

Professional Development for English-medium Instruction Lecturers: A Critical Review

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Abstract. Despite its rapid adoption in higher education institutions among non-English speaking countries, English-medium instruction (EMI) has been implemented with some discrepancies that exist in macro, meso and micro level policies. This paper is aimed to provide a critical overview of those mismatches though not neglecting some benefits of EMI application by addressing the following issues: (1) the discrepancies in EMI policy at the meso and micro levels regarding EMI lecturers' linguistic and pedagogical competence, (2) institutional supports in the form of lecturer professional development (LPD), and (3) proposed model for EMI lecturer professional development. The professional development should be conducted in such an integrated, continuous, and collaborative method as an institutional support with the involvement of language specialist and EMI experts for more effective and efficient outcomes. Future studies to see how lecturer professional development is conducted is worth conducting for facilitating EMI lecturers in the content delivery and for the students in both content mastery and language enhancement benefits to support the higher education institution vision in internationalization.

Keywords: English-medium Instruction, Meso-Micro Level Policy, Mismatch, Professional Development

1 Introduction

English-medium instruction (EMI) has got much attention and adoption among higher education institutions (HEIs) [1] in response to the increasing trend in higher education (HE) internationalization [2]. EMI is defined as “*The use of the English language to teach academic subjects in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English*” [1]. Though it is more a content rather than language teaching, EMI has been favored mainly for its dual-benefits, content knowledge as primary objective and language as the by-product added by future job-related benefits for the students [3][4]. Therefore, more universities worldwide, especially in non-English speaking countries have turned their attention and set up their new policy into EMI with different degrees of implementation specific to their contexts to realize their internationalization vision [3].

However, a language policy must be in line from the national government (macro), university (meso), and to students/teachers (micro) levels for the ease of lecturers and students in its implementation [2][5][6]. Otherwise, the dual benefits of EMI will not be likely to be achieved [7], thus even leading into deteriorating students' content understanding of the students and complicating or burdening lecturers' job [6]. Criticisms have been addressed to the EMI

lecturers' capacity in dealing with this content teaching approach, such as their lack of language proficiency [1], lack of communicative functions [8], lack of EMI guidelines for the lectures [1][9], and limited EMI lecturer training [10] in addition to students' problems [5][7][11][12]. Furthermore, EMI practice is not solely a teaching content subject business [13], but with a delivery mode and pedagogical challenges far different from mainstream teaching using first language (L1). Thus EMI lecturers must be given necessary supports for smooth content delivery in EMI class. This paper is aimed to review existing literatures in EMI practices, specifically addressing: (1) the discrepancies in EMI policy at the meso and micro levels regarding EMI lecturers' linguistic and pedagogical competence, (2) institutional supports in the form of lecturer professional development (LPD), and (3) proposed model for EMI lecturer professional development.

2 Research and Method

This article is a review of EMI studies to provide a state-of-the-art review of the practices on EMI in higher education institutions (HEIs), by focusing on the meso-micro level policies and implementation with emphasis on lecturers' linguistic and pedagogical competence and professional development with a recommendation for an LPD model. The steps will be identification of what has been known and unknown about meso-micro level EMI policy and implementation to show the significance of the study and eventually state how the study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge [14]. The contents of this review are conceptual, empirical, and practical. The stages of this review are defining the problems, searching for the literatures, selecting studies, reading the literatures, organizing the findings, and finally writing up the review.

3 Finding and Discussion

This paper focuses on some discrepancies that have been observed regarding the EMI implementation at higher education institutions in most Asian countries by focusing on the HEI policy, insufficient linguistic and pedagogical competence of the lecturers due to inadequate professional development support for the lecturers, and a proposed LPD model.

3.1 Discrepancies between EMI policy and implementation

Regarding the policy, there have been tendencies that many of the EMI programs are still lack of careful and good planning [15]. This can be possibly due to more top-down policy, with lack of administrative recognition and awareness, and unclear arrangement of EMI implementation at the classroom level [16][17][18]. For example, some universities have required English proficiency for lecturer recruitment, but no clear guidance regarding the minimum score of English proficiency [5][16]. The policy statement has not been translated comprehensively in the micro level, often leaving the lecturers confused of how to implement EMI in the classroom practice [5].

Then, related to lecturers' linguistic competence, an EMI program actually requires a certain threshold level of English proficiency for both the students and the teachers [2]. The lecturers' sufficient level of English proficiency is very important for the delivery of content

through the foreign language in English as foreign language (EFL) context universities [19]. Lack of language skill of the lecturers is detrimental for EMI class as it can cause the following problems for the lecturers: lack of asking/answering questions, code-switching, impoverished classroom discourse, more pressure, extended time needed for preparation/instruction, simplifying disciplinary content and difficulty explaining it, interacting less with students and developing a weaker rapport with them [20][21]. For example, some lecturers in an Indonesian Polytechnique still struggled to fully use English in EMI class, thus preferring to apply translation and code switching due to lack of English familiarity to explain concepts in English [18]. In addition, the lecturers' inadequate English proficiency can cause lack of confidence in lecturing through English [12][22] which might be due to difficulties in expressing specific terms in their disciplinary subjects [17][23]. Finally, using English exclusively would hinder students' content understanding [17] and absorb the lecturers' teaching preparation and teaching time [5].

Finally, looking at lecturers' pedagogical competence, EMI lecturers might be selected based on their overseas-training or education and even expatriates who are encouraged to teach EMI classes [12][17]. However, their overseas experiences are not enough to teach an EMI course as teaching through EMI is not supposed to be just asking students to do a work in English and submit it to the teacher with less discussion by the teacher [4]. They even need to have such strategies like error fixing and feedback strategies [11]. Therefore, it has been a challenge in EMI programs to provide qualified EMI teachers to assure content delivery to the students with various language and academic background [15][24].

3.2 The need for EMI lecturer professional development

Regarding the aforementioned discrepancies and some challenges faced by the lecturers it needs some thoughts of how inadequate language and pedagogical competence can be solved in order that the content delivery and understanding for the benefit of the students will be guaranteed [13]. An LPD program is thus needed to (1) prepare the lecturers with effective communicative skills and linguistic competence as content lecturers sometimes are expected to provide linguistic feedbacks for the students [8], and (2) minimize ineffective teaching due to teacher-centered teaching model [25]. However, very few higher education institutions (HEIs) have formalized this process and much of the current support available from program directors and course leaders is voluntary and unsystematic [26]. Therefore, some LPDs, like hosting symposium, workshops, or public lectures are still considered as ineffective to improve lecturers' linguistic and pedagogical competence in EMI [17].

LPD program can be designed to provide and develop EMI lecturers' both language and pedagogical competence to ensure quality EMI teaching and learning [27], in a continuous, cyclical, collaborative, and integrated mode [19][28]. In addition to continuous professional development, careful monitoring of intended learning objectives (ILOs) of EMI programs should be further conducted [13] as many of the existing LPDs are usually more incidental and unsystematic continuing professional development (CPD) initiative [19]. Furthermore, lecturers obviously are required to possess adequately high level of proficiency in the language of instruction, which becomes an issue if and when they are teaching through a language other than their own first language, which is English [19]. Finally, lecturers need to be equipped with the strategies of how to help students learn through their second or foreign languages to alleviate the extra cognitive load of such learning on the shoulder of the students. In dealing with students' difficulty in using English in EMI, lecturers therefore need more proper training and advice on how to scaffold the development of the students' academic literacy, their reading and

writing, in their second or third language as well as their communication and intercultural communication skills and competences [19]. As those varying outcomes of EMI, it is therefore urgent to really assure that teachers are given enough support so they can explain complex terms and concepts in understandable and clear words to make students understand course contents better [12]. More needs for professional development can further be provided by having a survey or needs analysis to know what teachers need to be facilitated and how such supports affect the EMI implementation in different HEI contexts.

3.3 Proposed LPD Model

This section is devoted for proposing a model based on the elaborated LPD mentioned above. The LPD can adopt two models. One is an intensive one-week teacher training adapted from Fenton-smith et al. [25] model and a continuous professional development adopted from Bright et al.'s model [28] and Lauridsen's model [19]. The argument is that professional development is supposed to not only providing workshops and courses, but also more cyclical or continuous professional development in which collaboration can be done in addition to assessment of each lecturer [19][28].

The one-week intensive training is aimed to give a unified perspective on EMI and enhancement in language and teaching methods. The instructors for this training will be the EMI experts and English instructors from the university language service unit or English specialists from international English language institutions to provide more up to date knowledge in EMI implementation. The proposed model at least should be designed to cater the following sessions.

1. Lecturers will be given an ESL enhancement for English proficiency, so that their communication in English will be much better, clearer and more understandable for the students to further enhance their confidence in front of the class.
2. Lecturers will emphasize on presentation skills for lecturers, including easy practices related to such topics as structuring speeches effectively, communicating nonverbally, and designing audio or visual aids for presentation.
3. The lecturers will be equipped and enhanced with EMI teaching methodology. This is to provide exposures to content and language teaching approaches, techniques or strategies that can help content delivery using English more understandable, enjoyable, and meaningful for the students.

After this training, follow-up continuous and collaborative professional programs shall be conducted using the following methods:

1. Mentoring. Mentoring is designed as an actively engaging learning and development to identify and solve particular problems found during EMI teaching which is more gradual and reflective [28]. A mentor will be a senior and experienced EMI lecturer who should be an effective educator, have good learning design and classroom management skills, as well as an ability to form, and keep effective professional relationship with excellent communication skills as a counsellor and expert in the subject field. The principles of mentoring are reciprocal, learning, relationship, partnership, and development [28].
2. Peer observation and review. This model will be conducted to help encourage evaluation and strengthen EMI teaching and learning. As EMI lecturers are designed as Team Lecturing, adopting Gosling's model, academics observe colleagues with activities such as assessment design, feedback practice, virtual learning environment, and course or module design [28].
3. Scholarship and professional development. This continuous model is aimed to provide a systematic study of teaching and learning process in order to improve students' learning

outcomes and disseminating learning and teaching practices within and across institutions [28]. This will be done by looking for models of EMI teaching and learning best practices from different contexts from reputable journals and then discuss among the lecturers for self-reflection and evaluation with the help of English instructor from the language center and EMI experts. By this, lecturers will be more enriched with up-to date EMI teaching approaches that enhance students learning outcomes. More importantly, is that the lecturers should contextualize the practices from other institutions to suit with the existing students and institutional needs [19]

4 Conclusion

As EMI is an emerging trend but with complexities in its implementation, discrepancies in the meso-micro level policy often happen in HEIs. Lecturers as the EMI agents are also faced by numerous gaps in terms of the unclear teaching guideline, recruitment criteria, and linguistic and pedagogical inadequacy. Meanwhile, lack of professional development unfortunately has been provided for the EMI lecturers as a form or institutional support. Therefore, a more systematic and well-planned LPD is needed to address the policy and implementation gaps by applying principles which can enhance the sustainability of EMI for the sake of its dual benefits, both content mastery and language enhancement of the EMI students, and the demand of HE internationalization. By applying continuous, integrated, and collaborative principles followed by intensive monitoring in conducting a lecturer professional development program, EMI policy makers at least have facilitated the lecturers to ease the highly demanding task of lecturing their disciplinary content subjects through English. More controlling and evaluation of the implementation should be carried out at the institutional level. In addition, more comprehensive studies are also supposed to be conducted by assessing how LPD has been conducted and has effectively helped lecturers and students in implementing EMI for the sake of content mastery and English language enhancement without sacrificing one of them and at the same time can enhance the realization of HEI vision in internationalization.

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