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USEFUL LINKS AND RESOURCES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING



ENGLISH AS A GATEWAY TO KNOWLEDGE: TEACHING SUBJECT CONTENT THROUGH ENGLISH



COPING WITH CHALLENGES IN ENGLISH MEDIUM INSTRUCTION (EMI) CLASSES: STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS

Vu Thi Tuyet Trinh

Introduction

EMI courses are becoming more popular, especially in the tertiary sector. The major difficulty that students encounter within EMI courses is their low proficiency in English (Belhiah & Elhami, 2015). The incompetence in English causes the failure to get important information from lectures and materials (Chang, 2010; Ibrahim, 2004, difficulty in understanding test items (Al-Bakri, 2013), and ineffective class discussions (Doiz et al., 2012).

Various learning strategies in EMI courses were found to help students in coping with the challenges. According to Lee (2022) and Orthman (2024), when students have difficulties in

understanding EMI lessons, they will try to connect the lesson content with their existing knowledge, guess the meaning based on the context, and seek help from peers for clarification. Furthermore, Lee's study also reported the students' activeness for self-study since they divided the lessons into smaller parts to support understanding, and made plans to prepare for exams.

Exploring the challenges students encounter in EMI classes and their strategies to cope with them will give some insights into the teaching practices that encourage and support students' learning.

Method

A qualitative approach was employed to explore participants' perceptions of what challenges them in EMI courses and their experiences of utilizing different strategies to overcome those challenges. Convenience sampling was used, and three university students who majored in Engineering and Information Technology were chosen for the semi-structured interviews. The participants are taking different specialized courses taught in English. The interviews' transcripts were analyzed using content analysis. Ideas were coded and thematically analyzed to find the main difficulties and the strategies used in EMI courses.



Findings and Discussion

Through the interviews, the participants reported two main difficulties: insufficient English language proficiency and insufficient knowledge of the specialized subjects. For the language proficiency, the participants mentioned the challenges in understanding lectures, difficulties in expressing ideas. These findings were aligned with the previous research by (Belhiah & Elhami, 2015; Chang, 2010; Ibrahim, 2004 Doiz et al., 2012). The participants did not mention difficulties in understanding test items, which was found as a difficulty in Al-Bakri's study in 2013. On the other hand, the current finding on students' lack of specialized knowledge was not mentioned in the reviewed literature. The participants emphasized this finding as a major source of difficulties. They believed that the combination of 'specialized knowledge' and 'English language' made it more challenging to understand the lessons. They said the specialized words were difficult to understand even in their mother tongue (Vietnamese).

In overcoming the challenges, some strategies employed by the participants in this study were mentioned by previous research, including the search for help from teachers and friends (Orthman, 2024) and the preparation for classroom assessment tasks (Lee, 2022). As one participant noted, the prompt assistance from friends helps the participants to understand the specialized concepts in an easy-to-understand manner:

"The fastest way to understand a specialized concept is to ask the good students in class, they will provide me with the explanations". (P02)

The findings on the application of AI in searching for information and translating materials emerged in this study:

"I prefer using ChatGPT to Google Translate since ChatGPT translates the specialized words correctly and provides suitable contexts for the words". (P01)

As found in the current study, the lack of language proficiency and knowledge of the specialized subjects brings major difficulties for the students. Acknowledging that, the participants shared they took an active role in improving these skills and knowledge through exploring knowledge on the internet, and through using the software that they were being taught:

"I will explore the software introduced by the lecturer to associate the language and the app's features". (P03)

"There are some aspects of the subjects that cannot be introduced in class, due to the shortage of time, so I have to look for the videos online and learn through them". (P01)

The findings showed that the participants had different strategies to overcome the challenges in EMI classes, including seeking immediate assistance from teachers and peers, and improving their knowledge and skills through the Internet and AI applications.

Conclusion

Although facing challenges in the EMI courses, students showed a positive learning attitude and employed various strategies to overcome the challenges. Based on the difficulty found that relates to the students' language proficiency, lecturers could explain the specialized concepts in simple language. Besides, since the students are curious about exploring the specialized knowledge, pre-class tasks could be assigned to prepare the students better for the in-class lesson content. Due to the small sample size, the findings of this research cannot be generalized to a wider population. It is recommended that future studies involve larger and more diverse samples to validate and expand upon these findings. Additionally, teachers and educational practitioners may consider exploring the challenges that students encounter within their own contexts to better assist students' learning.

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STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING VOCABULARY IN ENGLISH MEDIUM INSTRUCTION CLASSES

Vo Thi Hong Tram

One of the challenges that most students in EMI classes encounter is how to understand the meaning of disciplinary vocabulary. There are different strategies that we can try to help students understand specialized words in EMI classes.

1. Teaching Vocabulary in Context

The appropriate use of vocabulary instruction in EMI classes is of great importance to place students in a meaningful learning environment. Content-area instructors can consider explaining specialized words in context, rather than in isolated lists of words. This includes using definitions and paraphrases in English or learning words through dialogues, stories and hand-on activities.

2. Using Visual Aids

This is another effective way to reinforce vocabulary learning. Depending on the nature of the class and learners, teachers can use pictures, diagram or maps to make lessons more tangible.

Figure 1 is an example from the EMI Teaching Resources provided by The Education University of Hong Kong (n.d.), illustrating how this technique can be applied in Geography lesson. Students will read a conversation about climatic graph in Hong Kong. Then, they are asked to work in pairs and answer with their partners in terms of some questions like “Which month is the highest amount of rainfall?” or “Which season is the wettest?”.

4. Using Semantic Mapping and Word Associations

This is like a mind map, where teachers help students picture the link or relationship between existing and new words. This is a valuable tool for building vocabulary and comprehension skills.

5. Using Frayer Model

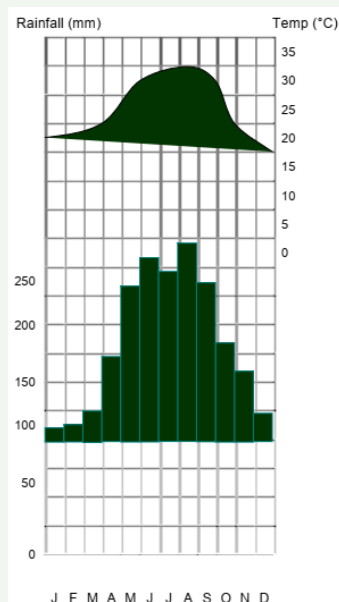
There are, in essence, two stages in this technique: initial instruction, which is heavily teacher-directed and modeling, and self-application, where students can apply this model for the other terms. Through this process, students are able to gain deeper understanding of the designated vocabulary.

Students start by selecting the vocabulary that they want to learn from their lessons. Then, they can fill in the model with its definition, characteristics, examples and non-examples. After finishing this, they can discuss with their peers. This model helps to predict, clarify, and access knowledge of vocabulary in the whole learning activities, especially reading activities.

6. Embracing Technology for EMI

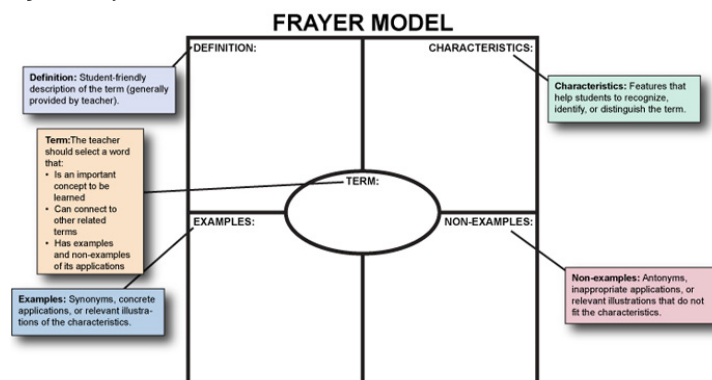
Besides those ways mentioned above, various updated learning management systems have blended into teaching process. Take Wordwall as an example, it provides a platform to review vocabulary like quizzes, match ups and word games in English. Along with those useful sources, lecturers can also create and customize activities to fit their own classroom.

Figure 1: Climatic Graph of Hong Kong



Note: From *S.1 Geography: Climate*, by the Education University of Hong Kong (n.d.).

Figure 2: Frayer Model



Note: From *What should content-area teachers know about vocabulary instruction*, by IRIS Center (n.d.).

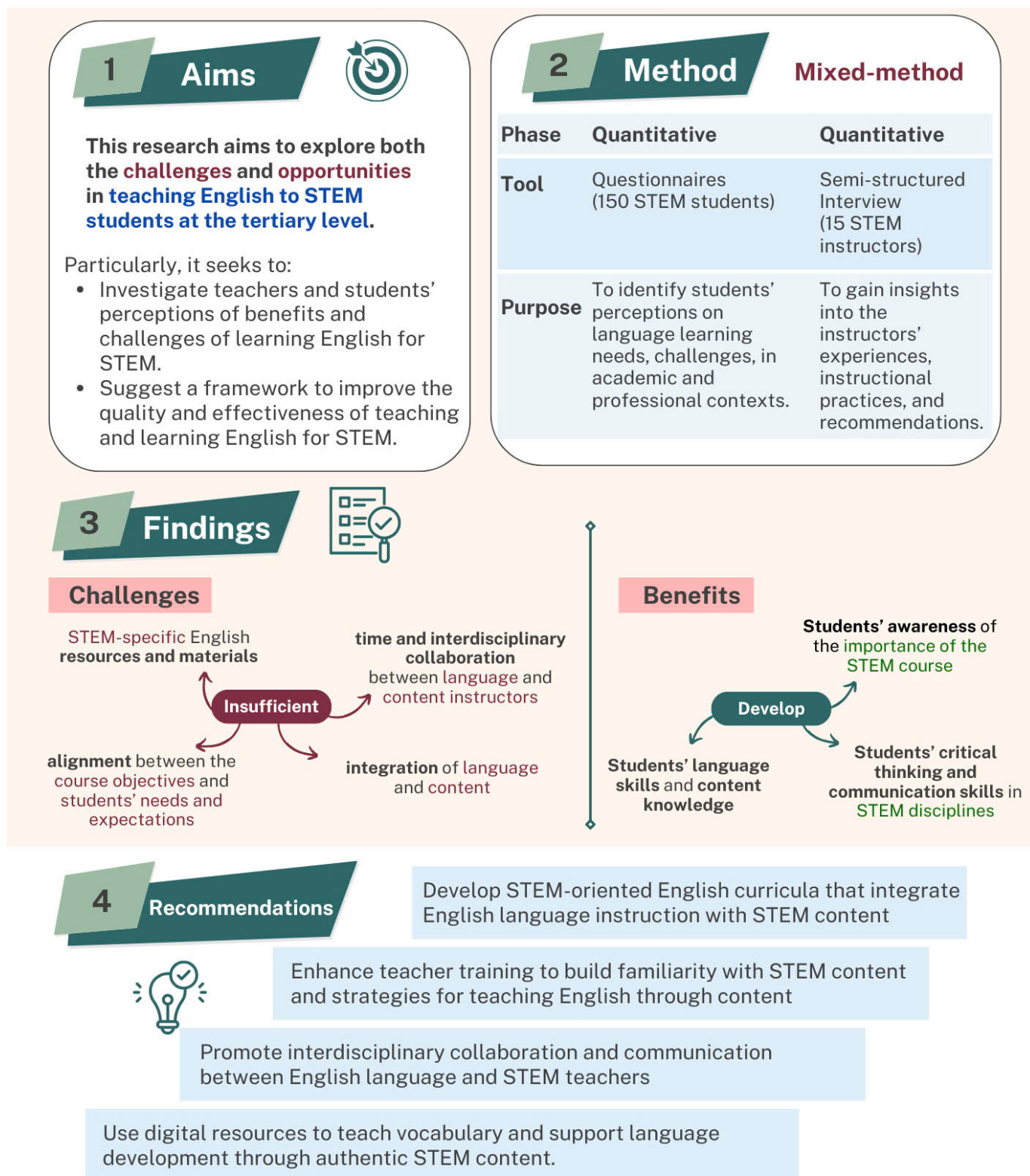
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TEACHING ENGLISH FOR STEM 1 & 2 COURSES AT FACULTY OF EDUCATION, ASSIUT UNIVERSITY: INVESTIGATING THE POSSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES ¹

Summarized by Mach Buu Hien

The following infographic shows the findings of the research paper, conducted by Abdallah (2023), which focused on the investigation of the benefits and challenges of teaching English for STEM 1 and 2 courses at Faculty of Education, Assiut University.



¹ Abdallah, M. M. S. (2023). Teaching English for STEM 1 & 2 courses at Faculty of Education, Assiut University: Investigating the possibilities and challenges. *Academic Journal of Faculty of Education*, 39(7), 1-42, Assiut University, Egypt. DOI: 10.21608/mfes.2023.224146.1598

16th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TESOL

English-Medium Education: Global Perspectives and Local Applications

SEAMEO RETRAC | August 14-15, 2025

The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Training Center (SEAMEO RETRAC), in collaboration with Curtin University, Australia, will organize the 16th International Conference on TESOL focusing on “English-Medium Education: Global Perspectives and Local Applications”, which will be convened on August 14-15, 2025, at SEAMEO RETRAC– 35 Le Thanh Ton Street, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

As English increasingly becomes a medium of instruction across all levels of education, English-Medium Education (EME) brings both promising opportunities and complex challenges. The growing adoption of EME reflects broader global trends in education and internationalization, while also raising important questions about language policy, teacher preparedness, student engagement, and equitable access to learning. The event serves as an excellent platform for sharing innovative research, practical strategies, and future directions in English language teaching and English-medium education worldwide.

Key theme:

English-Medium Education: Global Perspectives and Local Applications

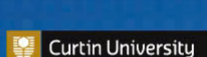
Sub-themes:

- 🔍 Innovative approaches in teaching and learning
- 🔍 Curriculum integration and cross-disciplinary learning
- 🔍 AI-driven technologies in EME
- 🔍 Assessment and quality assurance in EME
- 🔍 Policies and implementation challenges
- 🔍 Teacher training and professional development

Time: Thursday & Friday, August 14-15, 2025

Venue: SEAMEO RETRAC, 35 Le Thanh Ton Street, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Contact: <https://www.vnseameo.org/TESOLConference2025/>



16th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TESOL

English-Medium Education: Global Perspectives and Local Applications

 **14-15**
Aug 2025

 **SEAMEO RETRAC**
35 Le Thanh Ton St. - Dist. 1, HCMC, Vietnam

VIETTESOL INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION 2025

INNOVATING ELT: SUSTAINABILITY & GLOBAL READINESS

Can Tho University, 28 - 30 August, 2025

VIETTESOL INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION 2025

Vietnam Association of English Language Teaching and Research (VietTESOL), in collaboration with the National Foreign Language Project (NFLP) and Can Tho University, organizes the annual VietTESOL International Convention at Can Tho University, Can Tho City from August 28th to 30th, 2025. The key theme of the convention, "Innovating ELT: Sustainability and Global Readiness", will explore the integration of sustainability into all aspects of English language learning realms in Vietnam and beyond. It will delve into the changes and innovations in curricula, materials, and pedagogies for the global competence of the next generation.



28-30

August, 2025



Can Tho University, Campus II, 3/2 Street,
Ninh Kieu District, Can Tho City, Viet Nam



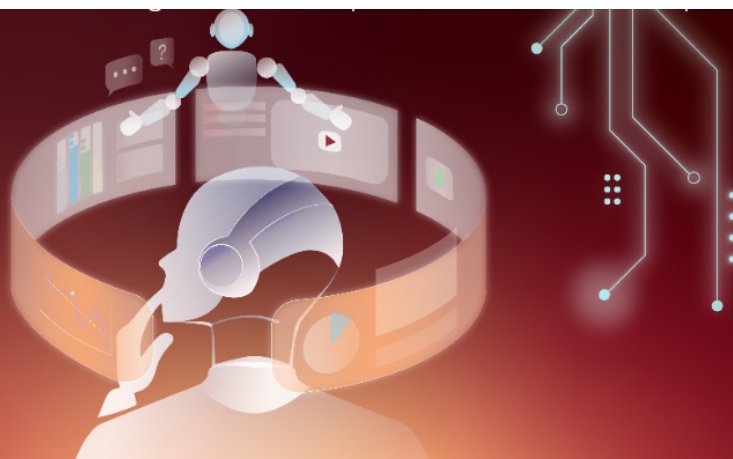
[https://convention.viettesol.org.vn/
event/4/](https://convention.viettesol.org.vn/event/4/)

ETRA 42nd
International Conference on English Teaching and Learning

Rethinking ELT in the Age of AI

人工智慧時代的英語教學反思

2025.10.17 FRI. - 18 SAT.



ETRA 42ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ENGLISH TEACHING AND LEARNING



October 17-18, 2025



National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU)
Taipei, Taiwan.



[https://sites.google.com/ntnueng.
tw/2025etra42nd/home](https://sites.google.com/ntnueng.tw/2025etra42nd/home)

The ETRA 42nd International Conference on "Rethinking ELT in the Age of AI" will be organized online by the English Department of National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU) and generously guided and supported by the English Teaching and Research Association, Taiwan (ETRA). The conference provides an opportunity for researchers and language educators to share and discuss the impact of AI technologies on teaching also requires teachers to develop new competencies and adapt their pedagogical strategies to effectively leverage these tools.

ONLINE TRAINING COURSE ON ENGLISH FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

This online course, developed by the University of Pennsylvania, and funded by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of English Language Programs, aims to help non-native English speakers who are interested in advancing their careers in the global marketplace. In this course, you will learn about the job search, application, and interview process and you will also have the opportunity to explore your global career path, while building your vocabulary and improving your language skills to achieve your professional goals.

The course will cover the following units:

Unit 1: Entering the Job Market

Unit 2: Resume

Unit 3: Writing a cover letter

Unit 4: Networking

Unit 5: Interviewing for a Job

For further details, please go to the website: <https://www.coursera.org/learn/careerdevelopment?action=enroll>



ONLINE TRAINING COURSE ON ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION FOR ACADEMICS

This online course provided you with essential knowledge and skills to teach your subject in English. Particularly, you will learn about current English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) practice, and increase your confidence in using English, you'll also work to grow your intercultural skills.

After completing the course, participants will be able to:

- » Explore aspects of research and practice in contemporary EMI across the world
- » Develop confidence in using English as a medium of instruction and become part of a community of practice in EMI
- » Compare the different contexts of use for EMI and reflect upon how this understanding fits with your own teaching context
- » Identify challenges in facilitating effective intercultural communication in a variety of contexts (lectures, seminars, writing etc) and explore how these may be addressed
- » Explore the role of the voice in effective intercultural communication
- » Identify appropriate language to facilitate effective communication in English and discuss the role of language in intercultural communication
- » Investigate how to promote successful communication in educational interactions



For further details, please go to the website: <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/emi-academics>

USEFUL LINKS AND RESOURCES

- » Free activities to help you practice your English
<https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/learning-english>
- » Free Online English Courses help you learn English, improve your skills and study for a job
<https://www.usalearns.org/free-online-english-courses>
- » EMI Teaching Resources
https://www.eduhk.hk/ele/emi/EMI_Learning.html



SOUTHEAST ASIAN MINISTERS OF EDUCATION ORGANIZATION
SEAMEO REGIONAL TRAINING CENTER (SEAMEO RETRAC)

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