



An Investigation into Students' Perceptions on the use of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in EFL Classes

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Abstract

Language is a tool for communication between two people or among the people. English is a global language and it is used as a common language in some countries and as an official language in some countries. English is used as a medium of language in classes of some countries in which English is still used as a foreign language. There are two previous papers in which the respective researchers studied the drawbacks and benefits of using English as the medium of language. Based on these studies, the researcher studied the perceptions of the students on the use of using English as a medium of instruction in EFL classes. The title of this research is "An Investigation into Students' Perceptions on the Use of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in EFL Classes". The main purpose of doing this research is to reveal benefits and drawbacks of using English as a medium of instruction in EFL classes. It took a semester. The researcher used a sampling method. Thirty first year English major specialization students, fifteen first year Economics major specialization students and fifty-eight second year Physics major specialization students were used as the participants in this research. As the research tools, some questionnaires were used. Data were collected and analyzed by using quantitative and qualitative ways. As the findings, nearly all participants became developed in listening and speaking skills more than before, more confident in communicating with others by using English and enjoyed in using English as EMI in classes as well as had the great demand in EMI in future English classes as the benefits though there were a few drawbacks. In brief, all findings and results will be supportive for further researches related to EMI.

I. INTRODUCTION

It is clear to say that language is essential in the human society because it functions as a communicator or a connector as well as a medium between people or among the people. There are many languages which people are using in their daily lives all over the world. Among them, English is used as a common

language or a global language which is easily used as a medium or communicator in conversations and in written forms for different purposes. Even in most of the world countries, English is spoken and written as the global language, in some countries including Myanmar, English is still used as a foreign language. Similarly, mother-tongue instruction or bilingualism, English and their mother tongue is

used in teaching and learning English courses in classes in most of the government schools including universities. However, there may have some barriers such as language distractions if we use English as a communicator or a medium in English classes. Concerning with this, there were two previous papers in which the researchers studied the role and impact of using English as a medium of instruction and language proficiency and academic success related to EMI. Based on the findings from these papers, the researcher attempted to do the research relating to English as the language medium in classes.

The title is “An Investigation into Students’ Perceptions on the Use of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in EFL Classes”. The aim of doing this research is to reveal benefits and drawbacks of using English as a medium of instruction in EFL classes. To achieve the purpose of doing this research, the following facts were considered.

Objectives of the Study

To reveal the advantages of using English as a medium of instruction in EFL classes

To investigate the disadvantages of using English as a medium of instruction in EFL classes

To apply the impacts of using English as a medium of instruction in the current language teaching

Research Questions

What types of benefits from using English as a medium of instruction in EFL classes such as developing students’ language skills can be found?

Are there any drawbacks in using English as a medium of instruction in EFL classes? What are they?

How can the impacts of using English as a medium of instruction in the current language teaching?

Rationale

This research helps the teachers notice using English as a medium of instruction in EFL classes is beneficial for improving language skills especially listening and speaking skills of students and other academic success even there are some barriers.

Limitations

There are some limitations such as time-taking to do this research. The researcher collected data by surveying the students who had to take classes only in the previous semester.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, there are two main parts: literature of related researches and previous studies.

Literature of Related Researches

According to Coleman (2006), (Crystal, 2004), (Graddol, 1997), and (Marsh, 2006), many studies were conducted on EMI in different parts of the world reveal that the future of EMI has a high take in both educational and cultural setting by and large. Cultural barrier is yet another dominant factor in posing a challenge in the promotion of EMI into education system. The results are staggering in terms of poor performance and grades, poor knowledge and learning, low learning outcomes. Even though billions of dollars are being invested in education sector yet the results are not proportional to the level of spending.

According to Crystal (2003), English is one of the most geographically widely spoken languages in the world and serves multiple purposes in a rapidly globalizing world. Its width extends from politics and economy to technology, science, media and communication. Its mastery opens doors to more information than the mastery of any other language. The importance of English language learning and its usage as a medium of instruction divides opinions. While some prefer using English as a medium of instruction as opposed to the mother tongue, others are suspicious of English language learning from an early age.

English language proficiency and Academic Success

Various studies have explored the relationship between English language proficiency and academic success. According to Crystal, D. (2004), in non-EMI contexts, studies have found a statistically significant relationship between academic success and English language proficiency.

Previous Studies

There are two previous studies related to the perceptions on the use of English as the medium of language as EMI all over the world. The first study is “The Role and impact of English as a Language and a Medium of Instruction in Saudi Higher Education Institutions”. It was done by Ebad and Rhyan, lecturers from the Department of Computer and Information, Jazan University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In this research, the researchers investigated the gap between English medium instruction (EMI) and Arab medium instruction (AMI) and investigates the root cause of the issues taking into account the reports of other case studies. The paper concluded with recommendations to address these issues.

The second study is “A longitudinal study at an English medium instruction university in Turkey: the interplay between English language improvement and academic success”. It was done by Doğan Yuksel, Department of Foreign Language Education, Kocaeli University, Turkey, Mehmet Altay, Department of Foreign Language Education, Kocaeli University, Turkey. Adem Soruç, Department of Education, University of Bath, UK 3 and Mehmet Altay, Department of Foreign Language Education, Kocaeli University, Turkey. In this study, the researcher investigated whether English language proficiency increases over time when studying academic content through English Medium Instruction (EMI). Two academic subjects, Business Administration and Mechatronics Engineering were compared. Results showed a statistically significant improvement in the English proficiency levels of both subjects over a four-year period of studying through English. Furthermore, this improvement predicted EMI academic achievement; meaning that the more proficient students became in English, the higher they achieved in their EMI academic studies. This provides evidence for policymakers, EMI practitioners, and language professionals around the world that English does improve when studying academic content through English, and that this improvement has a positive effect on content learning outcomes.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper studied the perceptions of the students on the Use of English as a medium of language (EMI) in EFL classes. The researcher studied how students feel in using English as a

medium of instruction and what they expect from EMI. Besides, the researcher observed that two previous studies related to EMI. Due to these studies, it was found that there was a gap between EMI, English as a Medium of Instruction and MMI, Mother-Tongue as a Medium of Instruction as well as EMI led the improvement of language proficiency and success. Based on these findings, the researcher did the new research titled “An Investigation into Students’ Perceptions on the Use of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in EFL Classes”. There were two main parts: the research design and research procedure. Under the research design, the researcher used a sampling method. As the samples or participants, the researcher used 30 First Year English Specialization students, 58 Second Physics students and 15 First Year Economics students attending at Pathein University were used. All these participants took part actively in this research. They were randomly chosen. This research took a semester. As the research tools, two questionnaires were used. All data were collected and analyzed with qualitative research method. As the research procedure, students were introduced EMI in EFL classes. At the beginning, it was found that most of the students might be difficult in learning the lessons. Within the research period, they were motivated by praising and handling. Before the end of the semester, students or participants became more familiar with EMI and became improvement in learning. So they were given two questionnaires to let answer these questions to know how much they improved in EMI. Data were collected and analyzed with quantitative and qualitative research method. All findings were discussed in findings and discussion section.

IV. DATA COLLECTION AND DATA ANALYSIS

Data Collection

Perceptions on the Use of English as a Medium of Instruction

Table.1 Questionnaire-1 Students’ Perceptions on EMI (Some Common Answers of the Students)

No	Questions	Perceptions of the Students		
		First year(English)	First Year (Economics)	Second Year (Physics)
1	What are the benefits can you get from using English as EMI?	Due to EMI, listening and speaking skill are better and those skills will be used in future work	EMI is useful for connecting with world countries	Due to EMI, listening and speaking are better and communication becomes better.
2.	What are the disadvantages you can get from using English as EMI?	There are many challenges to know advance of English.	It is difficult to use English for most people.	Sometimes, English is difficult to be interpreted

		English is unfamiliar with them		and understood to get main points
3.	Did you get benefits from using English as EMI in class?	Yes	Yes	Yes
4.	Did you enjoy using as EMI in class?	Yes	Yes	Yes
5.	Do you want to be still in using English as EMI in class?	Yes	Yes	Yes
6.	Do you prefer using English as EMI in class?	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table.2 Questionnaire-2 Students' Perceptions on EMI (Some Common Answers of the Students)

No	Questions	Perceptions of the Students								
		First year (English)			First year (Economics)			Second year (Physics)		
		Most	Fairly	Don't Mind	Most	Fairly	Don't Mind	Most	Fairly	Don't Mind
1	I prefer using English as EMI.	14	16	2	8	3	2	22		
2	I understand everything I learn in English.	3	20	9		8	6	24		
3	I liked English as EMI.	8	16	8		4	10	34	28	1
4	I disliked English as EMI.	8	8	16	11	2		30	27	5
5.	I want to be still in using English as EMI.	10	20	2	11	1	1	37	21	2
6.	I can improve my English by using as EMI.	15	9	8	9	1		21	39	3
7.	I can communicate easily by using English as EMI.	6	21	2	5	5		5	28	25

V. DATA ANALYSIS

By analyzing Table.1 Questionnaire-1 Students' Perceptions on EMI, most of the first year English Specialization students gave their perceptions on given question-benefits of using English as EMI that due to EMI, listening and speaking skill are better and those skills will be

used in future work. They gave their answer for the second question-disadvantages of using English as EMI that there are many challenges to know advance of English. English is unfamiliar with them. Most of the first year Economics Specialization students gave their perceptions on given question-benefits of using English as EMI that EMI is useful

for connecting with world countries. They also gave the answer for second question-disadvantages of using English as EMI that it is difficult to use English for most people. Most of the second year Physics specialization students gave their perceptions on given question-benefits of using English as EMI that due to EMI, listening and speaking are better and communication becomes better. They gave their answer for the second question-disadvantages of using English as EMI that sometimes, English is difficult to be interpreted and understood to get main points. Similarly, all their same answer for next questions “Did you get benefits from using English as EMI in class? Did you enjoy using as EMI in class? and Do you want to be still in using English as EMI in class? was “Yes”. By analyzing the students’ perceptions on EMI, it is assumed that using English as EMI was very effective, beneficial and reliable for all participants or students in improving their language skills in EFL classes as well as they have the willingness to still have EMI in EFL classes.

By analyzing Table.2 Questionnaire-2 Students’ Perceptions on the Use of English as EMI, it was found that most of the first year English specialization students preferred using English as EMI and they mentioned their perceptions that they want to be still in using English as EMI, they can improve my English by using as EMI .they can use English well by using English as EMI, and they are really satisfied with English as EMI. They can fairly communicate in easy ways by using English as EMI. They fairly like using English as EMI. A few students disliked using English as EMI. In the same way, most of the first year Economics specialization students preferred using English as EMI and they mentioned their perceptions that they want to be still in using English as EMI, they can improve my English by using as EMI .they can use English well by using English as EMI, and they are really satisfied with English as EMI. They can fairly communicate in easy ways by using English as EMI. They fairly like using English as EMI. A few students disliked using English as EMI. Most of the second year Physics Specialization students preferred using English as EMI and they mentioned their perceptions that they want to be still in using English as EMI. They can improve my English by using as EMI. They can fairly communicate in easy ways by using English as EMI. They can use English well by using English as EMI, and they are really satisfied with English as EMI. A few students disliked using English as EMI. By analyzing students’ perceptions on the use of English as EMI in EFL classes in Table.2, it is assumed that all participants were very satisfied in using English as EMI in classes and they wanted to still have EMI in next classes.

VI. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

According to data analysis collected in Table.1 and Table.2 Perceptions on the Use of English as EMI in EFL classes, it was found that all participants including first year English Specialization students, first year Economics and second year Physics specialization students’ linguistic skills especially listening and speaking skills became more developed than before, they became more confident in using English for communicating. They were easier in using English to communicate with others in classes. They were able to use English well by using English as EMI. Besides, they enjoyed using in English as EMI in classes. They wished to have EMI in next classes. All findings solved my research questions. The first question asked if what types of benefits students or participants could get such as developing their linguistic skills by using English as EMI. This question was solved because nearly all participants became developed in listening and speaking skill more than before by using English as EMI in EFL classes. The second question asked whether there were drawbacks in using English as EMI. This question was solved that there were a few drawbacks at the beginning of the research such as sometimes lacking the main points of the lessons but nearly all participants were satisfied with using English as EMI in classes as well as they all were happy with this. Besides, they had the great demand of having still EMI in classes of next semester.

For all participants, English is very difficult to be mastered in using in classes. This is because English is still used as a foreign language in Myanmar. English has been learned as a school subject but not as a language for many years. It is not peculiar that use of English is difficult for them inside and outside the classes. To do this research, the researcher, I was very anxiety whether I was able to get the good results after doing this research. At the beginning of the research, I attempted to motivate the students in using English as EMI in my all EFL Classes. I had to take one English major class and two minor classes. For the first time, EMI was unfamiliar with the students and they found difficulty in understanding what the teacher said. Later they improved their motivation themselves and they became more engaged in my teaching effectively. This research took a semester. At the end of my research period, I collected data by giving two questionnaires to the participants so that the good results were counted that I have already mentioned above. I have a plan to convey these good results for further researches related to EMI. Furthermore, I will have to use impacts of using English as EMI in current language teaching and due to these impacts or benefits and drawbacks from my research, I will have to

encourage my students to use English as EMI in classes by giving their regular training.

VII. CONCLUSION

Language is the tool of communicating and it serves as a medium of instruction. There are many languages used all over the world. Among them, English is used as a global or international language. In institutes or universities of most world countries, English is being used as a medium of instruction as EMI. In Myanmar, English is used as a medium of instruction in some institutes and universities. There were some previous studies which observed and analyzed the role and impact of EMI in educational setting as well as the language proficiency and academic success related to EMI. Based on their findings, the researcher attempted to a research titled “An Investigation into Students’ Perceptions On The Use of English as Medium of Instruction (EMI) In EFL Classes”. The aim of doing this research is to reveal benefits and drawbacks of using English as a medium of instruction in EFL classes. This research was conducted with sampling method. As the samples or participants, the researcher used 30 First Year English Specialization students, 58 Second Physics students and 15 First Year Economics students attending at Pathein University were used. All my participants participated actively in this research. They were randomly chosen. This research took a semester. As the research tools, two questionnaires were used. As a result, nearly all participants became developed in their language skills and they became more confident in communicating with others inside and outside the classes. They were very satisfied with their success and enjoyed using English as EMI in EFL classes. They also had a willingness to still have EMI in EFL classes next semester. Hence, all findings and results will be supportive for further researches related to EMI.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire -1

Answer all questions.

1. What are the benefits you can get from using English as EMI?
2. What are the disadvantages you can get from using English as EMI?
3. Did you get benefits from using English as EMI in class?
4. Did you enjoy using as EMI in class?
5. Do you want to be still in using English as EMI in class?
6. Do you prefer using English as EMI in class?

Questionnaire-2

No	Facts	Most	Fairly	Don't Mind
1	I prefer using English as EMI.			
2.	I understand everything I learn in English.			
3.	I liked English as EMI.			
4.	I disliked English as EMI.			
5.	I want to be still in using English as EMI.			
6.	I can improve my English by using as EMI.			
7.	I can communicate easily by using English as EMI.			
8.	I can use English well by using English as EMI,			
9.	I'm very happy with English as EMI.			
10.	I'm really satisfied with English as EMI.			

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