

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Variables Influencing the Selection of English Medium Instruction: Humanities and Social Sciences Students' Perception in a Sri Lankan University

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Abstract: Different factors influence the selection of English medium instruction (EMI) when there is a choice to decide the medium of instruction. Employing two-hundred and thirty-five (N-235) EMI and non-EMI students in a humanities and social sciences faculty in a state university in Sri Lanka, this study investigated the role of key variables namely advantages from EMI, future working language, English proficiency, barriers, ambition, residential environment and motivation that influence the students to select EMI. Binary Logistic Regression analysis revealed that advantages from EMI, future working language, English proficiency, and motivation have a positive impact when selecting EMI whereas barriers, ambition, and residential environment have a negative impact. Therefore, universities need to introduce general English, pre-EMI and EMI language enhancement programmes to motivate, better prepare and support students to pursue EMI. Also, establishment of mentoring systems and peer support networks can enhance students' confidence in navigating in EMI environments.

Keywords: Binary Logistic Regression; English medium instruction (EMI); factors; humanities and social sciences students; perception

Introduction

English medium instruction (EMI) has become popular in universities due to various reasons. First, most of the academic books, and research articles are published in English, and students who want to stay updated in their field of study select EMI. Content and vocabulary in most of the technical fields are available in the English language. In addition to these pragmatic reasons, students tend to select EMI due to the view that EMI is a way to speed up their upward social and economic mobility (Dearden, 2014). Previous studies, Lueg and Lueg, (2015) and Tsou and Kao, (2017) suggest that students select EMI due to various reasons such as better employment prospects, higher social status, further education in developed countries, etc. Similarly, universities tend to believe that EMI

programmes will improve students' English language proficiency while enhancing knowledge of their subject, and this helps students to gain better jobs in the open competitive job market without being a burden to the government. For instance, Huang and Curle, (2021) claimed that EMI that enhances the English language proficiency of the undergraduates expands their career choices. Also, it is believed that those students who complete their degree in English medium may be able to render their services better in the competitive job market (Wijayatunga, 2018). Particularly, there is social pressure against students of the humanities and social sciences faculties that they need to enhance their English skills to secure a job after graduation. Hence, the students of the humanities and social sciences faculties are particularly encouraged to follow their degrees in the English medium. Due to these reasons, arts faculties and

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faculties of humanities and social sciences of the Sri Lankan universities tend to offer their degree programs in the English medium. Although there are benefits of pursuing a degree in the English medium, some challenges to choosing EMI persist. For instance, linguists argue that it is easier to learn in one's mother tongue than to learn in English (Christensen, 2009, Gottlieb, 2009). This implies that students' comprehension, participation, and exam performance could be negatively affected by EMI. Also, whether undergraduates in Sri Lankan humanities and social sciences faculties are equipped with adequate English proficiency to continue their degrees in the English medium is questionable. Similarly, the competence of the university academics to deliver EMI effectively remains questionable. Further, only some humanities and social sciences faculties of Sri Lankan universities offer support programmes such as English for academic purposes courses to facilitate EMI. In spite of these challenges, there is a growing demand among the students of the humanities and social sciences faculties in Sri Lankan universities to select EMI.

Different variables influence the students to select English medium instructions. According to previous literature, advantages of English medium instruction as students perceive, learners' ambition and motivation to pursue their degree in English, self-perception regarding the students' English language proficiency, English as a future working language, friends' opinion and residential environment, and different barriers such as getting a lower grade on the exams tend to influence the learners to choose EMI. Hence, a review of the literature related to these factors is made.

Advantages of EMI

EMI offers a number of benefits to the students. First, it enables students to access global knowledge. (Kim *et al.*, 2014) highlight the fact that resources are not available in the first language. As a result, English has become the most popular language in educational institutes, and most of the books and journal articles sharing new knowledge are published in English. Dearden, (2014) also agrees with this view and claims that English is the lingua franca in the academic world. Accordingly, undergraduates need English to make effective presentations, deliver talks in academic contexts and complete the degree with a global value. Second, students who follow a degree in English medium are able to secure a better career prospect than a student who completes a degree in a local language. For instance, Talaue and Kim, (2020) show the positive correlation between English language

proficiency and job effectiveness. Curle *et al.*, (2020) to highlight how English language proficiency opens up opportunities for university graduates to secure better career prospects. According to (Galloway, 2020), educational institutions adopt EMI in order to develop student and staff employability, provide access to a wider range of teaching material and develop English language competencies. Thus, literature on EMI reveals the numerous benefits that EMI offers to undergraduates.

Ambition and learner motivation

Language learners are motivated due to various reasons. According to (Brown, 2000) and Gardner *et al.*, (1985), there are two basic types of motivation: integrative and instrumental. Accordingly, integrative motivation refers to language learning for personal growth and cultural enrichment (Gardner *et al.*, 1985). In other words, learners who have an ambition to integrate themselves into the culture of the target language learn a language in order to successfully enter into the target language society. (Dörnyei, 1998), Alizadeh, (2016) identifies four types of motivation namely instrumental, integrative, intrinsic, and extrinsic motivation. The instrumental motivation refers to learning a language for instrumental purposes such as furthering a career, reading technical materials, translation, and so on. According to Dörnyei, (1998), intrinsic motivation refers to the motivation to engage in an activity because that activity is enjoyable to do. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation refers to the actions that are performed to get some instrumental aims like earning a reward or a promotion in the job. Thus, learners' ambition to complete a degree in the English medium tends to stem from intrinsic, extrinsic, integrative and instrumental motivation.

Perceived English proficiency

Students select English medium instruction when they believe that they possess a satisfactory English proficiency to pursue their higher studies in the English medium. Here, the term 'perceived' is used as the level of proficiency is identified as a combination of opinion, beliefs, and attitudes which indicate how learners feel about their English proficiency (Kaewwichian and Jaturapitakkul, 2018). When discussing learners' proficiency in a language, different terms such as ability, proficiency, and competence are used. In this study, these terms are interchangeably used. (Guo *et al.*, 2024) argue that learners' perceived English language proficiency plays a crucial role in selecting English medium instruction. Similarly, (Rose *et al.*, 2020) point out that

there is a strong correlation between English language proficiency and academic achievement, and students' English proficiency is important to ensure their academic success. Thus, it is clear that students' perceived English language proficiency is an important variable that determines the selection and success of an EMI programme.

English as a Future Working Language

Students select EMI when they believe that they will be able to enhance their English skills further during the course and secure a better job after graduation. For instance, Lueg and Lueg, (2015) and Tsou and Kao, (2017) claim that students select EMI in order to secure better employment prospects. Accordingly, graduates from the EMI private universities who graduate with high proficiency in English become far more employable than their monolingual counterparts from the public universities. Ariyawansa, (2008) claims that one of the major reasons for the graduate unemployment problem in Sri Lanka is lack of English knowledge. Similar findings were also reported by Gunaratne *et al.*, (2018), who claimed that students of the arts, humanities and social sciences faculties in Sri Lanka mostly follow their degrees in the local languages, Sinhala and Tamil and consequently find it difficult to secure suitable employments. Having understood the importance of English, undergraduates tend to select EMI in order to improve their English skills while adding an extra value to the degree as an English medium degree.

Friends' opinion

Peer pressure seems to be yet another important variable when it comes to the decision making of the undergraduates. It is important to explore how peers influence their friends to select the medium of instruction in university education. Nelson and DeBacker, (2008) have conducted a study using two hundred and fifty three (N = 253) middle school and high school students to examine the role of peer climate and selection of EMI by adolescents and concluded that there is a strong correlation between the choice of EMI and the influence of the student's peers. Similarly, Lueg and Lueg, (2015) conducted a study to identify the reasons for selecting EMI with students with a non-native English-language background in a business school setting and found that choosing EMI is significantly related to peers' attitudes toward EMI. Thus, there is empirical evidence in the literature that peers' influence significantly affects the students when academic related decisions such as the selection of medium are taken.

Residential environment

The residential environment in this paper is used in a broader sense to refer to the environment the learners come from, i.e. urban, suburban, rural, or estate. Some argue that the residential environment of learners has an impact on the academic success of the learners while others claim that rural students do not suffer disadvantages in their academic performance simply as they come from rural areas, or they attend schools located in rural areas. Thus, the prior literature on the urban-rural gap in academic performance has produced mixed results. For instance, Alok and Arijesuyo, (2013) conducted a study that investigated the difference between the academic performance of students from rural environment and students from urban environment in Nigeria and found that there is no significant difference in the academic performance of students from rural environment. A recent study by Li and Qiu, (2018), on the other hand, points out that urban students' academic performance is more heavily affected by their families' socioeconomic status compared with rural students. Similarly, Zhao, (2020) compared the differences in academic performance between students of rural and urban origins across fields of study and college years and found that rural students academically lag behind their urban peers in arts and humanities and STEM fields, but not in social sciences. A study was conducted by Wijayatunga, (2018) in Sri Lankan secondary school context to examine the challenges of EMI and found that English is not a popular medium of instruction in remote schools because parents have the fear that their children may not perform well in school due to poor English language proficiency, and consequently it may lead to difficulties in understanding the subject matter properly. Thus, there is evidence in EMI literature that an urban-rural gap exists.

Barriers

Although learners see clear benefits in pursuing their higher education in the English medium, they encounter a number of challenges. According to Zumor (2019), inability to comprehend the content, interact in the class effectively, anxiety, frustration, tension, fear, embarrassment, and ultimately poor educational outcomes are some of the challenges students face when continuing their education in the English medium. Similarly, Wijayatunga (2018) conducted a study to explore the challenges of EMI in the Sri Lankan secondary school context and reported more or less similar findings. In addition to that, the lack of qualified teachers and their proficiency in teaching in English were identified as barriers for

effective EMI in secondary schools in Sri Lanka. According to linguists, it is easier to learn in one's mother tongue than to learn in English (Christensen, 2009, Gottlieb, 2009). Thus, literature on English medium instruction reports different challenges and barriers learners encounter when continuing their higher education in the English medium.

Research gap

EMI has become the primary medium of instruction for humanities and social sciences in Sri Lanka, but there is a lack of research on factors influencing its selection or non-selection. Recent studies have examined lecturers' practices and qualitative studies on factors affecting EMI selection among students. However, there is a lack of quantitative studies in Sri Lankan higher educational contexts to identify how variables like advantages of EMI, learner motivation, perceived English language proficiency, English as a future working language, friends' opinions, residential environment, and barriers for EMI influence EMI selection among students. This study aims to fill this gap.

Research question

How do different variables influence the humanities and social sciences students at a university in Sri Lanka to select English medium instruction?

Methodology

A Google form questionnaire adapted from Lueg and Lueg, (2015) study was shared among the participants to examine the variables influencing their selection of EMI. The questionnaire was piloted and refined further before it was finally distributed among the participants. It is important to mention here that the participants of the present study were given pseudonyms in order to ensure their confidentiality. The questionnaire was used to examine the selected variables, namely advantages of EMI, learners' ambition and motivation to pursue their degree in English, self-perception regarding the students' English language proficiency, English as a future working language, friends' opinion, and residential environment, and different barriers such as getting a lower grade on the exams. The conceptual framework of the study is presented in Figure 1.

Two hundred and thirty-five (N-235) second-year students, who were following EMI and non-EMI in a humanities and social sciences faculty in a state university in Sri Lanka, were selected as the sample of the study using a simple random sampling technique. The analysis of the study was conducted using SPSS software version 23 and Microsoft Excel. A Binary Logistic Regression model has been employed to assess the impact of various variables on the selection of EMI.

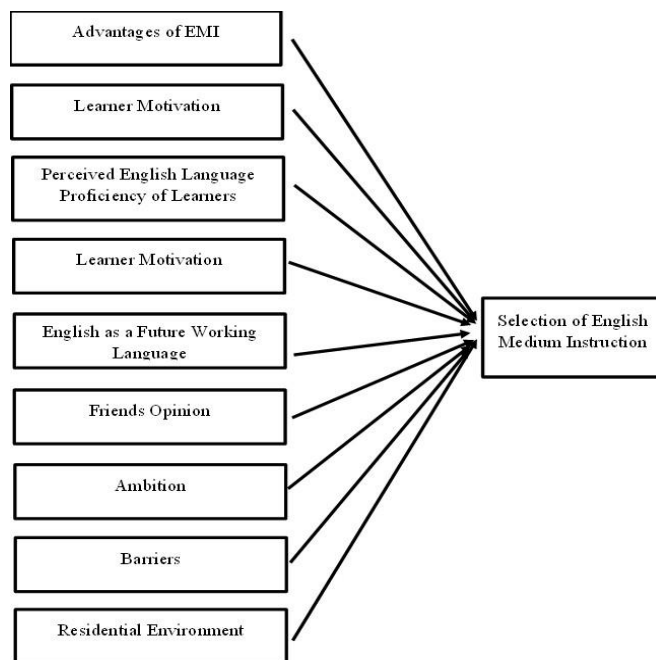


Figure 1 – Conceptual Framework for Variables under Consideration for the Study

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Sample Respondents

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	29	12.3
	Female	206	87.7
Residential Environment	Rural	72	30.6
	Sub Urban	122	51.9
	Urban	41	17.4
Parents' Education Level	No schooling	31	13.2
	Up to grade 5	44	18.7
	Passed grade 6 – 10	65	27.7
	Passed GCE OL	81	34.5
	Passed GCE AL	14	5.9
Parent's Income (LKR)	Less than 18,500	163	69.4
	18,501 – 28,057	12	5.1
	28,058 – 36,381	8	3.4
	36,382 – 44,429	13	5.5
	44,430 or above	39	16.6
Medium of Instruction	Sinhala	130	55.3
	English	105	44.7

Table 1 carries information on respondents included in the sample. As per the data obtained, the majority of the participants, and as a value, it was two hundred and six (N-206). Twenty nine (N-29) participants were males. However, the degree enrolment by medium of instruction in the year in which the study was carried out indicated that the majority of students pursued their degree in their first language, Sinhala (Table 2).

From the respondents, it was observed that most of the students were living in the suburban and urban areas.

As a value, it was 194 students. The respondents' parents' education has shown a significant pattern. It was identified that most of the parents had completed their secondary education and passed the G.C.E. Ordinary Level examination. When considering the economic background of the respondents, it was evident that most households received an income of less than Rs. 50,000 per month. Finally, it was evident that 105 students had selected English medium instruction, the dependent variable, while 130 students had selected Sinhala as the medium of instruction

Table 2: Degree Enrolment by Academic Year and Medium of Instruction - 2022

Academic Year	Honor			Bachelor		
	English (%)	Sinhala (%)	Total (%)	English (%)	Sinhala (%)	Total (%)
2019/2020 (2nd Year)	233 (32%)	501 (68%)	734 (100%)	24 (11%)	201 (89%)	225 (100%)
2018/2019 (3rd Year)	225 (29%)	553 (71%)	778 (100%)	21 (15%)	122 (85%)	143 (100%)
2017/2018 (4th Year)	220 (28%)	553 (72%)	773 (100%)	-	-	-

Source: Freshers' Survey Report, 2023

Table 3: Reliability and validity of Latent Constructs

Latent Construct	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin	Bartlett's Test	
				Chi-square value	P-value
Advantages of EMI	5	0.840	0.831	450.36	0.00
Future Working Language	5	0.919	0.886	834.984	0.00
English Proficiency	6	0.912	0.888	912.292	0.00
Barriers	3	0.908	0.757	461.161	0.00
Interest	7	0.751	0.743	569.662	0.00
Attitude	5	0.883	0.775	861.093	0.00
Ambition	4	0.786	0.763	346.781	0.00
Opinion of My Family	5	0.804	0.806	407.999	0.00
My Friends' Opinion Toward EMI	3	0.782	0.666	219.357	0.00
Role of English in Society	4	0.710	0.735	355.156	0.00

Table 3 shows how the reliability and validity of the latent constructs have been measured. Validity refers to the accuracy of a measure, while reliability refers to the consistency of a measure. Cronbach alpha represents the reliability of the latent variables, showing the internal consistency.

Cronbach's Alpha value in all the latent variables obtained a value greater than 0.70, resulting in a higher internal consistency. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value ranges from 0.6 to 0.8, indicating that the sample is adequate to develop the model.

Additionally, Bartlett's test for Sphericity is highly significant ($p=0.000$ for all constructs), confirming that the correlation matrices are suitable for advanced

Table 6: Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp (B)
Step 0	Constant	-0.214	0.131	2.649	1	0.104	0.808

statistical analysis.

The data contains one categorical dichotomous outcome variable (y) and eight predictor variables. The outcome variable was coded as 1 (chosen English as the medium of instruction) and 0 (not chosen English as the medium of instruction), as shown in table 4 below.

Table 4. Dependent Variable Encoding

Original Value	Internal Value
0	0
1	1

Block 0: Beginning Block

Table 5 presents the null model, which consists of no predictors and merely the intercept. With this null model, SPSS predicts that all cases have a value of zero for the dependent variable. The percentage of cases in which the dependent variable is correctly predicted is 55.3% based on 130/235 cases.

Table 5: Classification Table^{a,b}

Observed		Predicted		Percentage Correct
		MEDIUM		
		0	1	
Step 0	MEDIUM 0	130	0	100.0
	1	105	0	.0
	Overall Percentage			55.3

a. Constant is included in the model.

b. The cut value is .500

The coefficient of the constant in the null model given B is -0.214 as shown in Table 6.

The standard error around the constant is .131. Wald's chi-square test which examines the null hypothesis shows that the constant equals zero. This hypothesis is supported since the Sig. p-value is greater than the critical p-value of .05. We infer, then, that the constant is 0. Exp(B) is the exponentiation of the B coefficient, which is represented in log odds units; $105/130 = 0.808$.

Step 8 defines the whole model in the logistic regression, inclusion of predictors, Barriers, English proficiency, Ambition, Advantages from EMI, friends' opinion toward EMI, motivation, residential environment, and future working language. In table 7 of the Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients, the chi-square goodness of fit test associated with each step in

a stepwise model demonstrates that all eight predictors significantly contribute to the model's fit.

The omnibus test applies to all steps, indicating a significant influence of factors on the choice of EMI. With a test statistic of $\chi^2 = 194.087$ on 8 df and $p = 0.00001$ at a significance level of 5%, we may finally conclude that the model adequately fits the data.

Table 7: Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients

		Chi-square	Df	Sig.
Step 8	Step	4.591	1	0.032
	Block	194.087	8	0.000
	Model	194.087	8	0.000

In the eighth model constructed for binary logistic regression, the Nagelkerke R^2 value is .752, although the Cox & Snell R-square value is 0.562 as shown in table 8 below.

Table 8: Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
8	129.028 ^c	0.562	0.752

While the Cox & Snell R-square is based on the log likelihood of the model compared to the loglikelihood of a baseline model, the Nagelkerke value was examined for the produced model. Yet, even with a "perfect" model with categorical outcomes, it has a maximum theoretical value less than 1. Nagelkerke is a modified version of the Cox and Snell R-square that modifies the scale of the statistic to include the full range of 0 to 1 (IBM, 2019).

Sometimes, the values of Cox & Snell R-squared and Nagelkerke R square are called pseudo R^2 values. Usually Cox & Snell R-square value is lesser than the Nagelkerke R^2 value. These values show how many dichotomous variables are linked to the explanatory variables. The value of Nagelkerke is 0.752, which indicates that the chosen independent factors explain 75.2% of the variability in the dependent variable. Therefore, there's a strong association between the predictors and the prediction that the logistic model explains.

Cases are commonly classified or predicted using independent variables and logistic regression; consequently, it is essential to compare the efficacy of the model to the actual classification. There are several approaches for evaluating this, with their effectiveness often varying according to the nature of the research being undertaken. All these approaches, however,

revolve around the known and predicted classifications, which are shown in the "Classification Table" (Table 9).

Here, the model properly identifies 117 students as choosing Sinhala as their medium of instruction, but 13 students were wrongly predicted to choose EMI. This method of hypothesis testing is known as Type I Error because the model correctly identifies 90.0% of genuine negative cases.

Table 9: Classification Table

Step 8	Observed	Predicted		
		MEDIUM		Percentage Correct
		Sinhala	English	
Step 8	MEDIUM Sinhala	117	13	90.0
	English	17	88	83.8
	Overall Percentage			87.2

Similarly, 88 students correctly chose EMI as their preferred mode of instruction. Seventeen students were incorrectly expected to have chosen Sinhala as their medium of instruction, as they really chose EMI. The classification accuracy was correct 205 times out of 235. Overall, the logistic model accurately classified 87.2% of the data according to the defined independent variables.

Table 10 gives the regression coefficient (B), the Wald statistic (used to verify the significance of various model coefficients), and the critical Odds Ratio (Exp (B)). The "B" coefficients, also referred to as unstandardized coefficients, were used in developing the regression equation (Bewick *et al.*, 2005). The Wald Statistic, which tested the hypothesis of whether the beta coefficient for that predictor was significantly different from zero, i.e. $\beta = 0$, is a hypothesis-testing statistic. If the coefficient was significantly different from zero, we may infer that the independent variable contributes significantly to the prediction of the result (Y), and the coefficient values represent the extent of the contribution of the eight components. All these variables play a leading role in making the decision of the medium of instruction. It may help both the lecturer and the students to prepare for their future academic activities.

Advantages from EMI, future working language, English proficiency, barriers, ambition, residential environment, and motivation have been identified as

highly important independent variables to predict the selection of medium of instruction as p – p -value is less than 0.05 at 5% significance level. Advantages from EMI, Future working language, English proficiency, and motivation indicate that probability of

means that predictors have a negative relationship with the outcome.

As the findings of the present study suggest, the most significant factor that influences students to choose

Table 10: Variables in the Equation

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Advantages from EMI	0.871	0.220	15.666	1	0.000	2.389
Future working language	0.352	0.175	4.058	1	0.044	1.422
English proficiency	0.588	0.146	16.177	1	0.000	1.801
Barriers	-0.689	0.155	19.678	1	0.000	0.502
Ambition	-1.081	0.222	23.777	1	0.000	0.339
My friends' opinion toward EMI	0.266	0.150	3.134	1	0.077	1.304
Residential environment	-0.895	0.366	5.968	10	0.015	0.409
Motivation	0.782	0.260	9.023	1	0.003	2.186
Constant	-6.113	2.246	7.405	1	0.007	0.002

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Barriers.

b. Variable(s) entered on step 2: English proficiency.

c. Variable(s) entered on step 3: Ambition.

d. Variable(s) entered on step 4: Advantages from EMI.

e. Variable(s) entered on step 5: My friends' opinion toward EMI.

f. Variable(s) entered on step 6: EDU_MOT_NEW.

g. Variable(s) entered on step 7: RES_ENV_NEW.

h. Variable(s) entered on step 8: Future working language.

choosing EMI increases with the increment of these factors. Conversely, barriers, ambition, and residential environment make a negative impact on choosing EMI.

If the Exp(B) value is greater than one, that will result in an incremental trend in the predictor, suggesting that the probability of the occurrence of the outcome will also rise. A number less than 1 implies that as the predictor grows, the likelihood of the occurrence of the outcome will decrease.

Applying the regression coefficients (B) of the model shown in table 10, the following regression equation was developed:

$$\text{Logit} = -6.113 + 0.871(\text{Advantages from EMI}) + 0.352(\text{Future working language}) + .588 (\text{English proficiency}) -0.689(\text{Barriers}) -1.081(\text{Ambition}) + 0.266(\text{My friends' opinion toward EMI}) -0.895(\text{RES_ENV_NEW}) +0.782(\text{EDU_MOT_NEW})$$

Accordingly, the significant variables, namely advantages from EMI, future working language, English proficiency, and motivation, show a value greater than 1, and from the coefficients also it was also proved that the independent variables maintain a positive relationship with the dependent variable. On the other hand, barriers, ambition, and residential environment maintain an Exp(B) value below 1, which

EMI in the university is the numerous benefits they see in EMI. Internationalization of education happens so fast in countries like Sri Lanka, which were once colonies of the United Kingdom, whose first language was English. Also, when resources such as reading materials and online materials are available in abundance in English, students tend to switch their medium of instruction to English. Also, the students see the opportunity to improve their English proficiency and boost their chances for better job prospects if they pursue their degree in English. These may be the reasons why English proficiency and English as a future working language play a vital role in selecting EMI. They are all interconnected, and students seem to have carefully planned their path during the undergraduate years so that they can secure suitable employment after graduation.

As a result, it can be concluded that the participants of the present study are extrinsically motivated due to instrumental reasons such as better job prospects and furthering their careers as Alizadeh, (2016) and Dörnyei, (1998) pointed out.

Therefore, although they have barriers in pursuing their studies in English such as getting a lower grade, the participants of the present study tend to select EMI. However, in spite of the clear benefits, majority of students (Table 2) do not select English medium instructions in humanities and social sciences faculty of the selected university. Also, the majority of

students who have selected EMI come from urban and suburban environments. Therefore, it is important to examine in future studies why the majority of students continue their studies in their first language in spite of the clear benefits of EMI. Does it happen in other similar contexts too? Are the preparatory English programmes not adequately supportive for the humanities and social sciences students to pursue their studies in English, or do the students complete the degree in their vernacular in order to gain higher grades and secure a class for their degree? These need to be studied in the future. The findings also have implications for English language teaching and learning in schools in rural and estate environments in Sri Lanka because a smaller number of students coming from these residential

environments have chosen EMI. The findings suggest that English education is still limited to urban and suburban areas in Sri Lanka.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study was conducted to explore the role of key variables, namely advantages from EMI, future working language, English proficiency, barriers, ambition, residential environment, and motivation in selecting EMI. Statistical analyses revealed that advantages from EMI, future working language, English proficiency, and motivation have a positive impact on the selection of EMI, whereas barriers, ambition, and residential environment have a negative impact on choosing EMI. Once selected, irrespective of the students' residential environment of the students, they are able to successfully pursue their studies in the English medium. However, the majority of students still pursue their higher education in the selected university in their mother tongue i.e. Sinhala. Therefore, several recommendations can be made to implement EMI in Sri Lankan higher educational institutes and other similar contexts successfully.

To enhance the adoption and effectiveness of English Medium Instruction (EMI) in Sri Lankan universities, several immediate measures are recommended. Institutions should implement strong General English and pre-EMI language enhancement programmes, particularly for students entering humanities and social sciences faculties—many of whom come from rural and estate areas and choose to study in their mother tongue. Tailored academic English support is essential to ensure equitable access to EMI across diverse student populations.

In the long term, students must be made aware of the instrumental value of EMI, including access to global

academic knowledge (Dearden, 2014, Kim *et al.*, 2014) and improved employment opportunities (Curle *et al.*, 2020). Mentoring systems, peer support networks, bilingual resources, and culturally responsive pedagogies can further foster motivation and confidence in EMI settings. Faculty training is also critical, as many educators lack sufficient English proficiency to teach effectively (Wijayatunga, 2018); thus, language development programmes for EMI instructors are essential.

Future research should examine the long-term impact of EMI on academic achievement, employability, and socio-cultural adaptation, while also expanding the focus to include varied disciplines and geographic regions within Sri Lanka. These efforts will contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable EMI framework aligned with national and global educational goals.

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