

Meeting the Challenges of English Medium Instruction: Using MOOCs with Corpus-Based Tasks

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Abstract

The increase in English-medium instruction (EMI) courses in higher education has created many linguistic challenges for EFL students. This study was designed to test the effectiveness of using massive online open courses (MOOCs) and corpus activities to prepare EFL students for EMI. The participants were 33 freshman students enrolled in an English course at a top university in Taiwan. Nine MOOCs were pre-selected by the instructor, and a corpus of the transcripts of the course videos was built. The students were assigned one MOOC to take over four weeks. Every week, before watching the video recordings of the MOOC, they explored the corpus to identify words that interested them and predict the course content based on those words. After watching the course videos, they gathered again to discuss their learning experiences. The results of the pre-test and post-test showed that the participants made significant progress in their academic listening abilities. The results of the questionnaires suggested they felt taking the courses benefited their English listening abilities. The participants also found that the data-driven learning activities and the follow-up discussions helped them to notice and learn the language used by the instructors as well as the content of the courses.

Keywords: MOOC (Massive Open Online Course), English medium instruction (EMI), Corpus-based learning