

## **Exploring Challenges of Using English as a Medium of Instruction in the Colleges of Education: A Case of Oti Region of Ghana**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the difficulties associated with teaching in Ghanaian colleges of education using English. The study was conducted using a mixed-method methodology. Purposive and basic random sampling were used to gather data using questionnaires, in-class observations, and interview schedules. The results showed that adopting English as a medium of instruction had drawbacks, including encouraging excessive time spent in class, lowering student participation because of poor English ability, and making it difficult for students to comprehend English-language textbooks and lectures.

Additionally, it was found that students who learn by memorization are less engaged with their course topics. It is suggested that language alternation pedagogy, together with other support measures, could raise English proficiency in Ghanaian educational institutions.

**Keywords:** *English, Lingua Franca, Medium of Instruction, Challenges*

## **Introduction**

The paper aims to examine how English is used as a teaching language at two educational institutions in Ghana's Oti Region. The language that the instructor uses to instruct is referred to as a medium of teaching. As a result, when English is not the pupils' first language, the educational system employs English as the main language of instruction. To put it another way, teaching academic courses in nations where English is not the students' first language is known as English is used as a language of Medium of Instruction (EMI).

In higher education, it is a quickly growing phenomena (Dafouz & Guerrini, 2009; Doiz et al, 2013, as referenced in Macaro et al, 2016). English has been used as a lingua franca (common language) for over 20 years, and the English that is taught to non-native speakers in second language classes is frequently distinct from the English used in lingua franca conversation. Higher education is one well-known setting where English is being used as a lingua franca.

Because many universities have switched to teaching in English in an attempt to draw in more students and staff from outside their borders, internationalization of universities is thus accompanied by campuses that are paradoxically becoming more linguistically and culturally diverse on the one hand and more focused on English on the other (Jenkins, 2018).

Therefore, English as a medium of education is a complicated phenomenon, but outside of English language as foreign-oriented study into English as a medium of instruction, its (multi)lingual franca nature is still poorly recognized and frequently overlooked (Jenkins, 2018). However, regardless of whether the country is Anglophone or not, there are other languages spoken on campus in addition to English, which is used in a variety of ways. With a growing trend in Ghanaian schools and universities to use English as the sole official language of administration and instruction, in addition to being the primary language of instruction, the issue of the language of instruction in

schools and universities has consequently become evidently current and topical. Because of its importance in the phases of integration, internationalisation, and globalization, English is emerging as the official international language in the era of globalization.

Ghana is one of the African countries that uses English as a teaching language starting in Primary four (4). Early grade instruction should be conducted in either English or the local tongue, according to recommendations made by President Kufour's Committee on Review of Education Reforms in 2002. Economics, science, technology, and computer science are all conducted in English. It is sometimes believed that the increasing need for English in research and higher education over the past few decades is a parallel and inevitable development that will increase academic communication across borders.

With the exception of teaching a Ghanaian language as a subject, the remainder of the child's education should be in English (Anamuah Mensah, as stated in Seidu, 2011). This is because, according to Seidu (2012), English is the only lingua franca or shared language in Ghana and serves as a unifying force for the country's society more so than any other Ghanaian language. As a result, English emerged as a preferred teaching language among academics and learners.

### **Literature Review**

In Ghanaian colleges of education, especially those in the Oti Region, English is the main language of instruction. However, many students face significant challenges in learning and understanding course content due to their limited proficiency in English. These challenges can hinder academic performance, engagement, and overall comprehension of lessons. A growing body of research highlights the impact of language barriers on students' learning experiences, particularly in multilingual settings. This literature review examines existing studies on the challenges of using English as a medium of instruction, exploring factors such as students' language proficiency, teaching strategies, and the implications for educational outcomes. By Analysing relevant literature, this review aims to provide insights into how language-related difficulties affect teacher training and propose potential strategies for improving instructional practices in the Colleges of Education in the Oti Region of Ghana.

**The Use of English as a medium of instruction**

Speakers have more exposure to and opportunity to communicate in English when English is used as a medium of education. This covers informational, narrative, and conversational discourse in addition to spoken and written language. The performance of our pupils determines the success of our educational establishments. Students must do better, as evidenced by their written and oral assignments. Both native English speakers and educated African speakers of English may find it difficult to cope with English as a medium of instruction at educational institutions. Without a doubt, this calls into question how well we teach and learn English.

Few studies have been conducted on the topic at educational institutions, despite the fact that English is used as a medium of instruction at many Ghanaian institutions. Interestingly, a large number of these research suggest that studying in English improves students' academic performance in higher education. This covers informational, narrative, and conversational discourse in addition to spoken and written language. Students at our educational institutions learn more quickly as a result of this. Additionally, studying in English helps kids expand their vocabulary. Accordingly, learning English raises their level of proficiency both inside and outside of the classroom (Sultan et al, 2012).

As a result, their language proficiency improves, and they are better able to interact with their teachers and peers. As a result, students utilize English in both their daily conversations and their academic work. Thus, studying in English improves pupils' academic achievement on all fronts.

Unquestionably, a number of further research had identified that students' employment of English as a medium of education has not produced many positive outcomes. Contrary to the assertions that students learn a great deal of words when they learn English, the English language actually hinders their academic performance rather than helping it (Briggs et al., 2018). According to other research, pupils encounter technical vocabulary in English that they struggle to understand (Othman & Saat, 2009).

As a result of their dreadfully low skill level, kids are unable to participate in class and communicate. This is evident from the fact that reading comprehension passages present difficulties for pupils due to the large number

of unfamiliar words they include. As a result, kids' academic performance falls short of this expectation. Low English proficiency among pupils could be a likely contributing factor (AlBakri, 2017; Mchazime 2001). The substantial impact this has on our educational system in general and on the students in particular is tolerable to both native English speakers and educated African English speakers (Othman & Saat, 2009).

Most students will be unable to respond or ask questions in class if tangible steps are not taken to address this issue, and they will be more likely to drop out of school due to their incapacity to handle the English language in the classroom. The scope of studies in this area is constrained because they either examined the impacts or the importance. Thus, it makes sense to examine the difficulties related with using English as a teaching language in Ghana's Oti Region's educational institutions. This was accomplished by using a mixed-method approach that included eight English tutors and a sample of 200 pupils.

### **Exploring challenges of using English as a medium of instruction in the classroom**

This study looked at the challenges of teaching English in Ghana's Oti Region's educational institutions. It seems that English teachers at educational institutions have been operating in the dark for a while because there is a lack of adequate empirical data about the use of English as a medium of instruction. As a result, the study offers the empirical information needed to create successful classroom English teaching methods. Therefore, if teachers have a stronger understanding of English as a medium of instruction in educational institutions, they will be better equipped to appreciate students' difficulties with learning the language. It will therefore enhance the way second language learners are taught English.

The issue of language of instruction in Ghanaian schools and universities is certainly very current and pertinent, especially considering the growing trend of English being used not only as the primary language of instruction but also as the only official language of administration and instruction in these establishments. This stems from the importance of English in the stages of globalization, internationalisation, and integration. Although using English as a language of instruction may have cultural and political ramifications in countries where English is not the first language, English as a Medium of

Instruction (EMI) has grown in popularity in higher education worldwide as a result of internationalization of education and the desire to compete globally.

In addition to the implementation of school regulations that require EMI, it is clear that language learning would occur with the delivery of content in a second language. Research in the domains of language education and acquisition supports the idea that learning a second language is most effective when it is used to convey information that is interesting and relevant to the learner.

Reaching literacy and learning objectives in the classroom depends on the language used for communication. English has always been given preference in the language policies. This is because it has been Ghana's official language of instruction for a long time. In a nation with roughly "50 non-mutually intelligible languages," it also acts as a unifier language (Anyidoho & Dakubu, 2008, p. 2).

English is the principal language of teaching beginning in primary four in Ghana, one of the few African countries where early childhood education is delivered in the child's mother tongue (LI). The language policy, the historical background of English in Ghana, the use of English as a medium of instruction in Ghanaian schools, and the challenges involved are presented after the article's introduction.

### **Historical background of the use of the English language in Ghana**

The government and the missionary organizations that spearheaded the nation's educational advancement had separate language policies before to the British arrival in the Gold Coast, hence there was no language policy for education. For instance, depending on the region in which they worked, the Basel missionaries spoke Akan and other native tongues, while the Bremen missionaries spoke Ewe.

Both the authorities and the Wesleyan missionary spoke English. A single linguistic strategy started to take shape when British authorities were established. The Phelps-Stokes Committee was established in 1920 by Sir Gordon Guggisberg, the governor at the time, to advocate formal education. The Committee suggested that while English should be taught as a topic as soon as practicable, Lower Primary students should be taught in the vernacular instead.

This suggestion was approved by the Ghanaian government and included into the entire educational system (Gbedemah, 1975; Dzamashie, 1988, as referenced in Quarcoo, 2014). Since then, there have been numerous changes made to the educational language policy, particularly at the foundational level, pertaining to both English and Ghanaian languages. Language policy is defined by Weinstein (1980, p. 55) as a long-term, deliberate, and authorized government endeavour to change a language or a language's role in a society in order to address communication issues. Ghana has made numerous changes to its language of instruction policies.

The use of a Ghanaian language in schools became so ingrained when the British colonial authority took over Ghana's educational system in 1925 that the government was powerless to stop the trend (Owu-Ewie, 2006). Thus, bilingual education was introduced in Ghana through the employment of both the colonial language and a Ghanaian language in the classroom. It has always been challenging to decide between the official language, English, and the native tongues for teaching, particularly in Lower Primary.

### **Language policy**

Many laws have been proposed to change the language of instruction in schools since Guggisberg's 1925 educational policy, which recognized a Ghanaian language as a medium of instruction alongside English starting at the elementary level. For instance, teaching Ghanaian took up the first three years, from 1925 to 1951. Between 1957 and 1966, no Ghanaian language was spoken, and between 1967 and 1969, only Primary 1 spoke a Ghanaian language.

Up until 2002, this persisted (Owu-Ewie, 2006, p. 77). According to Quarcoo (2014), English is the only language used in Ghanaian formal education after the first three years of primary school. This is due to the presumption that all children will learn an indigenous language prior to attending school. Because it would then help them comprehend mental ideas, the child would benefit from utilizing it as the language of teaching in Lower Primary. Till lately, this was the norm in the majority of public schools.

A law that mandated the study of a local language as a subject at the secondary level and made English the only language of teaching starting in Primary 1 was approved in May 2002. Ameyaw-Ekumfi, the education minister at the

time, cited a number of reasons for this pronouncement, one of which was that students still lacked the ability to write and speak "good" English sentences by the time they graduated from Senior Secondary School (SSS) (The Statesman, 2002, as stated in Quarcoo, 2014).

Additionally, he maintained that the Ghanaian languages (GLs) do not have a common written form. The minister emphasized that English is the state's lingua franca and that every attempt should be made to guarantee that pupils gain the necessary proficiency in both spoken and written forms of the language. This policy undoubtedly demonstrates that learning and using English in Ghana cannot be compromised. However, while GLs are taught as subjects in schools, they are not completely disregarded under this policy (Quarcoo, 2014).

Regardless of the government's position on the use of a GL beginning in Primary 3, private schools have traditionally used English solely, therefore this policy is not new, especially to them. While some public schools have adopted the new policy of using English starting in Primary 1, others, even within the same neighbourhood, still adhere to the antiquated practice of using indigenous languages from Primary 1 through Primary 3 (Quarcoo, 2014).

Even while GLs have been an essential component of the educational system since Guggisberg's time, it is evident that language policies have consistently favoured English. This is because it has been Ghana's official language of instruction for a long time. In a nation with roughly "50 non-mutually intelligible languages," it also acts as a unifying language (Anyidoho & Dakubu, 2008, p. 2).

From 1971 to 2002, Ghana's language policy typically stated that the primary Ghanaian languages covered in basic school curricula should be taught for the first three years of school and, if feasible, for the following three years as well. The relevant Ghanaian language or languages will be taught as subjects in any Upper Primary or higher schools where English is the primary language of instruction (Ministry of Education, 2002). The policy's primary flaw was that not much had been done to guarantee its complete implementation.

Most Ghanaian children did not learn either English or their mother tongue under the prior P1–P3 system; instead, they switched to English for P4 and the rest of their schooling. Students in all basic schools, including public and

private, would receive instruction in English at all levels under the new policy. From the first year of primary school through junior secondary school (JSS), they will only be required to enrol in a Ghanaian language course. It was also stated that in locations with teachers, French would be taught to students in grades JSS1 through JSS3.

The administration cited the multilingual nature of urban classrooms and the fact that the majority of students may not speak the local language employed as the medium of teaching as justifications for its decision. Before being able to follow the classes, these students and youngsters who have moved from one location to another would need to begin learning new local languages (Ministry of Education, 2002).

The administration also hinted that Ghana is a part of the global village and that English has become a universal language. As recommended, introducing the language to elementary school students early on will facilitate their language acquisition and enable them to participate in international trade, industry, and technology (Government of Ghana, 2002).

The policy also makes the case that kids can readily pick up the ability to communicate in any language they come into contact with. They will therefore be better able to reach the required level of proficiency the earlier they are exposed to English. It's interesting to note that the official stance is that the ongoing use of English as a medium of teaching from preschool onwards is the reason why private schools in Ghana obtain comparatively strong results. The official policy was also defended by other arguments, such as the dearth of local language instructors and resources and the English-language development of textbooks.

It is thought to be better to utilize English as the only language of instruction until these problems are fixed (Government of Ghana, 2002). However, many believe that switching to English exclusively instead of the child's mother tongue or language does not advance the child's linguistic rights or the Objectives for Sustainable Development.

### **The use of English as a medium of instruction in Ghanaian schools**

It is true that English usage has grown extremely complex in Ghana. This form of bilingualism, which is practiced in Ghana and other countries with similar histories, is known as diglossia. According to Morris (1998), diglossia is the

state in which a second language acquired in formal schooling is only utilized for formal spoken and written communication and is not utilized for everyday discourse by any segment of the population. According to Opoku-Amankwa (2009), one crucial element in literacy development is students' access to the language of instruction.

Reaching literacy and learning objectives in the classroom depends on the language used for communication. Learning is mediated by language, which enables us to access new knowledge and relate it to our prior knowledge. Additionally, language is the primary means by which we can exhibit our acquired knowledge. Thus, a key factor in the teaching-learning process is the language used as the medium of instruction. He contends that learning English makes kids anxious and prevents them from participating fully in class.

This claim was stated by Opoku-Amankwa when he examined the main factors influencing the growth of literacy in multilingual classrooms in post-colonial Africa, such as ignorant perceptions about mother tongue/bilingual education. He then looked at the potential for bilingual/mother-language education in multilingual classrooms in Ghana and used empirical facts from Africa and other places to dispel the unfavourable views about mother tongue education. The study was predicated on the rule that the relevant Ghanaian language or languages shall be appropriately taught as a school subject in any Upper Primary or higher schools where English is the medium of instruction (Ministry of Education, 2002).

Purposively selected students from a Ghanaian school participated in focus groups, interviews, and classroom observations of interactions between teachers and students as part of this anthropological case study.

Tamanja (2010) contends, however, that there was little knowledge of the policy on the medium of teaching and that teachers in rural schools choose their native tongues, whereas those in urban ones prefer English. Accordingly, he thinks that in order to raise awareness and alter attitudes toward the use of English as a medium of education, it was necessary to involve all parties involved, particularly teachers. Additionally, there was a need for instructional materials, efficient supervision, and teacher training and motivation. During an investigation into the "attitudes of teachers on the medium of instruction

policy in basic schools in Savelugu Nanton District and Tamale Metropolis," Tamanja asserted it.

In essence, the research focused on a survey that included qualitative and quantitative data. A countrywide teacher capacity survey revealed that instructors in the two districts had deferring attitudes toward the medium of instruction policy, which led to their purposeful selection. A questionnaire was created and utilized to gather information from educators. Interviews were also conducted with circuit supervisors and district directors. Tamanja (2010) may have suggested methods for more research based on his findings that could improve a consistent medium of instruction policy to close the gap between urban and rural schools.

Anh (2010) asserts that local language ought to be adjusted to suit the specific educational environment. He additionally encourages the wise use of the language by adjusting the amount of local language to the pupils' level of English ability and the topics being taught. Therefore, the less frequently the original tongue should be used, the more fluent the student is in English.

Additionally, a lot of issues, including the students' level of English ability, the lesson's objectives, and the length of the session, should influence how frequently teachers speak the local language. According to Anh, using the local language in the classroom can be beneficial and is a component of the teaching methodology. This suggests that, depending on the class level and the subject matter to be taught, local languages could be used in addition to English to enhance teaching and learning. This is comparable to Seidu (2011), who uses his research on Ghanaian language policy to support his argument that language variation in the classroom is beneficial. Data collection and analysis for the study used both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

The study's non-interventional nature led to the choice of this approach, which also allowed for the choice of study parameters. A basic recorder and classroom observation were the main methods used to collect data. Informal questionnaires and pen-and-paper interviews were used to support it.

As a result, Seidu (2012) claims that educators have favourable opinions about both Ghanaian and English. As a result, educators ought to advocate for bilingual education as a viable teaching strategy in elementary schools. He contends that policy planners needed to reevaluate the official language use

guidelines and recognize classroom language alternation as a viable teaching approach in Ghanaian schools if they wanted classroom instruction to be more successful and significant for primary school students.

In research on "teacher attitude toward language medium policy," Seidu made this claim. It collected data using both qualitative and quantitative methods. To help teachers employ language alternation pedagogy more successfully and efficiently, it was suggested that they be introduced to it. Additionally, he suggested that policymakers recognize classroom language alternation as an effective teaching strategy in Ghanaian elementary schools.

However, Arhin (2014) affirms that teachers employ their own techniques as a teaching aid. Arhin claims that the language of instruction has been examined by linguists, parents, and social critics. While some contend that local languages are broadened and utilized alongside English throughout the elementary school years, others think it will have a detrimental effect on the pupils' English skills. This implies that some teachers do not strictly follow the language rules.

Rather, they instruct in the classroom using their own methods. Purposive sampling was used in Arhin's qualitative case study design. Inductive analysis and creative synthesis were used to present the data, which included observation and semi-structured focus group interviews. As a result, the following suggestions were offered. To effectively serve kids in remote areas, textbooks should be updated, teachers should be supported, and schools should undergo regular inspections. The language policy of education should also be evaluated with regard to schools in rural areas. Teachers at educational institutions may be quite supportive of an institutional policy requiring a certain degree of competency in English. Clear policies about teacher competency and extensive stakeholder discussion are necessary for this, though.

Although Ghana has a language policy requiring English to be the medium of teaching from Primary Four (P4) through Junior High School and beyond, Owu-Ewie and Eshun (2015) argue that this is not always the case in practice. In other words, in these classes, teachers speak both English and the native tongue. The students' inability to use English effectively in the classroom has been identified as the primary cause of the current state of affairs. They also

think that the lack of enforcement of the language policy, the monolingual nature of the classrooms, and the tutors' propensity to teach in local languages are the main causes of the policy violations.

They also confirm that safe conversation, code-switching/mixing, translation, and simultaneous usage of the two languages are the primary tactics employed by teachers. They suggested that in order to improve the employment of English at the Primary 4 to 6 and basic 7 to 9, the language policy should be strictly enforced, English instruction should be improved, the use of local languages as a medium of instruction should be expanded, and classroom environments should be created that support the use of English.

According to Shvidko (2017), students would improve if they practiced their English, and they also saw their native tongues as an important tool for communicating with one another. He further claims that while the majority of unfavourable sentiments are shown in schools where the policy is applied by individual instructors, rather haphazardly and inconsistently, many pupils have favourable opinions of schools that have a formal English-only policy. He continues by saying that while many students seem to have generally favourable thoughts about the English-only policy, it quickly becomes apparent that these opinions are more consistent with the benefits of experiencing a lot of English than with speaking it exclusively.

Students like an institutional policy that promotes the use of English.

The premise that intensive English programs are designed to place students in an environment where English is spoken in order to help them enhance their language skills served as the basis for Shvidko's (2017) research. He collected data using a survey. Both open-ended and closed-ended questions (multiple-choice, 6-point Likert scale) were included in the survey's 15 items. Students were asked to identify and briefly explain how they feel the language use issue should be addressed in the classroom, as well as their overall thoughts about the current English-only policy in the English language classroom.

At the end of the survey, participants were asked if they would be willing to take part in an interview to talk about language use. The study was a component of a larger study that sought to determine the variables influencing students' language use outside of the classroom—that is, in all areas of the

building other than the gym during lunch. However, it also revealed the pupils' opinions regarding the English-only rule.

Despite using the same technique, the organization and follow-up questions of each interview were different. The interviews were audio recorded and done in English. Students from the same local language backgrounds—Spanish, Korean, Portuguese, and Mandarin—who participated in the individual interviews made up the focus groups. The interviews were used to create the focus group procedure. Some of the responses were grouped into more general theme categories.

Lastly, the respondents' further remarks and their answers to the closed-ended questions were categorized as either positive or negative sentiments. For the purposes of the report, only comments that dealt with students' opinions regarding the English-only policy were looked at. The results of the survey were thus verified, clarified, and expanded upon using the qualitative information gathered from the focus groups and interviews.

After that, Shvidko (2017) said that classroom settings should give students plenty of chances to practice their English through a range of language-related activities. The majority of pupils form the habit of speaking English in class since it is seen as a learning environment. Teachers should therefore make an effort to establish an atmosphere outside of the classroom that students would also consider a learning space—an extension of the classroom, albeit one that is less organized and formal. Conversation tables, speech competitions, and interest groups are just a few of the activities that can be used to do this, both academically and socially. Such activities would foster social contact and enable students form friendships with individuals from various nations, in addition to providing them with the chance to practice English in relevant circumstances. However, rather than just providing children with an opportunity to socialize, school administrators should strive to promote language development while implementing these activities.

In a related development, Owusu (2017) observed that students who are emerging bilinguals do not benefit from English-only instruction. This assertion is similar to that made by Owu-Ewie and Eshun (2015) on language policy. This is because it hinders children's ability to participate in class. English is a language with a vast vocabulary, some of which are technical in

nature, according to Owusu. Sometimes the only way to comprehend what they mean is to use the L1.

This assertion was stated by Owusu (2017) in his investigation of a comparative case study of two Ghanaian educational situations. The study investigated how non-native English speakers react to education in English alone, as well as how the policy differs for students in deprived and developed areas. The research was founded on Dutta's claim that a critical investigator was more likely to focus on oppression and inequality, elucidating the links between systemic injustices and personal suffering (Dutta, 2014). Participants were teachers and children from two Ghanaian elementary schools. Purposive sampling was used to choose six teachers from each school. All parties involved in Ghanaian education are required under the guidelines to update language policy and instructional strategies.

Secondary teachers are more certain that employing English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) provides students with an excellent education, according to Briggs et al. (2018). They argue that neither phase demonstrates enough support to reach the necessary proficiency level, despite the fact that more secondary teachers than postsecondary instructors have an institutional policy about the level of English competency required for instruction in English. Teachers think EMI will affect academic content even though they think it will help students' English.

According to the study's findings, EMI was implemented without extensive institutional stakeholder consultation and, as a result, without explicit guidelines on teacher expertise levels. This was revealed when 167 instructors from 27 different nations participated in a study by Briggs et al. (2018) on secondary and tertiary teachers' perceptions of EMI. Teachers' perspectives were gathered in four key areas: EMI policy, EMI teachers' objectives, student advantages and disadvantages, and teacher issues. The study employed a teacher perspective, which highlights how educators' beliefs are shaped by the social context in which they operate and may or may not correspond with their actual behaviours.

The research used a cross-section, mixed-methods survey with a one data collection instrument. Colleges of education may also benefit from the study's findings about pedagogical resources and abilities. Thus, the employment of

English as a teaching language in colleges is likely to be seen favourably by both instructors and students.

According to the evaluation on the use of English as a medium of instruction, local languages may also be utilized in conjunction with English. The literature evaluation, however, suggests that students ought to be encouraged to utilize the target language. It also notes that some professors have generally disregarded the English-only mandate. Teachers' readiness to use Ghanaian in the classroom is one of the obvious causes of this. But according to the current study, the infringement is caused by specific notions that may require explication in the local languages.

Their results and conclusions show that it is beneficial to use English along with the local languages as a medium of education, despite the fact that the different techniques and theoretical frameworks that guided their research varied. Therefore, the many studies show that a lot of sensitisations as well as teacher training and retraining must be done to improve the usage of both L1 and L2 alternatives as needed.

### **Challenges of using English as a medium of instruction**

It is very important to remember that using English as a teaching language presents several difficulties for both educators and learners. The section examines relevant research on these issues. Numerous studies claim that because English is such a complicated language, students become dissatisfied when studying it. Others contend that low English proficiency and a lack of vocabulary present difficulties for students studying the language. However, some believe that teachers' improper techniques of delivering material to improve students' comprehension are the reason why pupils struggle.

Interestingly, a number of other research also believe that the difficulties arise from the latter's failure to adhere to the language policy. According to Gröbinger (2017), while there are many obstacles to overcome, there are also many potential strategies and answers. Since one of the most important prerequisites for utilizing English as a Medium of education (EMI) is successful education, it is critical to consider how to support lecturers on an individual and organizational level. After their language skills are assessed, both internal and external lecturers must have access to (additional) language instruction, methodological classes, workshops, supervised feedback,

proofreading, and adequate supplies and equipment. The support of mentors and supervisors is also considered to be highly helpful; they can help with everything from class design and methodology to foreign language resources and language challenges.

As a result, this part reviewed the literature from a number of research related to the following topics: student frustration, low English proficiency and a lack of suitable teaching resources, and ineffective employment of English as a language of instruction. Finally, an overview of the literature review on the difficulties is looked at.

### ***Frustration of learners***

In this sense, Kyeyune (2003) affirms that teaching mother tongue has practical difficulties. English could be a more straightforward option if a bilingual, communication-focused approach to teaching is properly implemented. He argued that in order to help students comprehend and analyse classroom discourse, teachers should be trained in the skills necessary to foster learning through an analytical knowledge of language-related barriers. They should also be skilled in the two fundamental skills of explanation and questioning.

Additionally, Kyeyune argues that while using one's mother tongue as a substitute medium might be one way to bring about change, there are theoretical reasons to think that this would not necessarily lead to a noticeable improvement because the problem lies deeper than just linguistic proficiency and has more to do with the common ways that teachers and students communicate. Kyeyune (2003) looked at a few ways that teachers' use of English as a teaching language can sometimes work against students' learning efforts rather than in their favour.

However, Namuchwa (2007) disputes Kyeyune's (2003) assertion that English is the most effective language to be taught in schools. He contends that, contrary to what other scholars in the same field of research have said, students learn better when instructed in their native tongues (local languages) rather than English, which is a foreign language. This assertion was made by Namuchwa when he looked into a qualitative study of the challenges of utilizing English as a medium of teaching in Upper Primary schools in rural Uganda. In-depth interviews were conducted with a select group of pupils,

teachers, and the head teacher. Classroom observations were also conducted to support English, math, basic science, health education, and social studies teachers. In addition, relevant policy documents were reviewed.

In light of this, Ozer (2019), who concurs with Namuchwa (2007), claims that pupils face several difficulties when studying in English. These problems, according to Ozer, include students' negative attitudes, perceptions of a drop in academic achievement, the need for additional time to understand, challenges learning, and a lack of confidence. However, he pointed out that opinions among students about how English-language instruction affects their academic performance are mixed. Most pupils say studying in English has a negative impact on their academic achievement. He goes on to say that instruction in a foreign language may have a detrimental effect on pupils' academic achievement. However, Dafouz & Camacho-Minano (2016) looked into the impact of EMI on students' academic achievement and concluded that EMI does not lower students' academic outcomes because students' poor English proficiency seemed to be a barrier to in-class interaction and EMI was ineffective in terms of content knowledge acquisition.

The purpose of his study was to determine undergraduate students' perceptions of the English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) setting and the EMI classes. Students' thoughts and experiences in an EMI environment were explained through a case study technique, and their perspectives on learning the field-specific curriculum in English were gathered through semi-structured interviews. The data was gathered from fourth-year undergraduate students during the spring semester of the 2017–2018 school year. The research included six male and six female participants.

The research design used in the study was a descriptive survey. Quota sampling was used to choose the pupils. Focus group interviews were used in this study to gather detailed, descriptive information about students' opinions of EMI. Content analysis was used to examine the information obtained from focus group sessions. As a result, Omer suggested that instructors be willing to improve their teaching methods.

### ***Low proficiency in English and lack of appropriate teaching skills/materials***

Accordingly, Othman & Saat (2009) state that the first five difficulties instructors encounter when delivering lessons in English are: students' low

English proficiency; a lack of suitable teaching resources for the classroom; a lack of competence in English; and difficulty explaining concepts in English. However, they suggest that these difficulties could be resolved by implementing useful teaching techniques like talking gradually and using straightforward language to aid in understanding, using reference materials, translating during class discussions, and code-switching between the local language and English.

Other strategies include using cooperative group activities, hands-on activities, visual aids, practical demonstrations, and multi-media software provided by the Educational Ministry; consulting useful websites for assistance; writing a script to assist in teaching English lessons; and introducing new vocabulary prior to teaching a topic. Finding out how science pre-service teachers deal with the challenges of teaching in English during their practicum was the aim of the study. Regarding the need for sufficient English-medium teacher preparation, recommendations were made in this regard.

They continued by stating that teacher trainers need to determine ways to help student- teachers acquire the language proficiency and subject-specific teaching methods necessary to carry out science instruction in English effectively.

### ***Non-effective implementation of English as a medium of instruction***

According to research, improvements are frequently undertaken too quickly without adequate planning or thoughtful analysis. To overcome the aforementioned obstacles, specific requirements including financial support, workload reduction, and language aid must be met. In light of this, Ibrahim et al. (2017) confirm that there is noncompliance with the English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) policy.

They claim that there are certain challenges for both teachers and students when using English as a medium of education, especially due to mother language effects. However, Ibrahim et al. believe that some of these issues could be overcome if adequate attention is paid to the training and retraining of educators, legislators, and heads/proprietors of elementary schools. Instruction should be conducted in English and other native or regional languages. Once more, students should be exposed to adequate and pertinent

teaching materials for EMI, and teachers should receive training on how to handle EMI and be proficient in the language.

The researchers came at this conclusion after looking into a descriptive study of the challenges of using English as a teaching language in both public and private primary schools in Nigeria. Determining EMI usage patterns, as well as the challenges and repercussions related to its use, was the aim of this study.

In a similar vein, Al Zumor (2019) claims that teaching in English has a major detrimental effect on the majority of students' assessment and comprehension of the material. Therefore, he suggests looking at the possibility of additive bilingual education and making sure that the foundation year students receive high-quality English instruction. This claim was made when he investigated how students in an EMI context perceived affect, pedagogy, communication, evaluation, and lecture comprehension. His conceptual framework has offered convincing proof that learning one's mother tongue improves academic achievement. It has shown how closely mother tongue instruction and high academic achievement are related. Though, the globalization of English had created a novel environment for advanced education where mother languages are no longer as important in many non-Anglophone nations, which has led to a thriving field of study.

## **Methods**

### **Research design**

This study used a mixed-method approach to investigate the research questions. In a single study, "involves the collection or analysis of both quantitative and/or qualitative data in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially, are given a priority, and involve the integration of the data at one or more stages in the process of research," Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, and Hanson (2003) state (pp. 209-240). They point out that collecting data simultaneously enables the researcher to look for and contrast the two types of data in order to uncover findings that are consistent (Creswell et al., 2003). Therefore, the study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods. This set of techniques was selected because it promotes the study's objective, which is the use of English as a medium of instruction in educational institutions, and it uses a representative sample of Dambai and Jasikan Colleges of Education in Ghana.

This is due to the method's ability to employ a variety of tools, including focus groups, questionnaires, and observation, to collect information from participants in their natural environments in order to meet the study's goals. Additionally, the limitations of any one method are supplemented by the mixed-method approach. This strengthens the findings. Assuring the validity, originality, and quality of responses pertaining to the phenomenon being studied is the main goal of employing equally qualitative and quantitative responses in research. Additionally, one component of the responses will be used as supporting data (Creswell & Plano, 2011).

### **The sample and the sampling process**

Purposive sample and basic random sample were the two sampling strategies used in this investigation. While simple random sample was utilized to choose student respondents, purposeful sampling was utilized for tutors.

#### **Purposive sampling for tutors**

Another name for this is subjective or selective sampling. This method depends on the researcher's discretion when choosing subjects. Therefore, researchers may unintentionally select a "representative" sample to accomplish their objectives or target people with particular traits. Because English language tutors are aware of how their pupils utilize English as a medium of instruction, this sample approach was used to tutors.

They are the ones with well-informed opinions regarding the pupils' proficiency in the English language. Purposive sampling also has the benefit of being economical and time-efficient to conduct.

#### **Simple random sampling for students**

In this case, every single student was picked at random, and every student in the entire student body have an identical probability, of being chosen. The responses were divided into males and females to provide gender parity. Under the sponsorship of the Ghanaian government, Transforming Teacher Education and Learning (T-TEL) promoted measures to address gender sensitivity issues in education colleges, which served as the foundation for the decision to choose students in an equal male/female ratio. Paper pieces were cut out of each category in both colleges based on the number of pupils. Of the fifty (50) pieces of paper for each gender, fifty were marked "Yes," and

the remaining halves were marked "No." The sample for the study included everyone who selected "Yes." Because it reduces selection bias and allows for the calculation of the sampling error, simple random sampling was selected. Its simplicity as a probability sampling technique is one of its main advantages.

Sixteen (16) English language tutors from each college and third-year students from Jasikan College of Education and Dambai College of Education, respectively, made up the study's population. Due to their close proximity and ease of access, the two colleges have been selected as the research sites. The fact that they are the only two educational colleges in the recently established Oti Region is another factor. At the start of the 2021–2022 school year, the Dambai College of Education had 1,266 students enrolled and eight (8) English language tutors. With 1,531 students, Jasikan College of Education also employed eight (8) English tutors. One hundred second-year students from each of the colleges comprised the sample of 200 students. As previously stated, 50 men and 50 women were chosen from each college to guarantee gender parity. The selection of second-year education college students was based on their minimum two-year enrolment in the college system. They were also familiar with the College system. Twenty groups of 10 students made comprised the focus group interview target pool in addition to one-on-one interviews with English tutors. Student focus groups involved ten groups from each college.

Table 1: Selected sample for the research (teachers)

| Category          | Frequency |
|-------------------|-----------|
| Tutors in Dambai  | 8         |
| Tutors in Jasikan | 8         |
| Total             | 16        |

Table 2: Selected Sample for the research student-teachers

| Category                              | Frequency |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Third year student-teachers (Dambai)  | 100       |
| Third year student-teachers (Jasikan) | 100       |
| Total                                 | 200       |

Table 3. Distribution of Sample (gender) (student-teachers)

| Category         | Frequency |
|------------------|-----------|
| Male (Dambai)    | 50        |
| Female (Dambai)  | 50        |
| Male (Jasikan)   | 50        |
| Female (Jasikan) | 50        |
| Total            | 200       |

### Data collection methods

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. A range of technologies were employed to ensure the researcher got all the information from the respondents. Creswell (2011) asserts that employing two methods for data collection helps to better comprehend and interpret the research findings by delving deeper into important problems present in the variables being studied. In order to gather information for the study, questionnaires, in-class observations, and interviews were employed. The survey was modified from Agyemang-Prempeh (2018) and Rogier (2012). This is because they looked into related topics in various contexts.

As previously mentioned, data were collected in three stages to investigate English as a medium of teaching in Colleges of Education. A structured questionnaire was used in the first phase to collect the opinions of the student participants regarding the importance of teaching in English, the difficulties of doing so, and the results of doing so in educational institutions. Additionally, the students were asked to score how well they could do the assigned tasks and speak English. The study selected 100 students from each college to complete the questionnaire using a random sampling technique, for a total of 200 responses. There were 100 female students and 100 male students out of the 200 total. Structured questionnaires, interviews, and in-class observations were among the tools used to collect data from the study's participants.

### Questionnaire

Since the researcher could not be available at all times, a questionnaire was utilized to collect a sufficient amount of quantitative data. Because universities follow an academic calendar, the researcher had to finish the study within a specific time frame. Furthermore, structured questionnaires were used in this study since, according to scholars, they are quicker to code and analyse than

word-based data (Cohen, Manon, & Morrison, 2007). Sarantakos (1998) asserts that a questionnaire is advantageous because it ensures respondents' high anonymity and standardizes data collection, both of which incentivize respondents to give truthful information.

The use of a structured questionnaire might also be advantageous for a large sample size if participants are comfortable answering questions. The five (5) sections of the questionnaire included a collection of items that were directly related to the study issues.

In order to get their thoughts on each of the five categories, the respondents were requested to answer a variety of questions. The purpose of the first portion was to learn what the students thought about the reasons they were studying English. The second question asked for opinions on the difficulties that students at education colleges encounter because English is the language of instruction. Responses regarding the impact of using English as the primary language of instruction in educational institutions were gathered in the third segment. The respondents were asked to score their proficiency in English and completing specified tasks in the final two (2) sections of the questionnaire. 195 of the 200 copies of the questionnaire that were distributed to students were returned. Additionally, 16 tutor surveys were gathered, and the researcher used these files.

### ***Focus group interview***

The second step was the structured interview. In order to assess participants' opinions, feelings, and experiences about a subject under study, a focus group interview enables the researcher, acting as a moderator or facilitator, to bring a large number of participants together at one convenient time and place (Bell, 2008; Marvasti, 2004).

The study's research questions served as the basis for the questions in the semi-structured interview guide. While the 16 English language teachers were interviewed one-on-one, the students were interviewed in focus groups. As previously stated, the sample of participants for the focus group interviews included 16 individual interviews with English language teachers from both universities and 20 groups of 10 students based on themes that were found. The interviews were recorded using a recorder, and the tapes were

subsequently transcribed. This was done to ensure the validity of the participants' remarks and opinions.

### **Observation**

The final phase was observation. As a deliberate, organized, and systematic process of "looking" or "watching," observation is a crucial component of all scientific investigations. It is a process guided by logical norms and assumptions and motivated by the desire to learn more about events, occurrences, processes, reactions, conduct patterns, and connections. As part of a systematic data gathering approach, researchers use all of their senses to monitor people in their natural settings (Smart, Peggs & Burrige, 2013). One of the primary advantages of the observation approach is its directness. By hearing what individuals say and observing their actions, you can gain insight into their attitudes, feelings, and ideas (Cargan, L. 2007). The researcher switched between seeing a two-hour class at Jasikan College and Dambai College based on the following criteria:

Tabel 4: In class lesson observation guide

| <b>Criteria</b>              | <b>Rating</b> |         |                                    |
|------------------------------|---------------|---------|------------------------------------|
| Teacher-used lesson language | Only English  | Only L1 | English with L1 for little clarity |

### **Collection of data**

Within a month, the participants self-administered the questionnaire, the observation and the interview. This tactic gave the chance to address concerns that the respondents had regarding the tool. Additionally, the majority of participants were motivated to reply to the items by the personal administration of the instrument. As previously stated, 195 of the 200 student self-administered surveys were received. Alongside the qualitative data, questionnaires from 16 English tutors, including the aforementioned 195, were examined.

### **Data analysis**

The data collected from the questionnaire, in-class observations, and interview schedules were subjected to both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Analysis was carried out theme-by-theme.

To find parallels and contrasts, the researcher arranged information from all interviewers or respondents and their responses, including observations made in class. The connections and linkages between the responses were investigated during the findings analysis.

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations are not just procedural; rather, they are embedded throughout the entire research process and are crucial in framing the research design because "one has to consider how the research purposes, contents, methods, reporting, and outcomes abide by ethical principles and practices," according to Cohen et al. (2007) (p. 51). Therefore, when evaluating the research challenge, the cost/benefit ratio was taken into account. There was almost no risk to the participants. They were asked to schedule time to participate in the interview and finish the survey.

After balancing the expected benefits of the research (increased knowledge about the benefits/significance, the challenges, and effects of English as the medium of instruction) against the costs (participants' time), it was concluded that the study was valuable as a first step in the research process. Other ethical study considerations included decreasing participant risks, informed permission, privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality.

Since each participant was an adult, they were competent enough to make their own well-informed judgments about taking part in the experiment. At every stage of the data collecting procedure (completing the questionnaire and taking part in interviews), they were made conscious of the situation and goal of the study, and participation was entirely voluntary. The fact that participation was entirely voluntary and that withdrawal was possible at any moment was explained to the participants. At every stage of the research, they were given the researcher's name and contact details. I obtained the participating tutors' permission before doing the in-class observation. Measures were taken to protect each participant's privacy and confidentiality during the entire study.

### ***Validity***

Triangulation was used to guarantee the validity of this investigation (Cohen et al, 1994). When studying a facet of human behaviour, triangulation entails using two or more data gathering techniques (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 11). By using two or more approaches, researchers may assess the accuracy of the data

they collect and counteract the drawbacks of using only one approach (Cresswell, 2003; Punch, 2005). As previously mentioned, the semi-structured interview schedule was developed using the questionnaire and observation as a reference. Validity was increased by collecting data using these various tools.

## **Results and Discussion**

There are various perspectives on the employment of English as a medium of instruction. This chapter discusses the study's findings and provides a thematic explanation of the research findings to provide readers a more comprehensive understanding of the study. According to the results, students face several difficulties when it comes to using English as a teaching language in the classroom. Additional research indicates that these difficulties have a noticeable impact on kids' academic achievement.

According to the findings, pupils who receive instruction in English contribute less to the class since they are less proficient in the language and spend too much time during lectures. Using English as a medium of teaching has also been shown to have no effect on students' comprehension of English-taught courses or their ability to decipher English-written textbooks. Additionally, data demonstrates that English-speaking students are more likely to recall facts and engage with their course contents less.

The results of how using English as a teaching medium affects students' performance are the main topic of the third and final segment. The usage of English in educational institutions improves students' employment prospects and increases their global acceptance, according to the findings, which show that pupils grow to have a good attitude toward the language. Additionally, research indicates that using English as a teaching language causes school dropouts since not all kids can understand the material. That being said, it was found that students' competence levels are raised when they use English.

Lastly, the findings imply that students struggle to ask or answer questions when English is utilized as a medium of education due to insufficient vocabulary development.

### Difficulties of English as a medium of instruction

This section discusses the challenges of using English as a teaching language. The results of both tutors and students are again compared and analysed, taking into account important findings. Tables 1-4 provide a summary of the responses from both students and tutors.

Table 5: Tutors' responses to the challenges of using English language as a medium of instruction

| Item                                                                                                                                        | Disagree | Uncertain | Agree |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------|-------|
| Diminishes conceptual understanding                                                                                                         | 50       | 12.5      | 37.5  |
| Lack of familiarity with the topic being investigated                                                                                       | 75       | 25        | 0     |
| Excessive use of time during class                                                                                                          | 75       | 12.5      | 12.5  |
| Low English language competency results in the least amount of participation in the classes.                                                |          |           |       |
| Excessive use of time during class                                                                                                          | 50       | 12.5      | 37.5  |
| Low English language competency results in the least amount of participation in the classes.                                                |          |           |       |
| Not being able to comprehend English-language textbooks and lectures                                                                        | 37.5     | 37.5      | 25.5  |
| When studying in a language they don't understand, students typically pay less attention to what they're learning and learn by memorisation | 50       | 0         | 50    |

Tutors in Table 1 mainly concurred that there are difficulties in using English as a teaching language. Fifty percent of them disagreed that it impairs conceptual understanding. However, 12% were unsure, while 37.5% agreed. 75% of respondents agreed that pupils know very little about the subjects they have studied, but 25% were unsure.

75% of respondents disagreed that excessive time is spent during lessons when asked if using English as a medium of education causes excessive time consumption. Nonetheless, 25.5% of respondents accepted the claim. 75% of respondents disagreed with the statement that pupils know very little about the things they have studied, whereas 12.5% agreed and 12.5% were unsure. Similarly, 50% disagreed, 37.5% agreed, and 12.5% were unsure about the belief that pupils' poor level of English language ability is the reason for their lowest level of participation in class. 75% of respondents disagreed that excessive time is spent during lessons when asked if using English as a medium of education causes excessive time consumption. Nonetheless, 25.5% of respondents accepted the claim. 75% of respondents disagreed with the statement that pupils know very little about the things they have studied, whereas 12.5% agreed and 12.5% were unsure. Similarly, 50% disagreed, 37.5% agreed, and 12.5% were unsure about the belief that pupils' poor level of English language ability is the reason for their lowest level of participation in class.

Table 6: Students' response to the challenges of using English as a medium of instruction

| <b>Item</b>                                                                            | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Uncertain</b> | <b>Agree</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------|
| Diminishes conceptual understanding                                                    | 47.2            | 11.30            | 41.5         |
| Lack of familiarity with the topic being investigated                                  | 44.1            | 17.9             | 37.1         |
| Too much time spent on consumption during class                                        | 43.1            | 17.4             | 39.5         |
| The lowest degree of engagement in the classes because of poor English language skills | 34.4            | 13.8             | 51.8         |

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|                                                                                                                                           |      |      |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|
| Not being able to comprehend English-language textbooks and lectures                                                                      | 36.9 | 18.5 | 44.6 |
| Students who study in a language they don't understand are more likely to memorize information and be less engaged with their coursework. | 27.2 | 13.8 | 59.0 |

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According to Table 2, most students concurred that there are several difficulties with using English as a teaching language. Among the difficulties, it is noteworthy that 47.2% of the participants did not think that using English as the primary language of education impairs conceptual understanding. However, 11.30% were unsure and 41.5% agreed with the statement. 44.1% agreed, 37.1% disagreed, and 17.9% were unsure that using English as the medium of instruction encourages students to have a poor degree of understanding about the subject they are studying. When asked if using English as a teaching language led to excessive time consumption, 43.1% disagreed, 39.5% agreed, and 17.4% were unsure.

Furthermore, the findings show that 34.4% of respondents did not agree that pupils who are not proficient in English participate in class the least. 51.8% of respondents, however, agreed with this statement, while 13.8% were unsure. The results also showed that 36.9% of students did not agree that using English as a medium of teaching causes students to struggle to grasp English-language textbooks and lectures. However, 18.5% were unsure and 44.6% agreed.

The fact that 59.0% of respondents believed that pupils who study in a language they do not understand typically memorize information and engage with the topic less was not surprising. 27.2% of them disagreed with this, while 13.8% were unsure. Tables 3 and 4 reflect the results of statistical tests that were performed on the data. Additionally, the assessments project mean values that indicate how much students and instructors agree or disagree.

Table 7: Results of descriptive statistics test of tutors' responses

| <b>Item</b>                                                                                                                                 | <b>No.</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std Dev.</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Diminishes conceptual understanding                                                                                                         | 8          | 2.7500      | 1.16496         |
| Lack of familiarity with the topic being investigated                                                                                       | 8          | 3.1250      | 1.55265         |
| Too much time spent on consumption during class                                                                                             | 8          | 2.1250      | .99103          |
| Low levels of English language competency result in the least amount of participation in the classes.                                       | 8          | 3.0000      | 1.19523         |
| The inability to comprehend lectures given in English and English-language textbooks                                                        | 8          | 2.8750      | .83452          |
| When studying in a language they don't understand, students typically pay less attention to what they're learning and learn by memorization | 8          | 3.5000      | 1.60357         |

Table 8: Results of descriptive statistics test of students' responses

| <b>Item</b>                                           | <b>No.</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std. Dev.</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------|------------------|
| Diminishes conceptual understanding                   | 195        | 2.84        | 1.54             |
| Lack of familiarity with the topic being investigated | 195        | 2.88        | 1.39             |
| Too much time spent on consumption during class       | 195        | 2.95        | 1.35             |

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|                                                                                                                                           |     |      |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------|------|
| The lowest degree of engagement in the classes because of poor English language skills                                                    | 195 | 3.29 | 1.37 |
| Not being able to comprehend English-language textbooks and lectures                                                                      | 195 | 3.09 | 1.33 |
| Students who study in a language they don't understand are more likely to memorize information and be less engaged with their coursework. | 195 | 3.49 | 1.40 |

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Tutors and students gave different answers about difficulties using English as a teaching language in Tables 3 and 4. According to the investigation, the first item under this theme actually seems to be a topic that both instructors and their pupils agree on. In this case, pupils generated a mean value of 2.84 and tutors created a mean value of 2.7500. This indicates that neither group agrees that using English impairs conceptual understanding. This implies that there was some hesitancy among the tutors and their pupils over whether the assertion was difficult. However, a rigorous analysis of both values shows that many students and tutors disagree with the claim.

Similarly, the findings indicate that a significant portion of them concur that learning in English impairs their conceptual understanding. This indicates that both tutors and their pupils believe that there are no difficulties for students to overcome in the classroom with reference to their academics. But the interview and in-class observations showed different. During the interview, students acknowledged that they have several difficulties. Similarly, observations made in class indicate that pupils' inability to understand materials they read was caused by unfamiliar terminology. They claimed that the unfavourable jargon from some of the technical areas they learn is the cause of this. Thus, it is clear that using English as a teaching language impairs students' conceptual understanding.

This result is in line with that of Othman & Saat (2009), who contend that elucidating concepts in English is one of the main difficulties teachers and students encounter while teaching in the language. In this sense, Othman and

Saat do not just blame pupils for this difficulty; they also blame teachers. Even though some technical topics are not truly understood by pupils, teachers nonetheless fall short of their responsibility to clearly explain them to students. "Sometimes, naturally, there are some terminologies that are a bit strange to students," said one of the instructors who acknowledged in the interview that it is difficult. Students struggle to comprehend in that regard.

According to this teacher, it appears that several technical vocabularies are difficult for students to understand. This is evident from the fact that reading comprehension passages present difficulties for pupils due to the large number of unfamiliar words they include. "Well, sometimes there are some concepts and vocabularies you must use Ghanaian language," said another tutor. The majority of pupils are unaware of what they signify.

This shows that in order to improve students' comprehension, instructors frequently explain various subjects in both the local languages and English. One of the pupils who disagreed, nevertheless, stated that:

*Math and science are two examples of subjects that cannot be taught in Ghanaian. The teacher will find it challenging to explain important terminology in that specific subject in Ghanaian. Therefore, I believe that students will benefit from English being used as an official language in the classroom.*

Due to the fact that they have no choice but to utilize English for their studies, students frequently believe that it is okay. Nevertheless, the results are consistent with demonstrating that the English language impairs conceptual understanding. It is clear that students' comprehension of topics, particularly those that are highly technical, is limited by the use of English as the language of teaching at colleges of education. In order for pupils to comprehend certain technical ideas, examples and illustrations must be used. If tutors want their students to grasp difficult subjects, others want a combination of English and the local languages.

Once more, a mean score of 3.1250 for instructors and 2.88 for students indicates that both parties do not think that students' lack of understanding about the subjects they study is a challenge. It is important to note, nevertheless, that the level of disagreement varies, with tutors having a higher

mean value. This implies that instructors hold a firmer belief that pupils possess deeper understanding of the majority of the things they study. But the interview and in-class observations showed different.

This indicates that students' understanding of some of the courses they take in class is limited. This is in line with the findings of Agyemang-Prempeh (2018), who found that using English as a medium of instruction encourages pupils to know little about the subject they are studying. "The only difficulty students normally encounter is when it is time to answer questions; they can't express themselves explicitly in English," said a tutor who acknowledged that it is a challenge during the interview.

This respondent's perspective confirms that pupils do, in fact, encounter difficulties. This explains why they can't respond to queries in class. Students' ability to express themselves in class is limited due to their limited understanding of some subjects. It was expected that a student respondent who expressed strong agreement would say throughout the interview that:

*Our comprehension suffers when we don't grasp ideas. Both Ghanaian and English should be used in teaching and learning. The usage of Ghanaian languages will improve comprehension.*

According to this perspective, several subjects that are formally written in English are not understood by students. Students ask teachers to explain the vocabulary in the local languages since they feel that these books contain words that they do not comprehend.

It is clear that students' lack of understanding of the things they study is one of the difficulties brought on by the use of English as a medium of teaching in colleges of education. Students pursuing this path must possess a thorough understanding of the subjects they learn in education colleges. Teachers must implement useful teaching and learning practices in order to close this gap. A mean score of 2.1250 was obtained from instructors and a score of 2.95 from students in response to the question of whether English causes excessive time consumption.

According to the values, tutors and their pupils mainly disagree that using English during class takes up too much time. Few respondents were unsure; however, some students and tutors agreed with the statement. On the other

hand, observation and interview demonstrated that this claim is problematic. This result supports the claim made by Arhin (2014) that using English as a teaching language leads to unnecessary time consumption. Therefore, a lot of time is devoted to idea clarification in order to improve students' comprehension.

Teaching in English also requires the use of teaching/learning materials and images to enhance comprehension. Much time is spent in this area in order to accomplish this successfully. During the interview, a teacher concurred that "sometimes, naturally, there are some terminologies that are a bit strange to students." In that sense, students find it difficult to understand.

According to this tutor, students' comprehension is limited by the large number of unfamiliar words in the English language. In this sense, students struggle to comprehend such language. According to a student respondent,

*Our comprehension suffers when we don't grasp ideas. Both Ghanaian and English should be used in teaching and learning. It is best to use Ghanaian languages to improve comprehension.*

Accordingly, this respondent implies that a significant amount of time is devoted to elucidating new words and ideas for pupils to comprehend. Students' responses to questions and their interpretations of texts frequently reflect this. He chooses to use language alternation as a result. This is because, in order to improve students' comprehension, teachers employ a variety of techniques to communicate ideas that can be grasped in a short period of time. In this instance, it takes a lot of time to accomplish that. The results also show that students' low level of English language competence, as indicated by their mean tutor score of 3.0000 and their score of 2.88, resulting in the least degree of involvement in class. This indicates that in this regard, tutors and their students are frequently in agreement. The level of agreement varies, though, with tutors having a greater mean value. This means that tutors see their students' poor level of English language competency more strongly than their students do, which leads to the least degree of interest in class. Given that they are not involved in developing the curriculum, this suggests that students have no say in what is taught in the classroom.

This result is consistent with Othman & Saat's (2009) assertion that one of the top five difficulties teachers have when instructing in English is pupils' poor

English competence. This is also in line with Mchazime's (2001) contention that kids lack the language readiness to receive instruction in English. Therefore, their inadequate proficiency in the language hinders their ability to participate in academic tasks. As a result, he advocated for local language training, which he believes will help local children and improve their performance. Yıldız, Soruç, and Griffiths (2017) further support this by finding that both students and lecturers who use English as a teaching medium acknowledge the challenge of comprehending technical jargon.

They note that in many contexts where English is employed as a language of instruction, poor professional usage of the language is now widely acknowledged as one of the primary causes of unfavourable results. They stated that poor teacher-student proficiency is dangerous because it can result in poor communication, a decline in rapport, and a lack of classroom debate. Some teachers now seriously question the advantages as a result of these challenges. Students suggest that the curriculum be more production-based as a result. To put it another way, it should promote writing and conversation about scholarly subjects.

Additionally, students stated that they needed greater autonomy, more productive learning, and more difficult content. In a similar spirit, language assistance needs to be considered both a fundamental necessity and a fundamental right for EMI students. In order to help EMI students develop their oral presenting skills and general communication talents, they therefore support teaching general English rather than academic English. One of the tutors during the interview stated:

*In fact, what I've found is that occasionally, even their proficiency in English might be problematic. I recall asking a question one day while I was instructing. I questioned, "Is it the English?" as a woman attempted to respond but was having trouble speaking. "English is the problem," she added.*

According to the tutor, this implies that there is an issue with students' capacity to interact successfully in English throughout class. Their writing of essays for class assignments and tests frequently reflects this. " Another said, "Some students struggle to express themselves in English, so they don't contribute to class."

According to the tutors, this indicates that students are unable to express themselves in English, which prevents them from asking or responding to questions in class. Interestingly, one of the student interviewees stated: "We use the dictionary sometimes, which takes a lot of time, because some vocabularies in English are difficult."

Therefore, it is implied from the students' perspective that their poor English ability is the reason they rely so heavily on the dictionary. Due to their incapacity to speak English fluently, the majority of students neither participate nor pose queries. Despite having great ideas to share in class, most students keep quiet because they struggle with the English language. The findings, however, contradict Rogier (2012), who asserts that teachers and students have different perspectives on language proficiency and issues related to using English as a teaching language.

Rogier claims that although teachers disagree that students' language proficiency satisfies expectations for learning in an English-medium setting, pupils do not believe that studying in English causes issues. Given that pupils do not always believe that learning in English causes issues, Rogier's theory may not be totally accurate. Low English proficiency does present a challenge for students. Therefore, they don't contribute effectively to class.

Students' mean score of 3.09 and tutors' mean score of 2.8750 show that tutors and students have different perspectives on the issue of students' difficulty understanding English-language lectures and materials. There was disagreement among tutors over the difficulty of comprehending English-language textbooks and lectures. However, the average score indicates that the majority of students concurred that it can be difficult to grasp English-language textbooks and lectures.

There are differing opinions regarding the problem of students' inability to comprehend English-language texts and lectures, as indicated by the mean score of 3.09 from students and 2.8750 from instructors. Tutors did not believe that it is difficult to understand English-language textbooks and lectures. On the other hand, the average score indicates that most students concur that it can be difficult to comprehend English-language texts and lectures.

Saat and Othman concur that there is a challenge. They believe that a lack of resources to aid in teaching and learning is the main problem. A tutor who

agrees in an interview state that "Students don't understand if the lesson is more related to concepts." They would understand it better when the Ghanaian language is used.

Because tutors speak a number of languages besides English, students find it easy to understand lessons. However, children struggle to understand what they read due to the difficult terminology.

Additionally, the findings showed that students are more likely to memorize information and engage with their learning materials less while studying a language they do not understand. It follows that a mean score of 3.5000 from tutors and a score of 3.49 from the raw data indicate that both tutors and their students believe that pupils prefer to memorize information and engage with it less. However, there are differences in the degree of agreement, with students having a higher mean value.

This suggests that because students are less engaged with their course subject, they learn by memorizing. This backs up the assertions made by Agyemang-Prempeh (2018) and Arhin (2014) that pupils memorize more material and pay less attention to their books when they learn in English. Due to their incapacity to comprehend English, students are shown to be more engaged with their learning materials, but they also turn to memorization of passages they read. Therefore, the notion that students tend to be less engaged with their learning materials when they study a Memorization is an important method of learning, though. In order to achieve this, Vu & Burns (2014) list four main obstacles to teaching in English. These include students' proficiency, teachers' language skills, suitable teaching strategies, and insufficient resources. They suggest that teachers struggle with language. For example, subject teachers utilize slower speech rates and less flexibility when handling unforeseen situations and other language use issues, despite reports that English as a Medium of Instruction places more demands on their teaching abilities. They struggle with effective self-expression, particularly when it comes to paraphrasing, word-searching, and statement refinement. These elements may have been found to have a negative impact on kids' learning.

They struggle with effective self-expression, particularly when it comes to paraphrasing, word-searching, and statement refinement. These elements have the potential to have a negative impact on kids' learning. Although EMI can

result in successful content learning if instructional strategies are modified, there may be reduced covering of the material and knowledge loss. In this regard, teachers can assume that the mother tongue will serve as a stand-in for instruction when English communication fails. Students' poor English competence causes frustrating communication breakdowns in classrooms, according to observations of interactions. It is clear that students may have difficulty using English as a medium of instruction even when their interpersonal communication skills are strong.

In conclusion, it is observed that respondents typically have differing views about the challenges of using English as a teaching language, with many believing that there can be a variety of challenges when using English in educational settings. In support of this, a reply stated: "There is not much difficulty, because they have been using the English language from elementary school until now, and so they are comfortable with the English language." Another respondent, "Students find it difficult to explain themselves in English," said. Students may occasionally find it difficult to understand certain English vocabulary.

These results contradict the conclusions of Rogier (2012), who asserts that staff and students have different perspectives on language proficiency and issues related to teaching in English classes. Although teachers disagree that students' language proficiency satisfies requirements for learning in an English-medium setting, he believes that kids do not perceive studying in English as problematic. Both teachers and students thought that their English language proficiency improved as they studied, and they typically attributed this to exposure to the language.

He therefore proposed ways to enhance current practice, including more precise language goals, better marketing and tracking of available support services, changing attitudes toward the responsibility of language learning, increasing support for teachers and students, and developing programs and services that would provide students with a more integrated experience of language learning and content. The findings do lend credence to the idea that there are challenges associated with teaching English. The challenges that English as a medium of teaching faces, which are brought on by a number of factors, may be overcome by using the local languages in addition to English

as the medium of instruction and by putting into practice useful strategies that can address the current problems.

### **Conclusion**

According to the study, the difficulties include encouraging students to spend too much time in class, lowering student engagement because of poor English ability, and making it difficult to follow English-language lectures and texts. Less interaction with their educational resources and memorisation are two more. To help teachers employ language alternation pedagogy more successfully and efficiently, it is advised that they be introduced to it. This could raise the level of English proficiency at Ghanaian colleges of education, especially when combined with other existing assistance measures.

The current practice of putting a lot of pressure on colleges of education to ensure that, after admission, students solely get teaching in English is insufficient. The current English-medium instruction method is not questioned by students. Another reason why teachers might not be concentrating on language development is their conviction that they are doing everything in their power to teach the methods and subject and cannot be expected to do more than that. Students begin to feel that they don't have enough time to focus on improving their language skills and that just comprehending the content is enough. It is our responsibility as educators to figure out how to give our pupils an excellent learning and growth experience.

### **Recommendations**

It is advised that teachers be introduced to language alternation pedagogy in order to improve their capacity to use it successfully in the classroom. This strategy could raise students' English proficiency levels at Ghanaian colleges of education when combined with current support services. Additionally, the emphasis currently placed on teaching admissions students only in English is insufficient. By concentrating only on subject delivery, teachers may believe they are doing enough, and students do not challenge this strategy. Students might so place more emphasis on mastering the material than on improving their language skills. Teachers should implement tactics that combine language and topic learning to solve this and provide kids a more thorough education.

**Ethical Statement**

The Dambai College of Education's Ethical Research Committee in Ghana examined and authorized this study, which included human subjects. Each participant provided written informed permission prior to study participation. Additionally, the book has been proofread to increase its language clarity and accuracy.

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**Conflict of Interest**

The authors confirm that they have no conflicts of interest concerning the publication of this article.

**Authorship Contribution Statement**

Wumbei: Formulation of idea, research questions, designing the study, drafted manuscript. Adukpo: Research design, data collection, and analysis, formatting, citations, and compliance with ethical research standards. Gaaku: Review of relevant literature, theoretical framework, editing and proof reading. Joana Emefa Adansi: responsible for editing and proof reading of the manuscript to ensure clarity, coherence, and language.

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