

# Teachers' Compliance with the Use of English as Medium of Instruction in the Liberal Arts Department

VICENTE B. FERNANDEZ

<https://orcid.org/0000-00w-8194761>

[vincefernandez1@yahoo.com](mailto:vincefernandez1@yahoo.com)

Bicol College

Sagpon, Daraga, Albay

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## ABSTRACT

The use of English as a medium of instruction is growing so fast. This institutional research determined the teachers' compliance with the use of English as a medium of instruction. The researcher made use of the questionnaires as the primary source and main data gathering instrument. The statistical tools used were the frequency count, percentage, weighted mean and average mean. The total population of the respondents was utilized. The findings revealed that the respondents failed to comply with the use of English as medium of instruction due to several factors, such as, majority of the faculty members were not motivated to initiate the use of English, no cooperation among subject teachers that they used mother tongue in communication instead of English, did not create a friendly environment in learning English, and failed to explore ways to improve and enhance their teaching. As recommended, the compliance should be elevated at all times, the faculty should find ways to enhance their knowledge and skills about the English language, and the administration should spearhead to conduct seminars and workshops on language training, and create policies to oblige the faculty to use English as the medium of instruction and communication.

Keywords— compliance, the medium of instruction, communicative competence, continuing education, learning environment, Philippines

## INTRODUCTION

Study shows that as worldwide globalization continues, English as the medium of instruction (EMI) is rapidly being adapted from primary to higher education institutions around the world as it is understood that an individual's proficiency in the language can be the key to success. The medium of instruction as defined is the use of English language in teaching academic subjects such as mathematics, medicine, science except in Filipino. English as the medium of instruction essentially refers to the teaching of a subject using the medium of the English language, but where there are no explicit language learning aims and where English is not the national language. In France, such phenomenon is typically observed in higher education institutions (HEIs) that teach the sciences, social studies, business and mathematics in English. The phenomenon, however, extends to secondary and even primary schools depending on the context (Macdonald and Madhavan, 2014).

According to a study conducted by the Hopkins International Partners (2018), the official Philippine representative to the group called Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), the level of English proficiency of college graduates from the Philippines is lower than the target English proficiency of high school students in Thailand. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) said that they had to take the industry-academe-government partnership more seriously to make sure that the graduates of the educational system could have the skills and competencies needed not just in the workplace now but in the workplace of the future.

Furthermore, former President Gloria M. Arroyo signed Executive Order 210 – Establishing the Policy to Strengthen the Use of English Language as a Medium of Instruction in the Educational System, whereas Section 7, Article XIV of the 1987 Constitution provides that for the purpose of communication and instruction the official languages of the Philippines are Filipino, and until otherwise provided by the law, English, whereas, it is the declared policy of the state to promote education as a means to achieve and maintain an accelerating rate of economic development and social progress (Robles and Chan 2003).

The researcher aimed to find out the teachers' compliance with the use of English as the medium of instruction for the students to gain skills necessary

in supporting learning through analytical understanding and to help them develop their communicative competence. The study determined the teachers' compliance with the use of English as the medium of instruction in the Liberal Arts Department of Bicol College in Daraga, Albay for Academic Year 2018-2019. Specifically, it aimed to: 1.) Assess the compliance of teachers in using English as the medium of instruction at Bicol College, along with motivation, prior linguistic competence, learning environment, and teaching strategies in using the language; 2.) Analyze the challenges encountered by the respondents in using English as the medium of instruction, and 3.) Recommend action plan to address the challenges encountered.

This study is believed to be of great value to meet the needs of teachers in the mastery of English as a global language. The findings of the study are deemed beneficial to the teachers as well as to the students. This study could also serve as a lesson for the students on their studies and on other matters that will make them proficient in using English as a foreign language.

The teachers as the ultimate beneficiaries of this study could serve as a framework on how to improve the level of proficiency in using English as the medium of instruction. With the salient and relevant findings in this study, it could also serve in enhancing the teachers' knowledge and skills in the second language. Also, the academy could use this study as a sound basis for curriculum planning, implementing, organizing, and evaluating policies; school administration could use this study as basis for implementing plans to improve the curriculum as well as the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) as key leader and effective partner in transforming college students towards producing competent and productive professionals through dynamic excellent client-oriented services as this study could serve as a baseline to introduce innovation and curriculum reforms.

Furthermore, the researchers could benefit from the result of this study in the aspect of gaining knowledge to provide and offer new approaches and strategies in teaching, in the case of future researchers, for this could serve as a basis for further studies about English as a medium of instruction in a different setting.

Similarly, scholars had developed an understanding of the use of English as the medium of instruction and how this thing helped the teachers in the classroom. Cankaya (2017) conducted a study with the main concern on the discussion of English as medium of instruction in all aspects with a particular focus on its challenges and difficulties reported by both students and teachers

based on the relevant research studies, since English as Medium of Instruction (EMI) gained the greatest importance among the researchers, policymakers and educators. The data revealed that the policy might not only about instructional challenges, but also language related difficulties both for students and teachers.

Tehseen & Hadi (2015) explained that it was critical to retain high quality and qualified teachers to provide high quality education in schools. Turnover intentions of teachers in schools had a negative impact on students' satisfaction and on their educational development as well. The retention and performance of school teachers and possible through their job satisfaction which reduces their turnover intentions and leads. It reviewed the literature relevant to the teacher's performance and factors that reduces teacher's turnover intentions from schools. This study also aimed to review the effects of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors to assess the teacher's performance and their staying intentions.

The above literature is supported by Bolton and Botha (2017) wherein the authors stated that English is the medium of instruction in higher education from the late 1940s to the post-colonial era. The authors explained that one important argument in this context is that the post-independence policy of promoting English within education had strong roots in the colonial language policies of the 1950s. The authors mentioned that today, Singapore has six tertiary institutions, all of which maintained a uniform policy of using English as the sole medium of instruction. Despite the official policy on English as Medium of Instruction (EMI) throughout education from a sociolinguistic perspective, it was also important to consider the wider multilingual ecology of the Singapore society.

Nkwe and Marungudzi (2015) further discussed the perspectives of teachers on English as a language of learning and teaching in the context of government recommendations that Shona and Ndebele be used alongside English as languages of learning and teaching in Zimbabwean secondary schools. The study indicated that through a questionnaire survey, open interviews and classroom observation, the teachers regarded English as a language of learning and teaching in a positive way, though they were aware of the difficulties associated with its use. There was a high consensus on the desirability of English among teachers as informants with various attributes obtained attitude, pedagogical beliefs, and perceived difficulty scores that were in the main, not statistically significant.

The previous literature was supported by Borjian (2015) as the author explained that the lack of communicatively proficient teachers in Mexico was due to a number of factors, including the types of English training were given at

the university level. English as Second Language (ESL) and Language Arts (LA) teachers had noted a growing population of transnational students who because of family migration patterns had complex educational histories that straddled both Mexico and the US. Yet, US teachers knew little about the English-language training that such students received in Mexico. This study attempted to bridge that gap, reporting on a survey-based study conducted in Mexico of 76 Mexican teachers of English. Included were recommendations about English instruction in both Mexican and US contexts, as well as recommendations for greater collaboration between US and Mexican English teachers.

A similar study was conducted by Owu-Ewie and Eshun (2015), wherein the authors stated that language education is crucial to students' academic success. The researchers explained that as a result, nations whose native languages were not the languages of education had promulgated language policies to solve communication problems in their school systems. Most multilingual nations had adopted bilingual education systems that recognized the child's native language and second language, which in most cases was the official language of the nation.

In order to address the problem indicated on the previous study with regards to English as the medium of instruction, Belhiah and Elhami (2014) explored on the effectiveness of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in the Arabian-Persian Gulf with special focus on the situation in the United Arab Emirates at six universities. The authors explained the results and made suggestions that the current EMI situation left much to be desired with students struggling to learn the subject matter due to their low-proficiency level in English. As such, this could be the lack of support of teachers in the teaching/learning process or their failure to initiate the use of English both in oral and written communication inside the classroom. Hence, implementing a bilingual curriculum in which instruction be delivered in English and Arabic in order to enhance students' linguistic and literacy skills. The study had implications for language education policy issues in the Gulf and advocated bilingual education as a means of improving students' mastery of English while preserving their national identity and indigenous culture. The studies cited above had bearings to the present study since both of them focused on the use of English as the medium of instruction as knowledge and skills in the second language as a crucial aspect in the teaching/learning process.

Raymunde and Ramirez (2013) pointed out that the need to be proficient in the use of English among non-native speakers had become a global phenomenon.

It was noted that Filipinos are really proud because English is considered to be the “world language,” the lingua franca of the modern era. Furthermore, the authors stressed out that the English language is used as the medium of instruction in Filipino schools and universities.

Launio (2015) stressed that since the need to connect with students as essential to successfully transfer learning. The author aimed to look into the relative effects on the use of pure English (Control) and the use of English supplemented with Hiligaynon (Experimental) as the medium of instruction in the teaching of mathematics. The findings revealed that the medium of instruction played an important role. Success in mathematics was also influenced by the medium of instruction used inside the class.

This study is anchored on Carl Rogers’s humanistic psychology who agreed with the main assumptions of Abraham Maslow but added that for a person to “grow,” he needs an environment that provides him with genuineness, acceptance of being seen with unconditional positive regard, and empathy, being listened to, and understood.

Rogers believed that every person could achieve his goals, wishes, and desires in life. When, or rather if he did so, self-actualization takes place. This was one of Carl Rogers most important contributions to psychology, and for a person to reach his potential, a number of factors must be satisfied.

The conceptual framework of this study was designed to assess the compliance of faculty in using English as the medium of instruction at the Liberal Arts Department of Bicol College along with motivation, prior linguistic competence, learning environment and methods/strategies in using the language. The study also focuses on Executive 210 in enhancing the use of English as the medium of instruction in all the institutions in the country.

The study analyzed the challenges encountered by the respondents with the use of English as the medium of instruction. Also, this study provided an action plan to address the challenges encountered.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The study employed the descriptive method of research in gathering relevant information of the study. The questionnaire was utilized in gathering vital responses.

### **Research Site**

The study was conducted at Bicol College in Daraga, Albay.

### **Participants**

The study utilizes the 12 faculty from the Liberal Arts Department as the respondents of the study.

### **Instrumentation**

The researcher prepared a questionnaire. The checklist questionnaire was presented to the institutional research committee for corrections and suggestions. The questionnaire had three parts. The first part indicated the factors affecting the respondents in using the English language with a scale of 4 – Always, 3 – Sometimes, 2 – Seldom, and 1 – Never. The second part referred to the difficulties encountered by the teachers in using English as the medium of instructions, and the third part the recommended action plan.

### **Data Collection**

The researcher personally sought permission from the department head of the Liberal Arts Department to conduct the study. Upon approval, the researcher requested to get the total list of the teachers of the liberal arts department. The researcher administered the distribution of the questionnaires to the respondents and requested them to answer all the items as honestly as possible. The researcher personally retrieved the questionnaires. The data gathered was tabulated and tallied, and the weighted mean was computed to determine the perceptions of the respondents.

### **Statistical Technique**

The findings of the study were evaluated using statistical terms and formula. The frequency count and the percentage determined the responses of the respondents while the weighted mean was used to express relative participation of the set of responses compared to the totality.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This part presented the results and discussion of the data gathered from the respondents through a questionnaire in order to determine the teachers' compliance with the use of English as the medium of instruction at Liberal Arts

Department of Bicol College in Daraga, Albay.

Work performance had been identified as a significant key for the institution to gain competitive advantage and superiority in the field of teaching. It was noted that there is a fast-moving worldwide shift towards using English as the medium of instruction for academic subjects such as science, mathematics, geography, and medicine. The following were the determinants in teachers' compliance with the use of English as the medium of instruction at the liberal arts department of Bicol College in Daraga, Albay.

Motivation, as defined, is the reason for people's actions, desires, and needs. Majority of the respondents were not motivated to initiate the use of English and did not cooperate with the other teachers to use the target language at all times. Hence, it resulted in the failure of motivating the students to develop their speaking and thinking skills in the target language. It is understood that a teacher's motivation had been proven a crucial factor closely related to a number of variables in education. The respondents seldom used the mother tongue and the negative attitude in speaking in English in and out of the classroom. Also, the respondents were always aware of initiating the use of the English language. On the other hand, the respondents failed to demonstrate positive feedback with regards to their linguistic competence at all times. The respondents sometimes addressed grammatical lapses immediately to improve skills in the use of the language, possessed good overall English proficiency and the ability to produce sentence forms with reasonable accuracy in speaking, had written and spoken clearly and efficiently in English, and have understood that learning English is a continuous process. Such factors definitely had a negative interpretation of the teachers' compliance in using English as the medium of instruction. Also, such findings contradicted on the indicators in the aspect of motivation.

In addition, the respondents should have understood that prior knowledge played an important role in the job assigned to them in order to prepare them address challenges they may be facing along the way. As defined, linguistic competence is the system of linguistic knowledge possessed by speakers of a language distinguished from linguistic performance, in which the way a language system is used in communication. Furthermore, it can be discerned that the respondents were sometimes responsible for students' English language development did not encourage students to create a friendly environment in learning the second language as expected in all teaching/learning situations. Although using English as the medium of instruction as understood could be a complex task, the teachers should have found ways in establishing an environment

that complemented in the learning process.

Also, the respondents should have considered learning to be more fun wherein students are given equal opportunity to develop their communicative competence, and that it should have initiated by them to use English as the language of communication. It can be noted that classroom diversity influenced the teachers as their duties to handle students with a diverse range of learning abilities in terms of using the target language. The teacher should have understood that their encounter every time with the students should be an opportunity for them to transfer holistic learning and that the classroom or the school premise served as the perfect training ground of becoming knowledgeable and proficient in the second language.

In addition, it can be inferred that the respondents failed to explore ways in the methods and strategies in using the language to improve and enhance teaching in order to develop students' interest using the target language other than the mother tongue at all times. The teachers must have explored and employed effective teaching strategies. Hence, the teachers should have collaborated with colleagues to discuss and share best classroom practices, and even how to structure a unique learning environment. In addition, the teachers should have clarified the goals in beginning a new lesson for the students to understand the whole thing.

On the challenges encountered by the teachers, the majority of the respondents expressed that there were insufficient seminars-workshops on English language being conducted by the administration. The respondents lacked skills in pronouncing the words correctly; wherein incorrect pronunciation distorted the meaning of the words in a given utterance. Also, the respondents revealed that there were insufficient seminar-workshops in the English language a factor that could have resulted in non-compliance in using English as the medium of instruction and communication. The respondents lacked vocabulary in the English language, wherein it is considered an essential component both in oral and in written communication. Also, the respondents revealed that they lacked skill in pronouncing the words correctly. Hence, such difficulty needed to be addressed since correct pronunciation played an important role in English language teaching. The respondents also expressed that they lacked confidence in speaking in the target language.

As understood, fluency in the language started with confidence. Hence, being confident should be considered as not just like learning rules, but it should be characterized as a state of mind that requires to think positively through

constant practice and exposure by talking to individuals. This could have improved the teachers' levels of confidence in speaking situations. In contrast, as understood, a low level of confidence could also be the result of fear, criticism, and lack of knowledge about something which led to being unproductive.

In addition, the respondents had difficulty in using the correct tenses of the verb in the English language. Grammarians considered verb as more complex compared to other parts of speech in the structure of the English language. The respondents should have spent times in reviewing all its aspect so as to learn and apply its correct usage and other parts of speech such as noun, pronoun, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction and interjection at all times.

On the aspect of recommended measures, the majority of the respondents expressed the desires to attend seminar-workshop to become proficient in the English language. Some of the respondents also considered engaging in speaking activities in developing their self-confidence using the English language, acquire more words in the English language, and to review the grammatical structure of English language that could help them become more effective and efficient educators.

Good teachers became great teachers by going beyond the call of duty and the textbook (Hill, 2012). Thus, teachers opted to continue their education for the purpose of improving knowledge and skills essentials to the teaching profession. There were conferences, workshops, and continuing education that served as an avenue in developing their students' communicative competence in the English language.

In addition, technology also serves as a channel in learning such as workshops, and classes that teachers could attend as well as on-site workshop and classes. Educator performance evaluation system is a potential tool for improving the student's achievement by increasing the effectiveness of the educator workforce. For example, recent research suggested that giving more frequent, specific feedback on classroom practice may be led to improvements in teacher performance and student's achievement.

It can be discerned that on motivation in using English as the medium of instruction the respondents interpreted two indicators as 'seldom' such as frequent use of mother tongue in teaching the subject with 2.25 weighted mean and negative attitude in speaking English in and out of the classroom with 1.66 weighted mean. Also, two indicators were also interpreted as 'sometimes' such as, frequent use of English inside and outside of the classroom with 3.08 weighted mean, cooperation among subject teachers helps in the language development

of the students with 3.33 weighted mean, while one indicator was interpreted as 'always' on the awareness to initiate the use of English in developing students' communicative competence with 3.66 weighted mean.

On the linguistic competence, it showed that all indicators were interpreted as 'sometimes' wherein the respondents failed to address grammatical lapses immediately to improve skills in the use of the language and were not able to write and speak clearly and effectively in English with 3.16 weighted mean respectively, did not possess good overall English proficiency; did not possess ability to produce sentence forms and with reasonable accuracy in speaking both received 3.33 weighted mean, and did not understand that learning English is a continuous process and requires constant practice with 3.58 weighted mean.

In addition, on the learning environment, four indicators were interpreted as 'sometimes' wherein the respondents failed to encourage students to become active participants in using English more often and use English as the medium of communication among teachers and students both with 3.32 weighted mean. Also, the respondents failed to provide resource materials that were important aids to teaching and learning with 3.33 weighted mean and failed to create a friendly environment in learning the second language with 3.49 weighted mean. It is understood that the environment is crucial to learning. Thus, educators should be aware of their duties and responsibilities to create a friendly environment for the students in developing their knowledge and skills in the second language. Furthermore, in the aspect of the teaching strategies in using the language, four indicators were interpreted as 'sometimes' such as, the respondents considered the traditional strategies as helpful in teaching, introduced and applied new strategies in using the second language, and explored ways to improve and enhance teaching with 3.41 weighted mean respectively; focused on language skills across curriculum to enhance the knowledge about English with 3.49 weighted mean. Only one indicator was interpreted as 'always' wherein the respondents provided clear goals of using the second language with 3.58 weighted mean.

Also, the respondents had no sufficient seminar-workshop in English language with the frequency of 12 or 100 percent which was ranked first, followed by indicator E wherein the respondents lacked English vocabulary with the frequency of 6 or 50 percent on rank two, indicator B wherein the teachers lacked skill in pronouncing the words correctly with the frequency of 4 or 33.33 percent on the third rank, followed by indicator C, lack of confidence in speaking in the target language with the frequency of 3 or 25 percent on the fourth rank, and indicator A wherein the respondents had difficulty in using the correct tenses

of the verb with the frequency of 2 or 16.66 percent and on the fifth rank. These indicators greatly affected the teachers' compliance in using English as the medium of instruction.

Hence, the respondents expressed the desire to attend English seminar-workshop to become proficient in English language with the frequency of 10 or 83.33 percent on the first rank, followed by indicator B wherein the respondents aimed at engaging in speaking activities to develop self-confidence in using the second language with the frequency of 7 or 55.56 percent on the second rank, followed by indicator D, acquire more words in English with the frequency of 6 or 50 percent on the third rank, and indicator A, review on the grammatical structure of English language with the frequency of 5 or 41.6 percent on the fourth rank.

## CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the respondents failed to motivate themselves in the use of English at all times; they also failed to understand that prior linguistic competence in the second language is essential in the teaching process; failed to consider that learning environment is likewise important in teaching; and methods and strategies should be viewed as crucial in teaching at all times; there were difficulties encountered by the respondents in using the English language as the medium of instruction, and A=action plans were recommended to address the difficulties encountered.

## TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

The findings of the study may be best translated to the various understanding of the importance of English as a second language and the medium of instruction. Its aim is to further develop awareness and the use the conventions of academic English in order to develop students' communicative competence to be prepared and globally competitive in the field of communication.

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