



Revealing the Potential Impacts of English-Medium Instruction(EMI) in Indonesian Higher Education Context

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Abstract

In recent years, many top universities from non-English countries have been implemented English Medium Instruction (EMI) in teaching and learning processes because it provides beneficial impacts for institutions, lecturers, and students. However, some other countries do not support EMI implementation because it has several drawbacks that are ineffective for educational systems. This conceptual review article aims to promote the benefits of EMI implementation and suggest the better application of EMI in Indonesian higher education. The research methodology used in this investigation is a critical literature review. The concept used in this paper is to critically explore the potential implementation of EMI in Indonesian higher education, which aims to teach specific content subjects through English as a medium of instruction. This implementation promotes students' bi-literacy and bilingual skills and their learning motivations to be highly capable of competing in the globalization era. As a result, the implementation of EMI expands three benefits that can be attained by the students and lecturers; EMI enhances academic competence, improves English proficiency level, increases motivation in the learning process. This critical paper proves that EMI implementation will significantly benefit Indonesian institutions, especially their students and lecturers.

Keywords: English medium instruction, language skills, motivation, higher education

Introduction

In recent years, many educational institutions in non-English speaking countries have been applied English Medium Instruction (EMI) in learning and teaching processes. EMI refers to the concept of teaching particular subjects using English as a medium in a non-English speaking country without any explicit language learning goals (Breeze, 2021). It is purposely implemented in formal education in order to provide exposure to English to the students. This approach is

aimed to develop students' bilingualism, biliteracy, and cognitive aspects (Doiz et al., 2013; Lin & Lei, 2021). It effectively enhances students' English ability since they will encounter more interaction within English language during their educational activities.

EMI implementation in Higher Education (HE) levels has been inevitably considered as the way to guarantee a better future in the global competition. Moreover, EMI practices particularly contribute to the positive impact of students' academic competence, English proficiency level, and learning motivation (Chen & Kraklow, 2014; Doiz et al., 2013; Jiang et al., 2019; Lasagabaster, 2016). Consequently, many European universities, such as in Netherland, Germany, Sweden, and others, have implemented this approach over the last two decades based on Bologna Process, which has been in operation since 1999 (Coleman, 2006). More than 8,089 English-taught programs in approximately 2,637 HE institutions around Europe (Lanvers & Hultgren, 2018).

Considering the widespread application of EMI in educational contexts, many Asian countries such as Japan, China, Taiwan and Indonesia (Doiz et al., 2013; Huang, 2015; Zacharias, 2013) have endeavored to adopt this approach in their educational systems, especially in tertiary level. In Indonesia, EMI is not a new scheme to be applied in teaching processes. It was formerly initiated by the government as part of the internationalization of educational institutions through the International Standard Bilingual School (SBI) in school levels (DGPSEM, 2009).

The government provided some supporting SBI standardization, including the content, policy, and learning process and procedure (Ministry of Education and Culture [Kemendikbud], 2003, s.50). Consequently, the policy about EMI has attracted Muhammad Nasir as the Minister of Research, Technology, and Higher Education (KEMENRISTEKDIKTI) to apply this method in Indonesian tertiary level for some reasons (The Jakarta Post, 2015). Firstly, the government previously proposed the internationalization concept of higher education through international cooperation with other world reputable universities (Indonesian Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education [KEMENRISTEKDIKTI], 2014, s.1). Secondly, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which Indonesia has become the largest country, enacted the agreement of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and adopted English as a lingua franca (Kirkpatrick, 2012). Thirdly, the effect of the autonomous authority of Indonesian universities (Ministry of Education and Culture [Kemendikbud], 2003, s. 24) caused a massive operation of English within the curriculum.

However, the positive trend of EMI practices in Indonesian universities does not mean there will be no problems that should be considered in its operation. Although EMI implementation aims to improve students' bilingualism and biliteracy, the current EMI practices in Indonesian universities seem vaguely to achieve these goals (Simbolon, 2018). This study will significantly provide an insight that EMI can be used as an effective technique to enhance the students' English proficiency level and academic achievement (Dang & Vu, 2020; Van der Worp, 2017; Vidal & Jarvis, 2020). On the contrary, some countries refuse to adopt EMI in their HE curriculum since they contend that EMI is irrelevant to their educational system. This negative response was unavoidable because some studies

purport to show numerous challenges dealing with EMI application (Bradford, 2016; Kim, 2017; Soruç et al., 2021).

For those reasons, this paper will critically examine the advantages of EMI implementation in Indonesian Higher Education (HE) by considering the challenges and providing some recommendations. Hence, I would like to argue that EMI implementation in Indonesian HE will significantly give benefits to the students learning process and should be counted in the educational systems of Indonesian HE. This paper begins by explaining the context of EMI implementation in Indonesia and significance of the investigated issue before scrutinizing EMI benefits in depth. At the end, the paper will be concluded by summarising some key points, implications and recommendations for further implementation of EMI.

Therefore, the significance of this investigation is to provide more information about EMI implementation which will be beneficial for educational policymakers, institutions, lecturers, and students in Indonesian HE context. This study aims to answer several questions as a guideline to investigate the issue, including the benefits and challenges of EMI implementation in Indonesian HE and how the potential solutions are offered to encounter the challenges of EMI implementation in Indonesian HE.

Method

The research methodology used in this investigation is a conceptual literature review. In elaborating this critical paper, several peer-reviewed literature from books and academic journals (Kosztyán et al., 2021) related to the implementation of EMI and second language acquisition was compiled and constructed in a systematized manner way. Subsequently, the literature was critically synthesized and analyzed to find out the important information used as supporting arguments in the study. As mentioned in the above discussion, the main focus of this study is to elaborate on the benefits of EMI implementation in Indonesian HE context. There are three advantages of EMI implementation that critically elicited from various sources. The first is EMI develops the students' cognitive aspect through bilingual learning process. The second benefit is improving students' English proficiency level because of language practices. The last, EMI encourages students' and teachers' motivation in mastering English and subject materials.

Result and Discussion

Academic Competence

EMI encourages the development of students' cognitive aspect, which is beneficial for their academic competence. The utilization of this method influences the students' way of thinking because they will perpetually process the content information in two or more languages. In processing the information within a foreign language, students will heighten their metalinguistic awareness that enables them to think creatively, to acquire visual-spatial skills and to have a better memory (Marian & Shook, 2012). For instance, Indonesian students who involve in EMI classes will be more sensitive to core meanings and more analytical towards teachers' contents explanation. In other words, they can absorb the content

materials extensively in-depth understanding. Research has corroborated the advantageous relationship between language instruction used in classroom and students' academic attainment. Marian, Shook and Schroeder (2013) found that the students who were taught in English as language of instructions outperformed the students who were merely taught in a monolingual setting in their academic performances. The research data findings were elicited from students' mathematics and reading standardized tests achieved from several tests. Furthermore, Dafouz, Camacho & Urquia (2014) claimed that EMI students not only performed at the same level as their non-EMI counterparts in several economics and business subjects but also developed biliteracy of specific disciplinary areas in English to study or work in an international environment. Hence, EMI students' cognitive skills will significantly improve their academic competence in long-term learning processes because they used to identify, analyze and synthesize the content materials comprehensively.

However, some critiques show the shortcomings of EMI implementation dealing with the improvement of students' academic competence. Some researchers claimed that teaching subject materials in students' native language at the early stage of tertiary level will be better before introducing EMI in a particular content area (Dang & Vu, 2020; Soruç et al., 2021). This barrier exists because the utilization of mother tongue allows students to integrate higher-level thinking skills during the completion of demanding tasks (Floris, 2014; Simbolon, 2018). Besides the lack of using foreign language as instructions, students' insufficient English proficiency impacted to the low-level of students' academic achievement and impeded students' pursuit of academic understanding in EMI classes (Kim, 2017). For example, most Indonesian students in EMI classes experienced major difficulties due to their inadequate proficiency in English (Floris, 2014). This language hindrance makes them difficult to express their thoughts in either written or oral form and prevents them from performing at their best in exams or presentations. Moreover, some particular content from difficult subjects such as mathematics and science will multiply the burdens. Consequently, the students grossly confront the difficulties regarding to content materials, authentic resources and lecturing activities in the EMI classes.

In order to manage those challenges, several solutions can be arranged by HE institutions. Firstly, the pertinent institutions can put into action to arrange the bridging program including English for Academic Program (EAP) or English for Specific Purposes (ESP) as a prerequisite language program to the first-year enrolled students. According to Fenton-Smith, et al. (2017), these programs will provide both pedagogical as well as language competence and help the students to be ready for EMI implementation. Two Asian countries, Korea and Taiwan, have implemented the EAP or ESP program at the initial stage of tertiary education to train them for coping with content-area learning. In consequence, commencing EMI program in the following semester after completing the preparation programs will be more effective for the students' academic processes (Doiz et al., 2013; Kim, 2017).

Furthermore, lecturers should participate to design a positive classroom atmosphere through student-centred learning. They need to pay more attention in clarifying students' course content understanding, encouraging lesson-learned

reflection, promoting dialogues to all class members and giving some constructive feedbacks related to students' performances. In addition, learners will be able to accelerate with the classroom learning pace if the lecturers maintain their pedagogical skills dealing with content materials (Jiang et al., 2019). These skills include, for instance, taking additional time to particularly explain some abstruse concepts, speaking the language instruction more slowly, providing supplementary materials beyond the textbook, designing easy-understanding contents via PowerPoint, and ensuring students' comprehension frequently. As a result, the students will be able to acquire the language used as an instruction as well as improve their academic competence successfully.

In brief, EMI implementation will give advantages which offer students' academic competence along with their study achievement. The institutions can attain benefits from the high-quality graduates of EMI program. In conjunction, Indonesian universities will be able to compete with other institutions worldwide because they can be considered as qualified universities in global education. EMI students will cognitively enhance their higher-level of thinking because the lecturers encourage the students' ability to grasp not only specific content-related language and materials but also the discourse being used in the classroom interaction. Therefore, EMI implementation can optimistically expand students' learning opportunities and make learning more meaningful, intriguing, and alluring.

English Language Proficiency

In addition to enhancing students' academic competence, the improvement of students' English proficiency level is promisingly offered by EMI. Learning new language in a meaningful academic content can enhance students' language level while absorbing content materials (B. Fenton-Smith et al., 2017). As a medium, English is likely used to perform various academic tasks in communicative classroom activities. For example, Indonesian HE students will utilize their English to gain information which urges them to practise reading and listening skills. Moreover, they will be obligated to show their performances in conveying or presenting lecturing tasks that require the use of speaking and writing skills. These situations certainly provide supportive English environments for both students and lecturers to get more exposure in and interaction of English which is vital for language acquisition.

In this learning environment, students get opportunities to engage in meaningful oral exchanges and to develop their inter-language systems which are recognized as essential factors in language acquisition. Research from Vidal & Jarvis (2020) shows that the EMI program improves students' English accuracy and fluency, especially on grammar aspects through presentations, lectures, and reading. In addition, Lin & Lei (2021) stated that learning content matters through foreign language afford comprehensive input and output. This input comes from various learning resources, including subject textbooks, online references, workbooks, etc. Through accessing English online platforms or massive online open courses such as Khan Academy, Youtube, EdX, TEDx, Coursera, and many others, EMI lecturers can enormously equip the students with fruitful language inputs. Furthermore, she explained that comprehension and acquisition transpire

if the language input is beyond the students' current English proficiency level (Lin & Lei, 2021). Subsequently, comprehensible input should be supported by comprehensible output that gained from students' language production to strengthen students' input resources. Thus, extensive English resources and English repertory practices and productions in EMI classes will improve the students' English proficiency level.

Nevertheless, EMI implementation might not significantly improve English proficiency level or even jeopardise the students' development in mastering English language. Some experts argue that the implementation of EMI will hamper students' language acquisition for some reasons (Bradford, 2016; Kim, 2017; Soruç et al., 2021). First, lecturers' insufficient English proficiency influences the way how they use the language of instruction in integrating content and knowledge. If the lecturers do not acquire the integrated method of foreign language and pedagogical teaching skills, they will not be capable in improving students' English proficiency (Bradford, 2016). This problem emerges as a result of insufficient training for non-English subject lecturers organized by the institutions or government. As an illustration, many lecturers in EMI programs of Indonesian universities tended to frequently use Indonesian in order to cover their weakness in the target language. They detached the connections between content materials and language and only focus on subject matters while neglecting English language acquisition process. Moreover, senior lecturers or professors tended to avoid giving feedback dealing with learners' language errors because they think that devoting time allotment for language correction is worthless. Consequently, in EMI classes, lecturers still struggle in conveying the concepts which contain numerous unique vocabulary and technical terms for content materials (Zacharias, 2013). Second, students' inadequate basic of English will cause a detrimental process of EMI implementation (Soruç et al., 2021).

According to Cummins's theory (1984, as cited in Baker, 2021), students will be able to expand their language proficiency related to academic purposes only if they have acquired Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS). BICS will enable them to effectively engage in EMI classes to improve their language skills into Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) level. In fact, for instance, the majority of EMI members in Indonesian universities were not able to follow the lecturers' instruction and explanation because of their lack in basic English skills. They were able to join EMI program because they afford paying the tuition fee which surely more expensive than regular classes. As a result, this incapable language proficiency will be hampered the development of their academic English proficiency level. Thus, EMI program is not hazardous as long as the lecturers and Indonesian HE institutions can cope with those mentioned barriers.

However, as the response of those obstacles, there are viable solutions that should be prepared by the agents of EMI program including institutions, lecturers, and students. First of all, institutions should screen the candidates of EMI students regarding their English proficiency before admission (Kim, 2017). For example, the students should submit the minimum requirement for English proficiency test score such as IELTS, TOEFL, and so forth to meet the program qualification. If the institutions want to give opportunities to the students with insufficient English

ability, they should prepare the additional language courses facility. Then, they have to select the capable lecturers who have a high-level of English competence because incapable tutors will cause the ignorance of students' language development (Soruç et al., 2021). Institutions can regularly organise training and workshops which are necessitated to ensure lecturers' professional development as well as their competency of using English as an instruction in conveying content materials. Additionally, sending lecturers to learn in overseas language programs where they can further develop their English skills is considered as an alternative way to overcome this problem.

Similarly, students should be conscious of registering and enrolling themselves in EMI classes regarding their language capabilities and preferences. In the Indonesian context, most universities rarely provided these solutions to improve the quality of EMI lecturers and screen the students' quality because they want to get many students enrolled in EMI programs that cost more expensive compared with regular classes. Then, Indonesian universities should encourage the lecturers to collaborate and share with English language experts or tutors to identify the specific language parts that affect contents' comprehension and solve students' language problems (Corrales et al., 2016). In other words, training and workshops for EMI instructors should be frequently arranged by the universities either in the home country or overseas. These glitches are recognised as severe impediments in the implementation of EMI in Indonesia. Hence, EMI programs can promisingly be applied to enhance both students' and lecturers' English proficiency levels as long as the HE institutions, lecturers, and students realize these prerequisites for implementing EMI effectively.

Students' and Lecturers' Motivation

Besides improving students' and lecturers' English proficiency levels, EMI also positively increases their motivation in acquiring English academic skills and mastering subject contents' materials. The students and lecturers are recognised the roles of English in today's globalisation era. They have a positive attitude towards English skills' acquisition while learning specific disciplines because of global competition trends. Thus, this positive attitude promoting two kinds of motivation namely intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2018). These motivations will boost up the effectiveness of EMI implications which are undoubtedly valuable for the students who will face the real global system as soon as possible once they have graduated. Considering EMI lecturers' motivation, being internationally acknowledged in the educational field is grossly needed because they can contribute to the advancement of knowledge worldwide (Huang, 2015; Jiang et al., 2019; Rivero-Menéndez et al., 2017). Moreover, as well-known scholars, these lecturers will be academically used as a prominent reference. Therefore, in this part, I will expose the two motivation types that may emerge in the EMI application.

There are two motivation types appear in the EMI utilisation which benefits the students and lecturer's development. First, intrinsic motivation will certainly stimulate the EMI students to improve their English academic skills and international academic competencies. Chen & Kraklow (2014) stated that EMI students are highly motivated because they obviously understood the

consequences, pressures and burdens in EMI programmes. For instance, EMI students will make extra efforts to cope with the language and content goals and manage their learning time effectively, do not easily give up with the problems and strive to get a higher score in their subjects (Rivero-Menéndez et al., 2017). In addition, the EMI lecturers will be motivated to teach in the classes because it means that they get opportunities to improve their pedagogical EMI proficiency level (Vidal & Jarvis, 2020). They will be aware of students' high expectations about their performances, therefore, the lecturers should show their best capabilities in handling the programmes. Consequently, these stimuli generate self-consciousness as an intrinsic motivation for EMI students and lecturers. Without these considerations, students will not personally be courageous to involve in, and lecturers will not challenge themselves to improve students' language and academic development in EMI classes. Second, EMI values as an international medium instruction provide extrinsic motivation dealing with employability skills in global citizenship. Both EMI students and lecturers will heighten their self-bargaining power after involved in EMI programs because they are qualified to work, study, collaborate and compete globally.

Nevertheless, in line with students' and lecturers' motivation in EMI, there are other arguments indicate that EMI will not increase their motivation. Students' insufficient language proficiency will be a barrier for learning processes because it raises students' anxiety, stress, nervousness, and frustration. Moreover, this language barrier seems to demotivate and affect the students' academic performances (Chou, 2018; Kim, 2017). According to Moore (2017), research about EMI in Cambodian higher education shows that students did not engage in EMI classroom interaction albeit they were enrolled in one of Cambodia's most prestigious degree programme. This problem arises because the student are lack of motivation to the English testing and assessment. They perceived that involving in EMI classes with insufficient English skills added their psychological and mental burdens. In addition, this situation even became worst since the lecturers did not encourage the students to be active and involved in classroom activities. Thus, EMI implementation can threaten students' psychological well-being when there is a paucity of motivations and not able to cope with the burdens.

In order to challenge those arguments, Chen and Kraklow (2014) proposed the concept for the institutions to conduct intercultural activities, workshops and seminars for faculty members. This event will motivate the students to interact in English because informal situations may decrease their anxiety and become more comfortable in the EMI environment. Furthermore, HE institutions should communicate with the students about what subjects that they are eager to be taught in EMI program or which one that they are not interested in EMI classes (Jiang et al., 2019). Besides the subjects' option for EMI, lecturers should be a role model of English utilisation and may apply students-centred and task-based learning as the ideal technique in EMI classes because the students will be more motivated to engage in classroom activities progressively (Lasagabaster, 2016). Lastly, universities should provide various supporting programs, including educational practicum and casual events. For instance, EMI students who enrolled in science major can practice their subject materials in International schools which implementing international curriculum. They can teach a specific discipline based

on their background knowledge and utilise EMI skills throughout the programmes. In addition, EMI students should be facilitated with several activities that may relax themselves such as outdoor games, faculty parties, and gala dinner. Therefore, getting involved in internal participation and being relaxed with enchanting activities will significantly enhance EMI faculty members' motivation.

Conclusion

In this global education era, EMI is considerably needed to be implemented in Indonesian higher education context because it extends several benefits that are useful for the faculty members. This paper shows that the EMI implementation will enhance the students' academic competence related to the creativity, metalinguistic awareness, and visual-spatial skills. Then, EMI significantly improves students' and lecturers' English proficiency level since it provides more exposure of and interaction in English. EMI also increases students' and lecturers' motivation in learning processes dealing with the English requirements used in numerous fields of work. Although EMI has positive impacts towards students' and lecturers' development, it confronts some challenges on its practices which might detriment the learning processes. These hindrances include the lack of supporting programs for students with insufficient English skills, the lecturers' absence of EMI pedagogical competence, and the heavy burdens that cause learning demotivation within the programme. However, EMI will be successfully implemented in Indonesian universities if the pertinent elements consisting institutions, lecturers, and students recognise the main prerequisites of EMI application related to the academic purposes.

The implications of this paper are to highlight the benefits of EMI implementation so that Indonesian institutions reconsider the requirements for its operation. Then, the educational policymakers of HE can arrange the appropriate regulations to establish the high quality of EMI implementation in Indonesia. This policy is important since it will impose the institutions to follow the international standardisation. In addition, it can minimise the educational marketisation practices that possibly organised by universities without giving consideration to the quality of education. Furthermore, this paper's inferences will broaden the EMI lecturers' and administrators' point of views with constructive recommendations for the improvement of EMI practices in Indonesian universities. Therefore, EMI should be meticulously implemented in Indonesian HE to enhance its benefits for the institutions, lecturers, and students' global competitiveness.

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