

## **How Enriching is the English Enrichment Programme?**

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### **Abstract**

This paper reports the interim findings of a longitudinal study which aims at exploring the effectiveness of a 3-year English Enrichment Programme, on top of the regular English curriculum, in exposing secondary students to more subject-specific English while they learn their content subjects in the mother tongue. The study was carried out in response to the Hong Kong government's decision to firmly promote mother tongue teaching in her post-colonial era after 1997. To evaluate the effectiveness of this programme on students' learning of English, in-depth study with selected schools was done and different research tools including questionnaires, lesson observations, interviews and language proficiency tests were used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. It is found that the increased exposure to English may have had a positive effect upon students' perception of learning English, if not on actual performance. A closer look at the cases, however, sheds light upon the intricate interplay between factors leading to the different degrees of perception about the effectiveness of the programme. These factors include: the willingness of the school to pool resources and efforts in making the most of the programme, the language competence of students, and the teaching focus and methods in class. Recommendations on the way forward will be discussed.

### **I. Introduction**

As a result of the Hong Kong government's decision to firmly promote mother tongue teaching in her post-colonial era after 1997, the number of secondary schools that adopted Chinese as the MOI rose from 77 to over 300 in 1998/99. Only 114 out of 501 secondary schools have been approved using English as the medium of instruction in their teaching. To pacify the outcry of the public about the "unequal opportunity" of the students in Chinese medium (CMI) schools in learning more English, the government commissioned a project to develop suitable teaching modules for an enrichment programme to increase the CMI students' exposure to English learning. The main body of the programme was a series of teaching modules written and taught in English on cross-curricular themes or selected from some key learning areas. Each module was intended for three to four teaching periods and schools could choose to teach more of these modules to suit the needs of their students. The schools participating in the study were requested to set aside a certain percentage of teaching time for teaching the modules. They would also have to design their own school-based implementation plan including time scheduling, designing learning and teaching activities, and putting in place adequate support strategies.

The enrichment programme (EP) was implemented to 14 secondary schools at Secondary 2 (S2) and 3 (S3) in the 2001/02 school year and the students were followed till 2003/04 so as to gauge the full effect of the programme. The paper

reports the interim findings of an evaluative study on the effectiveness of the programme.

## **II. Research question**

As the programme being evaluated is called “Enrichment Programme” (EP), one of key questions to ask is how enriching the programme is on students’ learning of English. To answer this question, the concept of “enrichment” needs to be defined. The purpose of the “Enrichment Programme” is to help students in CMI schools increase their exposure to English while they continue to learn in the mother tongue to ensure effective subject content learning and high order cognitive development. The concept of “enrichment” as seen from this purpose is to provide students with what is lacking in their learning experience, for students in CMI schools are always considered by the community as second class and lacking in the opportunity to learn better English which is essential to their future studies and career (Tung, Lam & Tsang, 1997; Tsui, 2004), and the gains they get from mother tongue instruction are often played down. This echoes to a certain extent the definition of Richards, Platt & Platt (1998) that an enrichment programme is “for children who come from backgrounds with limited social and cultural experiences and whose learning is thought to benefit from enrichment”. Therefore, to evaluate how enriching the EP is, this paper will focus on the benefits gained by students in their learning of English in this programme.

The benefits gained by students will be viewed at from two perspectives, namely, the quantitative perspective and the qualitative perspectives. The quantitative benefits refer mainly to proficiency test results illustrating what the participating students (EP students) could do (better) with English. The EP students’ results were compared with those of the control group (non-EP students) to see if there was any significant difference. In addition, the results of students experiencing two years of EP versus one year of EP were compared. The qualitative benefits refer to whether the EP students felt differently about their learning of English after participating in EP, and in what ways and to what extent their views and attitudes towards English learning might have changed. The teachers’ views on students’ learning of English were explored to complement data from the students.

## **III. Source of data**

### **III.1 Quantitative data**

Proficiency tests were designed to see what students could do in English in core academic subject areas (Mathematics, Science and Social Science) at six points in time across three years [T1 (January - February 2002), T2 (May - June 2002), T3 (September - December 2002), T4 (May - June 2003)]. The data collected were analysed in such a way that the performance of the students from the 14 participating schools was compared to that from the 13 control schools to gain evidence of the programme effectiveness in the first and second years of the study.

The tests were developed along broadly similar lines for each subject, that is, including integrated listening, writing, reading and speaking skills. Given the human resource implications of testing spoken skills, this was only included in one subject,

Mathematics. Mathematics was chosen because it was felt the oral English required to express the process of calculation was relatively accessible to students and relatively prescriptive for markers.

Other quantitative data include results from questionnaire designed to find out more about the beliefs, attitudes, expectations and perceptions of the programme teachers, principals, English panel chairs and programme coordinators about the rationale, essential features and implementation of the EP in the fourteen participating schools. It was believed that the programme personnel's beliefs, attitudes, expectations and perceptions would have a bearing on the effectiveness of the programme. The surveys were conducted at different stages of the project, namely T1 (January - February 2002), T2 (May - June 2002) and T4 (May - June 2003).

### III.2 Qualitative data

These include

- data from interviews with a representative sample of EP students, participating teachers, EP coordinators and principals of the 4 case study schools conducted from December 2001 to March 2004 to collect feedback, understand the implementation strategies and identify problems of the EP.
- lesson observation field notes – a total of 21 EP lessons in S2 & S3 classes of ten 10 participating schools in the first two years of implementation of EP and notes from post-lesson interviews with participating teachers and students.
- notes from 24 meetings of representatives from programme designers, programme evaluation team, the Education Manpower Branch that commissioned the project and school personnel of the participating schools. These meetings were conducted in the participating schools from October 2002 to July 2003 and they provided information about the effectiveness of the EP as viewed from different perspectives.
- evaluation of 60 EP modules written by the programme design team and 12 modules written by the participating schools conducted from January 2002 to June 2004.

## IV. Findings

### IV.1 What could the EP students do better in English?

#### Proficiency test results showing effects of EP on students' use of English for different subjects

In the first year of study, the magnitude of the improvement in the first cohort of S3 students' mean score of T1 and T2 was significantly greater for the EP than the non-EP in English for Science and Social Science. That is, EP students improved significantly more than non-EP students in their use of English in Science and Social Science [See Table 1].

**Table 1: Comparison of the First Cohort (1-year EP) and the First Cohort (Non-EP) – the Magnitude of Changes in Subject-related English [S3 Proficiency Tests at T1 (January – February 2002) and T2 (May – June 2002)]**

SUBJECT	TIME	STATUS				INTERACTION (TIME * STATUS)
		EP Students		Non EP Students		
		Mean Score	S.D.	Mean Score	S.D.	F-value
Maths	T1	1.56	1.162	1.46	1.139	2.276
	T2	2.11	1.247	2.12	1.329	
Science	T1	1.40	0.774	1.38	0.794	24.511*
	T2	1.99	0.874	1.76	0.879	
Social Science	T1	1.47	0.854	1.29	0.874	11.224*
	T2	1.67	0.884	1.34	0.935	

\*Significant at 0.05 level

In the S2 group, both EP and non-EP students showed significant improvement in English for all subjects except Social Science. EP students improved to a significantly greater extent than the non-EP students only in Science-related English [See Table 2].

**Table 2: Comparison of the Second Cohort (2-year EP) and the Second Cohort (Non-EP) – the Magnitude of Changes in Subject-related English [S2 Proficiency Tests at T1 (January – February 2002) and T2 (May – June 2002)]**

SUBJECT	TIME	STATUS				INTERACTION (TIME * STATUS)
		EP Students		Non EP Students		
		Mean Score	S.D.	Mean Score	S.D.	F-value
Maths	T1	2.29	1.527	1.95	1.340	2.316
	T2	3.15	1.601	2.68	1.614	
Science	T1	2.61	0.639	2.33	0.649	26.347*
	T2	2.97	0.724	2.50	0.708	
Social Science	T1	1.40	0.913	1.03	0.804	3.584
	T2	1.46	0.897	0.99	0.823	

In the second year of study, the S3 students' proficiency test results of T4 were compared to their first test result (T1) in S2. In terms of the **extent of improvement** (if any) between the proficiency test results of EP and non-EP students who had been in the study for two years (Second Cohort), it was found that the extent of change in the mean score of subject-related English for all subjects was significantly different between the two groups of students from T1 to T4 as shown in *Table 3*. Both groups showed improvement in Social Science-related English at T4 when compared to T1, but the EP students showed significantly greater improvement in the English use of this subject than the non-EP students. In contrast, the mean scores in Mathematics- and Science-related English were lower for both EP and non-EP groups at T4, but the change in these mean scores was significantly smaller for the EP students than for the non-EP students.

**Table 3: Comparison of the Second Cohort (2-year EP) and the Second Cohort (non-EP) – the Magnitude of Changes in Subject-related English [S2 Proficiency Test at T1 (January – February 2002) and S3 Proficiency Test at T4 (May – June 2003)]**

SUBJECT	TIME	STATUS				INTERACTION (TIME * STATUS)
		The Second Cohort (2-year EP)		The Second Cohort (non-EP)		
		Mean Score	S.D.	Mean Score	S.D.	F-value
Maths	T1	2.27	1.507	1.98	1.353	17.312*
	T4	2.23	1.437	1.53	1.177	
Science	T1	2.61	0.623	2.33	0.647	27.326*
	T4	2.32	1.034	1.77	0.981	
Social Science	T1	1.39	0.895	1.04	0.798	18.425*
	T4	1.96	0.952	1.38	0.986	

\*Significant at 0.05 level

Tests for interaction are applied because the proficiency tests are different and statistical tests for interaction do not assume equivalent standards across years.

On the whole, the comparison of EP and non-EP students' improvement in English for each subject area over two consecutive years shows that the EP students had significantly greater improvement in Social Science-related English than their non-EP counterparts and significantly more resistance to deteriorating performance in English for Mathematics and Science.

Regarding comparison of these **short-term**<sup>1</sup> **one year EP** results with the **longer-term**<sup>1</sup> **two year EP** results, it was found that

- in both the short-term and longer-term cohorts, EP students exhibited significantly greater improvement than non-EP students in Social Science-related English. However, the mean level of performance in Social Science-related English was lower than in both Mathematics- and Science-related English.
- in both the short-term and longer-term cohorts, there was no sustained improvement in Mathematics- or Science-related English. In fact, there was deterioration in mean scores. Nevertheless, students' Mathematics- and Science-related English performances remained higher than in Social Science.

These results imply that while sustained English improvement occurred only in Social Science, the higher language demands of the discipline meant absolute performance levels remained lower than in the less-language-rich subjects, where subject-related English proficiency was stable at a slightly higher mean level.

#### Proficiency test results showing effects of EP on students' **English language skills**

In the first year of study, comparison of both EP and non EP students of the first cohort S3 students showed significant improvement in all English language skills except listening/speaking. EP students improved to a significantly greater extent than

<sup>1</sup> 'Short-term' and 'longer-term' are used, since language learning is a very long term process. In terms of classroom language learning, then, one year is 'short' and two years is 'longer than one year', but not 'long'.

non-EP students in listening/writing and reading/writing skills, but not in listening/speaking skills [See Table 4].

**Table 4: Comparison of the First Cohort (1-year EP) and the First Cohort (non-EP) – the Magnitude of Changes in English Language Skills [S3 Proficiency Tests at T1 (January – February 2002) and T2 (May – June 2002)]**

SKILL	TIME	STATUS				INTERACTION (TIME * STATUS) F-value
		EP Students		Non-EP Students		
		Mean Score	S.D.	Mean Score	S.D.	
Listening/ Writing	T1	1.47	0.834	1.45	0.841	10.546*
	T2	1.94	1.013	1.76	1.046	
Listening/ Speaking	T1	2.33	1.615	1.65	1.578	0.216
	T2	2.49	1.277	1.95	1.257	
Reading/ Writing	T1	1.47	0.734	1.32	0.761	4.354*
	T2	1.86	0.800	1.63	0.830	

\*Significant at 0.05 level

Among the first cohort S2 students, both EP and non-EP students improved significantly in all English language skills. However, performances in all skills were at ‘partially appropriate’ level<sup>2</sup> only. The EP students showed significantly greater improvement than non-EP students in reading/writing and listening/reading skills, but listening/speaking skills were not significantly different [See Table 5].

**Table 5: Comparison of the Second Cohort (2-year EP) and the Second Cohort (non-EP) – the Magnitude of Changes in English Language Skills [S2 Proficiency Tests at T1 (January – February 2002) and T2 (May – June 2002)]**

SKILL	TIME	STATUS				INTERACTION (TIME * STATUS) F-value
		EP Students		Non-EP Students		
		Mean Score	S.D.	Mean Score	S.D.	
Listening/ Writing	T1	2.58	0.823	2.40	0.668	8.271*
	T2	2.91	0.789	2.61	0.721	
Listening/ Speaking	T1	1.66	1.209	1.08	1.193	2.169
	T2	2.15	1.338	1.94	1.396	
Reading/ Writing	T1	2.53	1.209	1.91	1.179	13.348*
	T2	3.13	1.409	2.27	1.344	

\*Significant at 0.05 level

In the second year of study, in terms of the **extent of improvement** (if any) between the proficiency test results of the Second Cohort EP and the Second Cohort non-EP students, it was found that

- the extent of change in the mean score of English skills was significantly different only in **listening/writing** between the two groups of students from T1 to T4 as shown in Table 6 below. The mean score in **listening/writing** was actually lower for both groups at T4, but the change in this mean score was significantly smaller for the EP students than for the non-EP students.

<sup>2</sup> 4 categories of proficiency: 0= flawed, minimal or nil response; 1-2 = partially appropriate response; 3-4 = generally competent responses’ 5-6 = complete, extended response showing evidence of high level thinking.

- the mean score in **reading/writing** was also lower for both groups at T4, but there was no significant difference in the extent of deterioration between EP students and non-EP students [See Table 6].

**Table 6: Listening/Writing and Reading/Writing Skills – Comparison of the Second Cohort (2-year EP) and the Second Cohort (non-EP) – the Magnitude of Changes in Subject-related English [S2 Proficiency Test at T1 (January – February 2002) and S3 Proficiency Test at T4 (May – June 2003)]**

SKILL	TIME	STATUS				INTERACTION (TIME * STATUS)
		The Second Cohort (2-year EP)		The Second Cohort (non-EP)		
		Mean Score	S.D.	Mean Score	S.D.	F-value
Listening/ Writing	T1	2.57	0.803	2.41	0.668	58.370*
	T4	2.01	1.075	1.43	0.904	
Reading/ Writing	T1	2.52	1.190	1.93	1.183	0.129
	T4	2.25	0.959	1.63	1.009	

\*Significant at 0.05 level

Tests for interaction are applied because the proficiency tests are different and statistical tests for interaction do not assume equivalent standards across years.

**Note:**

- (1) The percentage of students with improvement in **Listening/Speaking** could not be calculated because different students had to be tested in each proficiency test due to in-school constraints. Referring to *Table 7* below, there was no significant difference in the extent of improvement between the Second Cohort EP and the Second Cohort non-EP students. However, as different students were tested in T1 and T4, a higher mean score might be achieved by a group of more proficient students. So it was difficult to say whether both groups in the Second Cohort indeed showed improvement in listening/speaking skill, particularly when deteriorating performances were found in their other English language skills – listening/writing and reading/writing.
- (2) Nonparametric Mann-Whitney U test for speaking was not done because different students had to be tested in each proficiency test. The change in raw score of *individual students* was thus not available.

**Table 7: Listening/Speaking Skills – Comparison of the Second Cohort (2-year EP) and the Second Cohort (non-EP) – the Magnitude of Changes in Subject-related English [S2 Proficiency Test at T1 (January – February 2002) and S3 Proficiency Test at T4 (May – June 2003)]**

SKILL	TIME	STATUS				INTERACTION (TIME * STATUS)
		The Second Cohort (2-year EP)		The Second Cohort (non-EP)		
		Mean Score	S.D.	Mean Score	S.D.	F-value
Listening/ Speaking	T1	1.66	1.209	1.08	1.193	1.027
	T4	2.20	1.394	1.37	1.189	

\*Significant at 0.05 level

Tests for interaction are applied because the proficiency tests are different and statistical tests for interaction do not assume equivalent standards across years.

On the whole, the comparison between EP and non-EP students on their improvement in English skills over two consecutive years shows that the EP students had significantly more resistance to deteriorating performance in listening/writing skill than their non-EP counterparts.

### Questionnaire survey and qualitative data showing effects of EP on students' learning of English

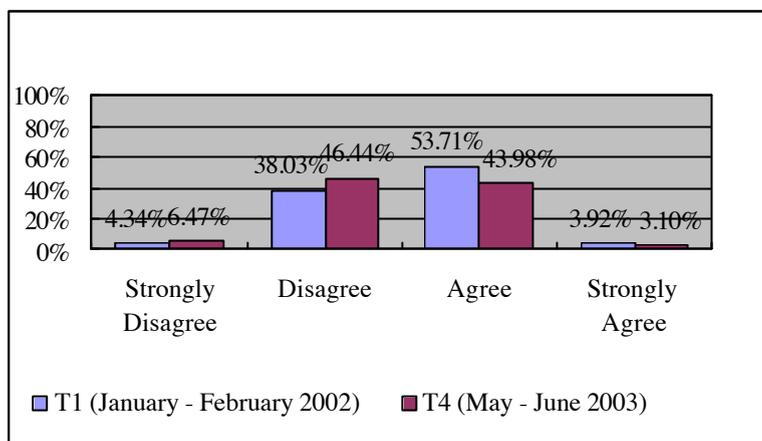
The proficiency test data above suggest that the EP may have positively affected the students' English listening/writing and reading/writing skills to a limited extent but not their (mathematical) speaking skills. Qualitative data from lesson observation seems to support this. The majority of teachers observed, though adhering to the using of English as the medium of instruction, tended to focus mainly on vocabulary teaching, reading comprehension and listening comprehension in the EP lessons. The lessons tended to be teacher-directed. Therefore not much student-student/student-class interaction was recorded. Although the evaluation of the EP modules reflects that communicative and task-based approaches were adopted in the module design, which exposed students to a wide range of interesting and life-related topics and contexts where language was purposefully used, there seemed to be a teacher-directed view of teaching implicit in the design of materials and lesson plans. As subject teachers observed and interviewed tended to emphasise subject content knowledge only without offering language support to students while the language teachers emphasised language development with little attention in highlighting or connecting subject content knowledge, it was a common practice for students to use Cantonese in their group interaction or to use very structured English but with a superficial treatment of content and thinking.

The proficiency tests data also suggest that in the subject areas, EP may have some, though very limited effects in English for each subject as the effects were patchy and unsustainable. Teachers' feedback gathered from the post-lesson meetings suggested that EP teachers could not identify any major difference between the EP and non-EP students. However, most of them believed that the EP should have helped to improve the language ability of students to a certain extent due to their increased exposure to language. They thought students were more confident in their English language abilities especially on speaking but that the EP was a language enhancement course with little impact on students' subject knowledge.

Similarly, when the programme teaching respondents (PTR) views on the effectiveness of the EP programme are tracked from the first questionnaire at T1 (January - February 2002) to the last at T4 (May - June 2003) in *Figure 1*, their perceived effectiveness of the EP also dropped from around 58% to about 47%, reflecting the growing skeptical view towards the effectiveness of the programme. Further analyses on items with significant changes in levels of agreement in *Table 8* shows that in T1, about 75% of respondents supported the view ("Strongly Agree" and "Agree") that EP would enhance students' English proficiency in general (Item B2), but only 58% of the respondents believed so ("Strongly Agree" and "Agree") in T4. This together with the finding that the non-programme teaching respondents (NTR) tended to have a more positive view of the programme effectiveness than the

PTR suggests that the frontline staff seemed to be more aware of the limitations of the EP in enhancing the students' learning in general and also in the learning of English.

**Figure 1: Comparison of Attitude of All Respondents to Combined Items in Part B – Perceived Effectiveness of the Enrichment Programme between T1 (January - February 2002) and T4 (May - June 2003) Questionnaire Survey**



**Table 8: Comparing Response Proportion of Each Item in Part B – Perceived Effectiveness of the Enrichment Programme between T1 (January - February 2002) and T4 (May - June 2003) Questionnaire Survey**

Item	<u>Strongly Agree</u>			<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>Strongly Disagree</u>		
	T1	T4	Diff. # (T4-T1)	T1	T4	Diff. # (T4-T1)	T1	T4	Diff. # (T4-T1)	T1	T4	Diff. # (T4-T1)
B1	3.8%	3.8%	<b>0.0%</b>	51.9%	41.2%	<b>-10.7%</b>	38.5%	46.6%	<b>8.1%</b>	5.8%	8.4%	<b>2.6%</b>
*B2	7.0%	4.6%	<b>-2.4%</b>	67.7%	53.4%	<b>-14.3%</b>	21.5%	35.1%	<b>13.6%</b>	3.8%	6.9%	<b>3.1%</b>
B3	2.6%	1.6%	<b>-1.0%</b>	58.3%	43.4%	<b>-14.9%</b>	36.5%	50.4%	<b>13.8%</b>	2.6%	4.7%	<b>2.1%</b>
B4	4.4%	3.2%	<b>-1.3%</b>	50.6%	45.2%	<b>-5.4%</b>	41.8%	45.2%	<b>3.5%</b>	3.2%	6.3%	<b>3.2%</b>
B5	5.1%	2.3%	<b>-2.8%</b>	62.0%	53.8%	<b>-8.2%</b>	29.1%	39.2%	<b>10.1%</b>	3.8%	4.6%	<b>0.8%</b>
B6	0.6%	3.2%	<b>2.5%</b>	31.6%	26.2%	<b>-5.5%</b>	60.8%	62.7%	<b>1.9%</b>	7.0%	7.9%	<b>1.0%</b>

# Proportional test is used to detect the proportion difference between groups. (\*: significant at the 0.05 level)

\* Items with significant changes in levels of agreement.

Note: Percentages may not add up to exactly 100.0% and the difference in percentages may not be accurate in the decimal due to rounding values.

In fact, as pointed out in greater detail in Li & Wong (2004), the interview and meeting feedback indicated that teachers in two case study schools which had relatively shorter histories in using English as the medium of instruction prior to 1997 and which involved more collaborative team work among teachers of EP, tended to be more positive about the improvement in students' performance. For instance, teachers in one school highlighted the reduction in 'silly mistakes' in students' work, and those from the other school reported major advancement in their students' word power, oral skills and writing abilities. The improvement in the students' oral skills was considered critical as much of the class time in regular (non-EP) English lessons was devoted to grammar practice, and opportunities for oral practice were therefore limited. Therefore, teachers felt that the EP made a significant contribution to

enhancing students' oral skills, an area identified as one of the major weaknesses of the majority of students in that school. However, in light of the proficiency test findings, these teachers' perceptions could be taken to mean that students' baseline oral performance was extremely low.

Conversely, teachers from schools which had a longer history in using English as medium of instruction (MOI) tended to hold less positive views. For instance, in addition to their criticisms of the lack of subject depth in the modules, and the inappropriate integration of the EP into subject teaching, they found students uninterested in the programme because of boring module content, difficult listening tasks, and the lack of formal school-based assessment of students' performance in the programme. They doubted the effectiveness of the programme in preparing students for the language demands of S4. Much of the negative sentiments leveled at the programme by teachers in the well-established school was mixed with the schools' and their teachers' grudges against the Government's MOI policy, which took away from them their EMI tradition and their right to exercise autonomy in formulating their own MOI policies.

In sum, the lesson observation and module evaluation data seem to confirm the findings of the proficiency tests that limited effects of EP on students' learning of English was found in listening/writing and reading/writing skills, but not in speaking although teachers had the impression that EP students confidence in speaking was increased.. The effectiveness of the programme on students' English use in various subject areas was patchy and unsustainable and programme teaching respondents developed greater reservations about the effectiveness of the programme on students' subject learning in general and also in their learning of English in the questionnaire survey. Nevertheless, in-depth interviews with teachers suggest a vast number of variables affecting the perceived performance of students in English learning through EP.

## VI.2 Did the EP students feel differently about English?

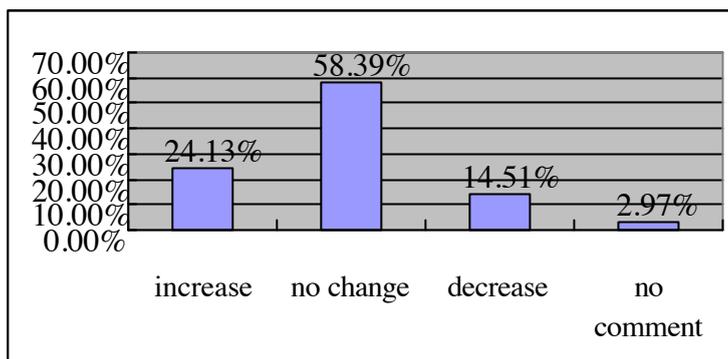
Apart from considering the extent of EP in benefiting students' learning of English, it is also important to find out if EP has brought changes to students' attitude/views towards the learning of English. Students were asked twice, once in the pre-test and once in the post-test, to respond to the question: "How much do you like English?" by indicating their preference in a given scale (1, 2, 3 or 4)<sup>3</sup>.

It is found that nearly 60% of students were consistent in their choice of how much they liked English. More than 20% of students showed more interest in English by the end of the EP. About 15% of students became less interested in English. Less than 5% of students did not make a choice of how much they liked English and thus their change in attitude towards English could not be assessed. [See Figure 2 below]

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<sup>3</sup> These results need to be treated with caution because the data was obtained from students' test papers which were not anonymous and students could not have been certain that their English teacher had no access to their opinion.

**Figure 2: Percentages of Students Who Increased (Increase), Did Not Change (No Change), Decreased (Decrease) and Expressed No Comment on (No Comment) Their Extent of Interest in English**



Lesson observation and the post-lesson discussions with EP students as discussed in Li & Wong (2004) indicated that most students interviewed appeared to be interested in the EP lessons and believed that the EP could help them improve their language skills (more than their subject knowledge) in year two of the EP implementation than in year one. The students' comments reflected that many of them welcomed opportunities to learn, practise and use more English. However, there were also some negative comments which focused mainly on the non-motivating teaching methods and the difficult, irrelevant, and/or boring content of the modules.

In short, EP students did not seem to feel significantly differently about their interest in English learning. However, students tended to think positively about the perceived benefits of the EP lessons despite the sometimes difficult or non-motivating content and/or teaching methods.

## V. Conclusions

On the whole, as far as students' performance in the proficiency tests is concerned, both EP and non-EP students from the first and the second cohort generally showed significant improvement in Mathematics- and Science-related topics and in applying listening and reading skills. In other words, students generally improved in the comparatively less language rich subjects and also in "receptive" language skills of listening and reading no matter whether EP or normal English teaching was employed. The EP students from both cohorts, however, improved to a significantly greater extent than non-EP students in both reading/writing and listening/writing skills. This implies that aspects of EP may have positively affected these skills to a certain extent.

No significant improvement was found in speaking skills and field notes of lesson observations suggest classroom teaching did not support genuine classroom interaction in English. Although module materials were developed on a communicative based approach which aimed at developing purposeful and contextualised language use, many subject teachers did not see themselves as capable of nor responsible for using the teaching strategies of language teachers. At the same time, English teachers teaching the EP also tended to focus more on language practice without extending the students' cognitive understanding of the content. Nevertheless, the feedback from teachers and students appeared to be more positive in

terms of the increased opportunities for students' to practise speaking in English and to develop their confidence and competence in oral skills. This showed that participants' perceptions of learning was not wholly supported by the demonstrated performance of the students nor observation notes of the EP lessons.

With regard to the development of subject-related English, the EP may have some limited effects in English for each subject, but the effects were patchy and unsustainable when proficiency test results of pre and post tests in one academic year was analysed. The two cohorts of EP students showed significantly greater improvement than non-EP students in different subjects in different occasions. However, when comparison was made across two academic years, the second cohort of EP students showed significantly greater improvement in Social Science-related English than their non EP counterparts and significantly more resistance to deteriorating performance in English for other subjects. The EP, therefore, has some limited effects in subject-related English and time is probably an important factor for more sustained effects to be seen in the longer run.

With regard to the effect of the length of EP, longer-term EP students seemed eventually able to sustain, to a limited extent, improvement in Social Science-related English and listening/writing skills. This finding is not surprising, because of Social Science-related EP content and EP lessons dominated by students' listening and writing short answers. While the improvement sustained to a limited extent in Social Science-related English is heartening, it should be noted that the 'improved' performances of EP students remain at 'partially appropriate' level which indicates that students would have difficulty studying Social Science through English in S4. Thus, it seems that students' English resources remain inadequate to cope with English as a teaching/learning medium in Social Science despite 8-10 regular English lessons per week and a 2-year Enrichment Programme comprising largely Social Science-related content.

In response to the whether students change in their attitude towards the learning of English through EP, there were diverse views among students on the effectiveness of the EP programme in improving their English. However, there seemed to be slightly more positive than negative comments on the benefits they gained from the EP programme. Teachers' views were equally if not more diverse. It seems that teachers in schools which had relatively shorter histories in using English as the medium of instruction prior to 1997 and which made more efforts in pooling resources, tended to be more positive about the improvement in students' performance than those in schools which had longer histories and more grudges about the medium of instruction policy. Participating teachers in general, however, seemed to have become more skeptical than the non-participating teachers about the effectiveness of EP on students' learning over the two years of EP implementation.

## **VI. Recommendations**

The findings of this chapter show that language learning is a long term process for significant improvement in language learning to be demonstrated, and that there are many variables affecting the effectiveness of students' learning of English, which range from curriculum factors to personal factors. Although most of the quantitative

and qualitative findings reveal unsustained effects of the EP, **pointers can be identified for recommendations to be made** at different levels of the EP programme:

The fact that EP students have not demonstrated improvement in speaking skill even though both the students and the teachers perceived that their confidence and improvement in this skill was enhanced, suggests that opportunities for oral discussion or feedback were present in the EP, but the quality of students' oral output and the feedback provided needs greater attention. There is a need to encourage students to respond not just at single word or phrase level but to elaborate their responses with the help of the teacher's prompts, to ensure that speaking activities are done in English and to give specific feedback by teachers to enhance the quality of students' oral output.

Although EP students' improvement in subject-related English is unsustained, their improvement across two-years was often significantly greater than their non-EP counterparts. This suggests that on one hand, the training of teachers is essential in helping them understand the implications of employing the EP for their roles and classroom strategies in developing language across the curriculum. On the other hand, for the programme to be successful, there must be a long-term commitment in planning and integrating the curriculum into the whole school curriculum. Subject teachers have to be aware of their responsibility in developing the students' knowledge of the subject as well as the subject-obligatory language use of the students, while language teachers are responsible for supporting the subject teachers in developing students' language abilities and cognitive skills required for effective learning in subject content areas on top of the general language proficiency development in the normal English curriculum. If these responsibilities are not met, students will be left very much on their own to transfer their subject learning from Chinese medium to English medium.

Although students who were interviewed in groups seemed to make more positive than negative comments on EP's effectiveness in helping them learn English, the relatively large proportion of students who had no change in their attitude towards the learning of English may indicate that the EP has not contributed to any significant change in students' interest or attitude towards English learning. It is recommended that schools which adopt the EP firstly assess the learning returns of their current regular English curriculum, and whether/how the EP helps address English medium learning. If the EP is adopted, school personnel should brief students clearly on its purpose, general approach in lessons, and the students' role in making the most of the programme. A more differentiated role for the EP is considered essential to good student attitudes towards learning.

At the programme co-ordination level, case studies of chosen project schools show that collaboration and team work helps participating teachers to see more positive changes in their students' learning of English. This implies that as an initial tryout, a small core team of teachers who share similar understandings of and commitment to the programme and who work closely together in planning teaching and materials adaptation will develop a stronger sense of ownership in implementing the programme than a loosely co-ordinated large group of participating teachers.

At the curriculum planning level, the orientation of the EP programme should be more clearly spelt out. It is evident that schools were more concerned about preparing students for a better transition from CMI to EMI in S4 than simply improving the general proficiency of the students' English. In other words, the design of the EP should be based on more informed planning between subject and language specialists so as to attain a better integration of language and subject content.

## VII. References

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