

THE IMPLICATIONS IN THE USE OF ENGLISH AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT COURSES AT VAVUNIYA CAMPUS

¹*J. Gnanaseelan

Department of English Language Teaching, Faculty of Business
Studies, Vavuniya Campus of the University of Jaffna
jeya86@hotmail.com

²S. Jeyaseelan

Department of English Language Teaching, Faculty of Business
Studies, Vavuniya Campus of the University of Jaffna
subi_08@hotmail.com

ABSTRACT

The paper avails, in a systemic form, some of the results of the investigation into nature, functions, problems, and implications in the use of English as the medium of Instruction (EMI) in the Business Management courses at Vavuniya Campus of the University of Jaffna, located in the conflict-affected northern part of Sri Lanka. It is a case study of the responses of the students and the teachers from Tamil and Sinhala language communities of the Faculty of Business Studies. This paper analyzes the perceptions on the use of the medium, the EMI background, resources available and accessible, language abilities of the teachers and learners, learning style and pedagogy, the EMI methodology, the socio-economic and socio-political contexts typical of a non-native English learning context. The analysis is quantitative and qualitative. It finds out the functional perspective of the EMI in Sri Lanka and suggests practical strategies of contextualization and acculturation in the EMI organization and positions. The paper assesses the learner and teacher capacity in the use of English. The ethnic conflict and linguistic politics in Sri Lanka have contributed multiple factors to the current use of English as the medium. It has conflicted with its domestic realities and the globalization trends of the world at large which determines efficiency and effectiveness.

Keywords: English medium, function, learning, management and teaching

INTRODUCTION

Bilingual education has both the mother tongue and English (as the second language) as their media of instruction. The policy-making and implementation of monolingualism, bilingualism, and EMI have always been in the party politics in Sri Lanka, but it remains a social and educational question that is ‘national’ in the broadest sense of the word. Therefore the researcher approaches the topic – using English as a medium of instruction for academic purposes – without distortion that belongs to party politics. The contemporary

Sri Lankans understand the need for a link language, English, in national and international communication for peace and development.

The issue depends on the government. There has always been a popular protest against the education system currently implemented in Sri Lanka, mainly, the Advanced Level, which is so competitive and mechanical and rote-learning based but not anything related to the English language teaching proposals.

This study is not related about trilingualism or nationalism or national unity integration, but English as the medium of instruction.

The students are liberal in their attitude towards English. They are anxious to learn English. From the beginning of the post-independent era, it should also be remembered that the medium of English that has been fast becoming artificial, due to the implementation of using the mother tongue as the medium of instruction solely. At the University level, the EMI is the contemporary need. Learning English as a second language will not be successful unless some major subjects are taught in English. The professional training should be given in the EMI. Sri Lanka lacks professionally trained bilingual or EMI teachers at the school and university levels. The reform is most urgent. The graduates feel disappointed about the lack of their EMI proficiency. They are not able to function in the public and private sector workplaces with the needed EMI proficiency and feel inferior.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The EMI context in Sri Lanka suffers a dearth of research at both school and university level. There is a need for researching the genres and rhetorical styles that the Sri Lankan universities to follow in conducting their programs.

One other interesting feature is that there are many kinds of research done by the people on English for specific purposes or on language teaching and learning for specific purposes, but they are less directly involved in studying English as the medium of instruction. Especially in Northern & Eastern

provinces in Sri Lanka, it is almost nil. It is understandable that the increased sophistication of the research on English as the medium of instruction will also be apparent.

This study is essential of an applied nature, and it involves the close examination of background, needs, and problems, the texts that the students have to grapple with in reading, writing, speaking and listening in subject matters of commerce, economics, management, accountancy, and finance in English.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The focus of the study is very much on needs analysis and on identifying the problems that the Campus students encounter in their course. The objectives are identifying and assessing needs, identifying students' problems, and the status of the course components about the medium of the instruction.

The paper aims to study the nature, problems, and implications of using English as the medium of instruction in the Business Management courses at Vavuniya Campus in Sri Lanka in particular and Sri Lankan universities in general. The Faculty of Business Studies of Vavuniya Campus of the University of Jaffna, Vavuniya, Sri Lanka was taken as a Case study.

The fact, moreover that hardly any investigation is made to the students of the faculty on this subject must not be construed as meaning that both the teachers and the students have ignored the importance of English as the medium of instruction. The contrary is indeed the case. They are carefully studying and realizing the subject matter. The language background, language abilities, resource availability, and accessibility and EMI methodology have been analyzed.

The type of questionnaire used is called mixed questionnaire in which there are both open and closed questions. The total number of the students to whom the

questionnaire was distributed is 84. Also, some interviews were conducted with the teachers and students.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As the limitation of the study, in presenting the results here, only some of the main findings are given, and owing to its limited perception-based survey form, much explanatory evidence of a statistical nature, which would have been essential in a strictly scientific study, had to be omitted.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Almost all the universities in Sri Lanka use English as the medium of instruction. However, the faculties of arts, humanities, and social sciences still conduct most of the degree programs (90%) in Tamil or Sinhala. All the science degree programs are conducted in English. However, the management degree programs are conducted in English in 75% of the universities. Some universities conduct the management degree programs in Sinhala or Tamil. The programs conducted in English may or may not be successful due to many factors. Meganathan, (2011) states that EMI in most of the South Asian countries creates social division. However, it is not seriously felt in the current scenario in Sri Lanka though it had had its impact before the 1980s. One of the real challenges is inequitable resource allocation according to Coleman (2011a). Sri Lankan people have benefited from the free education policy of the government for decades. Though it has ameliorated the inequity and inequality to some extent, it is still a critical factor.

During the colonial and immediate post-colonial periods, Sri Lankans felt what Coleman (2011b) terms as “language apartheid” due to the EMI implementation, contemporary Sri Lanka does not feel it pragmatically but ideologically it prevails to some extent. However, the language apartheid is felt mostly by the Tamil people due to the linguistic discrimination as part of the racial discrimination by the government in the implementation of its language policy of trilingualism.

The researchers, for example, Byun et al., (2011) and Hamid et al., (2013) have identified a shortage of competent teachers and learners, and curriculum support, and inappropriate methodology as the reasons for poor EMI performance. In Sri Lankan universities also, they are applicable. In recruiting the academic staff, proficiency in the English language is not mandatory. The university admission criteria do not demand at least a pass in the G.C.E Advanced Level examination in General English (University Grants Commission, 2017). Training in English for academic purposes is rarely given to both the staff and the students. Professional training in teaching, learning, and research methodology is too short and nominal requirement for the staff. Other key factors are inadequate learning time and inappropriate materials (Kaplan, Baldauf Jr, and Kamwangamalu (2011). At the undergraduate level, the duration of one lecture is one hour in Sri Lankan universities. Delivering one hour lecture in their mother tongue, Tamil or Sinhala, is different from delivering one hour lecture in a second language English. In the same manner, delivering one hour lecture by a native English lecturer to the native English speaking learners is different. The non-native lecturers using EMI need more time for preparing their oral presentation (Wilkinson, 2005). He further advocates for code-switching between L1 and L2 if there is a necessity. However, scholars like Kyeyune (2010) do not encourage it in the use of the EMI. This short learning time has its impact on the outcomes of the EMI. He further observed that interactions in the classroom were very poor in Ugandan classrooms because though the teachers assumed their students' competence and performance to be high, it was not so and very low (p.175). Cummins' (1979) distinguishes the Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) from Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). If the former is good, that does not guarantee that the latter will also be useful and vice versa. This trend is well acknowledged in the Sri Lankan universities.

In Sri Lanka, at the university level, textbooks are imported from the English speaking countries. The structure, style, and nature of the English language

used in the texts are to be culturally and contextually alien to the South Asian university teachers and students. There is a need for acculturation and re-contextualization and de-contextualization of the teaching and learning materials in Sri Lanka.

Also, Lia, Leungb, & Kemberb, (2001) point out that there is a gap in policy development and implementation between the policymakers and the program implementers such as institutional administrators, teachers, and students. They do not collaborate to make it a success.

The native languages such as Tamil and Sinhala have similarities in linguistic and cultural levels, but they have more differences compared to the English language. Coleman (2005; 2011c) attributes the relationship between L1 and L2 determining the EMI success.

Hamid,(2013) distinguishes another cause of serious nature; the educational goals inappropriately developed to the actual implementation of the EMI in Asia. Sri Lankan universities teach mostly the theoretical content in English and miss teaching the application or practical or employment oriented content in English. Though many a scholar in EMI like Coleman (2011b, p. 18) reiterates the “increasing employability” due to learning and learning in English, the general perception of the Sri Lankan youth is that the triangular relationship between the big Es - English, Education, and Employability is still a myth. The factors are so diverse from international to individual and from economic to political. Therefore, Kaplan et al., (2011) claim it as fictional.

Giving priority to studying the micro-level EMI has become constructive (Dang et al., 2013; Ramanathan & Morgan, 2007). This research also investigates the issues and perceptions of the students and the teachers. The content lecturers emerged from the non-English home, school, university and social environments faced many challenges in Sri Lanka, especially ‘higher demands on the teaching skills’ (Vinke et al. 1998). They experience difficulties in

comprehension, reading aloud, explanation, paraphrasing, exemplification and classroom management language and so on. A dichotomy is observable between the competence in content and the competence in the language of the content lecturers (Shohamy, 2012, p. 203). Learning and using English at the tertiary level without adequate exposure at the primary and secondary level is also another determining factor (Kyeyune, 2010).

According to Perera and Kularatne (2014), “other countries ESL curriculum is designed planned and implemented to facilitate Bilingual Education. This partnership is essential in Sri Lanka”. The National Education Commission report (2003, p, 178) as quoted by them, emphasizes this necessity “to ensure that all students, irrespective of socio-economic and regional disparities have the opportunity to acquire a level of English proficiency adequate for higher education and career advancement.” The National Education Reforms of the National Education Commission report (2003), as quoted by them stipulates that the need for “improving the learner’s second language competency and performance” to facilitate the EMI implementation in the educational sector. Perera and Kularatne (2014) measured the Bilingual teachers' second language competency and Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) competency. They intended to study the collaboration between ESL Teachers and Bilingual Teachers.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Among the student respondents (SR), almost 60% are Buddhists, and the rest of them are Hindus, Christians, and the Islamic. The students are heterogeneous by religion and regions. So, religion does not play an essential role in the effective use of the medium. The majority of the teachers are Hindus and Tamils but the majority of the students are Buddhists and Sinhalese. This situation created the inability to code-switching, from Tamil to English and vice versa because most of the Tamil staff members do not know the Sinhala language. The university admission policies of the Sri Lankan government artificially create a situation where even the universities and campuses situated

in the North and East provinces are made to compose this proportion of student population not proportionate to the ethnolinguistic or religious composition of the Tamils or Tamil speaking people in these regions. This government implementation reflects the inequality and inequity conflicts experienced for the last half-century regarding the ethno-religious lines.

Around 60% are females, and 40% are males. Since our society is bound by the gender distinction and discrimination procedures. It is better to have the staff from both sexes. If the boys or girls are too shy or over gender sensitive in communicating with other opposite sex in the new medium, they can freely do this with the staff from the same sex and the students can freely consult their difficulties.

95% indicated their willingness to follow their course of study in English though they face some difficulties in using the language at present. They give importance to their future progress. Only 5% hesitated. There may be many psychological and social factors. Apart from the long-term benefits, it is easier to do all the references and the issues of the handouts in English because all the books and materials are in English. It can be useful for globalizing their knowledge acquisition and learning methods. Using English gives them a sense of satisfaction, and they feel that they are not only a citizen of this country but also a citizen of the world! Being students, their main aspiration is to acquire and apply the knowledge regularly in this globalized environment. So this medium fulfills their aspiration to a great extent.

A most interesting issue here is that though the majority is willing to use this medium, almost half (55%) accept the fact that the medium does affect their natural progress at least in the first and second semester of their course of study. Natural progress means that if the students had done this course in their mother tongue, they would have performed and succeeded much better than what they have achieved. It expresses their confidence and hopes that they may improve in the coming years. One student pointed out that they feel that they are unable

to write in English what they think. It enlightens the fact that they are thinking in their mother tongue and writing in English.

The students obtain both poor and good grades regardless of whether they are related to the use of the medium at all. It affects the students' performances in the examinations. It makes them unable to express their ideas in writing. Some students never work hard. As a result, they fail or obtain poor grades though their language efficiency is good. They do not have the required knowledge to put them in writing. Some show their strong intrinsic motivation, future benefits, and personality development. They want to overcome those temporary difficulties and continue to use it formally and officially. Whenever they face difficulties in conveying their ideas and facts orally or graphically, they learn more about its proper use by recognizing errors and difficulties and remedying them immediately. They say that it is a continuous process for progress.

65% feel learning English is an immediate need to achieve their target in the following their degree program. The past educational experiences in their preschool, primary and secondary levels of education determine it. There are two types of students who say 'No' (35%) to this question. Either they must have acquired proficiency in general English in their past, but not all, so they are confident about using it in this specific course or, though the students do not have that required proficiency because of laziness or lack of interest, they may not feel it as an immediate need. Some might have thought that they would progress gradually during the period of the course of study. The student who says 'Yes' might have realized the need for an intensive English programme to tackle the difficulties. However, even they are too not proficient. Though they can communicate matters regarding their academic fields, they cannot communicate their ideas beyond their subject matters, even the day to day casual or routine matters, and general news. This drawback is seen clearly among the students. 75% feel progressive in learning their main subjects in English. If compared it with the result discussed earlier, almost half feel that it affects their natural progress in this course of study. However, this result

indicates that it does not mean that they do not feel progressive. It affirms their positive attitude towards the medium at least at the undergraduate level.

The complexity in the use of English differs subject to subject in the course. In Economics, it is more complex and sophisticated than in Accountancy because, in the later one, most of the units consist of mathematical and numerical knowledge, applications and calculations. The former one demands much vocabulary acquisition and practice of complex sentence patterns. The students have to learn specific contextualized phrases and discourse features. The use of language dominates the subject matter of Management. The use of a mathematical formula comparatively dominates accountancy.

In the University of Jaffna, the majority followed their degrees in the Tamil medium. As a result, those 'passed out' students have to face many difficulties in getting employment in private sectors or in any other institutions where Sinhala or English is used as the medium and which deal with business people and entrepreneurs from many foreign countries or with people belonging to various communities.

87% like to follow the Business English Communication course and Proficiency in English course in addition to their main subjects. **They** feel the need to facilitate their present use of English in their course of study and their future carriers. During these sessions, the students who face difficulties can get help from the teachers. Some were disappointed because some teachers were indifferent to the specific needs of each.

Only 18% say 'satisfactory' about their English language learning at the primary and secondary levels of education. Almost 90% said their home and social environments are not helpful in learning or using English. However, 25% stated their school environment is helpful. As expected, the result indicates unsatisfactory. These students hail from different places either rural or urban and different social classes. The majority are from monolingual families, schools and societies economically and academically at a low level. A very few

of the students are from bilingual, well-to-do families. The schools are poorly equipped with necessary facilities. The social environment dissuades them from learning English. The North and East areas had been experiencing untold sufferings and difficulties due to the ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka during the intensive conflict period up to 2009. Later they continue to feel vulnerable due to the continuation of the political discrimination in Sri Lanka. Further, the political, economic and social factors do not encourage or facilitate learning English in these areas. It is notable that nobody has followed any studies in the English medium until he or she began to follow this course.

In their General Certificate in Education Ordinary Level examination in English Language, only 5% of the students obtained Distinction pass, but 55% got Credit pass and 30% Normal pass. 10% failed. This trend is reflected in their General Certificate in Education Advanced Level examination in General English: A grade 3%, B grade 10%, C grade 35%, satisfactory grade 27% and 25% failed. The results show that almost more than half of the students have got credit passes. However, unfortunately, their real competence is not assessed by looking at this result because most of the students told that they had prepared "especially" for passing the subject. So it has to be concluded that their learning at the secondary level is exam – oriented.

In overall estimation, the majority of the students lack proficiency in all the four skills. Here, one thing is to be negotiated, that is, the students' assessment of the measurement or competence denoted by the words "very good," "good," "satisfactory" and "weak" cannot be the same. They may differ according to their interpretations. When their written answers for the questions of the model Reading and Writing papers were assessed, the differences in their competence in their real sense of the terms given in the table above were identifiable.

Table 01: The present competence of the students in English

Skills	Very good	good	Satisfactory	Weak
Speaking	Nil	12	33	55
Reading	5	8	47	40
Writing	5	13	28	54
Listening	10	18	40	32

Source: Primary Data, 2018

It is always expected in any class or batch of students that there are a few students who excel in all the skills and competencies. With their already acquired skills, they can “manage” and “express” their knowledge. However, they cannot do it efficiently and effectively in the expected precise manner in real use.

There is a difference between Business English Communication and General Proficiency in English.

During lectures and conversation, they use English only. During the informal communication, the Tamil or Tamil speaking students use their mother tongue among themselves and with the students of other linguistic community, they use English/Sinhala. All the writing assignments, reading aloud and reference work are in English. Code switching is not possible in the lecture halls because of the multi-lingual nature of the student population. Only 45% of the students are satisfied with the way their subjects are taught in the English medium.

This statistical information is something unexpected and explains the way the students think about and expect assistance from the teachers at the tertiary level of education. Almost half of the students are not satisfied with the way their subjects are taught in the English medium. It is stressed that this unsatisfactory situation is regarding the teachers' use of the medium about the academic

welfare of the students only. It is not about the competence and the method of teaching the main subjects or the way teachers increase their competence in the subject and the medium on their own.

Table 02: The Student Satisfaction on teaching and Learning

Factors	Sati sfac tory	Not Satisfac tory
Teacher Performance	60	40
Assessment of your assignment	35	65
Feedback	30	70
Methodology of teaching	58	42
Materials used	45	55
Class organization and arrangement	38	62
Teacher-Student interaction	43	57
Classroom activities	45	55
Encouragement by the teachers	48	52
Counseling	33	67

Source: Primary Survey 2018

Before beginning to follow this course at the tertiary level, these students learned both English and other subjects from the primary level up to the advanced level by rote learning and cramming. Because of this inappropriate education system existing in the country, all realize the need for an educational reform. Though the materials and methodology are correctly given, the teachers are not prepared or trained well to teach the subjects accordingly. So these same students, once they enter the higher educational institutions, they expect the teachers to teach them the same way they had been taught at the secondary level. Some students expect that everything from the teacher. The phenomenon found by these studies here is that some students expect the curriculum and

learning be teacher-centered, even at the tertiary level but unfortunately half of the students' population is against this idea.

There is some truth regarding the poor situations regarding the assessment of the assignments feedback, class organization, and arrangements, Teacher-students interaction, encouragement by the teachers and counseling. They regretted that some teachers never corrected their assignments, by chance if their assignments are corrected; the evaluation of the language part is wholly ignored. Some teachers do not give the titles of the books for reference. They lecture at a stretch from the first minute to the last minute without asking or without any interaction with the students during the lecture hour. The students are afraid to request an explanation from the teacher regarding the phrase or sentence she or he has used which is difficult to understand. Even outside the classroom, teacher-student interaction rarely happens. The students are not asked or given a chance to have group discussion regarding a topic in the English medium. In this regard, the students have to depend entirely on the teachers of English or of Business English Communication. However, if there can be effective counseling and encouragement regarding the use of the medium, it can be possible only when both the subject teacher and the teacher in charge of English must come together and discuss the students' problems between themselves and with the students concerned. The students regretted that it is rarely done so.

38% feel their inability to listen and understand what with the lecturer says and 80% feel their inability to respond to teacher questions due to lack of fluency. Both these questions are about the students' listening and speaking skills respectively. The number of students who say 'No' to the first one is larger than the number of students who say 'No' the second one. Though many students can listen and understand what the lecturer says, they could not respond orally to the teachers' questions. In other words, their listening skill is better than their verbal skill.

When it is difficult to communicate in English, they would prefer switching to their mother tongue immediately but again it is not possible due to the multilingual nature of the student community. If that happens, it will become linguistic politics and conflicts as it is severely felt in the country right now. Thus, inconvenience, misinterpretation, and uneasiness among the teachers and the students are unavoidable. It is acceptable in a situation or a place like this, for, both the teachers and the students hail from Tamil and Sinhala communities from all parts of Sri Lanka. Notably, in the North and East, among the Tamil community, the political, economic and social factors never gave them an opportunity to speak the language in real life. For the past twenty-five years due to the ongoing ethnic conflict mainly, they have rarely been given opportunities to communicate in English or Sinhala. So, for the time being, under some certain situations as mentioned above, though this code-switching can be acceptable to make them progress gradually in using the English medium effectively in the long run, the present student composition will not permit this switching.

Regarding the teachers' feedback to the students, they used to give much importance to the facts and knowledge that the students show in the assignments given by them; but they rarely pay attention to the correction or effectiveness of the use of the medium in the assignments unless they could not understand the meaning or messages given in the students' written assignments. In the methodology of teaching at the tertiary level, it is the lecture method that is practiced by most of them. As a result, there are not much class room's activities as expected in an English language teaching or learning classroom. Most of the works are done in the form of assignments. Teacher-talking time is longer than that of the students. During the lecture hours, Teacher-Student interaction is not very much encouraged because the teachers think that it might hinder teaching or prevent them from covering the topic which had been scheduled to be taught during a particular lecture hour. However, outside the lecture halls, the teachers never mind interacting with the students regarding the subject matter.

All their encouragements and counseling are centered on the subject matter, not on the medium to a great extent. The students used to approach the teachers of the Department of English Language Teaching for any assistance regarding the problems related to their medium.

Only 30% stated that the knowledge and use of mother tongue restrict their EMI use. The students consider the mother tongue either as a facilitator or as a non-intervener in using the second language as the medium of instruction. However, some students say it interferes, especially in speaking and writing. They complain that when they try to speak in English, they find it difficult to pronounce the words smoothly in a flowing manner. They could not speak the language naturally and speedily like they do in their mother tongue. As a result, they hesitate to speak the language because since they are adults, they are afraid of making mistakes in common or in front of the teacher. They say they use inappropriate words or sentence patterns to communicate their ideas. Consequently, they feel odd and uneasy.

In writing also, they face the complicated patterns of the English sentences. They complain about the silent letters in some words. They feel that these silent letters are unnecessary and illogically placed in the words. Since they have to learn the subjects at the tertiary level, to express advanced ideas and matters, they have to use compound and complex sentences apart from using simple sentences. Additionally, they have to use the abstract terms in a definite way. Identifying and using the word classes of these abstract terms makes them difficult to use the language effectively.

Only 12% stated that cultural, traditional outlook, practice restricts their use of English as the medium of instruction. This outlook may affect the efficient use of language in the literary field. It rarely affects the use of the medium in this management course directly. It may affect the use of the medium in a general sense, that is, if the students have a negative attitude or any anti-feeling towards

the English cultural, traditional way of living and practice and if they come to follow any course in the English medium, it may restrict their use of the language.

52% stated that student number in the classroom restrict their use of English. Some students complain that they are ignored, or they could not get the needed attention of the teacher or they could not participate in the classroom activities due to the overcrowded classroom. They prefer to have individual attention and consultation regarding the problems they face in both their subjects and their expressive and receptive skills. Some students (28%) stated that course duration is another factor. The students who say 'No' (72%) to this have many reasons. The foremost is that they want to complete this course within the stipulated duration because they had waited long enough to enter the university until they sat for the A/L examination. So this statistics may not be related to the use of a medium, but it is related to their financial or economic situation. However, it indicates the fact that they are determined to complete the course within the stipulated duration in the English medium. There may be a positive correlation in the improvement of the use of the medium and the prolongation of the course duration. However, practically it is impossible to adjust the course duration to improve the efficiency in the use of the medium.

On the other hand, 70% accepted that their age matters in this regard. Unfortunately, the majority feel that to learn any language, a person should learn it from their childhood. Many are de-motivated by the idea that it is too late to learn a language in adulthood. On the contrary, some students firmly believe that even adults can learn a second language and use it effectively. So the teachers must take the responsibility of motivating them. If the students use the language as a means to achieve an end, then they do not feel that they are "learning a language" or they "have to learn a second language artificially as a subject." They do not have to learn the language as an end itself.

Teachers lack professional qualifications. At the tertiary level, professional qualifications are less considered. A professional qualification means sufficient experience in teaching or a pass in a professional course. At the tertiary level, educational qualifications are essential. However, most of them have completed a certificate or induction course in teaching in higher education, but they are not expressly subject oriented. They are about teaching, learning, assessment, research methods and so on.

The teachers need to be lenient and flexible regarding the use of the medium since the staff members have also emerged from the same environments. They can understand the positive and negative factors the staff members can easily break the psychological and social barriers and interact with the students and encourage them to use the medium effectively.

82% have the opinion that the current social, economic, political situations in which they live restrict their use of English as the medium of instruction. The unique negative insecure and un-protective social, economic, political situation prevalent in the war-torn North East provinces have restricted the students of this region from learning the language and using the language in any activities or studies. Further, it is the primary factor which prevents the students from using the language efficiently and effectively in their course and will prevent their efforts to use the language in future if they plan to live and work in this province.

48% confirmed that there is a difference between competences in general English and competence in English as a medium of instruction for their specific purpose. However, 34% accepted it to some extent. The rest (18%) do not accept it. Many students have realized the need to learn the specific skills of the language which can be used for a particular specific purpose, for example, Business English can be used for learning or involving in the activities related to Accountancy, Finance, Business, Commerce, Management, Economics, etc. They have to know some specific terms, specific sentence structures, and

specific discourse features suitable for this particular field. Most of the students can distinguish these specific features when they learn Business English and General English along with their use of English as the medium of instruction. Whenever the students make errors and mistakes in their use of the English language, the teachers are not entirely indifferent to them but 67% feel that they are partially indifferent. However, 33% feel that they correct them entirely. It seems that the teachers are not committed completely to correct the students' language errors and mistakes. Due to the large number, it is not possible to take care of both the language use and subject matter at the same time minutely. However, it is not an encouraging point regarding the development of the effective use of the medium on the part of the students.

40% think the use of their mother tongue along with English in all four language skills facilitates their studies. 37% accepted to some extent. 23% did not have this idea. As analyzed above, the majority of the students feel the need for the assistance of their mother tongue off and on to proceed their studies in the English medium formally and officially. However, one needs to be more flexible and lenient at least at the beginning stages. Motivating the students is more critical than preserving the formal rules or regulations regarding the use of English at the initial stage.

At the initial stage, the students can be recommended to read both Sri Lankan and Indian books on the subjects in English rather than the books from England or America because the former one uses simple, understandable language than the latter which is comparatively so complex and difficult to understand.

Most of the students of the Sri Lankan universities did not begin to learn English as their first language or as the main subject right from the start. It is their mother tongue Tamil or Sinhala learned as told but when and how the study of English as the second language begins becomes a question of educational method.

FINDINGS

This adoption of the EMI is not entirely practiced, with most teachers and students professing a commitment to the adoption but performing weaker in their teaching and learning. One of the causes of the problems in using the EMI between prescribed theory and classroom practice may be the students' attitudes. Though there has been much research on this line, it seems that their significance has less affected or facilitated or been used by them. Despite the increasing popularity of EMI, the few small-scale classroom studies that have been carried out in Sri Lanka seem to suggest that the perfect use of EMI is rare; Broadly speaking, the use of EMI proposes new theories than teachers' actual classroom practices.

The protracted half-century ethnolinguistic conflict and the emergence of ethnonationalism over constitutional nationalism in Sri Lanka have created the present status quo of the EMI situation in Sri Lanka. The contemporary governments have shown extraordinary interest in bringing back the EMI to the schools and universities. Bilingual education policies are implemented throughout the country in most of the national schools and universities.

The EMI situation in the humanities, social sciences and management disciplines is not efficient and effective compared to the situation in the science and technology fields. However, the graduates of science and technology education also suffer lack of general proficiency in the English language use, for example, writing and simple letter or report or speaking day today general or routine issues.

However, there is a change in the teachers' and students' attitudes showing a practical interest in the implementation of this medium. The EMI competes with the well-established use of the mother tongue at both their primary, secondary and sometimes the tertiary level of learning experiences, prejudices, and beliefs. Their educational attitudes, although in many cases unconsciously held, affect their teaching and learning behavior while using English as the

medium of instruction, influence what students learn and what teachers are a strong determinant of the teaching and learning styles. The students want teachers to ignore the inaccuracy in the language part. Since the teachers are less efficient in speaking in English, they are in a position to ignore students' use of the English language such as whether the sentences they generate are meaningfully conveyed. The teachers never pay attention to any linguistic forms but only to the meaning of the words written or spoken related to the issue under study.

The problem in using this medium is due to the post-independence development of separate, single medium (or the mother tongue) schools instead of a dual medium institution. So the students have the problems which are the outcome of their primary and secondary levels of education at the separate single medium schools. At the same time, a significant group of students has managing capacity in using the English medium since their home environment consists of bilingual people in varying proportions. However, it seems that all the students almost prefer the English medium, whether they find it difficult or not, partly as a result of compulsion and partly as the increased status of English users. The Tamil community in Sri Lanka, especially the students, has realized the worse consequences of not being bilingual in a country like Sri Lanka where the Tamils are a minority. Most of the students interviewed, pointed out this inevitable nature of learning a second language, that is, either English or Sinhala or both.

Those who cannot follow the English medium lectures or teach in the classroom cannot come individually or in the group to the teacher for explanation in their mother tongue. The teachers know English and their mother tongue only but the students are multilingual. The teachers do not explain purely in their mother tongue because it is impossible for the teachers to be trilingual: English, Tamil, and Sinhala. The other problem is a translation from English to Tamil or Sinhala.

The teacher uses English and Tamil as media alternatively especially in the instruction in subjects like management process, law & Taxation, and Economics where the descriptive, explanatory analysis of the themes and concepts is done in great detail. However, the subjects such as Financial Accounting & Business Mathematics have the limited use of language. The students who have proficiency in English take notes entirely in English. The students with less proficiency take notes entirely in English. The students with less proficiency take notes partially in both languages. All the essential terminology is absorbed in English only.

In semester examinations, the frequency distribution of marks is normal and natural. Most of the students can pass the examination but are not able to obtain 'A' or 'B' passes. It cannot be concluded saying that it is because of their incompetence in their use of the English medium in the examinations. Many factors are contributing to excel in a subject: motivation, aptitude, library reference, teaching method, counseling, physical and mental healthiness during the hours of examinations, financial and psychological support throughout the study, etc. Once again it is convinced that the students are "somehow able to communicate their ideas "through writing or speaking in English, but it may not be precise coherent, cohesive, systematic and conventional as expected in writing or speaking skill.

Some students who obtained "low result" expressed that they got low grades in some subjects because they could not write the answers in the English language though they knew the answer. There is a downward trend in obtaining the number of 'A's and 'B's. When they go from the first semester to the second semester, there is advancement in the quantity and quantity of the subject matter. On the contrary, the language skills needed cannot become more sophisticated. It is preferably the same. Even, because of the continuous use of the medium, probably in the second semester, the student can use the medium more easily than in the first semester. So the downward trend of this result shows that the sophistication of the subject matter of the second semester has

made the students incapable of obtaining at least the same result as they did in the first semester.

The students, apart from using English as the medium of instruction in their academic matters, they rarely use the medium outside, they use their mother tongue for the rest of their activities both inside the institution and outside the institution and their extracurricular activities, unless there are some formal functions such as "Awards Night" etc. However, when the Sinhala students talk to Tamil students and vice versa, they have to use English. Both Tamil and Sinhala students lack proficiency in each other's mother tongue. It can be due to the thirty year intensive protracted political and military conflict prevailed between them in the past and even now. It is only when they write assignments and sit for the examinations, they use the language to communicate real-life messages for real-life purposes according to the socially-sanctioned conventions of real-life language use completely in the English medium. Otherwise, they code-mix the medium with the mother tongue and communicate "a real-life message for real-life purposes."

RECOMMENDATIONS

Though there are problems and challenges in the EMI situations in Sri Lankan universities. Developing linguistic repertoire, sociolinguistic skills, and interactive strategy is necessary. The teachers and students should take initiatives and using opportunities to practice the use of English medium. The universities should create authentic, spontaneous communication opportunities in authentic teaching and learning contexts. The teachers must facilitate and guide the students to use English medium, to master the medium, to make them involved in the affective and cognitive academic domains within the lecture hours.

These attitudes and beliefs in this matter were primarily neglected before the introduction of English as a medium of instruction. The courses must be designed to train teachers in the use of English as the medium of instruction since the majority of them have had the education through the mother tongue.

At a tertiary level only they used English as a library reference language. Some particular recommendations are as follows:

- Orally or in writing, regarding assignments in the subjects, teachers seriously check and correct the grammatical aspect of the tasks.
- Encouraging group activities and interactions.
- Grammar is secondary. It is only as a means. However, knowledge of rules of the language cannot be ignored entirely.
- Taking care that the students should not feel disappointed by any language correction made.
- Giving them 'feedback' when the students interact in English.
- Grading the performances well if the students have referred the books in English.
- Exploring the problem regarding their use of English in speaking, writing, reading and listening.
- Ensuring that though the students make errors, they can convey information in English.
- Learning to use the medium effectively when they use it as a vehicle for doing their coursework.
- Giving the titles of the books for reference work when they give written assignments.
- 'Handouts' must be prepared by the teachers to fulfill the needs and the level of the students rather than taking photocopies of the pages from books.
- The use of all types of teaching aids, oral, aural, visual should be encouraged.

CONCLUSION

More and more, in politics, in economics, in education, realization must dawn that the world is one in the sense that no part can be completely isolated from the rest. The fullness of life, educationally and spiritually, is not compatible with the barbed-wire fences of racial politics.

There are many complicating factors which cannot be gone into in this limited discussion as for where knowledge of a unique set of technical terms is required for following the Degree program in Management. To acquire it takes time. The ability may be extensive and does not come as the result of merely studying a few technical terms or a few grammatical rules. It requires months of actual use and experience with inspiration and commitment. It must be supplemented and accelerated by the faculty where facilities for the use of the English medium and experience in it must be provided.

The complete ignorance of the discourse convention of the English language is the main problem they face. However, this authentic native speaker discourse as some language experts say might be entirely inappropriate for users of English in other parts of the world. So this factor is not the main thing barring the efficient language performance of the students.

There is a need for re-examining the concept of authenticity in using English as the medium of instruction in the broader context of two different trends in international affairs. One is the globalization of the world economics and the blurring of national and linguistic, boundaries due to the explosion of information technologies and larger scale migrations. The other one is the emergence of regional thinking and the revival of ethnic and regional cultures. Two trends have given rise to a political motto 'Think globally, act locally; (Berman 1994) so the localization of the global medium has become acceptable. Because doing things with words is less important than getting people to do things by using the words.

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