NEW APPROACH TO DESIGN EMI COURSES ON BLENDED - LEARNING PLATFORM AT HANOI UNIVERSITY OF INDUSTRY

HƯỚNG XÂY DỰNG CÁC HỌC PHẦN GIẢNG DẠY CHUYÊN NGÀNH BẰNG TIẾNG ANH THEO HÌNH THỨC HỌC KẾT HỢP TẠI TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC CÔNG NGHIỆP HÀ NỘI

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ABSTRACT

Offering EMI courses at Vietnamese higher education institutions is not a new phenomenon; many Vietnamese higher education institutions have introduced EMI in their training programs and this is a study area that has received a lot of attention in recent years. However, the courses' efficacy namely the development of English language through the learning process and the assurance that students can achieve each course's learning outcome are still questioned. Based on a review of relevant researches from across the world, this article offers recommendations for the development of EMI courses at Hanoi University of Industry. The article focuses on the approach of to design EMI courses on blended-learning platform, a platform which is now synchronized at HaUI.

Keywords: EMI, EMI course, course design, blended-learning, approach.

TÓM TẮT

Việc dạy và học các môn chuyên ngành tại các cơ sở giáo dục đại học tại Việt Nam không phải là một hiện tượng mới, có nhiều trường đã và đang áp dụng phương pháp này với các chương trình đào tạo của mình, và đây cũng là một đề tài nghiên cứu được trao đổi khá sôi nổi trong thời gian qua. Tuy nhiên, hiệu quả của các khoá học, cụ thể là việc phát triển ngôn ngữ tiếng Anh thông qua quá trình học và việc sinh viên đảm bảo đạt được các chuẩn đầu ra sau mỗi khoá học còn đang làm người dạy cũng như người học khá hoang mang. Bài báo này dựa trên việc tổng hợp các nghiên cứu liên quan trong nước cũng như trên thế giới từ đó đưa ra gợi ý về hướng xây dựng các học phần giảng dạy chuyên ngành bằng tiếng Anh tại trường Đại học Công nghiệp Hà Nội. Bài báo tập trung vào phương thức thiết kế học phần giảng dạy bằng tiếng Anh theo hình thức học kết hợp.

Từ khóa: EMI, dạy và học chuyên ngành bằng tiếng Anh, thiết kế chương trình, học kết hợp, hướng xây dựng

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of international economic integration, to response the global trends and needs, Vietnam Ministry of Education (MOE) has been encouranging universities to first apply, then expand the propotion of English as an instruction language in different specialized courses which is commonly known as English as Medium of Instruction (EMI). This act is believed to offer benefits to both educators and students. As to educators, EMI is credited with reforming higher education, with the goal of not only improving teaching and learning quality, thus providing students with a better chance of education and securing future employment, but also acting as a promoter in university work of advertising and recruiting new students [10]. As to students, they indeed benefit from EMI since it allows them to study their academic courses while also practicing and improving their English language skills [12]. EMI, indisputably, is considered as a promising scenario, and has been being introduced and applied worldwide. However, how to efficiently utilize EMI in higher education is still a challenge, and study on the subject is becoming increasingly popular [14, 26]. According to studies, there are still issues in Vietnam's higher education programs with EMI approaches. The ultimate goal of this article is to provide recommendations for improving EMI courses using blended learning platform, based on a thorough examination of the present state of EMI courses in Vietnam and the world.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. English as Medium of Instruction (EMI)

According to Dearden and Macaro, EMI refers to the provision of academic information in English in areas where English is not the first language (L1). For both students and instructors, EMI is thought to be a step toward internationalization. EMI expands lecturer mobility options and provides local university students with the skills they need to participate in professional settings globally. It also leads to courses that are open to foreign students, bridging language barriers to give higher education material to a larger audience. However, the application of EMI is not all positive. There have been concerns raised relating the

possibility of 'linguistic imperialism' [2, 19]. The difficulties that students have when learning complicated subject in a second language are also a source of concern [3], the intake of academic content supplied in a second language (L2) course to that of an L1 course are also compared. It is also brought out that language concerns are not given enough weight on EMI courses [4]. Yet, Doiz, Lasagabaster, and Pavón emphasize the fact that EMI is a growing phenomenon.

2.2. Blended learning

In ELT educational situations, blended learning is generally seen as a blend of an online and a face-to-face teaching space. This term is still widely used, although the boundary between online and offline situations is becoming less obvious. The 'blend' is increasingly being viewed as the interplay between online and face-to-face (F2F) components, as well as the manner in which combining digital tools with classroom-based work is changing the learning experience [15]. When combining blended learning techniques, whether in a physical or virtual setting, it's critical to understand how to create a cycle in which the various components may be linked, for as by giving online work that can be accessed before a F2F session and then incorporated into that session [7, 16].

In recent years, a blended learning paradigm has been used to improve engagement and collaboration in a variety of educational settings [21, 25, 27]. In [1, 13, 18] have all demonstrated the favorable impacts of online learning on learning processes and results. Students' engagement in learning may be improved by including online learning activities into blended learning [1] and learner autonomy can be increased (Sun, 2010).

3. FINDING ON CURRENT SITUATION OF EMI COURSES

3.1. On global scale

EMI programs soon became a worldwide trend, attracting the attention of many scholars as a result of the growth of globalization in higher education institutions. Tsou and Kao cite the following reasons as to why the EMI program might pique the interest of educators and researchers: As an international language, English is employed in important scientific journals as well as the language of international trade. Moreover, universities are currently attempting to enhance their positions in prestigious world rankings. The QS World University Ranks evaluates rankings based on a variety of factors, including two criteria relating to internationalization: 5% for foreign students and 5% for international faculties. An effective EMI programs can assist the institution in improving their curriculum and attracting foreign students, consequently, improving its international ranking score. Also, the growth of EMI programs also offers a multicultural atmosphere for universities. Students from other nations that come to study also contribute to the local educational institution in terms of linguistic, cultural, and financial involvement.

This growth, on the other hand, did not appear to rise from within the lecturers' group. Yet, it's a top-down imposition by many universities driven by those above-mentioned desire to enhance their worldwide rankings and boost student and staff mobility [10]. According to Marco (2015)'s survey in 55 countries and with approximately 400 EMI lecturers, before being implemented in public schools, EMI was more popular in private schools as desired by education agencies. EMI, according to 80% of the teachers polled, helps students enhance their English skills. 30 % of respondents feel that EMI still assists students in meeting requirements, while 45 % disagree and 25% are unsure. And while applying EMI, English teachers collaborate with content teachers in various way.

Tsou did a study on EMI classroom interaction in Taiwan using classroom observations and recordings in engineering classrooms. The findings show that in these EMI classes, there is very little interaction. One of the reasons given by EMI teachers is that in these classes, content delivery is critical and no interaction is required. In addition, the author suggests a method for developing interaction in EMI layers. There are three steps to this process: 1/ The pre-EMI stage considers language skills training or preparation for learners; 2/ The EMI application process should also pay attention to the development of interactions, interactive activities to check student comprehension, interaction for assessment purposes; 3/ Evaluate the course and identify areas for improvement

The difficulties of instructors' English communication are demonstrated by Macaro and Dearden. Inefficiencies in the classroom and a lack of interaction between instructors and learners have partly resulted from a lack of attention to the development of English language competency for EMI learners.

3.2. In Vietnam

As part of the globalization trend and to strengthen their place on the international education map, many universities in Vietnam have directed and executed high-quality educational programs in which English is used as the vehicular language. EMI, as an effort to develop young human resources with strong English capability which fits in the labor market's globalization trend [6] and as a motion to the development and integration goal of Vietnam educators, has been implemented for 20 years [14]. And by 2018, 21 higher education schools were implementing EMI program, offering 55 different study programs nationwide. This approach is seen to be following the trend and has certains result but the actual success of these EMI initiatives remains a major concern, particularly in terms of meeting learning outcome.

The concerns here may come from both teachers and learners' English competency. It's known that the majority of teacher of EMI in Vietnam have finished their studies of one or some level(s) in English-speaking countries or EMI

courses, and therefore, are assumed to be able to teach content subjects in English. This leads to the fact that there's usually no training program entitled to them before their teaching time [14]. And clearly, during the teaching process, bi-lingual is an unquestionable choice when problems arise. Nevertheless, this bi-lingual choice results in the problems of trust in EMI students as they may wonder if the course can truly help them improve their English as claimed.

4. DISCUSSION ON NEW APPROACH

From those above insights, methods should be considered to impose an effective EMI course, resulting in successful EMI programs. These options, when considered, should be be tightly linked to the implementation of blended learning platform, the platform which is now being synchronized at Hanoi University of Industry. This article's main focus is on method of lesson design for an EMI course on blended-learning platform.

The lectures in a blended-learning course are separated into two parts: online and face-to-face (F2F), with the online component being for self-study before class and the F2F being when lecturers and students meet face-to-face, details are as below.

As in online sessions, there are two main parts: terminology and self-reading materials. Terminologies are provided for students with their meaning, pronunciation and example. "Vocabulary explanations should be explored not only as a mode of vocabulary instruction, but also as an intergral part of EMI pedagogy". This shows how importance vocabulary is to ensuring that the students understand the lecture content. This demonstrates the significance of terminology in ensuring that students comprehend the lecture topic. Teachers must consider how much or how little their students comprehend the words used in lectures, the words they read in their English resources, and even the words their classmates or professionals use in discussions while teaching EMI. Spelling is crucial because students must be able to recognize words when they read them. They must also be able to distinguish words when they hear them, which is the duty of pronunciation, and they must employ those words appropriately while communicating. As a result, after the terminology presentation, certain vocabulary activities are suggested, with the main purpose of ensuring that students grasp the words and how to apply them appropriately. Self-reading materials is another important part of the online session. Before attending a face-to-face course, students will be given instructor materials to read at home. This is where all of the information is provided, and students must go through it in order to prepare for the class. The given resources, like those in the EMI course, are in English, and learners will need to put in a lot of effort to grasp what is being taught. Understanding the terminology in the first part of the course may help them with that. Additionally, questions of various types will be provided in

between the reading to aid students' learning; the ideal process here is for students to read the topic knowledge and then assess their comprehension by completing those assignments. Once these two parts are completed, students will be ready for the F2F lesson.

As in F2F sessions, a lecture are divided into 4 parts: warm-up, mini lecture, interactive activity and summary, and each of these 4 has its main fuctions. First of all, in the warm-up session, teachers will help students revising the knowledge that they have self-studied online, such as, through a word cloud activity, a matching activity to revise the lesson's terminology or a little discussion following a prompt to recall what they have read at home. This helps students recognize how much they have learnt and remembered and start connecting the terminology with the lesson content, as well as, revises and prepares them for the mini-lecture session awaiting. The second session is a mini-lecture, in which teachers deliver course content, significant points are addressed with explanation, and certain questions are asked to ensure that students' comprehend. This stage is comparable to traditional teaching approach, in which teachers deliver and students absorb. After the mini-lecture comes an in-class interactive session, it is when we want students to show that they have meet the course objectives in a lecture focused classroom. This portion of the lesson may be relegated to homework but by providing students time during class to show evidence of meeting our learning objectives, we can measure how much of the course content they have understood. The detailed activities depends on the subject, it can be group discussion on theoritical and pratical questions, case study or mindmapping their lesson contents,etc. Teachers can collect students' responses or have them shared with the entire class, ensuring that pupils leave knowing the correct and reasonable answers to the questions posed. The last sesson is summary and Q&A. This can be done through small group forming in class. One note for this session is that grouping should be different among lessons as it gives students chances to learn from different peers, and small groups might help students with low English proficiency as their peers might help them to understand the concepts and eventually learn more English at the end of the course. Also, allowing students to discuss previously learned information and discover the correct answer cover the first category "remember" and the second catergory "understand" from Bloom revised taxonomy of the cognitive domain. In addition, during this sesions, the instructor walks to each group to obtain snapshot of their current understanidng of the class and adjust accordingly.

5. CONCLUSION

By outlining the present state of EMI programs in the Vietnam and other countries, the article makes observations on the current situation as well as some of the issues that the programs must address. In the EMI teaching and learning environment, these include the students'

English ability and the absence of interactiom between students and teachers. The paper then takes a fresh approach to the creation of EMI courses on blended-learning platform in order to address the aforementioned issues. After the subjects are put into practice at HaUI, the success of this approach will be studied more explicitly.

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