

Argumentative paragraphs (group task)

Below are two topic sentences that were generated in class. Try to come up with a coherent thesis statement and overview for these. Then outline or sketch out a complete body paragraph based on one of the topic sentences (feel free to modify these sentences).

Thesis statement & overview

Topic sentences

1. Because of their differing English levels, not all students can follow the lectures.
2. EMI does not always allow instructors and students to communicate efficiently due to language limitations, especially for courses that are irrelevant to English.

Some general facts

1. 45% of undergraduate courses are taught in English
2. Full use of English in class is expected
3. Exemptions: Korean humanities, law, medicine

Research data, Korea

1. A mixture of Korean and English may typically be used in EMI courses at universities, e.g., lectures in English with discussion activities in Korean (S. Kang & Park, 2005)
2. Professors often compensate by speaking more slowly, using repetition, and using some simpler vocabulary; professors found EMI to be less effective for explaining concepts; undergraduate students find it less effective for learning concepts (Hwang, 2013).
3. Professors at various Korean universities say that they see long-term educational and career benefits for students, but also point out problems: the need for improving students' English skills; difficulty of explaining concepts in English; difficulty in covering course and lecture contents; and students' limited abilities to understand lectures or participating in class discussions / activities (Byun et al., 2011; S.-J. Choi, 2013).
4. Korean students report problems in understanding lectures, reading textbooks, and doing coursework, but are able to learn field-specific terminology and reading comprehension in English (Byun et al., 2011; Hwang, 2013).
5. Undergraduates surveyed at one major university encountered significant difficulties comprehending lectures, often understanding not more than 70% of lecture contents (K.-R. Kim, 2011).
6. Undergraduates at another university often could not understand more than 70-80% of lectures; students struggled with English textbooks; students felt dissatisfied with their comprehension levels and general English skills (content knowledge, presentation, group discussion, listening, reading, and writing skills) in EMI courses; and professors also expressed frustration with their own English skills and student participation. (G.J. Lee, 2014)

Sources

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Research data, elsewhere

1. EMI, Holland. Professors at Dutch universities reported difficulties with fluency and expressing their thoughts in English, and difficulty covering all the course contents in English (Vinke, Snippe, & Jochems, 1998).
2. Dutch undergraduates in EMI courses showed improvements in oral English proficiency and reading comprehension, but not for vocabulary skills (Admiraal, Westhoff, & de Bot, 2006).
3. Sweden. Undergraduate physics students were less able to simultaneously follow lectures and take notes, and asked fewer questions in EMI courses than in courses in Swedish (Airey & Linder, 2006).
4. Taiwan. Undergraduates felt that EMI helped improve their listening skills; students have comprehension difficulties in lectures (Chang, 2010).
5. Hong Kong. Interview data: undergraduates encounter difficulties with technical vocabulary, comprehending lectures, and learning appropriate academic styles and genres (Evans & Morrison, 2011).
6. China & Hong Kong. EMI here has been criticized for shortfalls in teacher training and inadequate improvement of students' English abilities (Hu, 2005).

Sources

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