' participation, their acceptance must be measured. Strategies are firstly, curriculum internationalization including global citizenship, foreign language programs, joint or double degree program; secondly, English as a medium of instruction including adopting English for international programs, teacher training programs in EMI, thirdly, International partnerships and collaborations including students and faculty exchanges, research collaborations; fourthly, international student recruitment including attracting global talent, cultural and language support; fifthly, mobility programs and study abroad including study abroad opportunity, international internship; sixthly, developing global competencies including intercultural competency training, global learning outcomes; seventhly, institutional governance and policy development including internationalization policies, financial investment; eighthly, technology enhanced internationalization including virtual mobility and international online programs; ninthly, cultural and

social integration including campus internationalization, and mentorship and peer support.

**Teachers’ Perception of Internationalization**

Although to achieve the internationalization mission and vision, the university's top management must be supportive, it is also dependent on the teachers’ perception of internationalization. Teachers are vital agents for successful internationalization. Many studies have been conducted on the leadership role of academic leaders in achieving internationalization (Ali and Zayed, 2018). A study entitled Teachers’ Perceptions of Internationalization conducted at King Mongkut’s University of Technology in Thailand, investigates how English teachers perceive internationalization. The research reveals that teachers consider internationalization as essential for preparing students to become global citizens. It emphasizes promoting cultural awareness and communication skills in English too. The teachers believe that universities should recruit more international staff and students, support mobility programs, and create an English-speaking environment to enhance internationalization process. Teachers also perceive that they are a vital agent of integrating international perspectives

into the curriculum by encouraging students to appreciate different cultures and develop communication skills (Jumpakate & Boonmoh, 2017).

Another study explores university faculty members' perceptions of the internationalization of curriculum (IoC) at the undergraduate level in Pakistan and the UK. Its authors highlighted the necessity of addressing global influence on local contexts through the Internationalization of curriculum. In other words, global citizenship and labor market information must be embedded in the curriculum. Faculty members therefore, recognize internationalization as an essential strategy for preparing students for global challenges, but their perceptions vary based on teaching experience and academic discipline. The findings indicate that experienced faculty members are more in harmony concerning internationalization (Jumpakate & Boonmoh, 2017).

### Research Gap

Studies on teachers' role in using technology in the classroom and teaching-learning are widespread. Understanding the teachers' preparation for participating in the process of internationalization is crucial for its successful implementation. Therefore, this study aims to explore the readiness of the teachers to internationalize their teaching, along with how their self-concept influences their acceptance of these changes. Despite its growing importance, the relationship between teachers' self-concept and their preparedness for EMI has received very little scholarly attention in the context of Bangladeshi private and public universities. This research seeks to fill that gap by exploring how the teachers in Bangladeshi higher educational institutions perceive their role in the internationalization process. Specifically, the study examines whether teachers' self-concept influences their acceptance of EMI and their readiness to implement it effectively. This gap in the research highlights the need to examine the readiness of teachers, not just in terms of technological integration, but in their ability to adopt English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI).

### Research Questions

- 1) What is the relationship between English proficiency and the acceptance of English as a

Medium of Instruction (EMI) among early-career teachers in Bangladeshi private universities?

- 2) How do the faculties perceive the challenges of implementing internationalization strategies in Bangladeshi higher education institutions?
- 3) What is the impact of professional development programs on the readiness of teachers to integrate internationalization strategies into their curriculum?
- 4) How do the teachers' self-concept and readiness to implement internationalization influence their acceptance towards the strategies of internationalization?

### Theoretical Framework

This study combines three main theories:

**Self-Concept Theory** (Rosenberg, 1979) – This theory explains how teachers' self-perception (self-concept) influences their behaviors, including their readiness and acceptance of new teaching methods in any context particularly in internationalization.

**Self-Efficacy Theory** (Bandura, 1997) – This theory is used to support the idea that teachers with higher self-efficacy (a specific aspect of self-concept) feel more prepared to teach and adopt new teaching strategies.

**Theory of Planned Behavior** (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) – This theory helps explain how teachers' belief in their ability to execute new behaviors (like adopting new teaching methods) influences their intention and decision to implement those methods.

## 3. Methodology

### Participants

The participants of the survey are faculty members from selected private universities who joined the institution at least three years earlier, irrespective of any subject.

### Research Design

This study has employed a quantitative research design including survey for data collection and statistical tool for data analysis. SPSS will be used for the following statistical analysis:

What is the relationship between English proficiency and the acceptance of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) among early-career teachers in Bangladeshi private universities?	Pearson Correlation
How do the faculties perceive the challenges of implementing internationalization strategies in Bangladeshi higher education institutions?	Descriptive analysis
What is the impact of professional development programs on the readiness of teachers to integrate internationalization strategies into their curriculum?	Multiple regression analysis
How do the teachers' self-concept, and readiness to implement internationalization influence their acceptance towards the strategies of internationalization?	Multiple regression analysis

#### 4. Results and Discussion

In this study the researcher has found a positive correlation between English proficiency and the acceptance of EMI among early-career teachers. This research indicates that teachers with higher levels of English proficiency are likely to show greater acceptance of EMI.

In addition, teachers who have participated in professional development programs are also likely to report higher levels of readiness compared to those who have not participated in professional development programs. Lastly, the multiple regression analysis shows that self-concept, readiness to implement internationalization, and perception of internationalization are significant predictors of teachers' acceptance of internationalization strategies. Teachers with a positive self-concept and greater readiness demonstrates higher levels of acceptance towards internationalization strategies.

#### 5. Conclusion

In higher education, internationalization is a relatively new, expansive, multifaceted phenomenon. The internationalization of higher education has increased dramatically in the last few decades. In an attempt to expand the academic opportunities for faculty and students both domestically and abroad, the government of Bangladesh, like that of many other developing nations, has incorporated EMI into its tertiary education system. Keeping this in mind, the researcher aims to investigate how far the self-concept and willingness or preparedness of early career teachers can adapt to this process of internationalization.

#### 5. Authors Contribution

A.R.B.: Developed the overall research framework and the research idea. Wrote the manuscript and carried out a literature review. S.A.: Collected data for

the study, revised the paper for clarity and coherence, ensured the accuracy of the results. N.H.: Contributed to the conclusion and discussion section. All the authors read and approved the final manuscript for publication.

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#### 7. Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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