

CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF PRACTICALITY OF USING MOTHER TONGUE AND ENGLISH-ONLY POLICY IN CLASS TO TEACH LEGAL ENGLISH

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Received: 22/02/2024	The quandary of the choice between the use of English-only policy or mother tongue in learning and teaching English for Specific Purposes has been ongoing for the past few years at the tertiary level. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness and practicality of implementing the two teaching and learning approaches. The quasi-experimental study was conducted with 56 students in two classes with different pedagogical practices in longitudinal tests during the first term of the academic year 2023-2024. The findings demonstrate that the distinction line is not significant; however, the mother tongue class illustrates a little bit higher in their test results, which indicates that the role of the mother tongue class in teaching English for specific purposes, especially legal English is still essential to some extents. Besides, the students pursuing a dual-degree program gain better achievement in learning legal English as their understanding legal English is somehow supported by the knowledge from their dual-degree program. This empirical study gives a deep insight of the appropriate choice of methodological practices in legal English teaching and learning.
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PHÂN TÍCH SO SÁNH TÍNH THỰC TIỄN CỦA VIỆC CHO PHÉP DÙNG NGÔN NGỮ THỨ NHẤT VÀ CHÍNH SÁCH CHỈ SỬ DỤNG TIẾNG ANH TRONG GIẢNG DẠY TIẾNG ANH PHÁP LÝ

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THÔNG TIN BÀI BÁO	TÓM TẮT
Ngày nhận bài: 22/02/2024	Sự khó khăn trong việc lựa chọn chỉ sử dụng tiếng Anh hay tiếng mẹ đẻ trong việc học và dạy tiếng Anh chuyên ngành đã diễn ra trong vài năm qua ở cấp độ đại học. Nghiên cứu này nhằm mục đích khảo sát tính hiệu quả và tính thực tiễn của việc triển khai hai phương pháp dạy và học nói trên. Nghiên cứu bán thực nghiệm được thực hiện với 56 sinh viên ở hai lớp và áp dụng các phương pháp sư phạm khác nhau trong các bài kiểm tra từng giai đoạn trong học kỳ 1, năm học 2023-2024. Kết quả của nghiên cứu đã chứng minh rằng sự khác biệt về kết quả học tập giữa hai nhóm lớp học thực nghiệm không đáng kể. Tuy nhiên, kết quả bài kiểm tra của lớp có sử dụng ngôn ngữ tiếng mẹ đẻ cao hơn một chút, điều này cho thấy vai trò của tiếng mẹ đẻ trong việc dạy tiếng Anh chuyên ngành, cụ thể là tiếng Anh pháp lý ở một mức độ nào đó vẫn rất cần thiết. Ngoài ra, sinh viên đang theo học chương trình song bằng đạt được thành tích tốt hơn trong việc học tiếng Anh pháp lý vì khả năng hiểu tiếng Anh pháp lý của sinh viên phần nào được hỗ trợ bởi kiến thức từ chương trình bằng kép. Nghiên cứu thực nghiệm này mang đến cái nhìn sâu sắc về sự lựa chọn phù hợp các phương pháp thực tiễn trong dạy và học tiếng Anh pháp lý.
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1. Introduction

Using the mother tongue in teaching English under which circumstance refers to the fact that when a school or educational institution integrates the language learners' mother tongue (or so-called first language) into English lessons. There has been an ongoing debate about the choice of whether the mother tongue should be used in teaching English, especially English for Specific Purposes (ESP), or whether an English-only policy should be strictly implemented in ESP classes to create a challenging English language zone. Advocates of using the mother tongue [1] - [3] would claim that it is normal for language learners to use translation as it is a natural phenomenon when acquiring another language. They further argue that even if one student goes overseas for his/her language acquisition, it is useful for him/her to either translate everything into their mother tongue for a few months or take advantage of using a bilingual dictionary to look up a knowledge base of vocabulary. Many studies [3] - [5] have proven that code-switching and translation in learning a new language take place instinctively for all language learners, so first language (L1) is regarded as an important resource in second language (L2) learning. Teachers should adopt this innate tendency rather than against it. Some researchers acknowledge that learning another language possibly adds richness to students' lives, and it causes little harm to devalue learners' language and culture. When students are allowed to use L1 in ESP classes, they would develop the sense of acquiring another language to experience a positive setting. They feel efficient to have access to a valuable resource assisting them in difficulty learning a new language and they also do not have a terribly guilty conscience about losing their faces in case of not completing one task successfully. Given a situation where students are not allowed to use L1 in English classes, they even receive punishments for breaking this rule. Elena [6, p. 37] reveals that students do not speak their mother tongue explicitly but employ their L1 quietly and feel a sense of shame if they are given some forms of punishments for their utilizing their L1 during the acquisition of L2. In one study conducted by Kani and Igsen [7], the researchers state that L1 helps strengthen the relationship between teachers and students under the teachers' perspectives by sharing what learners are confronted with in terms of learning ESP, especially legal English. Besides, communicating with learners in their first language can be more efficient and make time for more useful activities. Teaching ESP, especially legal English has its own distinctive characteristics, which causes many challenges for language learners to understand even native speakers of English. It seems to be very frustrating when instructions for one activity in English are complicated, whereas students show difficulties comprehending the English explanation. Under this circumstance, one student appointed to translate the task requirements in their L1 language would save time for other activities and prevent a lot of frustration for both teachers and students.

Although using the mother tongue would have a beneficial effect on legal English language teaching and learning, translation could result in the development of an excessive dependency on the students' L1 by both teachers and students [8]. As a result, students lose their confidence in their ability to communicate in the ESP field, they may believe that the only way to understand legal English is to master language translation. Or they are likely to use their mother tongue during legal English lessons even though they are perfectly able to express their ideas in English. This habitual reaction of using the mother tongue in learning legal English might discourage the use of English in class. They feel at ease translating from legal English to their first language and then converting their ideas from their mother tongue to English. This process is greatly dependent on the students' L1 language. In other words, the translated dependency of students' L1 language in learning L2 one and vice versa would significantly reduce students' opportunities to practice legal English, and students also do not really recognize the importance of using English in classroom activities to enhance their English competence [9] - [12]. Another concern about the frequent translation is blamed for the problem of oversimplification, which is due to the fact that many cultural and linguistic nuances cannot be directly translated, especially legal English. As clearly

stated in Vu and Le [13], some typical characteristics of legal English have been identified such as peculiarities of legal English, legal French terms and Latinisms, archaic diction of legal English, modality, frequent use of doublets and triplets, and technical terms. Research has shown that there are many non-equivalencies between two language systems, which would make no sense at all if being translated directly from the source language to the target language and the other way around. In order to evaluate the effects of using L1 in legal English-language learning for the purpose of how to maximize the benefits and minimize the repercussions, this longitudinal, quasi-experimental study was conducted during the first-term of the 2023-2024 academic year with 56 legal English major students at Hanoi Law University (HLU) to shed light on the following questions:

1. How effective is it to implement the English-only policy in legal English language learning classes?

2. Which method of teaching practicality would be more efficient - the English-only policy or mother tongue approach?

This quasi-experimental study was backed up by two classes – one class with 28 participants was treated as an experimental group with the English only policy in class and the other with 28 respondents was classified as a control group with mother tongue allowance. The collected data of the two groups were carefully scrutinized and analyzed to reflect the differences between two classes.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research design

This quasi-experimental research was conducted in a method of longitudinal studies, specifically pre-test, first post-test, and second post-test applied for both assigned classes to evaluate whether students demonstrate the effectiveness of their learning legal English performance in pursuance with teaching and learning approaches. For the purpose of legal English, the participants experienced the same three periodic formats of Test of Legal English Skills (TOLES) – Foundation level, which assessed reading and writing skills with a focus on legal vocabulary in context. The test results would be used to prove the practicality of teachers' methodological implementation. Based on these findings, the researchers arrived at some conclusions and implications to take legal English teaching approaches into consideration.

2.2. Participants

The two classes were chosen purposefully when legal English major students registered the basic legal English No.2. during the first term of the 2023-2024 academic year at HLU. The control group consisted of 28 legal English major students, who underwent the implementation of the English-only policy or so-called monolingual class. In particular, there were 23 female students, accounting for 82.1%, and 5 male ones, representing 17.9%. Similarly, 16 students (57.1%) in this group stated that they were doing dual-degree programs – majoring in legal English and laws while 12 participants (42.9%) informed that they had not clearly planned to take other programs at present. For the quasi-experimental class, they also included 28 students in which the majority of the sample was 21 female students, making up 75% and the rest was 7 male participants, constituting 25%. Meanwhile, the majority of the students ($n = 19$; same as 67.9%) in this class claimed that they had not taken second-degree diplomas currently, and 9 legal English students (32.1%) acknowledged that they were pursuing dual-degree programs. All the legal English major students had already studied basic legal English No.1 in 3 credits.

2.3. Research instrument and data collection

The research utilized three researchers' constructed tests which consisted of 80 items according to the TOLES Foundation level, which assessed reading and writing skills with a focus on legal vocabulary in context. Regarding listening and speaking skills, they would not be concentrated on the basics of legal English. Each test last 90 minutes and was scored from a

possible total of 100 points. The pre-test was given to both classes at the beginning of the basic legal subject No.2, which included in 3 credits. When two credits were over, the first post-test was administered for the purpose of checking their progress. Finally, the second post-test was carried out at the end of the basic legal subject No.1. Then the researchers used one statistics computing application, namely IBM SPSS v.26 to manipulate the test results.

2.4. Data analysis

Descriptive statistics was applied to analyze the gender and identify whether legal English major students followed the dual-degree programs or not. Pair sample T test and MANCOVA were utilized to assess the progress and disparities between two groups over three longitudinal tests.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1 displays the test of sphericity for the purpose of finding out whether the error covariance matrix of the orthonormalized transformed dependent variables is proportional to an identity matrix. Since the p-value (*Sig.* = 0.001) is less than $\alpha = 0.005$, which denotes the fact that the covariances are equal; that is, the learning performance of the two classes is progressive so data from a multivariate perspective should be reviewed as in the Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of hypothesis tests

Within Subjects Effect	Mauchly's Test of Sphericity ^a				Epsilon ^b		
	Mauchly's W	Approx.	df	Sig.	Greenhouse-Geisser	Huynh-Feldt	Lower-bound
		Chi-Square					
English-only Policy Class & Mother Tongue Class	0.771	13.795	2	0.001	0.814	0.851	0.500

Tests the null hypothesis that the error covariance matrix of the orthonormalized transformed dependent variables is proportional to an identity matrix^a.

a. Design: Intercept + Methodological implementation

Within Subjects Design: English-only Policy Class & Mother Tongue Class

b. May be used to adjust the degrees of freedom for the averaged tests of significance. Corrected tests are displayed in the Tests of Within-Subjects Effects table.

Table 2 summarizes the results of the longitudinal tests of the two classes. The outcomes showed that although the students in the English-only policy class had got better results in the same pre-test and gained the accumulative achievement in their learning legal English, they had not obtained their scores as well as those in the mother tongue class in the first and second post-tests. This finding indicates that the students in the English-only policy class have undergone some problems with their understanding of the knowledge of legal English. Those who are in the mother tongue class are allowed to use the mother tongue to exchange whenever they come across the obstacles of legal English challenges. This finding is in line with another recent study [13], which investigated the perceptions of legal English major students and concluded that their respondents also encountered some problems with the comprehension of legal English.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of longitudinal tests

Methodological implementation		Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Pre-test	English-only policy class	6.12	0.368	28
	Mother tongue class	5.84	0.376	28
	Total	5.98	0.394	56
Post-test 1	English-only policy class	6.64	0.275	28
	Mother tongue class	6.72	0.223	28
	Total	6.68	0.252	56
Post-test 2	English-only policy class	6.91	0.319	28
	Mother tongue class	7.26	0.290	28
	Total	7.09	0.349	56

Table 3 reveals the effectiveness of implementing the English-only policy class and mother tongue class. As glimpsed from the p-value (*Sig.* = 0.00), it is concluded that the null hypothesis of the assumption of homogeneity of variance differences or the assumption of ferocity within these classes are acknowledged with some differences in the values. These differences signify that the changes between the two classes are not the same. This is even clearer reflected in terms of comparing two classes with the pedagogical practices with the assumption that there is no similarity between the methodological approaches the participants experienced in each class. The p-value (*Sig.* = 0.00) rejects this presumption and proves that these teaching methods still enable the students to get improved in their learning process but not the same results by looking at the value column. This statement is somehow found similar to the previous studies [2], [9], [6].

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of multivariate tests within subjects design of English-only policy class and mother tongue class

		Multivariate Tests ^a					
Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
English-only policy class & mother tongue class	Pillai's Trace	0.85	145.06 ^b	2.00	53.00	0.00	0.85
	Wilks' Lambda	0.15	145.06 ^b	2.00	53.00	0.00	0.85
	Hotelling's Trace	5.47	145.06 ^b	2.00	53.00	0.00	0.85
	Roy's Largest Root	5.4	145.06 ^b	2.00	53.00	0.00	0.85
English-only policy class & mother tongue class * Methodological implementation	Pillai's Trace	0.31	11.77b	2.00	53.00	0.00	0.31
	Wilks' Lambda	0.69	11.77b	2.00	53.00	0.00	0.31
	Hotelling's Trace	0.44	11.77b	2.00	53.00	0.00	0.31
	Roy's Largest Root	0.44	11.77b	2.00	53.00	0.00	0.31

^a Design: Intercept + Methodological implementation

Within Subjects Design: English-only Policy Class & Mother Tongue Class

^b Exact statistic

Similarly, Table 4 illustrates the effects of the three tests of the English-only policy class and mother tongue class regarding evaluating whether there is homogeneity of the outputs between the practices of different methodological language teaching. The p-value (*Sig.* = 0.00) indicates that all values in the Sig. values are less than 0.05, which acknowledges that the hypothesis of no similarity between these two classes is accepted. Additionally, the degree of freedom (*df*) in the Error regarding the two classes and the implementation of teaching methods are not quite close, which means that the perspectives of the respondents are not quite similar. Besides, the mean square also bears the same situation; that is, the participants had different viewpoints about the methodological implementation of the teachers concerning legal English language teaching and learning. This finding is somehow similar to one recent study [2], which points out the dissimilar ideas about the implementation of the mother tongue in ESP language learning and teaching in general.

Table 4. Test of Within-subjects Effects

Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
English-only policy class & mother tongue class	Sphericity Assumed	35.24	2	17.62	211.27	0.00	0.80
	Greenhouse-Geisser	35.24	1.63	21.66	211.27	0.00	0.80
	Huynh-Feldt	35.24	1.70	20.71	211.27	0.00	0.80
	Lower-bound	35.24	1.00	35.24	211.27	0.00	0.80
English-only policy class & mother tongue class * Methodological implementation	Sphericity Assumed	2.76	2	1.38	16.52	0.00	0.23
	Greenhouse-Geisser	2.76	1.63	1.69	16.52	0.00	0.23
	Huynh-Feldt	2.76	1.70	1.62	16.52	0.00	0.23
	Lower-bound	2.76	1.00	2.76	16.52	0.00	0.23
Error (English-only policy class & mother tongue class * Methodological implementation)	Sphericity Assumed	9.01	108	0.08			
	Greenhouse-Geisser	9.01	87.87	0.10			
	Huynh-Feldt	9.01	91.89	0.10			
	Lower-bound	9.01	54.00	0.17			

As mentioned in Table 4, the effects of applying the teaching styles influenced the students' language learning performance. Table 5 highlights the comparison of the two pedagogical approaches to affirm if there are any similarities or differences when comparing these two methodological practices. Again, the p-value (Sig. ≤ 0.05) confutes the assumption that these two teaching approaches have the same results.

Table 5. Tests of within-subjects contrasts

Source	English-only policy class & mother tongue class	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
English-only policy class & mother tongue class	Linear	34.43	1	34.43	294.74	0.00	0.85
	Quadratic	0.81	1	0.81	16.21	0.00	0.23
English-only policy class & mother tongue class * Methodological implementation	Linear	2.73	1	2.73	23.41	0.00	0.30
	Quadratic	0.02	1	0.02	0.43	0.31	0.01
Error (<i>English-only policy class & mother tongue class * Methodological implementation</i>)	Linear	6.31	54	0.12			
	Quadratic	2.70	54	0.05			

With the hypothesis of the equality of error variances among the participants, Table 6 features the p-values (Sig. ≥ 0.05), which specifies that the null hypothesis denoting the error variance of the dependent variable is equal between the classes. As reported in Table 4, the perspectives of the participants are not quite the same; this disparity demonstrates that the students did not get the same level of understanding about legal English.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics of Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances^a

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Pre-test	Based on Mean	0.24	1	54	0.62
	Based on Median	0.36	1	54	0.55
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	0.36	1	50.96	0.55
	Based on trimmed mean	0.27	1	54	0.61
Post-test 1	Based on Mean	0.87	1	54	0.36
	Based on Median	0.84	1	54	0.36
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	0.84	1	53.50	0.36
	Based on trimmed mean	1.01	1	54	0.32
Post-test 2	Based on Mean	0.03	1	54	0.87
	Based on Median	0.00	1	54	0.95
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	0.00	1	53.45	0.95
	Based on trimmed mean	0.02	1	54	0.88

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.^a

^a Design: Intercept + Methodological implementation

Within Subjects Design: English-only Policy Class & Mother Tongue Class

To arrive at a firm conclusion about the differences among the participants, Table 7 displays the results of the three tests. Concerning the outcomes of the effects between English-only policy class & mother tongue class, the p-value (Sig. = 0.00) indicates that the null hypothesis of the assumption about the equal similarity between the two classes is rejected. In the same vein, the presumption of no difference among the participants is also not accepted by looking at the p-value (Sig. = 0.44). This fact highlights the claim that students who pursued dual-degree programs had different results compared with those who were only majoring in legal English.

Table 7. Descriptive statistics of participants with dual degree programs

Between-Subjects Factors		
		N
dual-degree programs	0	31
	1	25

Multivariate Tests ^a						
Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
English-only policy class & mother tongue class	Pillai's Trace	0.79	100.104 ^b	2.00	53.00	0.00
	Wilks' Lambda	0.21	100.104 ^b	2.00	53.00	0.00
	Hotelling's Trace	3.78	100.104 ^b	2.00	53.00	0.00
	Roy's Largest Root	3.78	100.104 ^b	2.00	53.00	0.00
English-only policy class & mother tongue class * dual degree programs	Pillai's Trace	0.03	0.835 ^b	2.00	53.00	0.44
	Wilks' Lambda	0.97	0.835 ^b	2.00	53.00	0.44
	Hotelling's Trace	0.03	0.835 ^b	2.00	53.00	0.44
	Roy's Largest Root	0.03	0.835 ^b	2.00	53.00	0.44

a. Design: Intercept + dual-degree programs

Within Subjects Design: English-only policy class & mother tongue class

b. Exact statistic

4. Conclusion

The outcomes from the quasi-experimental research have been able to shed light on the assumption about the implementation of either English-only policy or mother tongue in legal English language learning classes. Although the differences in the learning expectations between the two groups are not very remarkable, the tests reflect that the utilization of the mother tongue in class helps legal English major students at HLU gain better results. The arguments might account for the distinctive characteristics of ESP, especially legal English, which even causes many challenges for native English speakers who are majoring in law. These results imply that both methods of teaching are somewhat effective for legal English students, it is better to minimize the use of the mother tongue in delivering legal English lessons, the use of the mother tongue should take place in case the students are confused about the nature of some technical terms. The research also points out that the students doing dual-degree programs and those who are majoring in only legal English have differentiated their learning legal English scores. Therefore, further education should be promoted among legal English students as the knowledge of laws and the ability to use English fluency in an ESP class are complementarily necessary.

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