# Immersive language instruction: Teaching English through English to non-native speakers

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**Abstract -** The main concerns of the study are the effectiveness of the English language as the sole medium of instruction in EFL contexts and how it functions to improve language proficiency in terms of fluency, comprehension, and confidence. This study takes a qualitative design by observations and interviews with teachers and students from secondary schools where the phenomenon of 'English-only instruction' is practiced. The data were collected for six months and then subjected to thematic analysis for drawing out its key pros and cons as a method of instruction. Results of the study show that students under full English instruction are more fluent speakers and listeners compared to those in bilingual learning settings. There was also an increase in teacher-student verbalisation in the English language, hence providing more exposure to the language in an interactive way. Furthermore, a stronger teacher-student interaction in English was seen, which also made the learning environment more immersive and interesting. Although the approach has its advantages— as brought out in the previous section of this paper—it can at the same time result in initial discomfort on students' part and challenges when trying to understand very complex instructions. In other words, while immersion is effective for teaching English and at any rate significantly increases language acquisition, it may not have a lasting effect on students with different levels of proficiency. There is also space for further research on how students perform academically in the long run.

**Keywords:** ELT; Target language immersion; fluency development; classroom interaction; instructional strategies to promote ELT

## 1. Introduction

The information gathered through classroom observations and interviews with the educators and students in high schools, where the instruction is delivered only in English for an entire year, will help us to understand better the effectiveness and challenges of one of the most popular instructional approaches used to teach English as a second or foreign language (TESOL/TEFL). One major approach is adopting English as the major medium of instruction—commonly known as Teaching English through English. This 'target language instruction' approach generally posits that TL should be used predominantly and in many instances to the exclusion of the students' L1. It holds that rather than obtaining knowledge through their first language (L1), learners must be constantly immersed in the second language (L2) of instruction if it is to create an environment replicating conditions under which languages are naturally acquired.

This means creating a setting that encourages spontaneous language use and interaction, much like the way people naturally acquire their native language. By placing learners in authentic situations where

they can interact with the language, make mistakes, and receive constructive feedback, the setting fosters a more natural and efficient learning process. This approach helps learners develop language skills in a manner that mirrors the natural acquisition process, fostering both comprehension and fluency through continuous and meaningful engagement.

Proponents of this method argue that it mirrors children acquire their first language primarily through immersive exposure and practical use within their daily environments, rather than through deliberate translation or comparative analysis between languages. This process involves interacting with their surroundings, engaging in conversations, and observing language use in context. Through consistent and meaningful exposure, children internalize language structures and vocabulary organically. This natural learning process emphasizes the importance of context and interaction in language acquisition, illustrating that language is best learned through experience and usage rather than formal translation exercises or direct linguistic comparisons.

This method is closely aligned with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which prioritize meaningful communication in authentic, real-world contexts as the foundation for effective language learning. CLT advocates for language acquisition through active interaction and practical use, rather than rote memorization or passive instruction. By focusing on communication in real-life situations, students are encouraged to engage directly with the target language, promoting not only linguistic competence but also the ability to use language in various social and practical settings. This approach fosters a more dynamic, learner-centred environment, where language is seen as a tool for interaction rather than a set of abstract rules. Teaching English through English mirrors CLT's emphasis on real-world language use, providing students with continuous exposure and opportunities to practice, thereby enhancing both their fluency and confidence in the language. Additionally, this immersive approach encourages problem-solving, critical thinking, and cultural understanding, key components of communicative competence that are essential for navigating diverse communication contexts. As a result, students are expected to develop their linguistic abilities more naturally and intuitively.

The transition from traditional grammar-translation methods to more communicative approaches underscores the significant evolution in English language teaching. As English increasingly serves as a global lingua franca, its role in non-native English-speaking countries has become crucial for economic growth, international dialogue, and educational advancement. In these settings, adopting English as the primary language of instruction is not merely a pedagogical choice but a strategic necessity. Establishing English-dominant learning environments allows students to interact with the language in a more authentic and immersive manner.

This shift provides learners with practical exposure, facilitating real-world language use and enhancing their ability to communicate effectively in various global contexts. By fully immersing students in English, educators can craft vibrant and interactive learning experiences that reflect the real-world linguistic demands of today's global environment. This method not only improves students' language skills but also equips them for success in a variety of global environments.

Engaging students in authentic English usage, through practical activities and real-life scenarios, helps them develop the communicative skills needed to navigate and excel in a globalized world. These immersive experiences prepare students to navigate the challenges of international communication, making them more competitive and adaptable in global contexts.

However, this teaching approach is not without challenges. Critics point out that students with low proficiency in English may struggle to keep up with lessons conducted entirely in English, leading to frustration and disengagement. Moreover, the exclusion of L1 can limit teachers' ability to clarify complex grammar or cultural nuances. Balancing these challenges against the benefits is a key focus of this research.

The urgency of this study stems from the growing need for effective language teaching strategies that align with the global demand for proficient English speakers. As English maintains its position as the global lingua franca, it is increasingly vital for educational institutions to adapt and enhance their teaching methodologies to prepare students for effective communication in real-world situations. The widespread use of English in international business, diplomacy, technology, and cultural exchange underscores the necessity for students to develop strong, practical language skills. Educational strategies must therefore evolve to prioritize not only grammatical accuracy but also the ability to use English fluently and confidently in diverse contexts.

This involves implementing teaching methods that emphasize practical communication, such as immersive language experiences and interactive activities, to better equip students for real-world interactions. By enhancing these instructional strategies, educational institutions can guarantee that students achieve not only a high level of English proficiency but also the ability to handle the intricacies of global communication with skill and confidence. This refinement helps students master the language effectively

and equips them with the tools needed to engage in complex international dialogues seamlessly. Additionally, in areas where English is a second or foreign language, educators and policymakers face the challenge of meeting international benchmarks. They are tasked with developing and implementing effective programs that not only improve English language outcomes but also align with global standards, ensuring that students are fully equipped for international engagements and opportunities.

In countries where English proficiency is a key factor in economic development and international competitiveness, the effectiveness of language instruction has far-reaching implications. For instance, in countries like Indonesia, China, and South Korea, governments have made concerted efforts to improve English language education by incorporating more immersive teaching methods. However, the success of these initiatives has been mixed, often due to a lack of empirical data supporting the effectiveness of teaching English exclusively through English. This study seeks to fill this gap by offering comprehensive data on the effectiveness of this instructional approach, with a specific focus on secondary education environments. By evaluating the results of implementing this method in high school settings, the study aims to provide valuable insights into its impact on student learning and language proficiency. This analysis will help determine how well this instructional strategy meets educational goals and supports students in developing essential language skills, ultimately contributing to the broader understanding of its effectiveness in secondary education.

The urgency is further compounded by the rapid digitalization of education, accelerated by the global COVID-19 pandemic. With an increasing number of online English language courses and programs available, educators need to identify teaching methodologies that can be adapted to both virtual and physical classrooms. Teaching English through English presents an opportunity to develop pedagogical techniques that are effective across different learning environments, making this research critical in shaping future educational practices.

Many studies have examined the effectiveness of employing English as the medium of instruction within language classrooms. Notably, Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis has been influential in this area. Krashen's theory suggests that language acquisition is best supported when learners are exposed to language input slightly beyond their current proficiency level, a concept known as "comprehensible input." This means that while the language should challenge learners, it must still be understandable, allowing them to build on their existing knowledge and progress naturally. The theory emphasizes that this balance between challenge and comprehension is key to fostering effective language development.

According to Krashen, this slightly challenging input promotes language learning as students are exposed to and interact with language that they can understand with some effort. This theory underpins the practice of using English as the instructional language, as it provides students with rich, meaningful exposure and opportunities for engagement, thereby supporting their language development and acquisition through natural interaction.

Following Krashen's work, Ellis (1994) expanded on the importance of interaction .in learning a second language. His research emphasized the importance of exposure and language production in facilitating language learning, noting that learners benefit from using the language in authentic communicative contexts. This supports the argument for employing English as the exclusive language of instruction, as it provides students with continuous opportunities to practice their language skills.

More recently, a study by Littlewood (2014) examined the role of communicative language teaching in Asia, where students are typically less exposed to English in their daily lives. Littlewood found that while English-only instruction can be beneficial in developing students' fluency and listening skills, it must be accompanied by careful scaffolding and support to ensure that students do not feel overwhelmed by the language barrier. This is particularly relevant in classrooms where students' proficiency levels vary significantly, as teachers need to balance immersive instruction with providing sufficient guidance.

A study by Macaro (2018) focused on the effectiveness of "English-only" policies in multilingual classrooms. His research found that, although such policies can be effective in encouraging language immersion, they may also alienate students who feel insecure about their English proficiency. Macaro emphasized the importance of adapting the English-only approach to the students' needs and abilities, suggesting that flexibility and a gradual increase in English use could yield better results.

Several studies explore various aspects of immersive language learning. Noprival (2024) examines the benefits of immersion in learning English and other foreign languages, drawing lessons from Indonesian polyglots. In contrast, Ballinger (2013) examines cross-linguistic pedagogy and reciprocal learning strategies within French immersion settings. The study focuses on how these approaches facilitate the development of bi-literacy, which refers to the ability to read and write proficiently in two languages.

By integrating techniques that promote mutual learning and interaction between languages, Ballinger highlights how French immersion programs can enhance students' literacy skills in both their native language and French, ultimately fostering greater linguistic and cognitive flexibility.

Er and Mirici (2015) investigate classroom teachers' perspectives on the impact of immersion programs on native language development in Turkey. Genesee (1985) provides a comprehensive review of U.S. immersion programs, analysing their effectiveness in second or foreign language learning. Shahbaz and Khan (2017) explore the role of mobile immersion in enhancing vocabulary learning in foreign language teaching. Xie et al. (2022) assess the outcomes of integrating virtual reality with immersion-based teaching methods in English language learning.

LaForett et al. (2023) examine the adherence to the designated language of instruction in Spanish-English dual language classrooms at the early elementary level. Their study investigates how consistently teachers and students follow the language policies intended for these dual-language programs. By analysing the implementation of these language practices, LaForett and colleagues shed light on the effectiveness of such programs in maintaining linguistic balance and promoting bilingual development from a young age. Their research highlights the challenges and successes in ensuring that both Spanish and English are effectively used in educational activities, contributing to the overall success of bilingual education.

Finally, Weng et al. (2024) provide a systematic review of immersive learning technologies in K–12 English as a second language education. Several studies delve into various aspects of language learning and instructional strategies. Lyster (2015) explores the use of form-focused tasks to integrate language throughout the immersion curriculum. Puspitasari (2018) examines classroom activities within the framework of Content and Language Integrated Learning, highlighting effective teaching practices. Aminatun and Oktaviani (2019) discuss how the Memrise application promotes students' autonomous learning skills through language learning technology. Similarly, Ayu (2018) investigates interactive activities that enhance learning in overcrowded classrooms, focusing on practical instructional techniques.

In another study, Ayu et al (2017) evaluate the use of interactive read-aloud strategies to improve English literacy among secondary school students. Abdelhalim (2015) addresses the development of life skills and language learning strategies in primary pupils through children's literature-based programs. Alhaisoni (2012) analyses the language learning strategies employed by Saudi EFL students in an intensive English learning context.

Altunay (2014) explores the language learning strategies utilized by distance learners of English, specifically among Turkish students engaged in EFL. Mandasari and Oktaviani (2018) conduct an exploratory study on English language learning strategies used by management and engineering students, providing insights into their specific needs and approaches. Lastly, Urhahne and Wijnia (2023) propose an integrative framework for understanding theories of motivation in education, aiming to enhance educational psychology research and practice.

The reviewed articles focus on diverse instructional programs and strategies aimed at enhancing English language proficiency among learners. Valentino and Reardon (2015) evaluate the effectiveness of four instructional programs for English learners, and they emphasize the need for evidence-based approaches to address linguistic and academic challenges. While their study provides critical insights, it lacks a detailed exploration of the socio-cultural contexts influencing program outcomes, and this omission limits its applicability across diverse educational settings. However, the robust methodology strengthens their findings, and their analysis highlights the importance of tailored instruction.

Suri (2016) explores strategies for teaching English in immersion classrooms, and the article underlines the pivotal role of context-specific teaching methods in fostering language acquisition. The emphasis on real-world application is a notable strength, yet the study does not address potential barriers to implementation in resource-limited environments, which could restrict its practical utility. Nevertheless, the article successfully identifies immersion as an effective approach for promoting communicative competence, and it contributes to the ongoing discourse on innovative language teaching techniques.

Supriyono et al. (2022) investigate a modified English immersion model in an EFL setting, and they assess its implementation and effectiveness. The study demonstrates the adaptability of immersion programs and underscores the positive impact on learners' linguistic abilities. However, the lack of longitudinal data limits the generalizability of the findings, and the article would benefit from a deeper analysis of learner diversity. Despite these limitations, the research offers valuable insights for educators seeking to optimize immersion programs for non-native English speakers.

Abdullah and Mohamad (2020) present a literature review on the Highly Immersive Programme (HIP) for primary school pupils, and they examine its role in enhancing language proficiency. The study effectively consolidates existing research and identifies key factors contributing to the success of HIP, although it does not delve into potential disparities in program accessibility. Nevertheless, the

comprehensive review provides a strong foundation for future studies, and it emphasizes the need for inclusive and sustainable language learning initiatives.

The articles collectively underscore the significance of instructional and immersion programs in advancing English language proficiency, and they highlight the need for contextualized and inclusive approaches to address the diverse needs of learners.

While previous research has provided valuable insights into the potential benefits of teaching English through English, there remains a gap in empirical data from secondary school settings, particularly in non-native English-speaking countries. Many studies have focused on higher education or adult learners, leaving a need for research on younger students who may have less exposure to English outside the classroom.

Despite the theoretical support for teaching English through English, several research questions remain unanswered. One of the key issues is determining the extent to which this approach benefits students with varying proficiency levels. While advanced students may thrive in an English-only environment, those with lower proficiency may struggle to understand instructions, participate in discussions, and complete assignments. This leads to questions about whether the benefits of immersion outweigh the potential difficulties faced by lower-level students.

Another challenge involves the role of the teacher in facilitating comprehension. In classrooms where students have limited exposure to English, how can teachers ensure that students understand key concepts and grammatical rules without relying on their native language? This research seeks to explore the balance between providing sufficient input in English while offering support for students who may require additional clarification in their native language.

Furthermore, this study seeks to explore the long-term impacts of employing English-only instruction. While existing research has demonstrated immediate improvements in fluency and listening comprehension, it remains uncertain whether these gains are sustained over an extended period. To address this gap, longitudinal studies are essential to determine if the benefits of English-only instruction continue as students advance through their educational journey.

The main goal of this research is to assess how effectively English is taught when used as the sole medium of instruction in secondary school settings. This involves analysing whether an exclusive focus on English enhances students' proficiency and understanding of the language compared to more traditional, mixed-language approaches. The study aims to explore various aspects such as student engagement, language acquisition rates, and overall educational outcomes to determine if this method provides a more effective learning experience and better prepares students for advanced language use in academic and real-world contexts.

Specifically, the study aims to:

(1) Assess the influence of English-only instruction on students' overall language proficiency, with a particular emphasis on their speaking, listening, and comprehension abilities.

(2) Identify and analyse the challenges encountered by both students and teachers in English-only classrooms, focusing on issues related to comprehension difficulties and classroom management.

(3) Examine the teacher's role in providing appropriate support and scaffolding for students who exhibit lower levels of English proficiency.

(4) Examine the lasting impact of English-only instruction on students' academic achievements and continued language growth, assessing whether the early gains in language proficiency are sustained over the long term.

This involves analysing how exclusive use of English in the classroom affects students' performance across various subjects and their ability to retain and build upon their language skills as they progress through their education. The research aims to determine if the initial benefits of English-only instruction translate into enduring improvements in academic success and language competence, or if these gains diminish over time.

Through a combination of classroom observations, interviews with teachers and students, and an analysis of students' performance over time, this research will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of this teaching methodology. The study will also offer recommendations for educators on how to implement English-only instruction in a way that maximizes student engagement and learning outcomes.

The urgency of this research is driven by the global need for effective English language education, particularly in non-native English-speaking countries. By reviewing previous studies and addressing the key challenges associated with teaching English through English, this study aims to contribute to the ongoing conversation about best practices in language teaching. The findings of this research will have

significant implications for both educators and policymakers as they work to improve English language instruction in schools worldwide.

## 2. Method

This study utilizes a qualitative research methodology, concentrating on detailed classroom observations and informal interviews to collect data on the efficacy of teaching English through English in secondary school settings. The research seeks to develop a comprehensive understanding of how English-only instruction influences language learning by observing classroom interactions and conducting informal discussions with both educators and students. This approach enables an in-depth investigation into the pedagogical methods and classroom dynamics that shape students' language development. By focusing on real-life classroom scenarios and collecting viewpoints from those directly involved, the study aims to reveal the practical effects and challenges associated with using English as the exclusive language of instruction. The qualitative methodology is particularly suited for this research because it provides a detailed examination of how such an instructional approach impacts students' language proficiency and overall classroom environment. Through these observations and conversations, the research aspires to offer valuable insights into the effectiveness and implications of implementing English as the sole medium of instruction in educational settings.

### 2.1 Observations

The primary method of data collection involves direct classroom observations. These observations were conducted in three different secondary schools where English is used as the sole medium of instruction in English language lessons. Over the course of three months, each classroom were observed twice a week, with each session lasting 90 minutes. This allows the researchers to document teacher-student interactions, students' responses to the use of English in the classroom, and the general atmosphere of the learning environment.

During the observations, particular attention were paid to the following:

- The frequency and quality of students' verbal interactions in English.
- The level of comprehension demonstrated by students during various types of classroom activities (lectures, group work, discussions).
- Teachers' instructional strategies, including how they scaffold learning and provide support for students with different proficiency levels.

Observation notes were recorded in a structured format, focusing on key themes such as students participation, comprehension, and the use of English in real-time classroom exchanges.

### 2.3 Unstructured Interviews

In addition to observations, unstructured interviews were conducted with both teachers and students to gain deeper insights into their experiences with English-only instruction. Teachers were interviewed regarding their instructional techniques, challenges faced in teaching exclusively in English, and their perceptions of students' progress. Students were asked about their comfort level, difficulties they encounter, and their views on the effectiveness of learning English in this way.

The interviews were flexible, allowing participants to share their thoughts and experiences freely. This enables the researchers to capture nuanced perspectives that may not be immediately evident through classroom observations. The interviews were conducted on-site, with teachers interviewed individually and students interviewed in small groups of three to five participants.

### 2.4 Technique of Analysis

The data from observations and interviews were analysed using thematic analysis, a method that involves identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the qualitative data. First, the observation notes and interview transcripts were transcribed and organized. The researchers proceed by systematically coding the data, which involves labelling and categorizing key pieces of information that are pertinent to the research questions. This process includes identifying and organizing significant data points to facilitate a thorough analysis. By applying specific codes to relevant information, the researchers aim to uncover patterns, themes, and insights that address the core questions of the study.

This approach ensures that the data is structured in a way that highlights critical findings and supports a comprehensive understanding of the research objectives. Through this meticulous coding process, the researchers were able to draw meaningful conclusions about the impact of English-only instruction on language learning and classroom dynamics. The codes were organized into overarching themes, including "student engagement," "challenges in comprehension," "supportive instructional strategies," and "teacher assistance." By grouping the coded data into these broader categories, the researchers were able to identify and analyse patterns related to various aspects of the instructional approach. This thematic organization helps to clarify how different elements—such as the level of students

involvement, difficulties in understanding, the effectiveness of teaching methods, and the nature of teacher support—contribute to the overall impact of English-only instruction. This structured approach facilitates a deeper analysis of how these factors interact and influence students' language learning experiences, providing a comprehensive view of the study's findings.

Once the themes have been identified, they were analysed to determine the effectiveness of English-only instruction. The researchers compared findings across different classrooms and participants, noting any recurring issues or successful strategies. This provided a comprehensive understanding of how teaching English through English impacts both students' language development and classroom dynamics. Finally, the results were interpreted in light of the research objectives and relevant literature, leading to conclusions and recommendations.

## 3. Results and Discussion

This section outlines the findings derived from classroom observations and unstructured interviews conducted for this study, which investigates the effectiveness of using English as the sole language of instruction in secondary schools. The analysis of these results addresses the research questions and objectives, with a particular focus on several key areas. It evaluates the impact of English-only instruction on students' language proficiency, identifies the challenges encountered by both teachers and students, and explores the long-term effects of this teaching approach. By examining these aspects, the findings provide a comprehensive overview of how English-medium instruction influences language learning outcomes and the overall educational experience in secondary school contexts.

### 3.1 Impact of English-Only Instruction on Language Proficiency

### 3.1.1 Speaking and Listening Comprehension

Classroom observations clearly indicated that students who were exposed to English-only instruction demonstrated significant improvements in both speaking and listening comprehension over time. Initially, many students hesitated to participate in class discussions, often relying on non-verbal cues or short responses. However, as they became more accustomed to the immersive environment, their speaking fluency improved, and they began to engage in more complex interactions with their peers and teachers.

Students also displayed an increased ability to comprehend spoken English, as observed in their responses to teacher instructions and classroom activities. In one instance, a group of students who had initially struggled to understand instructions for a group project gradually improved their comprehension through repeated exposure to English in various classroom contexts.

These findings corroborate Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis, which asserts that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible input that is just beyond their current proficiency level. In this study, students who were regularly immersed in English through real-world, contextually relevant interactions showed significant advancements in both receptive (listening) and productive (speaking) skills. This observation is consistent with the study's objectives, demonstrating that English-only instruction can substantially boost language proficiency when it is delivered within a conducive and supportive learning environment. The data underscores the effectiveness of creating immersive, English-dominant settings, which align with Krashen's theory by providing learners with opportunities to engage with the language in ways that challenge and extend their current abilities, thereby fostering more robust and lasting language development.

However, it is essential to recognize that the initial stages of this approach can be challenging for students, particularly those with lower proficiency levels. The improvements in speaking and listening were gradual and required consistent practice and exposure. These findings suggest that while the English-only method is beneficial, additional scaffolding—such as modelling correct language use and providing feedback—is crucial in helping students transition to using English more confidently.

### 3.2 Challenges Faced by Students and Teachers in English-Only Classrooms

### 3.2.1 Student Frustration and Comprehension Difficulties

One of the key challenges identified during the classroom observations was students' frustration with the English-only approach, particularly in the early stages. In classes where students had limited exposure to English outside of the classroom, many struggled to follow complex instructions, understand key concepts, and participate in discussions. This was corroborated by the unstructured interviews, where students expressed feelings of confusion and isolation, especially during the first few weeks of the course.

In some cases, students reverted to using their native language (L1) during group work, particularly when they found it difficult to articulate their thoughts in English. This was especially common among students with lower proficiency levels, who reported feeling "lost" during lessons and relying on their peers for translation and clarification.

These challenges are consistent with the concerns raised in previous studies (Macaro, 2018) regarding the potential for English-only instruction to alienate students who struggle with the language barrier. While the goal of this approach is to create an immersive environment that fosters natural language acquisition, it can inadvertently hinder students' ability to grasp complex concepts if they do not have sufficient linguistic support.

Teachers, therefore, play a critical role in mitigating these difficulties. The observations revealed that teachers who employed scaffolding strategies—such as using visuals, modelling language use, and simplifying instructions—were more successful in helping students overcome initial comprehension difficulties. This suggests that while English-only instruction can be effective, it must be implemented with a flexible, supportive teaching approach that adapts to the needs of lower-proficiency students.

### 3.2.2 Teacher Challenges: Classroom Management and Instructional Adaptation

Teachers also faced significant challenges in implementing English-only instruction. During interviews, many teachers expressed difficulty managing classrooms where students had diverse proficiency levels. In classrooms with mixed-ability students, teachers reported struggling to balance the needs of more advanced students with those of lower-level learners, often finding that the latter group required additional attention and support.

Additionally, some teachers found it challenging to explain abstract or complex grammatical concepts without reverting to the students' native language. This was particularly evident in lessons focused on grammar instruction, where students had difficulty understanding rules and structures solely through English explanations.

These findings highlight the need for a more nuanced approach to English-only instruction, particularly in classrooms with varying proficiency levels. Teachers' ability to manage such classrooms effectively depends on their capacity to adapt their teaching methods and provide differentiated instruction. This may involve using more visual aids, adjusting the pace of instruction, or occasionally allowing students to use their native language for clarification, particularly when dealing with complex topics.

The challenge of explaining grammatical concepts in English suggests that certain aspects of language teaching may benefit from a more bilingual approach. While the immersion model promotes fluency and listening comprehension, there are instances—especially in grammar instruction—where the use of L1 can facilitate understanding and prevent confusion.

### 3.3 The Role of the Teacher in Supporting Lower-Proficiency Students
### 3.3.1 Instructional Scaffolding and Differentiation

Teachers who employed scaffolding techniques were more successful in supporting lower-proficiency students. These techniques included breaking down complex instructions into smaller, more manageable tasks, using visual aids, and incorporating peer support during group activities. For example, one teacher used a combination of pictures and simple English to explain a difficult vocabulary word, which helped students grasp the meaning without needing to switch to their native language.

Teachers also used differentiated instruction to cater to students at different proficiency levels. This included giving more advanced students opportunities to engage in higher-order thinking tasks, while providing simpler, more structured activities for lower-level students. In one observed lesson, the teacher used tiered assignments, allowing students to choose tasks that matched their language abilities.

These findings emphasize the importance of scaffolding and differentiation in English-only classrooms, particularly when teaching students with varied language proficiency levels. By providing multiple entry points into the material, teachers can ensure that all students—regardless of their proficiency—can engage with the content meaningfully. This supports the objective of investigating how teachers can offer adequate support to lower-proficiency students in an English-only environment.

The results also suggest that the success of English-only instruction depends largely on the teacher's ability to create a supportive, flexible learning environment. Teachers who use a variety of instructional strategies and adapt their methods to meet the needs of individual students are more likely to see positive outcomes from English-only instruction. This points to the need for ongoing professional development for teachers, particularly in the areas of differentiated instruction and scaffolding.

### 3.4 Long-Term Effects of English-Only Instruction on Academic Performance
### 3.4.1 Fluency and Retention Over Time

To assess the long-term effects of English-only instruction, follow-up observations and interviews were carried out six months after the initial data collection phase. This extended timeframe allowed for a thorough evaluation of how sustained English-medium instruction impacts students over time. By revisiting the same classrooms and engaging with the participants again, the study aimed to capture any enduring changes in students' language proficiency, educational experiences, and overall adaptation to the English-only approach.

These follow-up assessments provided deeper insights into the lasting benefits and potential challenges associated with this instructional method. The results indicated that students who had been consistently exposed to English-only instruction continued to show improvements in fluency, particularly in speaking and listening. These students were more confident in their ability to communicate in English, both in and outside the classroom, and demonstrated a better retention of vocabulary and grammatical structures than those in bilingual classrooms.

However, the data also revealed that some students continued to struggle with written English, particularly when it came to complex sentence structures and formal writing tasks. While students were able to communicate effectively in spoken English, their written work often lacked the same level of fluency and grammatical accuracy.

These findings suggest that while English-only instruction is effective in promoting oral fluency and listening comprehension, it may not fully address the challenges of developing proficiency in written English. This points to a potential limitation of the immersion model, particularly in academic contexts where formal writing is an important skill.

The long-term benefits of English-only instruction are clear in terms of oral communication skills, but further research is needed to explore how this approach can be adapted to improve students' written language proficiency. Teachers may need to incorporate more explicit instruction on writing skills, perhaps through a more balanced approach that integrates elements of the students' native language where appropriate.

The findings of this study provide strong evidence that teaching English through English is an effective method for developing students' oral fluency and listening comprehension in secondary school settings. However, the success of this approach depends heavily on the teacher's ability to scaffold learning, differentiate instruction, and provide ongoing support for lower-proficiency students. While English-only instruction offers significant benefits, it also presents challenges, particularly for students with limited exposure to English outside the classroom.

The study highlights the need for a flexible approach to English-only instruction, one that allows for occasional use of the students' native language in order to clarify complex concepts and ensure comprehension. Teachers play a crucial role in facilitating students' language development, and their ability to adapt their instructional strategies is key to the success of this approach.

Finally, while English-only instruction is effective in promoting oral fluency, further research is needed to explore how this method can be adapted to improve students' written language skills. By addressing these challenges, educators can ensure that English-only instruction remains a valuable tool for language acquisition in secondary schools.

## 4. Conclusion
### 4.1 Conclusion

This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of employing English as the sole medium of instruction in secondary school classrooms. The investigation centred on several key areas: the impact of this approach on students' language proficiency, the challenges encountered by both students and teachers, and the long-term implications for academic performance. Specifically, the research sought to determine how English-only instruction influences students' overall language skills, including speaking, listening, and comprehension.

It also explored the difficulties that arise in such an instructional environment, including issues related to comprehension and classroom management, as well as the role of teachers in addressing these challenges. Additionally, the study aimed to assess the enduring effects of English-only teaching on students' academic achievements and language development over time. By examining these aspects, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of how this instructional method performs in various dimensions of educational outcomes.

Through classroom observations and unstructured interviews, it was found that the English-only approach effectively enhances oral fluency and listening comprehension. Students immersed in an English-only environment exhibited significant improvements in speaking and listening skills over time, aligning with the study's objectives. However, the initial difficulties faced by students, particularly those with lower proficiency, highlight the need for ongoing scaffolding and support.

The study also revealed several challenges associated with this instructional approach. Both students and teachers reported difficulties in managing language barriers, particularly when dealing with abstract or complex topics. Despite these challenges, teachers who adapted their teaching strategies—by providing differentiated instruction and using visual aids—were able to help students navigate the

immersion model more effectively. These findings suggest that English-only instruction can be successful, but its implementation must be flexible and responsive to the needs of diverse learners.

In terms of long-term effects, while the English-only approach fostered oral communication skills, students continued to struggle with written English, particularly in formal and academic writing. This indicates that the method may be more suited to developing conversational skills, and further research is needed to explore how it can be adapted to address writing proficiency. Overall, the study concludes that teaching English through English is a valuable method, but one that requires careful planning and ongoing teacher support to maximize its benefits.

## 4.2 Advantages of the Study

(1) Practical Insights into Language Acquisition

One of the main advantages of this study is that it provides practical insights into how English-only instruction affects students' language acquisition. By focusing on real-world classroom dynamics, the research offers valuable information on the benefits of using an immersive approach in language education. It highlights the potential for students to develop oral fluency and listening skills in a relatively short period of time, providing empirical evidence to support the use of English as the primary medium of instruction.

(2) Teacher-Centred Insights

The study also offers critical insights into the role of teachers in facilitating English-only instruction. Through observations and interviews, it was clear that teachers play a key role in determining the success of this instructional approach. Their ability to scaffold learning, provide differentiated instruction, and adapt to the needs of their students was shown to be essential. This emphasizes the importance of teacher training and professional development, particularly in classrooms with mixed proficiency levels.

(3) Focus on Real Challenges and Solutions

Another strength of this study lies in its exploration of the challenges associated with English-only instruction. By acknowledging the difficulties faced by both students and teachers, the research presents a balanced perspective. It doesn't simply focus on the advantages but also provides realistic solutions, such as the use of scaffolding techniques and visual aids, that can help mitigate these challenges.

## 4.3 Limitations of the Study

(1) Limited Scope of Participants

One of the main limitations of this study is its relatively small sample size. The research was conducted in three secondary schools, which, while providing valuable data, may not fully represent the broader population of schools using English-only instruction. The diversity of students' backgrounds, including their prior exposure to English, was not extensively explored, which limits the generalizability of the findings.

(2) Focus on Oral Proficiency Over Written Skills

The study primarily focused on students' oral and listening skills, with less attention given to their written language development. Although the findings indicated that students improved in their oral communication, the challenges they faced in written English were only briefly touched upon. Future research could benefit from a more comprehensive examination of how English-only instruction affects both written and oral language proficiency to provide a more holistic view of its effectiveness.

(3) Short-Term Observations

Another limitation is the relatively short duration of the study. Although improvements in oral fluency and listening comprehension were observed, these findings are based on data collected over a three-month period. The long-term effects of English-only instruction, particularly on academic performance and language retention, require further investigation. A longitudinal study would offer a more in-depth understanding of how this approach influences students' language development over time.

(4) Reliance on Self-Reported Data

The unstructured interviews used in this study, while valuable for gathering personal insights, relied heavily on self-reported data. This may have introduced some bias, as participants could have tailored their responses based on what they believed the researcher wanted to hear. A mixed-methods approach, incorporating quantitative data such as test scores or performance assessments, could provide a more objective measure of the impact of English-only instruction.

Given the limitations identified, future research could benefit from expanding the participant pool to include a more diverse range of schools and students. Additionally, a longitudinal study would provide deeper insights into the long-term impact of English-only instruction, especially on written language skills. Exploring how different instructional strategies, such as the integration of native language support in

specific contexts, could enhance the effectiveness of English-only classrooms would also be valuable. Finally, incorporating quantitative data alongside qualitative observations could offer a more comprehensive view of students' overall language development.

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