



University ELLs' Perceptions, Evaluations, and Satisfaction with EMI Courses in Korea: Focusing on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM)

Yong Jik Lee

Woosuk University, South Korea

Robert O. Davis

Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, South Korea

Introduction

With the help of globalization and internalization, English has been established as the language of academia and the lingua franca of the world (Seidlhofer, 2004). Due to this trend, many countries, where English is not spoken as an official language, have implemented different English teaching methods that aim to promote ELLs' language proficiency and communicative competence (Huang, 2015). One of the recent trends is the implementation of English-medium instruction (EMI). In the context of East Asia, the adoption of EMI in higher education has been spearheaded due to worldwide university rankings, which is important for a university's globalization index, which includes percentages for English-medium classes and the proportion and numbers of international faculty and students (Cho, 2012).

Since the early 2000s, the Korean Ministry of Education (MOE) has strongly advocated for the use of EMI courses and lectures from elementary to higher education in Korea (Ha, 2011; Kym & Kym, 2014). To comply with the MOE's recommendations, many Korean universities have implemented various policies to make EMI courses mandatory for certain majors or disciplines (Cho, 2012; Ha, 2011; Kim, Kweon, & Kim, 2017). Such EMI courses aim to train students to become fluent English speakers and professionals in diverse workplaces and various fields that use English as a common means of communication. EMI courses are also offered to prepare students for short-term study abroad experiences in English-speaking countries, such as the USA or UK (Cho, 2012; Ha, 2011; Kim, Kweon, & Kim, 2017).

Previous studies have reported the pros and cons of implementing EMI in ELT (Dearden, 2014; Tsou & Kao, 2017); however, previous studies have failed to directly compare teaching methodologies such as communicative language teaching (CLT) and the grammar-translation method (GTM) when preparing students for overseas experiences using the English language. Thus, it is important for researchers to begin to compare such diverse methodologies and assess how students view such methodologies while preparing for use of the English language in context. Such studies will contribute to the existing literature and provide pedagogical implications for diverse teacher educators in ELT. This report examines university ELLs' perceptions of English improvement, evaluation of the course curriculum, and their

satisfaction with faculty teaching while studying in courses that use the grammar-translation method (GTM) and communicative language teaching (CLT) in an English immersion program.

Literature Review

EMI Research in Asia

EMI has been used worldwide to promote ELLs' communicative competence by many ELT professionals (Williams, 2015). Dearden (2014) suggests EMI should be considered 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" (p. 4). Previous research has demonstrated that EMI courses are an effective means of facilitating ELLs' second or foreign language learning (Huang, 2015; Jiang, Zhang, & May, 2019; Tsou & Kao, 2017). For instance, Jiang, Zhang, and May (2019) focused on subject teachers' perceptions and practices in EMI and students' motivation in English learning. Data were collected from nine classroom observations, three post-observation interviews, and a survey. Study findings show that EMI courses could increase students' knowledge of content as well as language skills.

In another study, Huang (2015) investigated university students' perceptions of learning motivation, learning anxiety, and learning achievement with EMI courses in Taiwan. A total of 157 students, including 93 Taiwanese students and 64 international students, participated in a self-assessment survey after completing the EMI courses. The results showed that most participants were motivated after taking EMI courses to promote their English ability and professional knowledge about the content. In other words, this result indicated that most participants agreed with the effectiveness of taking EMI courses for their English improvement and content learning.

However, previous literature has shown several challenges of implementing EMI courses. For instance, Nha (2017) investigated the implementation of an EMI program at a Vietnamese public university. Interview findings showed several challenges as previous studies have documented: 1) a lack of lecturers' language abilities, 2) a lack of students' language abilities, 3) a lack of effective teaching methods, and 4) a lack of resources. In this regard, it must be suggested that the implementation of teaching methodologies and EMI are not holistic but could be context specific (Nha, 2017). Therefore, the context and culture of the students need to be considered when evaluating EMI and the teaching methodologies used within a particular context.

EMI Research in Korea

In the context of Korea, several studies on EMI have shown positive and negative results with implementation (Joe & Lee, 2013; Kym & Kym, 2014). For example, Kim (2011) investigated the effectiveness of a short-term English immersion program with 102 students at a Korean university. Survey results showed that more than 90% of students viewed EMI courses and curriculum positively. The results also indicated that more than 90% of the students felt they improved their speaking and writing skills. This study implies that EMI courses could possibly maximize university ELLs' communicative competence.

However, previous studies have also suggested that students' English proficiency could be a critical factor in determining EMI effectiveness in higher education. For example, Kym and Kym (2014) found that students were significantly more satisfied with EMI courses if they had spent three months to a year, or over one year, in an English-speaking foreign country than those who spent three months or less. Similarly, Kim, Kweon, and Kim (2017) discovered that many students felt their English ability was insufficient when participating in EMI lectures, and that Korean-medium instruction improved their English ability more than EMI lectures. Thus, research provides evidence that students' level of English

proficiency has been a key factor in determining the effectiveness of EMI courses in an English immersion program (Joe & Lee, 2013; Kym & Kym, 2014; Kim, Kweon, & Kim, 2017).

However, another factor that is absent in the literature is the type of methodologies employed by teachers instructing university EMI courses. While English proficiency can impact the comprehension of EMI courses, the manner in which they are taught might affect the students in different ways because some teaching methods require more interaction from the students. For instance, the focus of CLT classes is more student-centered where students are responsible for producing and interacting with information, whereas the GTM is more teacher-centered with the teacher providing most of the information and students taking in the information. Therefore, teaching methodologies are an inherent component of the EMI classroom.

Communicative Language Teaching

Theoretically, CLT has been advocated as an effective language teaching methodology in ELT because it engages ELLs in an authentic environment to develop their communicative competence (Nunan, 1987). Many ELT scholars have argued that if language teachers provide authentic opportunities that meet the ELLs' learning needs, CLT can lead ELLs to get more involved in classroom activities and increase their second language ability (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013).

Based on these key concepts of CLT, previous studies have demonstrated the benefits of implementing CLT in regard to boosting ELLs' communicative competence, vocabulary development, and productive skills, including listening and speaking (Natsir & Sanjaya, 2014; Safraz, Mansoor, & Tariq, 2015; Tuba, 2013). For instance, Tuba (2013) examined ELLs' vocabulary development and retention by comparing the GTM and CLT through controlled and experimental groups. Study participants were 50 Turkish ELLs in tenth grade. The study results found that students who learned through CLT scored significantly higher on vocabulary tests than students studying with the GTM. Subsequent delayed testing supported these findings with CLT students scoring significantly higher on a vocabulary assessment than GTM students.

In another study, Safraz, Mansoor, and Tariq (2015) analyzed the teachers' and students' perceptions of communicative language teaching in the computer-assisted language learning environment. The study results indicated that the overall perceptions of the teachers and students show a positive attitude towards the communicative language teaching approach. Some research in ELT has argued that CLT is an effective teaching method that can be used to enhance ELLs' second and foreign language learning because it fosters ELLs' communicative competence through authentic input and practice (Natsir & Sanjaya, 2014; Safraz, Mansoor, & Tariq, 2015; Tuba, 2013).

Grammar-Translation Method

Although the GTM has been considered a traditional teaching method in ELT, previous studies have provided evidence that the GTM can be an effective teaching method in terms of fostering ELLs' specific grammatical components that are essential for learning English (Chang, B, 2011; Chang, S, 2011; Durrani, 2016).

For instance, Chang, S (2011) compared CLT and GTM to discover which teaching method provided more benefits for students learning grammar in Taiwan. Two classes were selected and taught with GTM and CLT, respectively. Study results showed that the GTM was significantly better for student learning, confidence, and motivation than CLT when learning grammar. Likewise, Durrani (2016) discovered that students had a positive attitude towards GTM and their attitude was less favorable towards CLT when studying grammar.

Previous studies have explained that GTM can play a role in facilitating foreign language learning because it could enhance translation in explaining new vocabulary, developing students' cognitive skills, and extending students' background knowledge (Chang, B, 2011; Chang, S, 2011; Durrani, 2016).

Research Questions

This report examined ELLs studying in a university EMI program that ended with students attending a short-term language program. Thus, the course content focused more on listening and speaking skills. This research explores how university ELLs in CLT and GTM focused courses perceive EMI courses based on their satisfaction, their English-speaking ability, and instructors' English teaching methods.

This research attempts to address the following research questions:

Q1: How do university ELLs rate their English proficiency improvement from the different teaching methods?

Q2: How do university ELLs evaluate the curriculum in their own EMI courses?

Q3: How do university ELLs evaluate the professors' English language teaching methodology?

Methodology

Study Participants

This study used a within-subjects research design with university ELLs who enrolled in EMI courses at a Korean University in the fall semester of 2019. These courses were designed to prepare students for the opportunity to study in America. Study participants' ages were between 19 to 22, ranging from freshman to junior. There were 15 male students and 17 female students, respectively. Study participants' majors varied: hotel management, tourism, cabin crew service, airplane operation, airplane maintenance, and military department. Out of 32 participants, 18 students reported their English language test scores officially obtained from TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) by ETS. Their TOEIC score range was from 320 to 700 points with an average of 443. An IRB was obtained and signed before ELLs participated in the online survey.

Survey Instrument

An online survey was developed based on previous studies investigating ELLs' perceptions and satisfaction of EMI courses in Korea (Joe & Lee, 2013; Kim, 2011; Kim, Kweon, & Kim, 2017; Kym & Kym, 2014). Extracting relevant items from the existing literature, the researchers modified questions to fit into the current university research setting. A total of 17 items were finalized, five items evaluating the faculty ($\alpha = 0.96$), six items related to course materials ($\alpha = 0.94$), and six items related to their English proficiency improvement ($\alpha = 0.96$).

TABLE 1

Means and Standard Deviations for CLT and GTM Assessment Scores

Class focus	Proficiency Improvement		Curriculum		Faculty	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
CLT	16.09	6.20	14.50	4.635	15.53	4.42
GTM	16.03	5.86	14.22	3.84	14.69	4.14

Data Collection and Analysis

The post-course survey was conducted in the last week of the 2019 Fall semester. The purpose of the survey was explained and announced to each instructor. Students completed the semester-end survey. Data analysis aimed to examine students' overall perceptions and satisfaction of EMI courses, their English proficiency and comprehension of the content and course materials and evaluated the different

teaching methodologies used by the instructors. Four instructors taught courses using the GTM, while a comparison group of four instructors taught courses using CLT.

Results

Q1: How do university ELLs rate their English proficiency improvement from the different teaching methods?

Before conducting statistical tests, the data was evaluated for the assumption of normality. A Shapiro-Wilk test of normality was performed, which found the data not to be normally distributed ($W(31) = 0.753$, $p < 0.001$). Since the data was not normally distributed, a Wilcoxon signed-ranked test was performed to assess if there were any differences between CLT and the GTM. The results indicate there were no significant differences between the conditions when evaluating the curriculum with $Z = 112.5$, $p = 0.514$. Table 1 contains the means and standard deviations.

Q2: How do university ELLs evaluate the curriculum in their respective EMI courses?

Prior to conducting statistical tests, the data was evaluated for the assumption of normality. A Shapiro-Wilk test of normality was performed, which found the data not to be normally distributed ($W(31) = 0.788$, $p < 0.001$). Since the data was not normally distributed, a Wilcoxon signed-ranked test was performed to assess if there were any differences between CLT and GTM. The results indicate there were no significant differences between the conditions when evaluating the curriculum with $Z = 112.5$, $p = 0.492$. Means and standard deviations can be found in Table 1.

Q3: How do university ELLs evaluate the professors' English language teaching method?

Prior to conducting statistical tests, the data was evaluated for the assumption of normality. A Shapiro-Wilk test of normality was performed, which found the data not to be normally distributed ($W(31) = 0.788$, $p < 0.001$). Since the data was not normally distributed, a Wilcoxon signed-ranked test was performed to assess if there were any differences between CLT and GTM. The results indicate there were no significant differences between the conditions when evaluating the curriculum with $Z = 112.5$, $p = 0.492$. Table 1 depicts the means and standard deviations.

Discussion and Implications

This report examined university ELLs' perceptions, evaluations, and satisfaction of CLT and GTM focused EMI courses in Korea. Study results from this within-subject study found no significant differences in evaluations of students' English improvement, course curriculum, or professors' teaching by university ELLs. In other words, even though CLT and GTM are theoretically different in the literature, these study results showed that university ELLs' perceptions of these two methods were similar and did not find noticeable differences when preparing them for English immersive experiences.

Q1: How do university ELLs rate their English proficiency improvement from the different teaching methods?

Results from the students' self-evaluation of English proficiency improvement found no significant differences between the CLT and GTM methodologies. Even though students studied with both methodologies during the semester, the students did not feel that one methodology was significantly better at preparing them for their upcoming English immersion experience.

One of the possible explanations for this finding might be the English proficiency of the students before participating in the classes. Previous studies have provided evidence that EMI courses have a limited impact on university students' English proficiency improvement when ELLs possess lower levels of English ability (Joe & Lee, 2013; Kym & Kym, 2014; Kim, Kweon, & Kim, 2017). The TOEIC score range of 320 to 700, with an average score of 443, indicate that many of the participants were closer to the beginner level than the intermediate level. Due to the lower ability levels of the students, it is possible that this language ability impacted the students' English proficiency assessment. Similar to Kim and colleagues (2017) research, it was found that students did not feel EMI courses improved their English ability because of insufficient language ability. It is possible the students already had low perceptions of their ability and a semester course that lasted two hours a week did little to change that. Therefore, the perception of English proficiency might be more influential than the instructors' teaching methodology with lower-level English learners.

Although future research needs to examine the interaction between proficiency levels and teaching methodologies, researchers should start to examine how students are assessing their English proficiency when they have little to no knowledge of teaching methodology. This information could allow researchers and instructors to understand how to design classes that allow students, like ELLs, to properly understand how to assess English proficiency in accordance with desired outcomes like study abroad programs.

Q2: How do university ELLs evaluate the curriculum in their respective EMI courses?

The results from ELLs evaluation of the EMI curriculum found no significant differences between CLT and GTM. These results support previous studies that have shown EMI curriculum has a limited impact on ELLs' perceptions and evaluation if the curriculum did not require code-switching in bilingual instruction between students' L1 and the target language. Kim (2011) concluded that students and instructors in EMI courses used their L1 to explain complex material that might be difficult to comprehend in the L2. Specifically, students felt the emphasis of EMI without the use of the L1 hampered the depth of learning. In other words, when Korean students are not allowed to use their L1 to negotiate meaning and concepts for learning L2 (English), the EMI curriculum was not seen as effective for Korean ELLs.

However, several studies have reported that allowing students to speak in their L1 can help them better learn English and understand the content materials in the EMI curriculum (Kim, Kweon, & Kim, 2017; Kim, 2014). These studies have also suggested that using ELLs' L1 and L2 simultaneously through code-switching can be an effective teaching strategy for lower-level university ELLs (Joe & Lee, 2013; Lee, 2014). Therefore, EMI curriculum that advocates bilingual instruction can make ELLs satisfied with the content that they learn and the curriculum that they are provided. The EMI courses in this study did not allow for code-switching, which means that ELLs might not have had the opportunity to deeply understand the concepts discussed with both methodologies.

Future research should examine the use of code-switching by ELLs and by instructors in different teaching methodologies such as CLT and the GTM. Previous studies have advocated for code-switching research with students (Byun et al., 2011), and with instructors (Cho, 2012; Kim, 2011), but research into this realm has yet to have been conducted. With methodologies such as the GTM that are more teacher-centered, code-switching could possibly help ELLs feel more confident in their knowledge of the

language, but for methodologies such as CLT that are student-centered, ELLs might be able to parlay that deeper understanding into increased speaking and listening abilities that are needed for study abroad programs.

Q3: How do university ELLs evaluate the professors' English language teaching method?

Results from the teaching methodology survey found no significant differences between CLT and the GTM. Even though some ELT research has advocated CLT as an effective language teaching method, previous scholars have emphasized the misconception of CLT implementation (Wu, 2008). Specifically, several studies have provided empirical evidence that many ELLs may not show any favor for certain teaching methods, which causes students to have similar responses when evaluating the two teaching methods.

Also, it could be a misconception by academics to assume that students prefer or benefit from only one type of teaching methodology. For example, Prastyo (2015) argued that the integrated teaching method using both CLT and GTM was the most effective teaching method in the context of Indonesia. However, other studies in different contexts had similar findings. Research from Turkey and China have suggested that most ELLs preferred to have a combination of CLT and GTM by the ELT instructors (İnceçay & İnceçay, 2009; Rao, 2002). These results, and the results of the current study, may indicate that it is important to recognize the misconceptions about the effectiveness of CLT over the GTM. In this regard, employing a differentiated instruction model that includes components of CLT and GTM in the ELT classroom could be a more effective teaching method for ELLs (Wu, 2008).

The Authors

Yong Jik Lee is an assistant professor in the Department of Education at Woosuk University, South Korea. His current research interests involve ESOL teacher education, teacher professional development, the flipped classroom, and English as a medium of instruction.

Department of Education
Graduate School
Woosuk University
Jeollabuk-do, Wanju-gun, Samnye-eup, S. Korea
Tel: +82-63-290-1584
Mobile: + 82-10-9320-4480
Email: fhlyongko@woosuk.ac.kr

Robert O. Davis (corresponding author) is an assistant professor in the English Linguistics and Language Technology Department at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Seoul, South Korea. His current research interests involve human-computer interaction in multimedia environments, the flipped classroom, and second language acquisition.

English Linguistics and Language Technology Department
Hankuk University of foreign Studies
Seoul, Dongdaemun-gu Imun 1-dong, S. Korea
Mobile: + 82-10-2447-1975
Email: red1020@gmail.com

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