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### **Crossing the EMI hurdle in multilingual societies: the Israeli perspective**

The prevalence of EMI programs in the last decade has yielded a growing body of research that indicates, among other things, the difficulties involved in travelling the road from theory to practice, from intentions to implementation. This is evident on different fronts: on the policy level (the declarative national policy versus the institutional one), as well as with regard to practical aspects (namely support for students' and lecturers' needs and teaching and assessment practices). While some of the emerging patterns such as lack of infrastructure and understanding of the complexities involved are globally evident, others are rooted in the local context, its history, current linguistic ecology and the resources available for carrying out the EMI initiative. This presentation will trace the on-going implementation of an EMI initiative in a large university in Israel looking at the issues involved from both a global and a local perspective.

The research was conducted using interview data and critical document analysis. The findings shed light on a mixed global-local perspective. For, in addition to substantiating the irrefutable role of English as the international language, they also highlight the process against the backdrop of the historical context of the revitalization of the local Hebrew language, the status of Arabic, the second official language, and the dynamic multilingual reality of the Israeli society.

The findings also bring up dilemmas inherent in the consequences of the EMI phenomenon that regards English as the inevitable choice offered for conveying academic content in international courses and programs, for international students as well as for locals. The presentation will note and discuss the intriguing challenges of such practices in multilingual settings such as in the case of Israel.