A sneak peek at training English-medium instructors in China

University instructors' perspectives on training programs in English-speaking countries

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English-medium Instruction (EMI) has become increasingly common in non-English speaking countries such as China. EMI instructors' inadequate English proficiency has been reported as a major hindrance to successful EMI. This study examined EMI instructors' perceptions on the effectiveness of overseas training programs. The participants of the study were 75 instructors from 20 universities in a big metropolis in China who were engaged in a four-month international assignment in one of the universities in Australia, Canada and the US between 2009 and 2010. Data sources included survey and written reports. Constant comparison was applied to generate common themes. Results indicated that the instructors regarded the training programs that focused more heavily on pedagogy as more effective and hoped for more context-specific pedagogy applicable to Chinese educational systems. They perceived the training programs with an emphasis on supervised teaching practices as more effective. Implications are provided for EMI instructors and administrators.

Additional abstract(s) at end.

Keywords: English-medium instruction, international assignments, language proficiency, pedagogy, instructors' perceptions

1. Introduction

Internationalization has become a trend in higher education throughout the world. Intertwined with internationalization is English-medium instruction (EMI) (Kirkpatrick, 2011), which has become increasingly commonplace in non-English speaking countries (Wilkinson, 2013). Some European countries such as

the Netherlands, Denmark, and Sweden are leading the way in this effort, and more recently, EMI has been supported by the government and has made some significant progress in the higher education systems of Asian countries such as China. In 2001, the Ministry of Education (MOE) of the People's Republic of China (hereafter China) proposed 12 measures to enhance the quality of higher education in China. Among them was a policy for universities to offer 5% to 10% of their courses bilingually in Chinese and English within three years (MOE, 2001). In 2007, the MOE and the Ministry of Finance (MOF) of China co-published guiding principles for higher education reformation. EMI was emphasized again. Universities in general were expected to "promote curriculum design of bilingual education, explore effective teaching models, and improve students' disciplinary English proficiency and their ability to conduct research in English" (MOE & MOF, 2007, p. 6).

To respond to such an initiative, many tertiary institutions started to offer some content area courses via EMI. However, there were many difficulties encountered by academic staff and university administrators. One of the main obstacles was the paucity of eligible instructors to undertake these tasks (e.g. Fang, 2009; Fang, 2011; Hou & Xuan, 2009; Peng, 2013; Xia, 2007). Many content area instructors lacked the ability to conduct disciplinary instruction in English, and English language faculty members were incapable of teaching the content (Du, 2002). Fang (2009) reported that it was estimated that around 100 universities surrounding the Shanghai area would offer bilingual courses by the end of 2007, which generated a need for around 10,000 English-medium instructors. However, only 2,100 instructors were able to teach content in both Chinese and English in the region.

The shortage of qualified instructors has become a major roadblock for the successful continuation and expansion of EMI in Chinese universities. There are no universal guidelines on how to prepare EMI instructors. Some cities, especially those with strong economic power and copious resources, have created some training opportunities and designed some training programs for their local university instructors. The present study focuses on instructors who had participated in one of the training programs offered in three different English-speaking countries – the United States (US), Canada, and Australia – between 2009 and 2010. The programs were designed to enhance instructors' English proficiency and their ability to conduct EMI. The aim of this study was to explore the instructors' perceptions on the effectiveness of such training programs.

2. Background

2.1 Globalization and EMI

Within the context of globalization, English proficiency is regarded as an important global literacy skill (Tusi & Tollefson, 2007). The goal of English proficiency for citizens has influenced the agenda for many national and cross-national educational policies (Spring, 1998, 2006, 2008), such as the promotion of EMI in tertiary institutions across nations. Increasing numbers of EMI programs have emerged in countries and universities where English is not a native language since the last century (Wächter & Maiworm, 2014). In addition, it is estimated that approximately half of the world's international students are learning through English (Ball & Lindsay, 2013). Most European countries have undergone what is called Englishisation (e.g. Coleman, 2006; Phillipson, 2009) in their higher education systems, and the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands are particularly strong in this endeavor due to their geographical proximity to Britain and linguistic connections between their national languages and English (Werther, Denver, Jensen, & Mees, 2014). There was an increase of 340% in EMI offerings in European universities from 2002 to 2007 (Wächter & Maiworm, 2008), and the same trend is happening worldwide (Doiz, Lasagabaster, & Sierra, 2013).

In a large pan-European study by the Academic Cooperation Association (Wätcher & Maiworm, 2008), nine different reasons for introducing EMI programs into European higher education system were reported. Among them, the most dominant reasons are to 1) attract international students, 2) make domestic students fit for the global or international market and 3) raise university rankings (Wilkinson, 2013). In the Chinese context, advocates of bilingual education claimed that the addition of EMI and improvement of English proficiency were closely related to China's development and modernization (e.g. Feng, 2002; Jiang, 2002; Shen & Feng, 2005; Song & Yan, 2004; Wang, 2003; Yu & Han, 2003; Zhou, 2004; Zhu, 2003), high quality education (e.g. Huang, 2005; Shen & Feng, 2005; Son & Yan, 2004), and students' personal development (e.g. Qian, 2003a; Qian, 2003b; Wang, 2003; Zhang, 2003; Zhou, 2004). Different voices appeared, however, pointing out that the importance of nationwide English proficiency to China's development, quality education, and students' personal development was overemphasized (Hu, 2010). Furthermore, Hu (2010) commented that the bilingual programs have fallen far short of the expected success due to the poor English proficiency of most instructors and students. In addition, the scarcity of professional training and the dearth of learning materials and curriculum standards were also noted as contributing factors to the perceived failure.

In the global context, there is not a universal approach to EMI offerings. Decisions on the specific nature of EMI programs are generally made at the university level. China's approach to EMI at the tertiary level is still in an experimental stage. Other than the general guidelines from the MOE and MOF, there are no specific policies or authoritative research guiding its practice. Individual universities have their own policies and requirements for EMI course offerings. In most cases, an EMI course is expected to follow certain procedures and requirements:

–   Application with a sound bilingual curriculum and evidence of qualified human resources;
–   Specification of materials – either adoption of authentic textbooks by a foreign university or teaching materials that are instructor-compiled;
–   Specification of the ratio of English and Chinese use in teaching, depending on the teacher's competence in the English language;
–   Typical requirement that homework and the tests be conducted in English;
–   Typical requirement that written classroom input (blackboard writing or PowerPoint slides) be in English. (Pan, 2007, p. 203–204).

At the heart of all these procedures and requirements are the EMI instructors.

2.2   Research on EMI instructors

Research related to EMI instructors' abilities to conduct EMI has yielded mixed and often negative results in contexts outside of China. Some studies have reported considerable faculty resistance to EMI (e.g. Doiz et al., 2013; Webb, 2002). Many studies have found faculty's inadequate English proficiency a major hindrance to effective EMI (e.g. Ball & Lindsay, 2013; Cots 2013; Doiz et al., 2013; Webb, 2002; Wilkinson, 2013). It has been reported that the EMI instructors were less flexible and improvisational than they were teaching in their first language (L1) (e.g., Werther et al. 2014). They could not use anecdotes or humor, or deepen students' understanding through thorough and varied explanations. They reduced the amount of content instruction (Tatzl, 2011) and adopted various coping strategies such as using a transmission-oriented pedagogy (Webb, 2002), avoiding asking or answering questions (Airey, 2011), and switching to their L1 (Airey & Linder 2006).

Among the limited number of preliminary studies conducted in China, similar results have been found for EMI instructors. They rely on the similar coping strategies to mend the gap caused by their limited English proficiency (e.g. Hu, 2010, Hu & Lei, 2014). In addition, it is understood that teaching in EMI is more than simply teaching in another language. According to Tatzl (2011), language proficiency, effective lecturing behavior, and personal attitude are three pillars for

the successful implementation of EMI. More experienced EMI instructors often draw attention to pedagogical challenges related to EMI in addition to linguistic issues (Tange, 2010). Clearly, training of EMI instructors in all contexts is needed, and it should address both language proficiency and pedagogy.

Borrowing and expanding on implications of language issues for a range of international human resource management activities proposed by Marschan-Piekkari, Welch and Welch (1999), Werther et al. (2014) have described EMI instructor training and support from four aspects: staff selection, training and development, international assignments, and performance appraisal. In terms of staff selection, one way to have eligible EMI instructors is to hire native speakers to teach in EMI programs. However, in any context worldwide, the majority of EMI instructors are selected from the existing instructors. Therefore, many universities have adopted testing and certification procedures (Werther et al., 2014) where instructors are tested on their language proficiency, especially oral English (e.g. Ball & Lindsay, 2013; Klaassen & Bos, 2010; Kling & Stæhr, 2011). In the Chinese context, such screening tests are not popular. However, a screening test was implemented in this study to select participants. Regarding training and development, a natural reaction to address the inefficiency of EMI instructors is providing language courses to strengthen instructors' oral proficiency, especially their pronunciation (Ball & Lindsay, 2013). However, linguistic training alone is insufficient. EMI instructors should be required to take English language courses that focus on teaching subject-matter (Vinke, Snippe, & Jochems,1998; Tatzl, 2011). There is a need for both EMI pedagogy and language support courses (Ball & Lindsay, 2013; Lavelle, 2008). With respect to international assignments, most instructors regard opportunities to work at a university in an English-speaking country to be beneficial for their EMI (e.g. Hu & Lei, 2014; Werther et al., 2014). In addition, it is suggested EMI instructor participate in subject-specific international conferences, communicate with colleagues in English speaking-countries, and read and publish in English (Vinke et al., 1998). However, there is no actual research to investigate the effectiveness of these international assignments on the implementation of EMI from instructors' perspectives. This is a gap that the present study aims to address. Finally, when it comes to performance appraisal, Vinke et al. (1998) have recommended a lighter workload for non-EMI duties when instructors start teaching via EMI. Low levels of motivation to engage in EMI are the results of lack of bonus system, incentives, and rewards. High levels of motivation are likely to be aroused if EMI instructors' language skills are not taken for granted, but viewed as a resource or highly valued competence (Werther et al., 2014) or if EMI is built into faculty assessment and staff development.

To summarize, training EMI instructors is a complex issue that needs support from government policies and university administration and should include

a range of considerations from staff selection to performance appraisal. The training programs introduced in the next section represent an effort to engage Chinese university EMI instructors in different international contexts. Instructors' perceptions on the effectiveness of these overseas training programs are explored in this study.

3.   The present study

3.1   Description of the training programs and research questions

Three four-month training programs were located in major research universities in the US, Canada, and Australia. All universities have excellent academic rankings and international reputations. The details of each program were negotiated between a government agency named the Higher Education Teacher Training Center (hereafter Center) in a major metropolis in China and each individual university in the three countries. The guiding principles for all programs were improving oral communication, listening comprehension, and academic English in the discipline; auditing disciplinary courses; understanding curriculum design, delivery methods, and assessment procedures; and conducting presentations and completing academic papers. Nonetheless, in reality, not every component was incorporated in all three training programs. There were distinct differences, as the programs were designed based on the strengths and existing resources at the different universities. The differences among the programs are highlighted in Table 1.

Table 1. Key components of the training program design by country

Location	Program specifics
US	– The training focused on the teachers' English proficiency (mainly speaking and writing) – The teachers had to arrange their own opportunities to audit disciplinary courses – A course on American culture and society with site visits was offered
Canada	– The training focused on pedagogy for new teachers – The teachers conducted presentations on content, pedagogy, and research – Teaching demonstrations were videotaped and peer reviewed
Australia	– The training focused on both language and pedagogy – A mentor was provided for each student – Each teacher conducted two micro-teaching sessions – The teachers randomly audited courses from various disciplines

Such training activities have been in existence approaching a decade. Nevertheless, research on such programs and activities has been scarce. The goal of the present study was to tap into EMI instructors' perspectives on the training they received in the US, Canada, and Australia. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What aspects of the training program did instructors perceive as effective?
2. What aspects of the training program did instructors perceive as ineffective or challenging?
3. What were the reported outcomes of the training?

3.1.1   *Participants*

The participants in this study were 75 university instructors from various departments at 20 universities in a major city in China who participated in one of the training programs specially arranged for them in an English-speaking country between 2009 and 2010. Each year, two programs were available. In 2009, 24 instructors participated in the US program and 18 were sent to the Australian program. In 2010, the same US site hosted 19 instructors, and 14 instructors participated in the Canadian training program. Approximately 29 content areas were represented among the participating instructors, including areas such as engineering, computer science, accounting, filming, chemistry, and journalism.

It was a highly selective process to obtain these training opportunities. The candidates were required to have at least a master's degree in their field of study, be 35 years old or younger, have over three years of teaching experience, and be at the rank of lecturer or higher. The candidates were also expected to pass the National College English Test Band 6 (CTE 6). If all the above requirements were met, the instructors would be eligible to be nominated by their department chair. All the nominees were required to take a national standardized exam: the English version of the Business Foreign Language Test (BFT), which qualifies business professionals to conduct various government-related businesses in English-speaking countries. The exam contains listening comprehension (25%), reading (35%), writing (15%) and oral proficiency (25%) sections. Only those who passed the test with a satisfactory score were able to join the training programs. Priority was given to the candidates who had experience conducting EMI prior to attending the program. However, among the 75 participants, only 21 had been engaged in EMI teaching prior to the training. All 75 participants of the study met the selection criteria and spent four months in one of the universities in the US, Canada, and Australia.

3.1.2   *Data collection and analysis*

The data were elicited from two sources: a survey and written reports that involved responses to specific prompts. The unanimous survey contained four parts with

a total of 34 questions. The items in the survey were a combination of multiple choice, multiple answer, and short answer questions. Part 1 elicited personal information such as the location of training and prior EMI teaching experience. Part 2 was about their perceptions on the effects of the training program. One sample question was: How do you rate the training in terms of having a positive impact on your EMI teaching? The participants were instructed to select a rating among four possible responses: High, Average, Poor, and No positive impact. Part 3 was about their perceptions on the implementation of the training. Questions in this section gathered around the topics such as their satisfaction level to the courses offered, services provided, and housing arranged. Part 4 elicited their suggestions for future programs such as preferred length of the program and program design. The last question of the survey was an open-ended question designed to elicit participants' feedback on the training that was not covered by other survey questions. The survey was conducted in Chinese and collected within three months after the participants completed the training.

These participants also submitted a written report by the third month after they completed the training. The written reports served as a "structured interview" and therefore specific prompts were provided. Prompts included, for example: What is your discipline? What is your English proficiency before and after training in listening, speaking, reading and writing? What was your daily routine in the training program? What did you gain from this training? What were the challenges? What are the differences in higher education between China and the country of your training? What are your plans/activities to utilize what you learned from the training in your teaching? Study participants were permitted to use either English or Chinese. All the participants in the Australian program constructed their reports in English, while the majority of reports from participants of US and Canadian programs were written in Chinese. The average length of the reports was between 1,000 to 1,500 words.

After these data were collected, I ran simple statistics and adopted the constant comparison method (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) for data analysis. I coded surveys and read all written reports carefully multiple times. The major themes occurring repeatedly were recorded. Another reader, unrelated to the study, was invited to read about 20% of the reports and asked to identify themes. We compared our coding and discussed differences. We finally reached an agreement on the major themes revealed from the data sources.

4.   Results

By default all program participants were study participants because completion of the anonymous survey and written report was required for the training program participants, and they agreed to allow their survey responses and reports to be used for research purposes. The purpose for collecting survey and written reports was twofold: to inform this study and to guide the Center's future work.

4.1 What aspects of the training program did instructors perceive as effective?

4.1.1   *Language proficiency*

In the written reports, all participants stated that prior to the training, among all language skills they were strongest in reading, followed by writing. This is typical for English learners in China at this age, as the English instruction they received has mostly been based on grammar-translation and audiolingual methods. The majority of the instructors, including many of the 21 who had taught EMI classes before, claimed having difficulties in communicating orally in English or using English to teach disciplinary courses. Many of them were nervous about the training programs before their departure, but all of them were excited about the valuable opportunity to potentially improve their pedagogical and linguistic abilities in English.

Among all the participants, 78.4% claimed that the improvement of their English proficiency as a result of the training program and being abroad for four months was high. Slightly over 20% regarded their progress as moderate. Only one instructor stated that her language proficiency remained the same. In the written reports, the majority of the training participants also indicated that the program enhanced their English abilities in multiple areas. They shared perceptions with respect to improvement in all four modalities: reading, writing and oral skills.

Although the participants were most confident in their reading ability, they were challenged in the programs mainly due to having a large amount of reading and having to read outside of their specific disciplines as reflected in the following comments.

> We were assigned three to four articles to read at the beginning of the training, but I could only finish reading one. And I was still not quite sure if I understood it.
> (Written report, Canadian participant)

> I am teaching physics and I thought nothing is more difficult than reading articles in physics. But I found reading articles on educational theories is harder than physics. (Written report, Canadian participant)

After becoming familiar with the concepts and terminologies through intensive reading and class discussion/demonstration, the participants reported being able to read faster and understand texts on a deeper level. The analysis of the written reports indicated that around 95% instructors reported growth in reading.

All the training programs included some intensive writing components. However, only the US program had a course on academic writing. It was not surprising that participants in the US program reported the highest improvement in academic writing. They rated the academic writing course as the most useful and practical component of the training program. The satisfactory rate was also high for both Canadian and Australian programs because the participants learned to write teaching dossiers in the Canadian program, and received one-on-one feedback from their assigned individual mentors in the Australian program. Overall, approximately 86% of the instructors indicated growing in writing.

All participants, even a few who rated themselves proficient in oral English prior to the training, indicated that they encountered difficulties in listening comprehension and oral communication at different levels at the start of the program. One teacher commented:

> I spent many years to study English and passed the CET 6 as an undergraduate student. I took TOEFL and GRE tests and the scores were satisfactory. I also passed the BFT easily. So, I thought I had a good foundation in English. But I still found it difficult to communicate with people when I came to the US. I was once at a fast food restaurant and the salesperson asked me of the size of my drink. I had to ask him to repeat the question three times and speak slowly before I understood him.   (Written report, US participant)

After being exposed to both academic and non-academic oral communication on and off campus and engaging in specific listening and speaking activities, such as teaching demonstration and providing feedback to others, the participants sensed an improvement in their oral English proficiency and believed it laid the necessary foundation for them to conduct content instruction in English. The overall percentage of instructors reporting gains in oral communication in the written reports was around 73%.

In addition, the participants reported more gains in listening than speaking upon the completion of the program, which is not difficult to understand. In all programs, the participants received much more input than they produced output. The opportunities for these instructors to receive English input outweighed the occasions for them to use English to express themselves orally or in writing. The Australian group's living arrangement was a home-stay, which for the majority of instructors was an advantage to improve their English skills because their daily communication with family hosts offered more equal turns in conversation than

listening to a lecture. They were immersed in an English-speaking environment outside the classroom.

4.1.2   *Pedagogy*

The majority of the instructors were positive about the effects of the training on their ability to teach content areas in English. Only one teacher out of the 75 reported no gain in disciplinary teaching methods. Table 2 shows a portion of the survey results on the participants' perceptions on the effects of these training programs.

Table 2. Survey results on the perceived pedagogical effects of training programs

Teaching Knowledge and Skills	Effects of Training			
	High	Moderate	Poor	No Gains
Enrichment on educational theories	70 (93%)	5 (7%)	0	0
Enhancement of ability to teach in English	48 (64%)	27 (36%)	0	0
Enhancement of disciplinary teaching methods	52 (69.3%)	22 (29.3%)	0	1 (1.3%)

Ninety-three percent (93%) of the instructors reported that they gained a better understanding of educational theories and concepts. Sixty-four percent (64%) regarded the improvement in using English to teach content area courses as high. Slightly over 69% stated that they gained various methods in teaching disciplinary courses in English. Some specific pedagogical and methodological skills were identified in interpreting participants' written reports: teaching philosophy, student-centered classroom, assessment, and reflection on teaching.

Many participants described their past teaching as "instructors teach and students take notes" (Written report, Canadian participant). The training opened their eyes to educational theories and various methods guided by these theories. The instructors in all three training programs reported that they learned new teaching approaches, such as problem-based learning, project-based learning, cooperative learning, active learning, and creating learning communities. They experienced the effects and functionalities of different types of learning through classroom activities.

All participants mentioned that they were impressed with the focus on student-centered teaching in all three countries. Their past experience as students and instructors was exclusively teacher-centered. They realized instructors in the student-centered classrooms motivated students, guided students to think independently and critically, encouraged active learning, and engaged students in problem-solving. Instructors respected diverse talents and ways of learning. One participant commented:

> A good teacher needs to know their students' needs and adjust course content to reach the best learning outcome. More learning will take place in a student-centered classroom and students would have a sense of achievement as they become responsible for their own learning.   (Written report, Australian participant)

Most classes that program participants observed were small in size, which facilitated student-centered learning; however, some instructors reported observing large classes. Although lectures were the main approach of teaching in the large classes, these participants witnessed group discussion/projects, seminars, and labs coupled with the lectures.

The participants also learned to diversify approaches to assessment in their teaching. Many of them had only utilized quizzes and final exams to grade students in their past teaching. They reported that sometimes, final exams could count for over 90% of the course grade, which led to the phenomenon that students would cram right before the final exam and could still pass the course with a good grade without studying during the semester. They found that although exams were used frequently in their training universities, students' grades were usually a combination of various tasks, such as class participation, presentations, group work, and research projects during the semester. Students would be busy throughout the semester, not just cramming at the end for an exam.

The participants also indicated that they learned to reflect regularly on their teaching and themselves as instructors. One teacher disclosed:

> I have been teaching for over a decade. Occasionally I would reflect on my teaching process, but this was the first time for me to put my teaching reflection and philosophy in writing. It is the first time for me to deeply reflect on the areas that I felt I need to improve and my future direction. I am going to reflect regularly in my future teaching.   (Written report, Canadian participant)

4.2 What aspects of the training program did instructors perceive as ineffective or challenging?

4.2.1 *Limited overlap with the discipline*
Thirty-six percent (36%) of instructors regarded their improvement on the ability to teach disciplinary courses in English as moderate. They felt some mismatch between the goal of the training and the design of the program. Many participants suggested that the training programs could be improved by increasing emphasis on the training of teaching content disciplines in English and on teaching practices.

The participants were encouraged to audit some disciplinary classes in their disciplines, and some independent study time was allotted for the observation. Some teacher participants managed to do it, but around half of them encountered

some obstacles in their efforts to gain access to disciplinary courses. First, participants in the US program had to make their own arrangements to audit classes. Some did not receive positive responses from the disciplinary professors; some could not find an overlapping field of study at the university; and others could only observe a limited number of disciplinary classes due to time conflicts with the required components of the training programs. Even for those who had the chance to audit disciplinary courses, some could not benefit from observing course content and delivery methods due to their lack of language proficiency. There were also cases that the participants were placed in courses irrelevant to their disciplines. The participants were dissatisfied with having to observe courses on unfamiliar subjects.

4.2.2 *Discrepancy between linguistic and pedagogical training*

Among the three programs, the teacher participants expressed the highest degree of satisfaction with Australian programs (96%), followed by the Canadian program (83.3%), in terms of program design. The corresponding percentage of satisfaction of participants who received the training in the US was 78.4%. Detailed analysis of their comments in the survey and written reports disclosed that the main reason for a comparatively low satisfaction rate for the US program was because it focused heavily on improving these participants' English language proficiency, while Australian and Canadian programs emphasized pedagogy. One US participant commented:

> I felt my English has improved, but not a large degree. Four months is too short for my English to improve greatly. I found this, especially when I started to teach a course in English. I think we should have studied more on how to teach in English. Unluckily, I only had a few chances to observe some classes in my field. I was busy trying to understand the professors and did not focus too much on how they teach the class. (Written report, US participant)

Some participants commented that the training courses were above their level of English proficiency at that time, and therefore, it was very difficult for them to take full advantage of the training. Some participants had complained the courses did not address the areas they needed the most or what they learned was not practical in relationship to their future teaching. Some participants regarded the teaching style of the foreign experts as unaccommodating to a group of Chinese instructors.

4.3   What were the reported outcomes of the training?

4.3.1   *Efforts to incorporate new strategies/assessment methods*
The majority of these instructors claimed that they tried to utilize some of what they learned in the training programs in their own teaching. Approximately 75% indicated that they implemented new strategies learned from the training site and around 83% reported diversifying their assessment practices. However, many participants reported encountering difficulties in applying strategies due to multiple factors such as resistance from students and failure to achieve the expected learning outcome. One Australian participant commented:

> Our teachers engaged us in active learning. We read, speak, listen, think deeply and write about it, relate it to our past experiences and apply it in our daily lives. We learned active learning strategies such as hot potato, PMI [Pluses/Minuses/ Interesting or Implications charts], KWL [Know, Want to Know, Learned charts], jigsaw and fish bowl. We discussed Bloom's Taxonomy. I was very excited. I decided to use those in my class. But it seemed my students did not like it much. I think it is still because we have a much larger class size.
>
> (Written report, Australian participant)

Although participants from Australian and Canadian programs reported some challenges, they also had more positive experiences implementing some pedagogical skills than participants from the US program. They attributed the successful use of some strategies and teaching methods to their supervised teaching practice. One participant commented:

> In my program, I had two chances to teach a mini-lesson in my subject area. My teaching was videotaped and played in class for the instructor and peers to give me feedback. At that time, I felt a little embarrassed to teach in English. But now I am glad I did it because if I didn't try the new things I learned and if I did not receive feedback, I don't think I really know how to use these strategies and methods. Only seeing it and actually doing it make a lot of difference to me.
>
> (Written report, Australian participant)

4.3.2   *Advantages of attending these programs were not obvious in daily work*
Many instructors indicated that participation in the training programs was not as beneficial for their career development as they had expected. Sixty eight (68) out of 75 instructors claimed that the training did not have a positive impact on their ranking, promotion, or compensation. On the other hand, all of them had a lower income during the duration of the training because they did not teach any courses for their employers. Many instructors were not motivated to teach EMI courses due to the disparity between the time spent on preparing EMI courses and the workload reduction to which they were entitled. Some of them were not granted any reduction in workload despite teaching EMI courses.

5.   Discussion and conclusion

It is difficult to offer a simple and straightforward answer to whether these train-ing programs are the solution to preparing bilingual instructors for the Chinese EMI context. According to survey results and written reports, nearly all instruc-tors perceived that the training experience was valuable, and they had achieve-ments in different aspects including language proficiency, teaching methods, and cultural enrichment. However, the training programs certainly did not fully pre-pare all these instructors to be proficient and qualified bilingual instructors in four months. Nevertheless, the findings of this study bring forth various interesting and meaningful discussion points.

English language proficiency, pedagogical quality, and intercultural commu-nication are three key factors in the successful implementation of EMI instruc-tion (Werther et al., 2014). Training on both language and pedagogy is important (Ball & Lindsay, 2013; Tange, 2010; Tatzl, 2011). However, one of the issues that was noticeable from this study was the proportion of linguistic and pedagogical training that was incorporated into the various training programs. How to allocate time and resources on each component within a fixed and limited time frame, in this case, four months, impacted participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of the training programs. The American training program had a heavy focus on participant language proficiency, and the US participants were the least satis-fied with their gains in skills for teaching EMI courses. The programs in Canada and Australia emphasized training in pedagogy, through which instructors had a chance to mend their knowledge gap on educational theories, methods, and strat-egies, and had opportunities to apply them in microteaching sessions. The degree of satisfaction in the Canadian and Australian programs was higher than in the US program. The instructors in this study preferred a higher percentage of pedagogi-cal and methodological training than a focus on language proficiency. This finding is consistent with some of the recommendations generated from European EMI studies (Ball & Lindsay, 2013; Björkman, 2010; Hellekjær, 2010). Ball and Lindsay (2013) proposed a need for EMI pedagogy courses in addition to language support courses and this need was backed up by student feedback which stated "what really matters is methodological awareness" (p. 59). The Chinese EMI instructors' pref-erence for pedagogical training in this study was possibly for a number of reasons.

First, in terms of language, these instructors had already met a specific thresh-old of English proficiency in all four modalities as indicated by the required BFT exam before departure. However, the experiences of some of the instructors in the training programs, mainly the US program, revealed their perspectives that when a certain proficiency level is reached, it is challenging to make significant improve-ments beyond that level in the short time frame of four months. This perspective is

supported by Wilkinson (2004) who found "improvement in language skills over a short time is likely to be limited" (p. 463) and Marschan-Piekkari et al. (1999) who pointed out that acquiring language proficiency is a demanding exercise in terms of time and effort in describing language issues for a range of international human resource management activities. In addition, although participants in this study had met a threshold English proficiency, there were still distinctions in their English proficiency and huge differences in their disciplinary academic English. Hu and Lei (2014) found that no English proficiency classes were able to eliminate the wide variations in English proficiency among EMI students. It is reasonable to believe that this was also the case for the EMI instructors in this study. This perspective led them to perceive the training that had a heavy focus on English proficiency was less effective.

In contrast, like some participants in Ball and Lindsay' (2013) study, pedagogical skills had never been an important component of these Chinese instructors' successful university careers and advancement. When these instructors are learning to teach in a language other than the mother tongue, particularly at advanced conceptual levels, a focus on methodology and practice is needed (Ball & Lindsay, 2013). When the instructors were exposed to pedagogies and methodologies that were new to them and seemingly effective in observed classes, they immediately felt that they learned something new and benefitted from the training. From this analysis, it seemed a training program focusing more heavily on pedagogy (like the Australian and Canadian programs in this study) was perceived as more effective and valuable from the EMI instructors' perspective. Similar findings have appeared in EMI studies in the European context where significance of methodology awareness was emphasized among teaching faculty in EMI settings (Björkman, 2010; Hellekjær, 2010).

In addition, as participants reported, another main source of acquiring pedagogical skills may be through observation of disciplinary courses. The importance of observation was also emphasized in the European EMI context (Lavelle, 2008). At the same time, observation can be beneficial at the starting point, but totally relying on observation to acquire pedagogical knowledge is problematic, especially for the participants in this study, who had very limited possibilities to observe disciplinary courses. Having so few observation opportunities did not allow these instructors to internalize the pedagogical approaches they observed. If participants had an opportunity to shadow a professor in the same subject area for the duration of the training, or if they were given opportunities to teach some sessions within the disciplines under the guidance of an experienced mentor, and receive feedback, it would be more effective for them to master some pedagogical skills. It should be noted, however, that even such opportunities fall short because disciplinary professors in English-speaking countries are teaching through the

medium of English primarily to native English speakers. Thus, the specific pedagogical skill set needed to be able to teach disciplinary content through a second language to a group of second language learners is not likely to be found through such observations. It may be more beneficial for Chinese EMI instructors to receive training in other, non-English-speaking contexts where EMI is prevalent, such as in many European countries. In such contexts they would at least have an opportunity to observe other EMI instructors teaching second language learners.

Moreover, in all three training programs, the participants represented different disciplines. It was difficult to introduce universal pedagogical skills that worked for all disciplines. It might be a good idea to encourage these participants to form consensus on broader educational issues such as the key competences required in EMI, or methods of encouraging students' participation and interaction (Ball & Lindsay, 2013).

Although the instructors in the training programs felt excited and hopeful about the pedagogy and methodology learned in the programs, they soon discovered that such activities were not easily applicable in their own classrooms when they returned to their universities. "Effectiveness of a borrowed idea, practice or innovation depends crucially on its appropriateness for the specific, local, and dynamic reality of teaching and learning in a particular educational context" (Hu, 2009, p. 131). How education is approached in China and these host countries with training programs is vastly different. In Australia, Canada, and US, many university classrooms are comparatively small, and student-centered approaches are used where instructors serve as facilitators for students' learning. Learning takes place through problem solving, negotiation of meaning, and interaction between and among students and instructors. Even in large university classes (with 100 or more students), students are often divided into small groups that are facilitated by graduate student instructors so that students have an opportunity to interact with one another and the instructor and to engage with the content. The Chinese tertiary educational system is still largely teacher-centered and utilizes a transmission approach to learning. Students are used to being requested to reproduce rather than reflect on the knowledge presented to them (Tange, 2010). Imported pedagogical and methodological skills that presented no difficulties in the host educational system certainly are less effective in guiding practices in the Chinese educational system (Tong & Shi, 2012), particularly when first attempted. The training programs were not tailored to the educational contexts and settings of these Chinese instructors, and therefore, may have created some difficulties for many participants to apply the pedagogical practices with their own students. Future programs might address this issue by taking into consideration Chinese factors in the program design. In addition, EMI instructors in China should be encouraged to try specific pedagogical strategies more than once before determining

that they will not be successful in Chinese tertiary classrooms. Students in EMI programs also need to be open to experiencing new ways of learning.

Although it may not be realistic for training programs to be tailored to the specific needs of EMI instructors in China, it may be possible to institute some practices that would make the programs more beneficial for them. For example, some time could be carved out for participants to debrief the pedagogical skills they learned or discuss what they observed in disciplinary courses and reflect on whether and how these skills can be successfully implemented in Chinese classroom as recommended by Lavelle (2008) for the European international business classes. Participants could discuss challenges they may encounter and reflect on the best use of these pedagogical skills in the Chinese context. Such discussions would at least raise their awareness of differences in educational systems and beliefs between China and these English-speaking countries.

What, to some degree, compensated for the lack of contextualization in the training programs was that both Australian and Canadian programs engaged program participants in supervised teaching demonstrations, which created opportunities for the participants to relate their learning and observations to their conceptions of teaching and learning. Feedback from the supervisors and peers provided a channel for further reflection on their teaching. Reflection helped some participants become open to the mindset of adjusting and improving educational pedagogy when initial plans do not work. This component was viewed as very effective by program participants and should be strengthened in future programs.

In the existing literature on EMI instructors' perceptions on support they wish to receive, international experience is always high on the list (Werther et al., 2014). The international experience this study's participants completed was unanimously regarded by all as valuable, but, as reflected in study findings, they had different opinions on the effectiveness of the training on their ability to conduct EMI courses effectively. Although participants in the Australian program had home-stays, the participants in the US and Canadian programs shared rooms in dormitories. The Chinese program participants spent a great deal of their time together, and many of them were not able to maximize their international experience. Mingling Chinese participants with trainees from other language backgrounds (if there are any) could be a more useful model. In addition, the experience of the participants in this study indicated that an international assignment "did not guarantee that a professor could teach a disciplinary curriculum completely through English" (Hu & Lei, 2014, p. 563). An extended stay abroad should be coupled with other international assignments such as teaching in the host university, reading and publishing in English, communicating with discipline-specific English-speaking professionals and attending English-speaking professional conferences (Doiz et al., 2011; Tatzl, 2011; Vinke et al., 1998).

Performance appraisal is not a direct result of training, but it impacts participants' views about the effectiveness of training programs. Study participants' post-training realization that the training experience did not result in a promotion, but instead generated a heavier workload, in some cases, made some participants view the training as ineffective. Future EMI instructors should become familiar with and fully understand the expectations of post-training assignments before they decide to agree to participate in training programs and ultimately serve as EMI instructors. High levels of motivation can only be achieved if the new instructors are given a lighter workload and/or obvious recognition in terms of assessment and promotion (Doiz et al., 2011; Tatzl, 2011; Vinke et al., 1998).

Both language and pedagogical development among individual instructors is an ongoing process. It would be premature to expect these instructors to become proficient EMI instructors upon completion of four months of training. The training offered these instructors opportunities to develop their language and pedagogical skills, and allowed them time to reflect somewhat on their teaching. Sustained professional development activities continued in the locally organized communication platforms where EMI instructors could share their experiences would benefit EMI instructors and improve the effectiveness of EMI (Hu & Lei, 2014).

This study has some limitations. First, the data were drawn only from survey responses and written reports. Had interviews been included it might have been possible for participants to clarify some of the comments they made in survey or reports. Moreover, future studies might involve collecting data while participants are taking part in the programs rather than after the training has been completed. In addition, all program participants were required to complete both survey and written reports. Although it was clearly explained to the participants that the primary purpose of collecting these data was for research purposes and to guide the Center's future work, there is still a slight chance that some of the comments made by the participants may not reflect their real thinking.

Despite these limitations, this study contributes to the current literature by adding to the knowledge base on EMI instructors' perspectives on training in English-speaking countries. Future research can explore suitable models for EMI in Chinese tertiary institutions and elicit perspectives from students as well as measure students' learning outcomes. It is also important to ensure that EMI instructors in China receive sustained professional development in their home institutions and to investigate the effectiveness of such programs.

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摘要

以英语授课的教学 (EMI)在非英语国家，如中国已经越来越普遍。 EMI教师的英语水平不足成为严重阻碍EMI成功的因素之一 。本研究旨在探讨一群在海外接受EMI培训的中国大学老师对培训有效性的看法。这项研究的对象是来自中国一个大城市20所大学的75名从事各种不同科目教学的老师。他们在2009年和2010年间分别参加了一项在美国，加拿大或澳大利亚为期四个月的国际培训任务。 此研究的数据包括无记名的问卷和书面报告。作者使用了基本的统计和定性研究的方法。通过比较数据产生共同的主题。结果表明，教师们认为较为侧重于教学的培训更有效，并希望培训更适用于中国的教育系统。他们认为培训应该增加教学实践的内容。文中还会讨论如何完善中国高校EMI教师的培训。

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