

INTERNATIONALIZING SECONDARY EDUCATION IN POLAND THROUGH ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

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Abstract. Since English as a lingua franca is extending into virtually all domains of public life, non-Anglophone countries move away from the approach of English being taught as a foreign language (EFL) to the practice of English being a medium of instruction for content subjects. The methodology is increasingly implemented at all educational levels from primary to tertiary education. Yet few empirical studies have been undertaken into how the programmes are run. Thus, the article presents the findings of a research project, which attempted to provide a broad picture of this phenomenon in the Polish context. The article explores the two most recognized bilingual programmes in the European Union, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and English Medium Instruction (EMI), both being thoroughly investigated in the paper. The article attempts to shed light on the teaching approaches applied in EMI classes. In addition, it discusses the extent to which the English language is used in such classes (partial or exclusive). Further, it focuses on the implications L1 interference has for the L2 learning process taking place in the classroom. Last but not least, the study gives a brief account of students' and teachers' perspectives on and attitudes towards EMI. Regarding the methodology, the triangulation of methods was adopted including questionnaires, interviews and observations.

Key words: EMI, CLIL, English, internationalization, bilingual education, bilingual programmes

INTRODUCTION

Post-war civilization of political unions, globalization or migratory movements necessitates the knowledge of more than one language in more than one discipline. In order to meet the growing demands, countries all over the world are committed to improving their students' foreign language proficiency and, in consequence, modify their educational programmes through the increased implementation of foreign languages into the school system. The most effective method, as regards language learning, involves a situation in which an additional language (e.g. English) that previously was taught as a separate school subject becomes the medium of instruction for academic subjects such as science, mathematics or geography. Given the successful implementation of Canadian and American bilingual programmes, the idea of teaching content

subjects through a foreign language has at an unprecedented rate expanded into the European countries (Czura, 2009: 105). Although the approach was generally adopted several decades ago, its practical implementation depends on a country, its government and policies regulating bilingual education within the state. As opposed to bilingual programmes in multilingual countries where an additional language is often the second language for students, monolingual countries introduce an additional language that is not the most widely used language of the environment. It is usually a foreign language for the students who often do not have an opportunity to use it outside the school environment. Given the monolingual countries and their search for a more practical than scholastic practice as regards language learning, one should refer to the two commonly practised and internationally recognized approaches to bilingual education, i.e. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and English Medium Instruction (EMI), both being thoroughly investigated below.

ENGLISH MEDIUM INSTRUCTION (EMI)

EMI is defined as ‘the use of the English language to teach academic subjects in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English’ (Dearden and Macaro, 2016: 456). Although EMI is often called an umbrella term with its multifaceted application, the term serves as a reference to a classroom setting where the English language is used as a means of communication between the teacher and the students. In Europe, English is ‘the most dominant L2 medium of instruction’, with its position forecast to strengthen further (Brumfit, 2004: 166; Marsh and Laitinen, 2005: 2). The first to implement EMI were Sweden and the Netherlands in the 1950s. The next to follow were Finland, Norway and Hungary in the 1980s. The trend, however, took off in the 1990s expanding not only to Western but also to Eastern and Central Europe (Coleman, 2006). At the moment, over 55 countries all over the world and 21 European states, e.g. Italy, Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Hungary, Portugal, Spain have been increasingly using EMI in secondary and tertiary education (Dearden, 2015). Further, in some European countries EMI is promoted as a passport to a global world (*ibid.*: 16). Policy makers, teachers, administrators and parents consider EMI as a mechanism for internationalizing their education offer, e.g. in Croatia, Estonia, Portugal or the Netherlands. There are practical reasons for this, for most academic research is published in English (over 90% in international, high-impact publications). So, if students want to stay current in their field, it makes sense for them to study in English, given that the content is mostly in English. In many technical fields, much of the content and vocabulary is also in English, as are students’ dissertations and research.

Dearden (2015) also makes it clear that the term EMI itself is so new that no proper definition exists. Hence, the notion is sometimes misunderstood in various educational contexts. As a result, EMI is wrongly associated with

teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) through English implying that the interaction and texts used for instruction in EFL should avoid any recourse to the students' first language. It is also mistakenly perceived as part of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) programmes where courses are specifically designed to aid the students with undertaking particular professions. In addition, EMI term often misleads researchers and practitioners into believing that it is similar to EAP (English for Academic Purposes) designed to provide students with academic lexis and discourse enabling them to function at a university where academic subjects are delivered in English.

Although it seems that EMI has not yet received as much attention in Europe as CLIL, its advantages seem to be self-evident. The central idea of the programme is that it does not concentrate on the acquisition of grammatical structures or studying other language-connected aspects representing the formal language learning (English as a school subject) but focuses on the development of communication skills, intercultural relationships, as well as on natural interactions with both native and non-native speakers of English. EMI contributes to the international mobility of the students involved promoting intercultural awareness (Tsou and Kao, 2017: 4). The programme helps students broaden their knowledge about the today's highly interconnected world that is driven by English as an international language. This important role of English motivates students to learn it. The universities and other higher institutions located in non-Anglophone speaking countries require their prospective students to demonstrate high level of proficiency in English. Therefore, participation in the EMI programme would facilitate the entrance process. EMI students do not only develop the four linguistic skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening), but also gain specialist knowledge in each discipline (biology, geography, psychology, mathematics, etc.) in a language other than their mother tongue. Given that the EMI programme ends with an internationally recognized matriculation exam (for example International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme), students usually do not have to sit any additional written or oral tests verifying their linguistic competence or subject-content knowledge. Apart from the academic aspect, EMI can bring considerable advantages to the future career of the students involved, both at the domestic and international level. Additionally, EMI is viewed as beneficial not only for the students, but also for the schools that implement the programme, as it boosts the prestige of such institutions. Having employed international staff, participating in foreign exchange programmes and cooperating with other bilingual schools worldwide may attract not only parents, but also local and national government which, in consequence, may lead to additional funding needed for further development and scientific research (Tamtam et al., 2012). EMI gives schools an opportunity for promotion and participation in international projects and research, gives access to a wide range of diversified teaching and learning materials, as well as helps to build up international respect and visibility on the European stage.

The approach provides greater exposure to the target language and more opportunities to use it. As opposed to the regular English classes where an emphasis is placed on the grammatical forms and structures, the English-medium instruction methodology allows for a daily contact with the target language through a variety of academic subjects. The difference between the regular classes and EMI classes lies in the way of the language acquisition. Students no longer learn about English as a separate school subject but learn through English as a medium to study non-language content (Dearden, 2015: 4). This way of language learning allows students to develop both receptive and productive skills. Students gather information from listening and reading and convey knowledge through speaking and writing, acquiring at the same time new terms and concepts from a non-language discipline. The main purpose of EMI is to focus on the meaning of the subject content and not on the language learning and its form. This means that the target language is acquired unintentionally, and its development can be referred to as a by-product of this process. The unintentional language acquisition process that takes place through EMI is a result of students being exposed to the new knowledge and new terminology they were not familiar with so far.

CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING VS. ENGLISH MEDIUM INSTRUCTION

The term CLIL is defined as ‘an integrated approach where both language and content are conceptualized on a continuum without an implied preference for either’ (Coyle, 2007: 545). CLIL is referred to any dual focused educational context in which an additional language, thus not normally the first language of the learners involved, is used as a medium in teaching and learning of non-language content (Marsh, 2002; Romanowski, 2018). The implementation of CLIL was driven by the desire to spread and reinforce multilingualism in Europe and respond to situations where there was a deficient foreign language competence (Pérez-Cañado, 2012). This is how CLIL evolved and became an established teaching approach, spreading fast across European countries being adopted at all educational levels from kindergarten through vocational schools and professional development courses to universities (Czura, 2009). CLIL is deemed to be a descendent of Canadian immersion and North American bilingual education programmes which, as Pérez-Vidal (2007: 44) emphasizes, ‘are extremely revealing for the design and implementation of programmes in Europe’. The approach also draws on the models developed by European international schools. The overriding conclusion that can be reached from the precursors of CLIL education is that learning a second language in isolation is not as effective as using it for the purpose of acquiring non-language content. Although the experience and observations gathered in Canada and in the USA were valuable, the programmes could not be directly transferred to Europe. Immersion education bears little resemblance to the study of a language through

CLIL programmes in Europe, particularly “in terms of the sociolinguistic and sociocultural context in which the L2 is learned and the authenticity of the input” (Gallardo del Puerto et al., 2009: 65). In this sense, CLIL offers less contact with a language when compared to immersion settings where the language of instruction is often an official language. The effect thereof is that CLIL represents a methodology focused on teaching students how to use a language for specific purposes rather than to gain native-like competence.

In the light of the above assumptions, it is crucial to distinguish between CLIL and EMI as these two concepts are often confused. CLIL is deeply rooted in the European ideal of plurilingual competence for EU citizens. On the contrary, EMI has no contextual origin. Whereas CLIL may refer to any second, additional or foreign language (L2), e.g. English, German, Spanish, Italian, etc., EMI clearly underlines the significant role of English as the medium of instruction at any educational levels. In addition, CLIL as an objective sets out furthering both content and language, in EMI there is concentration on the acquisition of grammatical structures. The main objective of EMI programmes is the development of communication skills and intercultural relations with native and non-native speakers of English (Dearden, 2015). Finally, yet importantly, it should be highlighted that although CLIL has often been used to describe programmes within primary and secondary education, EMI can be implemented at any stage of the educational cycle (Simpson, 2017; Toth, 2018).

A STUDY OF EMI IN A POLISH SECONDARY SCHOOL IN WARSAW

The study was conducted using naturally occurring data while sitting in on classes that took place in Stefan Batory Secondary School in Warsaw. The school was founded in 1918 and represents one of the bilingual secondary schools in Poland. Since 2005, the school has been granted the IB authorization and has offered the two-year International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) intended for students aged 16–19. Prior to enrolment, written and oral English tests verify the linguistic competence of the candidates. All students are expected to know English at a level that will allow them to participate in classes held partially in this language. According to the IB Organization, the school is currently registered for the following subjects: Polish A (literature), Biology, Chemistry, English A (language and literature), English B (intended for students who have had some previous experience of learning the language), Geography, History, Mathematical Studies, Mathematics, Physics, Psychology, Visual Arts, German B, French B and French *ab initio* (intended for students who begin to learn a new language). Throughout the two-year course, students need to attend six classes a week provided in English, irrespective of the subjects taught in a national language. Three of them must be taken at a higher level (HL) and the other at a standard level (SL) (Romanowski, 2019). The subjects the students choose to learn during the Diploma Programme are to be taken in the matriculation examination (the

Polish matura). In addition to IB classes and the exams, there are three more core requirements students must complete to earn an IB diploma. These are the Theory of Knowledge (TOK), the Extended Essay and Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS). It is recommended that students devote approximately 150 hours to these courses over the two-year period.

1 PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE

The following study is based on the observations that lasted for approximately two weeks. Data were gathered during the biology and chemistry lessons. The research was undertaken on 11th grade students from two different classes. None of the students had participated in the programmes preceding the Diploma Programme (PYP or MYP). Altogether, 29 participants took part in the project including 27 students and 2 teachers. Throughout the two-week fieldwork, 10 participants from one class and 17 participants from the other class were involved. Although the IB classes are small-sized and their number does not exceed 20 students, during the first week of the project, only 10 learners were present (as regards the biology class). For the purpose of the reliability and consistency of the study, students who came in the following week did not take part in the research. To make a clear distinction between the two groups the term Class 1 and Class 2 respectively is used. Then, when referring to the educators involved in the present study, the term Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 is applied, depending on the class.

2 METHODOLOGY

In the present study, the triangulation of methods was adopted. The aim was to develop a comprehensive understanding of the investigated phenomenon. Triangulation appeared to be an effective technique to validate and check the credibility of the collected data through cross verification from more than two sources and via several research methods. All the methodologies adopted in the research interweave with each other that allows for exploring the investigated area from more than one standpoint. The use of various instruments proved to widen the scope of the research. The data analysed comprised questionnaires completed by teachers and students, interviews, as well as observations made and field notes taken while observing both classes. Questionnaires were used to gain the basic knowledge of the students' and teachers' language background, as well as their personal motivations to participate in a class where English is a medium of instruction. Interviews were conducted to understand the attitude of the respondents towards EMI programme. Observations were made to see to what extent the Polish language is incorporated into the classroom and what kind of teaching methods are adopted by the educators while teaching in such classes. This allowed adopting both quantitative- and qualitative approach to the analyses. The former one enabled to study the data of all the participants. The second one allowed for collecting in-depth perceptions and descriptions

of the target group and the investigated subject. Besides, whenever additional information was needed or any inquiries appeared while marshalling facts and composing the present study, questions were sent per e-mail to the IB coordinator. Alternatively, appointments were arranged to personally discuss the doubts, if any.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

1 TEACHING APPROACHES APPLIED IN THE CLASSROOM

As regards the biology class, task-based learning approach was adopted. In other words, the lesson was based around the completion of a variety of tasks. The teacher provided plenty of opportunities for interaction and in his course employed communication-oriented learning activities alongside the coupled inquiry model mixing the two methodologies (a guided approach with an open inquiry) where the focus of instruction is gradually shifted from the teacher to the student who is put in the centre of the learning process. The leadership is, however, shared (person-centred approach involving both the teacher and the students). And thus, the teacher first introduced the topic and gave the students clear instructions on what they had to do at each individual task stage. Then, he helped the students to recall some specialized language that could be useful for the exercises. During the review, the students took notes and asked questions. Next, they spent some time preparing for the assigned tasks and completed them in pairs through independent self-directed interaction. In the meantime, the teacher monitored the work of the students, offered his assistance and cleared up any language- or content questions that arose during the completion of the assigned tasks. Additionally, the students made use of other resources available to them in the classroom, such as notebooks or smartphones. Interestingly, the students used exclusively English websites to search for the information needed and never looked up for a word in a dictionary even if they worked with complex and specialized terminology. Afterwards, the students delivered a short oral report in front of the class to explain what had happened during their task-completion process and shared their findings. Meanwhile, the teacher gave each group some quick feedback on the content. During the presentations, he highlighted relevant parts from the text and repeated them. From time to time, he asked questions to point out some interesting features. Throughout the task-based approach, a wide exposure to the language was guaranteed. Besides, the students seemed to enjoy the learning process and appeared to be motivated. Due to the student-centred instruction, the learning process seemed to be cooperative, collaborative and community oriented. The students were encouraged to work in teams, drive their own learning and become self-directed with the ability to link the new knowledge within the context of the existing knowledge. The teacher successfully implemented instructional strategies designed to foster active engagement and experiential learning. The central focus was thus on meaning making, inquiry

and authentic activity. The class was expected, as Brophy (1999: 49) explains, to: 'strive to make sense of what they are learning by relating it to prior knowledge and by discussing it with others' and to act as 'a learning community that constructs shared understanding'. As regards the chemistry class, the teacher played an active part being the primary source for knowledge while the students took a more passive and receptive role. As opposed to the biology class, Teacher 2 acted as an instructor rather than as a facilitator that resulted in applying a traditional Present-Practice-Produce (PPP) approach that tends to be teacher-centred. During activities, the students worked alone and collaboration was discouraged. Such methodology resulted in narrow obedience without the possibility to act freely in teams. This conformed to the statement made by Brophy (2006: 40) that 'the system which orients students toward passivity and compliance with rigid rules undercuts the potential effects of an instructional system' that he continued 'is designed to emphasize active learning, higher order thinking, and the social construction of knowledge'. The classroom interaction followed the specific pattern where the teacher initiated a question, provided a series of steps for the students to follow to discover the principle, rule or generalization, the students then responded, and the teacher evaluated their responses. Even if the teacher endeavoured to involve the students in the assigned tasks and asked them questions, she did not give the learners enough time to analyse the discussed problem and to find their own solutions but replied immediately with a correct answer. Instead of letting the students work on their own and giving them a chance to search for the desired solution, she simply showed them how to accomplish the particular task. This limited the students' commitment to active participation and resulted in passive listening and taking notes. Furthermore, unlike the biology class where all the students sat in a U-shaped configuration and the teacher approached each group individually or stood aside, the physical design of the chemistry class placed the teacher to the frontal position. In other words, the classroom setting was organized in such a way that the desks faced towards the primary focal point, i.e. the teacher. The U-shape layout (also known as a horseshoe layout) left room for more interaction between the teacher and the students. Consequently, the U-shaped desk arrangement encouraged discussion and made it easy for the teacher to observe the students and assist them, if needed. In contrast to the U-shaped setting, the traditional classroom arrangement (the rows or the columns configuration) did not support conversation or interaction. Besides, the traditional layout appeared difficult for the instructor to observe the students in the mid- and back rows.

2 PARTIAL VS. EXCLUSIVE USE OF ENGLISH

Before the biology class started (Class 1), the students talked to each other in Polish. Further, the informal communication during the lesson between the teacher and the students, the one not related to the subject content, took place in the students' L1. The lesson was provided to a large extent in English. However,

the use of the Polish language was neither forbidden nor undesired. Even if the learners touched upon the aspects related to the subject content in the Polish language, Teacher 1 did not punish or correct his students. He replied either in English or in Polish. Sometimes, it depended on the complexity of the subject matter, but usually the teacher switched between the languages. It appeared quite natural. Similarly, the group activities were held in both languages. On the one hand, the students were aware of the fact that they are enrolled at a bilingual school with an IB programme where English serves as a medium of instruction for most of the school subjects and that they need to learn the subject content in this particular language. On the other hand, they did not treat this situation as an opportunity to become bilingual in its pure sense but saw it as a tool to learn a language for useful purposes, such as employment, travelling or school exams. In other words, language learning was perceived as a self-oriented process that could bring considerable benefits in the future. Such an attitude towards language acquisition (or rather language learning) generated the instrumental motivation common to academic situations that involve learning the target language without interacting with the target language community. During the interview Teacher 1 claimed that some learners were not proficient enough to learn subject matter exclusively in English. Therefore, he supported the idea that additional lecturing and/or repeating some information in the student's L1 provides deeper and clearer understanding in terms of the content of the lesson. This approach enabled students to become familiar with the specialized terminology in both languages. In other words, the methodology helped to build up the students' lexicon and foster their metalinguistic awareness, i.e. the ability to monitor and control their use of language. If the students encountered any difficulties with understanding the subject content provided in English, Teacher 1 immediately cleared up the doubts and explained the subject matter in Polish. As regards the chemistry class, English was the primary language used for both informal communication and formal instruction. During the interview, Teacher 2 claimed that students would learn a second language only if they communicated enough through that language (even if this created an artificial situation). The aim was to construct an environment in which children would be motivated to use English in multiple contexts. Therefore, both informal and formal conversations were held in English. However, it sometimes did not work as the teacher wished. In some cases, Teacher 2 asked a question in English and picked a particular learner to answer. It happened that the student replied in Polish. Usually, the teacher did not punish the students when they asked or answered questions in their first language. Besides, she did not force them to repeat the questions in English but always replied in the target language. What could be noticed during the observations was the fact that some students used the Polish language as a response to the teacher who appeared to overuse English and excessively stick to this language in all kind of conversation. As far as the students comprehend the subject content and such behaviour is just a minor disagreement to the unnatural use of the foreign language, it has no severe implications. But if formulating a question

in the students' mother tongue is a sign of incomprehension and the teacher fails to notice the students' difficulties in grasping the subject content, the learning progress might be hampered which may, in turn, lead to discontent, frustration and poor performance on the part of the students.

3 L1 INTERFERENCE IN EMI CLASSES

There has been a heated debate about whether the use of the students' first language in the L2 learning process, the one that takes place in the classroom, should be allowed. According to Littlewood and Yu (2011: 64), 'for many decades, foreign language teaching has been dominated by the principle that teachers should only use the target language'. However, the trend has reversed in the recent years. This turned out to be true when observing the biology class in which the use of students' L1 was considered to provide an important communicative support for both the teacher and the students. Both code mixing (changes at the word level) and code switching (changes at the sentence level) were applied. These were introduced once an L2 explanation failed. As a last resort, if the students faced comprehension problems, the translation of a term from the L2 into the L1 was provided. Code switching was also adopted without any specific reason, somewhat subconsciously. As the teacher was not previously trained on the use of L1, this practice was neither systematic nor based on some specific rules (it could be concluded from the observations made). It was introduced intuitively drawing on the teacher's previous knowledge and experience. Teacher 1 believed that the partial use of the students' mother tongue was essential in order to facilitate the comprehension of the subject content and to ease the transition to confident and effective use of English. He went on to advocate that 'L1 provides a sense of security which is extremely important, at least in the initial stage of integrating content and language, as it allows students to express themselves freely on the subject matter that is, at the beginning, foreign to them. As L2 proficiency increases, L1 use decreases'. According to Teacher 2, learners who are given the opportunity to familiarize with the content in their L1 before it is thoroughly provided in a foreign language are much more willing and determined to switch to English than the students who are deprived of this possibility. He added that 'sometimes, the immediate switch to the Polish language is a useful tool to check if students understand what is being taught'. Still the first language was introduced to such an extent that it did not impede the proper development of the target language. L1 use also did not disrupt the classroom management and seemed to have no adverse influence on the teaching and learning process. It could result from the fact that both the teacher and the students shared the same mother tongue. Thus, the teacher could keep an absolute control over its use in the classroom. The students did not communicate in the language that was unknown to the teacher. As regards Class 2, near-exclusive use of English was required, at least on the part of the teacher. The aim was to imitate the natural process children follow when acquiring their first language. In the interview, Teacher 2 said that in her opinion, any L1 use would interfere with the students'

attempts to master the target language. Should any comprehension difficulties arise, the teacher tried to convey the meaning through monolingual dictionaries, thorough explanation, action or demonstrations. There were only two situations in which Teacher 2 had to resort to the use of the Polish language, still reluctantly. First, the switch to the students' L1 took place if the English language proficiency was insufficient to comprehend the subject content. If the students had no previous knowledge about the specific term, and all the strategies designed to clarify such complex words had been tried out and none of them worked, the explanation in the students' L1 was provided. Such a situation occurred when the teacher used the chemical term 'titration', which the students could not grasp. The teacher tried to clarify the word in English in two different ways. When both failed, she provided an explanation in Polish. Second, the Polish language was introduced for disciplinary purposes, which turned out to be an effective strategy if the students became sidetracked and did not pay enough attention to the lesson. The teacher used a wide variety of expressions aimed at scolding the students and capturing their attention. The analysis showed that the contexts in which the educators introduced the students' L1 vary from teacher to teacher. In addition, the attitudes towards the students' mother tongue, as well as the amount of its use differed significantly. Despite the differences, some commonalities were brought to light. Both teachers resorted to the Polish language if the content comprehension is endangered.

4 STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS EMI

The purpose of the following section is to determine the students' attitudes concerning English-medium instruction and their perception of English as a foreign language. First, personal motivations for EMI are briefly presented. Secondly, the students' self-evaluation, as regards the extent to which they comprehend the subject content provided in English, is described. Then, a comparison is made as to the comprehension of the same subject-specific terminology but provided in the students' native language. The data were collected through in-depth interviews, both with the teachers and students, during the two-week period of the research project.

4.1 PERSONAL MOTIVATIONS FOR EMI

As regards the personal motivation for the participation in EMI, the students touched upon various reasons. The prime motive to enrol at a bilingual school and take part in an IB programme was of an academic nature. Twenty-seven students (the responses were counted together, irrespective of the class students attended) wished to develop their English language proficiency in a variety of disciplines. The students perceive EMI as an ideal opportunity to enlarge specialized vocabulary and enrich the knowledge in another language. Due to the regular use of English in the classroom, the students improve their English skills, become confident and much more fluent in its use in both informal and

formal conversations. These factors turned out to be the prime ones for choosing an EMI programme. Nearly as many students agreed that English is essential for travelling purposes as it serves as a lingua franca. Then, 23 students explicitly mentioned career-related reasons referring to the increased number of some good job opportunities, both in and outside the home country (Poland), provided that an excellent command of English in various fields of study be demonstrated. However, the academic content, travel purposes and the career-related reasons were not the only factors for the students' choice. The response, rating fourth, was the desire to study abroad. As many as 13 students wished to apply for studies at a university outside Poland. Some of them considered an EMI degree to be beneficial for future career perspectives. The students who chose neither 'yes' nor 'no' response (as regards studying overseas) but commented the field 'other' were asked in the interview for the reason for doing so. On the one hand, they answered that they could not imagine leaving their home country, their friends and their family. On the other hand, they all agreed that having English as a medium of instruction in secondary education would allow them to apply for studies of their choice (in the country) and facilitate their future university life in Poland. Ten students wished to participate in the EMI programme to improve their English language proficiency in order to make some international friendships. Last but not least, as many as two students admitted that they wanted to attend a mainstream secondary school, but the decision had remained with their parents.

4.2 STUDENTS' SELF-EVALUATION

All students (considering both classes) evaluated their English language skills (those that pertain to the comprehension of the subject content provided in English) as fairly high. The majority of EMI students admitted that they did not encounter any comprehension problems concerning the materials and/or lectures provided in English. Thus, 26 students stated that they understood the subject content in more than 80 per cent. Only one student confessed that the extent to which he comprehends the subject matter is between 50 and 80 per cent. None of the students, however, had assessed their English language skills as poor. The boy that put himself in a lower position when judging the comprehension of the materials provided in English justified it as follows: 'Sometimes, I lag behind my friends. Some terms or lessons are more complex, and I need to devote a bit more time to understand the unknown words and the subject matter. But the teacher and my friends do not wait until I grasp this meaning. It makes me feel upset as I face then difficulties in catching up with the material'. Apart from one student who now and then experiences some comprehension problems, the majority of the learners was rather pleased with the EMI classes and found that studying a subject in English improved their general English language competence. Initially, many of the interviewed students had perceived an EMI class as a burden due to their uncertainty about or lack of precise vocabulary and subject-specific terminology in English. Over the time, the context familiarity played its part. All students were able to take notes. Nobody asked

the teacher for repetition or peers for verification. This shows that familiarity with the context is one of the factors that can rule out comprehension problems. When asked about the comprehension of the same subject content but provided in Polish, the students' responses were less satisfying. When requested to provide the equivalents of the English terms, almost half of the students encountered considerable difficulties. The students were asked if studying a subject in English prevents them from improving their mother tongue. Five students responded saying 'yes' that they did not know the equivalents of the English terms. One student answered that the subject matter provided in English had no influence on his L1 competence. In this case studying a subject in the students' native language would be more challenging than learning it in English.

5 TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS EMI

According to the interviews conducted separately with each of the teachers, both agreed that English medium instruction improves the language competence of the students in the target language (i.e. English) as it provides a medium for learners to use the language. Then, they both admitted that the students who have some background knowledge in English are likely to succeed in the subjects taught through this language when compared to the students who have just started to learn it and, thus, are short of relevant experience. However, they believe that due to the context familiarity also the students, who initially seemed to lag behind, will get accustomed to the target language and over time, will easily absorb the new terms and concepts. Nevertheless, it happens that the students want the subject matter, first explained in English, be translated into their mother tongue (i.e. Polish). This request is driven by some minor comprehension problems that occur during the lesson. The switch to the students' mother tongue depends on the English language competence the students have developed so far. In any case, the teachers confirmed that the classes, which participated in the research project, face minor (if any) difficulties in understanding the English sources and materials used in the classroom. Thus, they do not recognize a need to organize any additional courses or preparatory tutorial, as there are no students who would be linguistically unprepared or who would not be fully acquainted with the necessary basics of a subject. Next, both teachers believe that EMI is an effective method to teach a foreign language and that the knowledge of English will bring considerable advantages to the students in the future. In contrast to the common belief, both teachers claimed that studying a subject in English does not prevent students from improving their mother tongue. Given that the explanation in the Polish language is provided (should the need arise), students have access to the terminology in their mother tongue. Every now and then, L1 served as a bridge from the familiar to the unfamiliar. As mentioned in Sections 4.2 and 4.3, the students' mother tongue was used more often during the biology class. However, if needed, the reference to the Polish language was also made during the chemistry class. Furthermore, both teachers perceive teaching in a foreign language as a source of personal and professional satisfaction

that has a positive impact on their teaching performance. Nonetheless, despite some shared opinions on particular issues connected to the EMI programme, the teachers differed in some aspects. They both agreed that English medium instruction contributes to students' cognitive development, but the biology teacher disagreed that it encourages creativity. Additionally, Teacher 1 said that knowledge of the English language is no more a mark of prestige in society whereas Teacher 2 believes it is still an important asset, not available to everyone. Besides, the biology teacher admitted that some students feel the need to pre-prepare using the materials in their mother tongue to be able to understand the content matter provided in the target language while the chemistry teacher disagreed with that. All in all, the advantages outweigh the challenges. Both teachers have positive attitudes towards English medium instruction and find the programme useful and beneficial.

CONCLUSION

Regarding the teaching approaches applied in EMI classes, two different methods were developed by the educators. Teacher 1 adopted task-based learning approach oriented towards interaction and communication. Additionally, he applied the coupled inquiry model mixing a guided approach with an open inquiry where the focus of instruction was gradually shifted from the teacher to the student who was put in the centre of the learning process. However, the leadership was still shared through the person-centred approach that involved both the teacher and the students. Whereas Teacher 2 acted as an instructor rather than as a facilitator that resulted in applying the traditional Present-Practice-Produce (PPP) approach that tends to be teacher-centred. In other words, the teacher played an active part being the primary source for knowledge while the students took a more passive and receptive role. The students worked alone without the possibility to collaborate freely in teams. Considering the use of English, Teacher 1 conducted the lesson to a large extent in English. Nevertheless, speaking Polish was neither forbidden nor undesired. He believed that introducing the students' L1 would allow deeper and clearer understanding of the subject content. Both the teacher and the students switched between the languages, and it appeared quite natural. Whereas Teacher 2 claimed that students might learn a second language only if communicating enough through that language. English has been recognized as the primary language and used for both informal communication and formal instruction. An artificial situation was created which was negatively received by the students who often replied in Polish thus expressing disagreement with the unnatural use of the foreign language. Despite the differences in teaching methods, both teachers resorted to the Polish language if the content comprehension was endangered. Taking into account the students' personal motivation for the participation in EMI, they did not desire to become bilingual in the pure sense of the word, but saw it as a tool to learn a language for useful purposes, such as employment, travelling or school

exams, which generated the instrumental motivation common to academic situations that involve learning the target language without interacting with the target language community. As regards self-evaluation, the students of both classes assessed their English language skills as fairly high. Despite the initial uncertainty and doubts about the participation in the EMI programme, they quickly became familiar with the subject content. The vast majority faced no comprehension problems when reading the materials and/or listening to lectures provided in English. However, their comprehension of the same subject content in Polish was less satisfying. Almost half of the students encountered considerable difficulties when requested to provide the equivalents of the English terms. In this case studying a subject in the students' native language would be more challenging than learning it in English. Both teachers agreed that English medium instruction improves the English language competence of the students as it provides a medium for learners to use the language. They both believe that the knowledge of specialized language learnt in English will pay off in the future career of the students. Teaching in a foreign language seems to be a rewarding experience for the teachers as they both claim that this activity has a positive impact on their teaching performance. Even if they differ in some aspects, they both perceive EMI as a useful and beneficial programme with a large potential to expand in Poland.

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