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THE USE OF ENGLISH AS MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION: EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS OF ESL LEARNERS AT MINDANAO STATE UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to investigate ESL learners' attitudes towards the use of English as a medium of instruction at Mindanao State University Marawi, Philippines as well as to examine the challenges encountered by the students using English as a medium of instruction. This study is guided by two frameworks: the ABC Model of Attitudes of Eagly & Chaiken (1998) and the Problems of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) by Tanveer (2007). Thirty (30) undergraduate students from the College of Education majoring in English participated in the study by completing a survey questionnaire based on Ghani's (2015), using convenience sampling. This study further utilized a descriptive qualitative research design to explore their perceptions. The data from the Likert scale questionnaire was tabulated and computed, while direct content analysis was utilized for the open-ended questions. The major findings of this study were as follows: (1) the majority of participants had positive affective, behavioral, and cognitive attitudes toward English as a medium of instruction; (2) some of the challenges encountered were self-related cognition challenges, linguistic challenges, and challenges associated with the role of language instructor. Finally, the challenges encountered by the students in using EMI propounds the importance of carefully planning and developing curricula in line with students' needs and interests.
Keywords: *English as a medium of instruction (EMI); attitudes; learning anxiety*

INTRODUCTION

In this new era of globalization, speaking English has become an increasingly universal demand since it serves as an international medium of communication. It has become the first global lingua franca, which puts it in the very useful position of being the language most commonly used in business, technology, scientific publications, higher education, and other fields of discipline. In fact, one article published by Lyons (2021) reveals that out of the world's approximately 7.8 billion inhabitants, 1.35 billion speak English, and what's interesting is that the majority are not native English speakers. Indeed, speaking English has definitely evolved into a global phenomenon, for it is also by far the most commonly studied foreign language in the world. In the Philippines, English language is seen as the language of power and of progress as it has become the language of hiring, retention and promotion in any organization (Berowa, 2012; Berowa, 2016a; Berowa 2016b). It is highly valued by all the members of the different ethnolinguistic groups in the country as it plays a fundamental role in improving their socio-economic status and in achieving a much better life (Berowa, 2017a; Berowa, 2017b; Berowa, 2018).

Concerning its pervasive use, non-native English-speaking countries worldwide have implemented a variety of measures to improve their citizen's English proficiency, such as the inculcation of English in the curricula and implementing English as a medium of instruction in higher education. In fact, one of the most important educational trends, as argued by Graddol (1997), is the teaching of English and its adoption as a medium of instruction. This is also supported by Gibbons (2003) who pointed out that educationalists are experienced with the challenges of addressing the needs of the growing number of English as a second language learners. For this reason, many have shown an interest in its adoption, not only in integrating it into educational systems, but

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also in its adoption as a medium of instruction, and without a doubt, the Philippines is one of those.

The Philippine education system has been using English as a medium of instruction from elementary to university level for decades. The reason is that it is highly valued not only because it is functional and practical and washes over the people constantly, but more importantly, because it is an affordable item, a skill that can be used to increase one's position, respectability and marketability. In most cases, the greater one's ability to understand and use English, the better chances of career advancement (Manalastas, 2018).

The use of English as a medium of instruction has surely piqued the interest of many researchers. Several studies on its usage as a medium of instruction have been undertaken both locally and globally and the following mostly spoke of students' positive attitude towards EMI. In the foreign context, the study conducted by Abdelrahim & Humaida (2012) was deemed relevant to the study, wherein they indicated that students had high motivation in learning in English medium instruction setting because of their ongoing keenness and desire to learn and master English as a foreign language. They also noted that the popularity of English language might be one of the reasons why English language learners in different parts of the world are motivated to learn in English medium instruction setting. In the same vein, the case study conducted by Muthanna & Miao (2015) in the university in China found that the participants hold a very positive attitudes towards the use of English as medium of instruction in their current programs. They were reported to have expressed their complete readiness to join the post-graduate programs with the use of English as a medium of instruction and accordingly, there were factors behind these conceived motivations which are much related to academic purposes such as the academic network (the need to achieve more in academics and be able to study abroad), global friendship, and the leadership position.

Moreover, one of the relevant study seen in the local context was the study conducted by Medenilla (2017), wherein she investigated first the perceptions of the Senior Highschool English teachers on the use of English as medium of instruction with regards to the English proficiency of the Grade 12 Senior High School students, and second is, the perceptions of the Grade 12 Senior High School students on the use of English as medium of instruction to the language proficiency of the Senior High School English teachers. The two (2) dependent variables were tested using the "Pearson-Correlation" or "Pearson-R" method of analysis to determine the underlying relationship between the two variables. And as for the result, the language proficiency of the Senior High School English teachers has no significant relationship with the English proficiency of the Grade 12 Senior High School students. Therefore, the English proficiency of the Grade 12 Senior High School students does not depend on the language proficiency of the Senior High School English teachers.

Another study was conducted by Manalastas (2018) who focused on determining the effectiveness of English language as the sole medium of instruction in teaching the English subjects. The participants were 83 first year students from the two sections enrolled in English 13b (Communication Arts and Skills 02) for the second semester at the Isabela State University-Cauayan Campus. The researcher compared the achievement and confidence of two classes under two different teaching modalities and used the two-group Pre-test/Post-test Quasi-experimental as her Design. The teaching modalities were the use of English only and the Multilingual medium of instruction. Also, she employed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Hortwitz, et al. (1986) in

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measuring the student's confidence of using the English as a medium of instruction the English classrooms. As for her findings, it is stressed out that English Only Class achievement is relatively the same with the Multi-lingual class. Also, she found out that the confidence of the Multilingual Class students is higher than those students in the English Only Class which actually implies that the higher the level of confidence of students does not necessarily mean that they would achieve better and vice versa. Her study also suggested that Filipino students should be exposed to as much English as possible in English classrooms and English teachers should decide in the kind of learning atmosphere that will be established in the classroom to increase the confidence of the students in English language learning.

Many studies have been conducted to examine the significance of the medium of instruction in the classroom; however, research on the challenges of using English as the medium of instruction in Philippine English classrooms from the students' perspective is limited. In fact, several studies have found that the language proficiency of tertiary level graduates in the Philippines falls below of what is expected (Jimenez, 2018; Morallo, 2018; Macasinag, 2017 as cited in Domingo, 2020). Moreover, according to the recent test conducted by Hopkins, more than 90% of college graduates in the Philippines are not yet prepared for English-speaking roles; and the average score of around 10,000 Filipino college students who took the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) is 631 out of 990, which is equivalent to B1 or intermediate level (Domingo, 2020). Having this knowledge of tertiary graduates' English proficiency, it has become a widely belief that Philippine education is not successful in teaching English (Tosun, 2012 as cited in Domingo, 2020). The present status of English language teaching and learning in the country is failing to achieve the required levels of reading, listening, writing, and speaking (Oktay, 2015 as cited in Domingo, 2020).

To address these issues, this study was carried out to explore ESL learners' perceptions toward the use of English as a medium of instruction, as well as the challenges they encountered since the researchers believe that identifying the root problems would be helpful to provide suitable solutions to the problem as it provides awareness to the teachers and higher administrators. Also, this study would have a significant contribution to the implementation and improvement of EMI, thereby leading students to academic success.

METHOD

The study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to explore the perceptions of the university students as ESL learners on the use of English as Medium of Instruction at Mindanao State University, Marawi City, Philippines. The qualitative method was an appropriate research approach since it involves subjective world of human experiences to examine the phenomena surrounding students' perceptions and challenges on the use of English as Medium of Instruction. In addition, the data was collected through a survey questionnaire that uses a five-point Likert scale adopted from Ghani (2018) and an additional open-ended question.

This study was carried out at Mindanao State University in Marawi, Lanao Del Sur. The setting was chosen because it is an excellent location for this study given that it draws from a variety of linguistic, cultural, social, and religious backgrounds, with multilingual individuals who can provide various perspectives on the use of English as Medium of Instruction as well as rich information on the challenges they encountered using EMI. The investigation included 30 undergraduate students from second-year to fourth-year level, who were enrolled in Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in English in the university who were

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chosen through convenience sampling method. These target participants were chosen because they have greater experiences than freshmen students due to more years of exposure with the implementation of English as Medium of Instruction in the classroom, and thus their awareness level on EMI is supposed to be higher than freshmen students. In addition to knowledge and experiences, they have the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner (Bernard, 2002 as cited in Tang, 2020) which made this study more reliable.

To obtain the necessary data, the researcher made use of a three-part survey questionnaire. The first part was intended to gather pertinent personal information such as their gender, year level, course, and ethnicity. The second part was on the purpose of collecting the data regarding students' attitudes towards English as a medium of instruction courses using the 29-item scale adapted from Ghani (2018). From the 29 statements which are found in the questionnaire, different statements pertain to different components about the perceptions of the students on the use of English as Medium of Instruction as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. *Statements adopted from Ghani (2018) based on different components*

Components	Item No.	Statement
Affective Attitudes	1	I feel confident in speaking English.
	2	I feel confident learning our subjects in English.
	3	I feel that learning subjects through English medium is useful for me.
	4	I feel that my academic performance increases when the medium of instruction is conducted in English.
	5	I feel confident that my English is grammatically correct.
	6	I feel confident that I am using English words correctly.
	7	I feel motivated to learn the subjects in English.
	8	I feel eager to learn our subjects in English
	9	I am sure that learning subjects through English will increase my personal development.
Behavioral Attitude	1	I am willing to accept a full-English instruction setting.
	2	In pursuit of the fulfillment of English Medium Instruction setting, I can do my assignments in English.
	3	In pursuit of the fulfillment of English Medium Instruction setting, I can answer test or exam questions conducted in English.
	4	In pursuit of the fulfillment of English Medium Instruction setting, I am willing to use English to chat with my lecturers.
	5	In pursuit of the fulfillment of English Medium Instruction setting, I am willing to use English to chat with my friends.
	6	In pursuit of the fulfillment of English Medium Instruction setting, I am willing to request my friends to use English in class.
	7	In pursuit of the fulfillment of English Medium Instruction setting, I am willing to use English to chat with faculty staff and administrators.
	8	In pursuit of the fulfillment of English Medium Instruction setting, I am willing to chat with my lecturers when having appointment with them.
	9	In pursuit of the fulfillment of English Medium Instruction setting, I am willing to use computer system to be operated in English.
	10	In pursuit of the fulfillment of English Medium Instruction setting, I am willing to participate in the faculty activities for the purpose of helping myself to improve my English ability.

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Cognitive Attitude	1	I believe that by learning subjects through the English medium at university level, it can facilitate students' improvement in English.
	2	I believe that learning subjects through English medium is necessary at tertiary education level (university).
	3	I believe that English is an international language as it provides a medium for learners to use the language in other subjects.
	4	I believe that learning subjects through English medium enables students to learn about the culture of the target language.
	5	I believe that the use of English as a medium of instruction will improve my thinking processes.
	6	I believe that if lecturers who teach the particular subjects had perfect competence in English, students' learning of the subject matter would be facilitated.
	7	I believe that English-medium instruction is an effective method to learn a foreign language.
	8	I believe that because English has become an international language, English-medium instruction does not result in cultural corruption.
	9	I believe that in universities where the conditions are favorable, the medium of the subject content must remain English.
	10	In general, I find that it is appropriate that all subjects be conducted in English.

The questionnaire involved three components which are the Affective attitudes (consisting of 9 questions), Behavioral attitudes (consisting of 10 questions), Cognitive attitudes (consisting of 10 questions) as listed in the table above. This part of the questionnaire opted for a 5-point Likert Scale that varied from Strongly Agree (1) to Strongly Disagree (5). Total attitude scores for the scale range from 29 to 145 points. While the answer strongly agree (5) indicates positive attitude of EMI, strongly disagree (1) indicates negative attitude towards EMI that students feel. Meanwhile, the third part consisted of one open-ended question wherein the students were asked to list at least three challenges/possible challenges they encountered on the use of English as medium of instruction.

The data gathered through the use of questionnaire was tabulated, computed, and analyzed using descriptive statistics, particularly the mean and standard deviation, which was utilized in Ghani's (2018) study to determine whether participants strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree or strongly disagree with the use of English as Medium of Instruction. After getting the mean and standard deviation for each statement, the following scheme was used to interpret the statement.

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Table 2. *Mean Interpretation*

Mean	Interpretation
1-1.80	Strongly Disagree
1.80-2.60	Disagree
2.60-3.40	Neutral
3.40-4.20	Agree
4.20-5.00	Strongly Agree

Furthermore, this study will adopt directed content analysis in which theories and existing literature studies are employed to inform the codes and themes initially utilized in analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008 as cited in Malik et al., 2021) to analyze qualitative data related to the challenges encountered by students on the use of English as Medium of Instruction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students' Perceptions on The Use of English as A Medium of Instruction

Table 3. *Student's Affective Attitudes Towards English Medium Instruction Courses*

No	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
1	3	1	Neutral
2	3.62069	1.049278	Agree
3	3.931034	1.099709	Agree
4	3.551724	1.088453	Agree
5	2.724138	0.959782	Neutral
6	2.655172	0.856732	Neutral
7	4.034483	0.823007	Agree
8	4.103448	0.900192	Agree
9	3.689655	1.072495	Agree
Overall	3.505747	0. 583156	Agree

Note: Scale: *1.0-1.80= Strongly Disagree; 1.8-2.60= Disagree; 2.6-3.40=Neutral; 3.40-4.20=Agree; 4.20-5.0=Strongly Agree*

Firstly, in terms of MSU students' affective attitudes towards the use of English as a medium of instruction, it has been found that majority of the respondents wanted learning their subjects in English. As what the table 4 reveals, the overall mean score for students' affective attitudes towards the use of English as a medium of instruction is 3.5 while the overall standard deviation is 0.6 which can be interpreted on the scale as "agree." It is also shown in table 4 that the statement "I feel motivated to learn our subjects in English" has the highest mean and standard deviation score which are 4.1 and 0.9 respectively.

This signifies that majority of them feel motivated to learn their subjects in English. The underlying reason for this motivation was then revealed in the indicator statement no. 3 "I feel that learning subjects through English medium is useful for me" as it received a mean score of 3.9 and a standard deviation of 1.09, which is interpreted on the scale as "agree". Students regard the use of English as medium of instruction in their subjects as useful, which primarily sparks their interest to learn their subjects conducted in English. In essence, this is quite sensible since English language provides useful benefits to the students not only in their academic pursuits but also in their whole life in general. Such benefits include access to a wide range of knowledge, resources, and literature since it is often the language used in many academic disciplines; enhanced career opportunities; acing standardized tests; and global communication.

Further, some of the anticipated favorable effects of using EMI by the students in their courses include the considerable improvement on their "academic performance" as shown in statement no. 4 and the "increase of their personal development" in statement no. 9.

Meanwhile, the lowest rated indicator statement as shown in the table was the statement no. 6 "I feel confident that I am using English words correctly". It received a mean score of 2.6 and a standard deviation of 0.8 and is interpretated on the scale as "neutral". Following closely was the indicator statement no. 5 "I feel confident that my English is grammatically correct" which received a mean score of 2.7 and is also interpreted as neutral. These particular results reflect the potential challenges or limitations faced by the students. Generally, it indicates the students' grammatical issues and/or limited vocabulary.

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In view of this, one of the possible ways to address this identified challenge is to tailor language instructions to the needs and weaknesses of the students. This can be done by employing practice exercises designed to help students improve their grammar and enrich their vocabulary. Another essential step to consider is incorporating authentic materials, such as authentic texts, videos, or real-world examples; encouraging independent reading; and offering individualized support occasionally like one-on-one tutorials, extra-help sessions, and targeted feedback to address such specific needs.

The finding on the ground of the motivation of the students is supported by the study conducted by Adelrahim and Humaida (2012) in which the college students in Sudan were reported to be motivated to learning in English medium instruction setting because of their ongoing keenness and desire to learn and master English as a foreign language. The students also noted that the popularity of English language might be one of the reasons why English language learners in different parts of the world are motivated to learn in English medium instruction setting.

Furthermore, as regards to the usefulness of learning in English medium instruction setting, this is also supported by the study of Abdul Ghani Muthanna and Pei m Miao (2015) in which their research reveals that majority of the respondents preferred the existence of more English medium-instructed programs as they believe that this could enhance their English language proficiency, thus paving the way for more opportunities once they graduate, such as career prospects. Also, Tazl (2011, as cited in Le, 2016) found that respondents support the use of English as medium of instruction because of the several perceived advantages such as: EMI prepares graduates for international workplace and further education, improves students' English proficiency, increases their self-confidence, and enhances the institutional profile. These advantages also appear to be true for MSU students as s in the Philippines, where people are constantly driven to speak English since it serves as their second language.

Table 4. *Student's Behavioral Attitudes Towards English Medium Instruction Courses*

No	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
1	3.793103	0.977581	Agree
2	3.793103	1.081643	Agree
3	3.896552	1.01224	Agree
4	3.586207	1.052794	Agree
5	3.068966	1.099709	Neutral
6	2.965517	1.017095	Neutral
7	3.344828	0.973795	Neutral
8	3.793103	0.726012	Agree
9	3.862069	0.87522	Agree
10	3.793103	0.940338	Agree
Overall	3.589655	0.342309	Agree

Note: Scale: *1.0-1.80= Strongly Disagree; 1.8-2.60= Disagree; 2.6-3.40=Neutral; 3.40-4.20=Agree; 4.20-5.0=Strongly Agree*

In terms of their behavioral attitudes towards the use of English as medium of instruction, it has been discovered that generally, MSU students are willing or in favor of the use of English as a medium of instruction. It is said so because, as shown in table 5, the overall mean for students' behavioral attitudes towards EMI is 3.58, while the overall standard deviation is 0.34, which can be interpreted on the scale as "agree". More so, it is further seen in table 5 that the highest mean and standard deviation score for students' behavioral attitudes towards the use of English as a medium of instruction indicates the statement "in pursuit of the fulfilment of the English medium instruction setting, I can answer tests or exam questions conducted in English". It has a mean score of 3.89 and a standard deviation of 1.01, which can be interpreted on the scale as "agree".

Furthermore, the reason for their willingness to use English as medium of instruction is also revealed in the statement no. 10 which indicates "in pursuit of the fulfillment of English Medium Instruction

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setting, I am willing to participate to the activities given by my faculty for the purpose of helping myself improve my English ability". This means that their willingness to participate in the activities given by their faculty that is conducted in English are for the sake of improving themselves for their English language skills.

While the lowest mean score of 2.97 was obtained for the statement "*In pursuit of the fulfillment of English Medium Instruction setting, I am willing to request my friends to use English in class*" which falls as neutral. This suggests that the students may have some reservations or difficulties in using English with their peers, possibly due to social or cultural factors.

The results of this study have several implications for policy makers, educators, and researchers. First, the study suggests that EMI is a viable and effective approach to enhance students' learning outcomes and English skills in a multilingual context like MSU. Second, it indicates that students' behavioral attitudes towards EMI are influenced by their perceived competence and confidence in using English for academic purposes. Third, it implies that students' communicative skills in English need to be improved through more opportunities and incentives for interaction and collaboration with their classmates and instructors.

Based on these implications, some recommendations can be made for improving EMI practices at MSU. First, policy makers should provide clear guidelines and support for implementing EMI across different disciplines and levels. Second, educators should adopt appropriate pedagogical strategies and materials to facilitate students' comprehension and engagement in EMI courses.

Table 5. *Student's Cognitive Attitudes Towards English Medium Instruction Courses*

No	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
1	3.931034	0.923156	Agree
2	4.137931	0.915117	Agree
3	4.068966	0.961065	Agree
4	3.482759	0.784706	Agree
5	3.965517	0.823007	Agree
6	3.862069	0.990099	Agree
7	3.758621	0.950758	Agree
8	3.068966	0.883622	Neutral
9	3.310345	1.003688	Neutral
10	2.655172	1.110851	Neutral
Overall	3.624138	0.484521	Agree

Note: Scale: *1.0-1.80= Strongly Disagree; 1.8-2.60= Disagree; 2.6-3.40=Neutral; 3.40-4.20=Agree; 4.20-5.0=Strongly Agree*

As for their cognitive attitudes, it has been discovered that most of the respondents believe that English should be used as a medium of instruction. It is supported by the results shown in table 6 that the overall mean for their cognitive attitudes towards EMI was 3.6, while the overall standard deviation is 0.5 which can be interpreted on the scale as "agree". This is also reinforced by the statement "I believe that learning subjects through the English medium is necessary at tertiary level as it could facilitate students' improvement in English" because was found to have the highest mean and standard deviation score that is 4.13 and 0.9 respectively.

Finally, it has been found that the respondents who are MSU undergraduate students and are currently in year level 2nd year- 4th year majoring in English, had positive attitudes towards the use of English as a medium of instruction. The findings are consistent with the findings made by Adelrahim & Humaida, 2012; Abdul Ghani Muthanna & Pei m Miao, 2015; Thuy Nhung le, 2016; Ghani, 2018; Rahmadani, 2016; Köksal & Tercan, 2019; Tazl, 2011).

Challenges Encountered by The Students on The Use of English as A Medium of Instruction

In the qualitative survey, it has been revealed that most of the reported challenges encountered by the respondents on the use of English as a medium of instruction seem to be induced by their anxiety in speaking the language which are related to classroom

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procedure. These anxieties are also seen relevant to the study found by (Tanveer, 2007). They were themed as follows:

Self-related Cognition Challenges

Past researchers (Krashen, 1985; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999:228; Horwitz et al., 1986: 128–129 as cited in Tanveer (2007) suggested that anxiety in learners is produced by their cognitive interferences based on self-related cognitions, in which these refer to self-perceptions associated with one's self-esteem, perceived scholastic competence, beliefs about language learning, etc.

According to the findings, 20 out of 30 (90%) of respondents spoke about the challenges they encountered with regard to their low self-esteem or low self-confidence. Based on the findings, there were 6 respondents who reported having poor confidence when speaking the English language due to issues with their grammar, pronunciation, fluency, or linguistic abilities in general. Examples of such statements include:

> *"I find it difficult in constructing sentences. I am not that confident in my English-language skills."*
> *"Not fluent/grammatically wrong…Not confident. It's better to be quiet."*

The second one, which relates to how they perceive themselves, was their apprehension about others' evaluations and fear of making mistakes. This challenge elicited six comments from the respondents. They are afraid that they will make errors and that others will mock and embarrass them, which contributes to their inability to speak in a crowd. Some of them state:

> *"Actually, I can speak English in the classroom, but due to fear of making mistakes, being embarrassed, and lack of confidence, I can't use it properly in front of other people. "*

This finding is also considered relevant to that of Tanveer's (2018) and Jones (2004, as cited in Tanveer (2007), wherein they discovered that participants frequently expressed fear, and even horror, because of the fear of making mistakes or errors in front of others, or the fear of appearing awkward, foolish, and incompetent in the eyes of the learners' peers or others.

The threat to the mother tongue is the third. It was revealed that 3 of the respondents expressed concern about the threat to their mother tongue as a result of the regular use of the English language in their classroom. It is seen in the statement:

> *"Also, the use of English has overshadowed my mother tongue as I am trained in the class to be more fluent in this language on my own"*

Similarly, in a Hong Kong university, "the risks of traditional language attrition and culture loss" were the central arguments in terms of EMI policy, as reported by Tsui & Ngo (2017) and Cankaya (2017).

One possible factor that influences the students' self-related cognition challenges is the sociocultural diversity of MSU. As a state university system that caters to various ethnic groups and tribes in Mindanao, MSU has a multicultural and multilingual student population that reflects different backgrounds, values, and beliefs. This diversity may pose some challenges for students who have to communicate in English as a medium of instruction (EMI), especially if they feel that their linguistic and cultural identities are not adequately recognized or respected by their peers. Some students may experience language anxiety due to perceived differences or gaps between their own English proficiency and that of others. Others may feel cultural alienation or marginalization due to perceived discrimination or prejudice based on their ethnic or linguistic affiliations. These negative emotions may affect their self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-efficacy in using English as a tool for learning and interaction.

Another possible contributing factor to the students' self-related cognition challenges is the academic pressure and

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expectations that they face in their learning environment. As a prestigious university system that aims to produce globally competitive graduates, MSU has high standards and requirements for its students' academic performance and achievement. This may create some challenges for students who have to cope with the demands and expectations of EMI courses, especially if they feel that their English skills are inadequate or insufficient for meeting these expectations. Some students may experience performance anxiety due to fear of failure or negative evaluation by their instructors or classmates. Others may feel impostor syndrome or self-doubt due to lack of confidence in their own abilities or achievements. These negative emotions may affect their perceived scholastic competence, motivation, and beliefs about language learning.

Moreover, one of the possible ways to help the students overcome their self-related cognition challenges is to enhance their linguistic and communicative competence in English. This can be done by providing them with more opportunities and resources for improving their English skills, such as language courses, workshops, tutorials, online platforms, etc. Additionally, instructors can design and implement more interactive and collaborative activities that encourage students to use English for meaningful purposes, such as discussions, debates, presentations, projects, etc. These activities can help students develop their fluency, accuracy, and confidence in using English as a medium of communication and learning.

Another possible way to help the students overcome their self-related cognition challenges is to promote their cultural and social awareness and sensitivity. Additionally, instructors can incorporate more intercultural and multicultural elements into their curriculum and pedagogy, such as texts, materials, topics, examples, etc., that reflect the students' cultures and languages. These elements can help students appreciate and understand the richness and complexity of their own and others' cultures and languages, and foster a sense of belonging and empowerment in the MSU community.

Linguistic Challenges

Based on the results, 26 out of 30 (73%) respondents spoke of their linguistic difficulties. These are first the grammar mistakes, which 4 of the respondents reported as one of the challenges they encountered so far in the use of English as a medium of instruction since they are yet to master the language and are not confident with the right parts of speech to use. Such statements are the following:

> *"The recurring challenge for me is that, I still encounter many grammatical errors since I am yet to master the language".*
>
> *"... grammar since I am not that confident with the right parts of the speech to use such as whether it should be an adjective or an adverb"*

This finding on grammar errors is supported by previous researchers Steinberg and Horwitz (1986, as cited in MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991), who discussed grammar mistakes reported by their respondents, such as difficulties with prepositions, different uses of article systems in different languages, the use of English modal verbs, and so on.

The second encountered challenge that is related to linguistic difficulty is the limited vocabulary. There were 6 comments of them who reported that they were having difficulty understanding the context because sometimes there are words that are confusing, unfamiliar to them or just beyond their comprehension. That is why, they tend to misinterpret instructions conducted in English. Such examples of their statements are:

> *"There are terms in English that I don't know, that is why I find it difficult to comprehend a specific context".*
>
> *"There are some terminologies that are*

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unfamiliar to me. Every time I encounter this kind of unfamiliarity with words, I feel confused and puzzled."

Participants in this study presumed that it is their lack of vocabulary that causes misapprehension of the instructions conducted in English. Thus, this suggests that teachers must use varied activities that focus on language enrichment. This finding on limited vocabulary also supports the idea purported by MacIntyre and Gardner (1991, as cited in Tanveer, 2007) that limited vocabulary and the difficulties of remembering and retrieving vocabulary items caused the learners to have difficulty in learning using English as medium of instruction.

The third challenge reported by the respondents is more about accents and pronunciation mistakes. According to the results, 7 of the respondents also reported that they were worried about their pronunciation in fear of being laughed at by their peers and/or teachers. It is evident from their statement.

"...challenging because sometimes I tend to mispronounce something, especially when I am pressured. It seems like it's coming out automatically, and when I make mistake, I am afraid that everyone in the class will laugh."

Students' ability to communicate in a second language is hampered by their fear of making mistakes in accent and pronunciation as a result of a negative impression or evaluation by peers. This is also in line with the past research conducted by Tanveer (2007), wherein his respondents claim that pronunciation is an important issue across language groups due to its immediate effects on interaction.

The last challenge under linguistic difficulty is difficulty of translating into English or difficulty of constructing sentences. There were 5 of the respondents who attested that sometimes, they were having difficulty of translating from English into Meranao and vice versa. While some also commented that they were having difficulty expressing themselves particularly on their thoughts as shown in the statements.

"The most recurring challenge is the difficulty in translation from Meranao and Tagalog language to English language, and vice versa. As there are English words that have no counterparts in other languages, the translations are somewhat vague"

"Sometimes, I cannot fully express my thoughts for there are times that I need to use my other spoken language"

Such linguistic difficulty expressed by the participants may indicate that it is likely to be caused by infrequent use of English or a lack of practice communicating in English. Thus, it affects one's language fluency. This finding was deemed unrelated to the findings made by Tanveer (2007).

In line with the challenges experienced by the students, this study proposes some possible ways to address these challenges and enhance EMI practice in MSU. For grammar mistakes, the teachers could use explicit instruction and feedback to help the students improve their accuracy and confidence in using English. For example, the teachers could explain the rules and patterns of English grammar, provide examples and exercises, and correct the students' errors in a constructive way. For limited vocabulary, the teachers could use various strategies to help the students expand their word knowledge and comprehension. For example, the teachers could introduce new words in meaningful contexts, use synonyms and antonyms, provide definitions and examples, and ask the students to use the words in sentences or paragraphs. The teachers could also use graphic organizers, such as word maps or semantic webs, to help the students visualize the relationships between words.

In terms of the accents and pronunciation mistakes, the teachers could use phonetic instruction and modeling to help the students improve their articulation and fluency in English. For example, the teachers

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could teach the students the sounds and symbols of English phonetics, use minimal pairs and tongue twisters to practice pronunciation, and model correct pronunciation and intonation. The teachers could also use audio or video recordings to help the students hear and see how words are pronounced.

Lastly, the teachers could use translanguaging and scaffolding to help the students express their thoughts and ideas in English for difficulty of translating or constructing sentences. For example, the teachers could allow the students to use their home language as a resource for learning English, such as code-switching, translating, or explaining concepts in their home language. The teachers could also provide sentence starters, frames, or models to help the students structure their sentences or paragraphs in English.

Challenge On the Role of Language Instructor

Past research such as Tanveer's (2008) indicates that there are some roles of language instructors in the anxiety of their students, specifically in how they create stressful environments in the class. Similarly, in this study, the first challenge encountered by them associated with the role of instructor is difficulty keeping up with fluent English teachers. 2 of the respondents reported that the stress or tension created by the teacher in the classroom simply by speaking English fluently or frequently made it difficult for them to keep up or interact in the classroom. This can be seen in the statement below:

> *"Teachers speak English all the time, it's hard to keep up when your teacher is a fluent English speaker."*

This challenge further entails communication barriers among the teachers and the students. Students find it difficult to effectively communicate their thoughts, ideas, and queries in English. They may feel hesitant to participate in class discussions, ask for clarifications, or express themselves.

Some of the factors that can be attributed to this reported challenge may include the intimidating behavior of the teacher as demonstrated in his/her teaching strategies and approaches tailored in language instructions. Given that the respondents are in the college level, there is high expectation placed among them to speak English language fluently, thus creating high pressure and stressful environment among them. Another factor that that influences this challenge is the limited English language proficiency of the students. Because of this anticipated limited proficiency, students choose to be inactive in classroom interaction because they are in fear of negative impression or judgements among their teacher as well as their classmates.

Furthermore, one of the potential ways to address this particular challenge is to foster a supportive and inclusive classroom environment. Language educators should provide a safe space, a positive, and inclusive learning environment where students are able to feel comfortable expressing themselves, taking risks, and making mistakes. A teacher may need not to laugh or belittle a student when errors or mistakes have been committed. It must be seen as natural part of the learning process rather than something to be feared or ashamed of. Also, it is important to incorporate collaborative activities where students are able to work together in groups or in pairs, thereby allowing them to learn from one another, share perspectives, collectively solve problems, and reduce the fear of making mistakes. offer regular feedback and support on the students with regards to their language abilities. Another possible way to deal with this challenge is to provide constructive feedback. When errors occur, providing constructive feedback that focuses on the process rather than the person helps students understand areas where they need to improve and provide guidance on how to correct their mistakes.

Another found challenge encountered by the respondents which relates to the role

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of language instructor is misinterpreting instruction. There were 6 of the respondents who reported that they tend to misinterpret instruction conducted in English when the teacher, particularly those incompetent ones do not explain it further. Such statements are apparent in the following:

> *"When the teacher uses English language as a medium of instruction without further explanation, may lead to misunderstanding"*
>
> *"Some teachers are incompetent in utilizing English as medium of instruction thus resulting to misunderstood outputs."*

This challenge lies in the ability of teachers to provide instructions using the English language. Considering that students from MSU are not only diverse multiculturally and multilingually, but also diverse in terms of their language proficiency level due to their varying academic backgrounds, there is a need to carry out clear and simple instructions by the teacher. The same way, the use of differentiated instruction through differentiating content, process, and product in consideration of the diverse needs of the students is essential. On top of this, teachers need to engage in trainings, workshops, and seminars that aim to teach how to effectively enhance carrying out instructions to the students as frequent as possible.

Overall, the foregoing challenges in this study encountered by the students in the ude of English as Medium of Instruction also conforms to the previous findings of Tanveer (2007), particularly the self-related cognition challenges, linguistic challenges, and challenges associated with the role of language instructor.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrated the attitudes of the ESL learners at Mindanao State University at the 2nd-4th year level. Respondents show favorable attitudes towards the use of English as a medium of instruction. It also appeared that students, despite having a positive attitude towards EMI, experienced certain fears and challenges when using English as a medium of instruction, which they regarded as anxiety-provoking. Thus, this indicated that teachers need to be mindful of such fears and/or challenges as it can have a negative impact on students' academic performance. It is the task of the teachers to assist students in coping with their anxiety and fears in order to maintain this positive attitude on EMI among learners. Successful educational policy would be attained if the curriculum planners or the teachers would carefully and purposefully plan their curriculum. The use of varied activities that cater to the needs of the learners and activities which would help arouse their interest and encourage active participation may be taken into consideration. Teachers may also observe a variety of teaching approaches and teaching styles that match students' learning styles and capacity in order to enhance learning using the target language.

In essence, this current study found that most of the reported challenges fall under self-related cognition and/or apprehension towards others' evaluations, which are more likely to be attributed to the role of teachers in conducting the classroom environment, like the creation of a more friendly and less stressful environment. While this is true, it is also important to note that students should also take responsibility for their own learning. Teachers may facilitate learning and may help the students achieve academic success using EMI, provided that students are also willing to take part and are willing to take the path toward improvement. While there may be some underlying factors that largely provoke such anxiety, as it can also be traced to one's cultural differences, as in the case of the Japanese students in the research conducted by Jones (2004). It was reported that their language anxiety was largely a cultural-bound phenomenon, and others, however, it does not mean that students cannot do something about it. In fact, learners

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are active agents and not passive in their own learning. Therefore, students should also be responsible for their own learning and not solely depend on their teachers if they want to aim higher with EMI.

Above all, the current study has made several contributions. First, it filled a research gap by expanding the field of language and educational research. The importance of EMI in the classroom has received a lot of attention. However, study on attitudes of students on the use of EMI as well as the challenges of using English as a medium of instruction in Philippine English classrooms, including notably in multicultural settings are limited, and this study is thought to have addressed this gap. Researchers may expand this current study by increasing the number of participants and also by addressing the challenges encountered on the use of EMI with further suggestions on coping mechanisms and suggestions on varied teaching approaches. Second, it contributed to the body of knowledge in the field of language policy in terms of its efficacy of implementation in an academic zone with multicultural learners by revealing students' attitudes toward the use of EMI. Third, the current study provided significant implications and recommendations for curriculum planners and curriculum designers. The findings particularly on the challenges encountered by students when using EMI point to the necessity of carefully planning and developing curricula that are in line with students' interests and needs of the students in order to foster meaningful and successful learning of the target language.

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