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Evaluating the Quality of Learning: An Experience from a Language Enrichment Programme

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Abstract

The switch of the teaching medium of junior secondary classes in Hong Kong from English (EMI) to Chinese (CMI) in 1998 has met strong opposition from parents for fear of possible decline in the learners' level of English proficiency due to reduction in exposure. To make up for this and to smoothen the transition from CMI to EMI in senior secondary level, a 2-year English Enrichment Programme (EEP) was piloted in selected schools starting 2001. An evaluation project assessing the effectiveness of the EEP was also launched in the same year. This paper reports the preliminary findings from the evaluation project on how well the students learnt in the EEP.

In the evaluation, emphasis has been given to analysing the extent to which three conditions necessary for optimal L2 learning were present in the students' learning process in the EEP. These conditions include *comprehensible exposure and input*, *opportunities for L2 use with feedback*, and *motivation*. The paper reports the process and findings of this evaluation. Implications are drawn for how the design and implementation of the EEP could be improved to ensure quality provision of the conditions so as to improve the effect of learning, which shed light on programmes of which content is learnt through a second or foreign language, and also on immersion programmes for immigrant learners at a time when globalisation has led to increased cross-border mobility of people.

Medium of Instruction Policy in Post-1997 Hong Kong

For nearly thirty years, in accordance with what was considered the government's advocate of a *laissez-faire approach*, the choice of the medium for teaching and learning in Hong Kong secondary schools rested with the schools. However, shortly before the change of sovereignty in 1997, the colonial Hong Kong government in its final months suddenly adopted a coercive strengthening of policy, and it announced that starting from September 1998, Chinese would be the mandatory medium of instruction (MOI) for all secondary schools. Those schools which wanted to use English as the teaching medium had to apply to the Education Department¹ for approval. They needed to satisfy the criteria laid down (Kwok, 1997). The rationale for this change of language medium policy is that mother tongue is the most desirable medium for learning. Eventually, 114 schools were approved for using English as the MOI and 307 schools using Chinese as the MOI.

This new MOI policy has caused negative reactions from the community. Teachers, parents and students were seen taking to the streets to protest against it. Schools considered this policy as deprivation of their autonomy. Teachers were critical of its divisiveness, with the possibility of students in EMI schools being labelled as more able or high achievers versus those in CMI schools less able or low achievers. Parents

¹ The Education Department of Hong Kong was renamed the Education and Manpower Bureau of Hong Kong on 1st January 2003

who could not secure a place in EMI schools for their children considered the policy as denying their children access to higher education and well-paid jobs. The business sector warned that this would lead to a decline in English standards, and in turn jeopardise Hong Kong's competitiveness and its status as a metropolitan city.

The responses from the community were perhaps not unpredictable. There has always been strong parental demand for English-medium schools. The business sector has always wanted our graduates to be competent in English. Schools have always expressed their resentment about not having autonomy over their school policies (Johnson, 1994). Places in English-medium schools are still in high demand for reasons mentioned above.

While mandating the use of CMI in junior secondary classes (Secondary 1 to 3), it is by no means clear that this policy will continue unaltered into the future, nor is it clear whether the policy will eventually be applicable to Secondary 4 classes or above (Chan, 1999). As far as the issue of MOI in senior secondary classes (Secondary 4 to 7) is concerned, so far the post-colonial government has not had a clear policy on it. A report cited the head of a government-appointed working group on the MOI as stating that senior secondary students 'should have freedom to choose which language to be taught if the schools believed they have teachers capable of using English to teach' (Cheung, 1999). To investigate whether and to what extent provision of additional support for students from schools following the 'two-mode teaching', in which Chinese is adopted as MOI in junior secondary classes and English as the MOI in senior classes, could enhance learning and smoothen the transition in student learning of content subjects from Chinese to English medium, a two-year English Enrichment Programme (EEP) was launched in 2001 in 14 CMI schools. An evaluation project evaluating its effectiveness also started in the same year.

The English Enrichment Programme (EEP)

The EEP consists of a series of teaching modules written and taught in English on cross-curricular themes. Each module is intended for three to four teaching periods, and schools may choose to teach some of these modules to suit the needs of their students. The schools participated in the study were requested to set aside a certain percentage of teaching time for teaching the modules. They also had to design their own school-based implementation plan including time scheduling, designing learning and teaching activities, and putting in place adequate support strategies.

The Evaluation Project

The Project which evaluates the effectiveness of the EEP aims to answer the following questions:

1. How well do students learn in the enrichment programme?
2. What are the effects of the enrichment programme on students' learning of English?

3. How well do students of CMI schools adapt to English-medium learning at Secondary 4 if the enrichment programme is introduced at junior secondary levels?
4. What are the pre-conditions and necessary support services to make the enrichment programme work in CMI schools?

Multiple sources of evidence used to address the questions include questionnaire surveys, module evaluation, proficiency tests, interviews, and classroom observations. This paper aims at addressing Research Question 1 (RQ1) – to investigate how well students learn in the EEP.

Methods of Evaluation

To address RQ1, the focus was on a general observation of students' *learning process* in the EEP modules. Three important conditions have been identified in the Second Language Acquisition literature as necessary for optimal L2 learning, they include the following:

1. Comprehensible exposure and input

Krashen (1985) has emphasised the importance of the teacher simplifying input to ensure that learners are able to understand. According to the earlier version of the Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1985, cited in Ellis, 1999), learners will acquire an L2 when they have access to comprehensible input and when their 'affective filter' is low (e.g. they are motivated to learn and are not anxious) so that the comprehended input is made available to the internal acquisitional mechanisms for processing.

2. Opportunities for L2 use with feedback

To be effective in the use of language, one needs to be able to use the language with some ease and speed. The only way in which learners can go beyond carefully constructed utterances and achieve some level of natural speed and rhythm is by frequent use of the target language (Skehan, 1996). This requires frequent opportunity, provided in and out of the classroom, to link together the components of utterances so that they can be produced without undue effort, so that what will be important will be the meanings underlying the speech rather than the speech itself.

Following from this, as pointed out in the English Language Curriculum Guide (CDC, 2004), feedback is an integral part of the learning-teaching-assessment cycle whereby learners' performance is observed and then judgements are made about the best way to help them improve. Ur (2002) also emphasises the importance of correction whereby learners are provided with specific information on aspects of their performance: through explanation, or provision of better or other alternatives, or through elicitation of these from the learner. Nunan (1999) further argues that positive feedback is one of the preconditions for effective motivation.

3. Motivation

Referred to as the 'educational shift' (Dornyei, 2002), in the 1990s there was a shift towards a situated approach – examining how motivation affects learning processes

within a classroom context. The common theme underlying the ‘new wave’ articles is the belief that the classroom environment has a much stronger motivational influence that has been proposed before. Examples of aspects of the learning context examined include course-specific motivational components, teacher-specific components, and group-specific components. These aspects will be examined in the following sections. In the collection and analysis of data, emphasis was put on identifying if these three conditions existed in the delivery of the EEP to facilitate students’ learning. The following data were collected for analysis. The aims of data collection and procedure for data analysis of the various research instruments used are presented in more detail in Appendix 1.

- Field notes from observation of 21 EEP lessons in S2/S3 classes of 14 participating schools in the first two years of implementation of the EEP, and notes from post-lesson interviews with participating teachers and students. (conducted in the first two years of the study)
- Data from interviews with the principals, EEP coordinators, and a representative sample of participating teachers and students of the 4 case study schools (conducted in the first two years of the study)
- Evaluation of 60 EEP modules written by the programme developers and 12 modules written by the participating schools (conducted in the first two years of the study)
- Notes from 24 meetings of representatives from the module developers, the EEP evaluation team, the funding body, and EEP school personnel of the participating schools (conducted in the second year of the study)

Findings

Comprehensible exposure and input

Lesson observation data revealed that in general the majority of students seemed to have no difficulty in understanding teachers’ talk and following the written materials of the EEP. They could answer teachers’ questions in English, though most of the answers provided were rarely beyond the phrase level. In the post-lesson interviews some students reported that they did not have much difficulty in doing the activities and worksheets of the EEP. However, some students felt that the audio activities were a bit too fast and thus posed some problems for their listening. Some found the writing activities most difficult as they did not have enough vocabulary to develop essays. However, it was observed that students in general seldom asked teachers questions or volunteered to answer questions, probably due to their lack of confidence in using English. Instead, when they came across any difficulties, they often discussed with their classmates, but in Chinese, or consulted the dictionary. Some students also sought help from reference books or the Internet for further information or solutions to their problems.

The medium of interaction and teaching approaches adopted in the observed lessons were also noted and analysed to examine whether students were provided with

comprehensible exposure and input of the English language and subject content knowledge through the delivery of the EEP modules.

Based on a rough estimation by the observers, the amount of English used in the EEP lessons varied from 60% to 100% in the first year of implementation of EEP, and nearly 100% English in the second year. The teachers' use of language was mostly accurate and fluent and most of the instructions for individual activities were clearly and effectively given.

Interaction between students during pair or group work was often found to be conducted in Cantonese, which was mostly accepted by teachers. One EEP teacher, who was also the English teacher of the class, remarked that in normal English lessons she would insist on students using English in discussions but would be less strict in the EEP lessons. The EEP lesson observers did not note small group-based teacher input to help students move from Cantonese to English.

In general, the lessons observed tended to be teacher-directed. In the first year of implementation of the EEP, teacher-whole class interaction seemed to be the common pattern. In 9 out of the 11 observed lessons teacher-whole class interaction accounted for 70% or above of the lesson time. In the second year, teacher-whole class interaction still seemed to be the dominating pattern, most of the lessons devoted 50-85% of the lesson time to teacher-whole class interaction. In some observed lessons students were engaged in group discussions and group presentations, but, as above mentioned, group discussions among students were often carried out in Cantonese.

This tendency towards a teacher-directed approach gave rise to a large percentage of teacher talk in the observed lessons. In a couple of the lessons, teacher talk accounted for as much as 95% of talk. The students remained mostly quiet, listening to directions and following instructions. Some student-student interaction in the form of small group work was encouraged, but it was noted that the provision of necessary language support (such as transactional language for group interaction) was not properly offered.

Most teachers followed everything set out in the unit and taught accordingly, following a similar pattern of teaching. Firstly the teachers asked a few questions to prepare students for the activities and to check understanding; then students did some reading / listening tasks; and finally the teachers checked answers with the students (in which some explanations of vocabulary or subject content or questioning could be found). The questions teachers asked tended to be factual. Questions that required higher-order thinking (such as synthesising information, predicting or evaluating) were not common in the observed lessons.

Most of the observed lessons mainly focused on reading and listening comprehension, some with pair / group discussions or oral presentations by the students. Writing tasks were usually assigned as homework. In general not much time was spent on speaking activities and there was not much time used for revision of language and content.

To sum up, lesson observation data showed that while students were generally provided with **English-medium input** which was rendered **mostly comprehensible**,

there seemed to be a **lack of high quality content-related comprehensible exposure and a lack of interaction-related input** for effective learning of the English language and subject knowledge in the EEP.

Teachers' views elicited from interviews and meetings with various stakeholders also provided insights on students' learning process in the EEP. It was noted that their views were divided, probably due to the varied academic and language competence of their students. Some teachers expressed positive views on their students' learning experience in the EEP and observed that their students participated actively in the EEP lessons. They attributed this active participation to the design of the modules. They felt that, when compared with regular English lessons, the modules were basically activity and skill-based, providing more opportunities for cooperative and active learning. However, this observation was not shared by all teachers, some of them had less favourable views on the EEP and claimed no difference in lesson design between the regular English lessons and the EEP lessons. Some teachers reported that their students found the delivery speed of the listening activities too fast. Some remarked that their students found the vocabulary used in the EEP modules very difficult.

Module evaluation provided another source of data to examine the extent to which the EEP modules provided comprehensible exposure and quality input to enhance learning of the EEP. In general, the modules reflected a clear emphasis on the development of discrete language skills and subject-related vocabulary through a series of carefully structured communicative tasks, which were contextualised, purposeful and authentic in nature. Tasks or activities were often structured with language input given in support frames. As for the practice of the four language skills, an obvious feature of integration was often observed in the design (though not necessarily the implementation, as discussed above). The framework for module design appeared to be following the pattern of:

- simple activities / exercises as lead-in;
- listening and/or reading as input;
- speaking and writing as output; and
- integrated language practice.

The design of the materials seemed to be based on a constructivist view of learning. Both conceptual and linguistic support were present in the materials, and most of the activities were structured in such a way that scaffolds were gradually reduced to facilitate more independent and holistic practice of the language skills in the output task, mostly designed as the last activity in the module.

However, there seemed to be a lack of direct linkage between most of the module materials and the content subject curricula. Apart from a couple of modules which reflected more closely the nature of learning of the subject content, most modules evaluated may not be able to meet the students' needs in studying content subjects in senior forms, since the subject specific concepts are rather superficially dealt with. It appeared that language skills or tasks included in the EEP materials were not selected with the clear purpose of preparing learners for particular language demands in relation to learning of a specific content subject, for example, writing practice could have been tied to description of experimental results or writing of an experiment

report; speaking or writing could have been put in the context of making reasoned decisions about social issues.

In addition, there seemed to be a lack of focus on the development of higher order thinking skills in the EEP materials. It is recommended in the subject syllabuses of the Hong Kong secondary school curriculum that, apart from the subject knowledge and concepts, students are expected to be able to develop higher order thinking skills, for example, problem solving, enquiring, critical thinking, reasoning etc. and to be able to communicate effectively in the subject. Yet, learning in the EEP was mostly limited to comprehension and application as communication using pre-learnt language elements, and the development of students' higher order thinking was not obvious.

These features identified through module evaluation echoed findings from the observation of the approaches adopted by the EEP teachers. The EEP module materials **exposed the learners to more language practice opportunities** in relation to chosen subject contents, yet **the quality of input may not have been adequate** to bring about effective learning of both the English language and subject knowledge.

Opportunities for English use with feedback

As mentioned in the previous section, lesson observation data showed that the majority of teachers used nearly 100% English in their EEP lessons, which mainly focused on reading and listening comprehension. This suggested that generally speaking the EEP provided the students with opportunities for *reading* and *listening* to English to a large extent. It was also noted that the module materials contained opportunities for students' written and spoken output.

With regard to *writing* activities, it was observed that most of the lessons were devoted to the answering of questions in the worksheets or in the form of a quiz, and the answers were then confirmed or corrected by the teacher. More extended writing activities were usually assigned as homework and corrected by the teacher based on the criteria suggested by the module writing team. Since the EEP evaluation team was not able to collect samples of students' extended writing products for further analysis, it was not possible to ascertain the kind of feedback students received on their writing.

As for English use in *speaking*, it was doubtful whether students had sufficient opportunity to speak in English in the EEP lessons. Firstly, it was observed that generally there was not much time spent on speaking activities in the EEP lessons. In a few lessons there were pair or group discussions or oral presentations by the students. However in most of the lessons, speaking opportunities were provided mostly through answering teachers' questions and in many cases, the students just uttered a few isolated words in giving answers. Secondly, many of observed lessons were dominated by teacher-directed approaches, resulting in a high percentage of teacher talk, and students' use of English in speaking was thus lessened to a large extent. Thirdly, as noted previously, even when there were pair and group discussions, students often resorted to Cantonese and there was normally little intervention/feedback from the teachers to help students transfer Cantonese meanings into English. Hence, the opportunity for students to speak the English language was further reduced.

In general, no obvious support of or *feedback* to students' language use was recorded in the observed lessons. Some teachers graded students' oral performance. This was a kind of feedback, but not necessarily informative about individual student proficiency gaps. Other forms of feedback on students' work in the classroom were rarely found. The lesson observation data also showed that students' language errors were not handled in a systematic way. Some teachers just simply provided the correct version of the answers without pointing out the language and content errors made by the students.

Data from meetings of the stakeholders indicated that the teachers generally felt that the EEP modules provided their students with plenty of activities to interact in English. However, there were again diverse views about their effectiveness. Some teachers observed that their students enjoyed the group discussion time but some teachers criticised that the EEP modules did not help equip students with new skills for learning the language autonomously.

To conclude, the EEP was able to provide students with **a wide range of communicative and life-related topics and contexts for language learning and use**. However, the degree of structures or scaffolds and teacher-directedness seems to have limited the level of interaction with the language. And the provision of opportunities for **speaking** English was **to a far lesser extent** than the other three language skills. As for feedback, there was **not much evidence of provision of prompt, informative feedback** to the students in the lessons to enhance their learning.

Students' motivation towards English

Students' positive motivation is thought to be an important factor in successful second/foreign language learning, as indeed in all learning, so the programme specifically aimed to develop students' motivation. Lesson observation and post-lesson interview data showed that most students appeared to be interested in and participated more actively in EEP lessons. One school observed that when compared with non-EEP students, EEP students tended to be more confident in the learning process, and more independent in problem solving. In general, students exhibited positive motivation to learning English in the EEP lessons in the following views:

- The modules provided them with the opportunities to learn some useful subject-related vocabulary;
- The topics of the modules were more interesting and more relevant to their personal life than those found in the English lessons / textbooks;
- They learned some presentation skills e.g. using eye contact etc.;
- The EEP helped to prepare them for the transition from CMI to EMI in S4 or in tertiary/university studies;
- Students of one school liked the EEP because they did not need to be assessed;
- Some students enjoyed the EEP because they did not need to learn grammar like what they did in English lessons;
- Some students indicated that they liked the lessons because of the teachers.

However, there were other students who were less motivated by the EEP materials. Some of them found the materials difficult. As noted above, the listening parts

seemed to be the most problematic as many students felt that the delivery was too fast. Some felt that the topics / materials were boring. Some commented that the materials were not relevant to their subject of study and they preferred more subject-related materials. Some students lost interest in the modules because the teaching methods of some teachers could not arouse their interest. It was also observed that students were seldom given chances to negotiate changes in the activities.

Meetings and interviews with participating school personnel provided data on student motivation from the *teachers'* perspective, which again showed diverse views. Some teachers were impressed by the range of topics available and found students motivated by the modules which they rated as interesting. Some felt that their students were more actively involved in the lessons than they normally were. One school said that their students were motivated by the programme to use English because it placed less emphasis on the learning of grammar. Some teachers noted that their students liked the temporary switch from CMI to EMI. They felt good especially when they found no difficulty in understanding their teachers' English. Two schools revealed that the high achievers of the schools liked the programme more and students who performed well in the examinations were more keen to join the EEP. One case study school welcomed the topic and project based approach adopted in the module design and regarded the EEP as important in confirming the school's planned direction for cross-curricular integration and project-based learning.

There were, however, reports of dissatisfaction of the EEP in various ways in terms of student motivation. The most frequently mentioned area of discontent was the listening activities. Many teachers reported that their students disliked the listening activities. The students either found the listening activities boring or the pace of delivery in some of the tapes too fast. The second most mentioned problem was vocabulary. Most of the teachers shared the view that there were too many unfamiliar vocabulary items or special terms in the texts, hence the modules failed to motivate students in learning.

Another common criticism by subject teachers was the lack of subject depth in the modules, and in some cases, inaccurate information on subject matter. Some teachers commented that the topics were good and authentic, but not very related to the subject curricula, hence were not very useful for learning the subject matter. Some teachers even commented that the writers of the materials were not familiar with the subject matter. They stated that the materials required further proof-reading and reference should be made to the subject syllabuses.

Module topics and content were also an issue. Although some students commented that they found some of the topics relevant to their personal life or subject areas, in general, teachers and students thought that the topics of the modules should be more diversified and related to students' life experience and their subject areas. Other felt that activities that required higher-order thinking skills should replace comprehension exercises that simply required 'mechanical' transformation of information from input texts.

Teachers reported various *adaptation strategies* to make the EEP materials more enjoyable and more learner-centred so as to enhance the motivation of their students. For example, some included more games for the warm-up section; some changed the

writing task to be more creative. One teacher provided her students with supplementary materials in Chinese to enhance their understanding and interest. A case study school reported that Internet search by students and teachers was required for supplementing the modules with multi-media materials, and material adaptation was also made to render the modules less language-biased and more relevant to subject teaching. In general, in order to suit students' needs and interest, adaptations and modifications were found to be necessary by the majority of teachers, but were also considered very time and energy consuming. Some teachers commented that they could not afford the time to do so because other school work already kept them very busy.

It was also noted that there was a close link between *assessment* and motivation. Many teachers believed that assessment practice helped enhance students' motivation in the EEP and that students would not take the EEP seriously without having assessment in place. Interviews data indicated that only one school formally assessed students' performance through formative assessment tasks, such as oral presentations, and written assignments, the purpose of which was to assess students' language abilities rather than their knowledge of module content. Assessment scores were indicated on students' report cards. These measures were generally perceived as effective in motivating students to take the programme seriously, though some teachers believed that the EEP should be accorded much more weighting so that students would make a much greater effort in the EEP. This view about the close link between assessment and motivation was echoed by students' comments. Some students opined that if there were some kind of assessment, their learning of these modules could be better motivated. This often expressed need to link EEP English learning opportunities to assessment indicates that motivation towards English learning was extrinsic (i.e. dependent on factors outside the individual, like tests). Intrinsic motivation (interest, enthusiasm felt within an individual) appeared to be largely absent.

Conclusions and Implications

Conclusions

On the whole, it is shown from the data that the 3 factors which have been identified as necessary for optimal L2 learning, namely *comprehensible exposure and input*; *opportunities for L2 use with feedback*; and *motivation*, could be identified to some extent in students' learning in the EEP.

Comprehensible exposure to English language and subject content knowledge existed in the learning process, yet there was doubt as to whether the quality of input was high enough to bring about the most effective learning.

Opportunities were provided for the students to use English in learning in the EEP, especially in writing, but there seemed to be insufficient opportunities for the development of speaking and extended writing. In addition, there was a lack of immediate and informative feedback to students on their English performance.

Students were generally found to be motivated in learning in the EEP but motivation seemed to be mainly extrinsic. Students seemed to be motivated because they

understood well the need for them to improve their English competence for future learning. Some were motivated because there was formal assessment for the EEP. There appeared to be a need for the module content to be revised and for alternative teaching and learning approaches so as to bring about genuine enthusiasm, intrinsic motivation and enjoyment in the learning process of the EEP.

Implications

Taking into consideration the findings outlined in this paper, the following suggestions are made with a view to ensuring optimal learning process and experiences through quality and comprehensible lesson input, adequate opportunity for students to use the English language with informative feedback, and motivation in learning.

For Policy Makers

Effective English-medium subject teaching at any level, not just S4, depends primarily on teacher quality. High quality English-medium subject teachers are not simply those who speak excellent English. In addition to high English proficiency, English-medium teachers need understanding of their responsibility to teach students (who have limited English) the English they need to explore subject content, both in speech and writing. In addition, teachers also need competence to use teaching strategies to make subject-matter accessible to students. This study's data *indicate* that for the specialist task of teaching *through a foreign language*, **specialist teacher training is needed**, specifically, training on understanding the central role of language in learning, on modifying module materials appropriately to develop both English and content, on providing English input as a scaffold to support students to move from CMI to EMI discussions, and on providing students with appropriate feedback to enhance their learning of content and language.

During the evaluation period it was found that there were widely differing expectations of the programme across levels of stakeholders. Thus, *it is suggested* that policy makers ensure clear aims and shared understanding among EEP administration, materials designers and teaching personnel, and that the aims and implementation are in the best interests of the students. To inform formulation of future policy regarding the design and implementation of programmes of a similar nature, there should be more thorough analysis of the target students' language needs in relation to their learning of the major content subjects at S4. Communication and wider preliminary consultations among stakeholders need to be strengthened to develop shared ownership and understandings to avoid unrealistic and conflicting expectations and wastage of resources.

For Programme and Materials Writers

As students in CMI schools may not have the chance to use English to study content subjects before transition to S4, an English enrichment programme should be more subject relevant and cater for students' needs in using English for *academic* purposes. Hence, **suggestions are made here to define 'enrichment' in this sense and develop a programme with a focus on content-obligatory language use**, and the development

of students' language abilities and cognitive skills, in particular high-level thinking skills, required for effective learning in specific academic contexts.

For School Managers and Teachers on Future Use of the Piloted EEP

For future school-level participants, **suggestion is made to ensure differentiation of roles among educators working to enable students' late English immersion.** That is, EEP lessons must be sufficiently different from English lessons to prevent student demotivation from too heavy a dose of English in similar contexts.

For example, appropriate collaboration might be:

	Major contexts for learning	Primary focus of learning
English teachers	Language arts	Popular-literature-based knowledge & skills
	Social contexts (especially <i>academic</i> social contexts)	Everyday AND subject- compatible English knowledge & communication skills
Subject teachers (using Chinese)	Academic contexts (CMI)	Subject- obligatory concepts & skills in the mother tongue.
Enrichment teachers (using English) – EEP or adapted EEP or existing subject syllabus or other	Academic contexts (EMI)	Subject- obligatory concepts & skills, in English, including those already taught in the mother tongue.

At a time when the world is witnessing increased mobility of people owing to globalisation, the demand for immersion programmes for new arrival children is on the increase, in particular in developed countries. Equally huge in demand are programmes on which content is learnt through a second/foreign language. Yet whether these programmes can enable learners to adapt to the change from learning through the mother tongue to a second/foreign language, and whether they can lead to effective learning of language and content depend on a lot of factors. While the suggestions above would inform the preparation of future programmes, more research is needed to identify other factors that are sensitive to the three important conditions considered necessary for optimal L2 learning- comprehensible exposure and input, opportunities for L2 use with feedback, and motivation.

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Appendix 1

Details of Data Collection and Analysis

- **Lesson Observation and post-lesson discussion**

Data collected:

Field notes from observation of 21 EEP lessons in S2/S3 classes of 14 participating schools in the first two years of implementation of the EEP, and notes from post-lesson interviews with participating teachers and students. (conducted in the first two years of the study)

Aim(s):

To gather data for students' learning in the programme, and also for an overview of the comments and responses of teachers to EEP

Procedure:

A S2/S3 observation schedule was formulated to facilitate the collection of relevant data relating to the objectives. The first part of the schedule included a list of aspects for the observer to discuss with teachers being observed *before* and *after* the lesson:

Before the lesson:

- how the teacher had prepared for the lessons;
- the teacher's understanding of the objectives of the module being taught;
- the teacher's expectation of the benefit of the module on student learning.

After the lesson:

- the teacher's evaluation of the lesson, the materials and students' learning;
- the teacher's suggestions of changes required to the materials and the teaching and learning approaches;
- the teacher's perception of language development through subject content.

The second part of the schedule is related to the observation of the classroom activities. Observers were required to make note of the following aspects:

- the nature of the learning and assessment activities;
- the approaches for the development of language and content knowledge;
- the nature of student participation;
- the language use of the teachers and the students.

For post-lesson discussions with the students, observers were required to record the students' expressed attitude towards the EEP and learning through English; and their suggestions of ways to improve the EEP.

Method of data analysis:

The field notes (and lesson materials) gathered from the lesson observations and post-lesson discussions were compiled and analysed to permit an overall interpretation to be made. Attempts were also made to identify any common themes and phenomena in the teaching and learning processes and concerns expressed by teachers and learners in the discussion.

● **Interviews with personnel of the 4 case study schools**

Data collected :

Data from interviews with the principals, EEP coordinators, and a representative sample of participating teachers and students of the 4 case study schools (First two years of the study)

Aims:

The aims of the interviews conducted in the 4 case study schools in the 1st and 2nd years of programme implementation were to collect data pertaining to stakeholders' perceptions and to the changes that had taken place respectively in the following areas:

- aims and objectives of the programme;
- medium of instruction (MOI) policy of the Government and the school;
- expectations of outcomes of the programme;
- the school's approach to programme implementation;
- the actual implementation process and details;
- place of the programme in the school curriculum
- resourcing and timetabling
- extent of student and teacher participation
- programme evaluation measures
- effectiveness of the programme

Procedure:

The case study schools were chosen based on their location, and students' attainment categories. Two were in the 'high' attainment category and the other two in the medium group according to the ability of their Secondary One intake. Three rounds of semi-structured interview were conducted: one in the early months of programme implementation, the second one at the end of the first years of implementation, and the third one at the end of the second year of implementation. Field notes were made during lesson observations which enriched and enhanced the depiction of the implementation of the EEP in the four case study schools.

Method of data analysis:

A case study interview report was compiled for each case study school based on the data collected in the two rounds of interviews, and cross-case analysis was subsequently developed.

● **Module Evaluation**

Data collected:

Evaluation of 60 EEP modules written by the programme developers and 12 modules written by the participating schools (First two years of the study)

Aims:

The module evaluation component of the project aimed to seek information about the nature of learning opportunities the target groups of students were provided with in the EEP.

Procedure:

The major instrument used in the module evaluation component consisted of four areas of analysis, each of which included questions guiding the evaluation of the related sub-components of the material design.

First area: Aims and Objectives of the Language Curriculum

1. What are the aims and objectives of the curriculum?

Second area: Approach to Second Language Teaching and Learning

2. What theoretical assumptions underlie the curriculum's approach to language teaching and learning?

Third area: Design of the Language Curriculum

3. How is the curriculum organised? What assumptions underlie the curriculum's organisation?
4. What teaching approaches and methods are recommended? What assumptions about the teacher and learner's role underlie such recommended teaching approaches and techniques?

Fourth area: Techniques for Enactment

5. What instructional activities or techniques are recommended for enacting the curriculum?

Method of data analysis:

Through in-depth analysis of selected modules developed by the material writing team as well as the participating schools, the overall design of the EEP was identified, the embedded orientations, principles or theories the EEP had assumed in its material design was inferred, and the effectiveness of these materials in addressing the curriculum needs of target students was assessed.

● **Meeting with various stakeholders**

Data collected:

Notes from 24 meetings of representatives from the module developers, the project evaluation team, the funding body, and EEP school personnel of the participating schools (Second year of the study)

Aims:

The meetings intended to:

- collect school personnel's general feedback on the implementation of the programme;
- understand the strategies the schools used for implementing the programme and assessing their students;
- identify the difficulties the schools encountered in the implementation stage of the programme.