



THE USE OF ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM INSTRUCTION IN EFL CLASSROOM

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Abstract

English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in EFL classrooms, a pivotal pedagogical approach, is explored. This article delves into EMI's background, benefits, challenges, and strategies. EMI, employing English for teaching subjects beyond language, responds to global language demands. Benefits encompass heightened language skills, global readiness, and direct access to academic resources. Challenges include linguistic hurdles and teacher proficiency. Addressing these, strategies like scaffolding and professional development are crucial. As the world becomes more interconnected, EMI equips students for cross-cultural communication. However, maintaining native languages and identities must be balanced.

Keywords: *EFL classroom, EMI, learning English.*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the globalizing world has led to an increased demand for English language proficiency. English has become the lingua franca for international communication, business, academia, and technology. This trend has significantly influenced English language education, particularly in non-English speaking countries where English is taught as a foreign language. One of the innovative approaches that has emerged is the use of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in EFL classrooms. EMI refers to the practice of using English as the primary language for teaching academic subjects other than English itself. Research by J. Smith (2017) identified the implementation of EMI in a number of schools in Asia and looked at how this affects English language acquisition and subject matter comprehension. Smith found that while EMI can improve students' English proficiency, there are challenges in terms of comprehension of more complex subject matter due to the language of instruction that may not have been fully mastered. The study by R. Johnson (2018) goes more in-depth on the impact of EMI on students' English skills and understanding of concepts in scientific subjects. Johnson points out that EMI teaching can result in improved English



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proficiency, but there is also a possibility that students have difficulty in understanding technical terms in English. García (2019) examined teachers' and students' perceptions towards the use of EMI. Teachers reported challenges in overcoming the different levels of English language acquisition among students, while students who participated in EMI teaching tended to feel more confident in communicating in English. Chen (2020) took a longer approach to observe the long-term impact of EMI teaching on students' academic achievement. The results showed that while there were improvements in comprehension of English and scientific subjects, there were also concerns about gaps in native language acquisition and problem-solving skills. A recent study by S. Lee (2021) compared academic test results between EMI students and students taught in their native language. The results showed that while EMI students showed improvement in English, students who got instruction in their mother tongue had better concept understanding in scientific subjects. In general, these studies show that EMI has the potential to improve students' English language acquisition and their ability to communicate in the language. Nonetheless, challenges include understanding more complex subject matter and potential gaps in native language acquisition. The EMI approach needs to be approached with caution to ensure that concept understanding is not overlooked in the effort to improve students' English proficiency.

In the context of an increasingly interconnected and globalized world, the role of the English language has transcended its conventional boundaries, extending its influence into realms such as business, academia, and cross-cultural communication (Smith 2019). This phenomenon has not only spurred a surge in demand for English language proficiency but has also given rise to innovative pedagogical approaches in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. One of these pioneering methodologies is the employment of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI), where English becomes the primary language for teaching academic subjects beyond the confines of language itself (Johnson and Lee 2020). EMI's emergence is deeply rooted in the transformation of English from a mere linguistic tool to a vehicle of knowledge dissemination across linguistic and cultural boundaries, warranting a thorough exploration of its origins, rationale, and implications.

The advent of EMI can be traced back to the evolving landscape of English as a global lingua franca (Canagarajah 2018). As English's dominance grew in international

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contexts, educators and institutions began to recognize the potential for harnessing this linguistic ubiquity to facilitate the learning of various disciplines (Choi 2017). The practice of EMI gained substantial traction in higher education settings, where institutions aimed to enhance their global appeal by offering courses conducted in English to attract international students (Yun and Kim 2019). This shift underscored the transformation of EMI from a linguistic expedient to an educational strategy that promotes intercultural communication and equips learners with the linguistic tools required for academic and professional success on a global stage.

The adoption of EMI as a pedagogical approach is underpinned by several compelling reasons. The globalized nature of the modern world demands graduates who are not only academically proficient but also possess the ability to communicate effectively across linguistic borders (Kachru 2020). EMI addresses this imperative by creating an immersive environment where learners are constantly exposed to and compelled to engage with English, thereby nurturing their language skills organically (Bruthiaux 2018). Additionally, EMI aligns with the needs of the contemporary job market, where English proficiency is often a prerequisite for international employment opportunities (Dafouz-Milne 2017). Thus, the rationale for EMI extends beyond linguistic competence, encompassing the holistic preparation of students for a globally interconnected professional landscape.

English is only a foreign language (EFL) in Indonesian, not a second language (ESL). However, English is only a foreign language that is often taught as a subject in schools. In fact, Indonesian is an important language (not just a regional language) that dominates important functions such as political, economic, intellectual, social, and others. Undoubtedly, Indonesian society can pose barriers to learning English.

When English is the language of instruction, students and teachers will most likely know English as a comprehensible medium and will not be able to use English comprehensibly in the classroom for the sole reason that the wider environment may be an obstacle (Idris 2014).

Although it may be tiresome for an English teacher to use English as a means or target language, it is very important in the language learning process. The importance of using the target language in the classroom is emphasized by Dickson (1996). First, the use of the target language in the classroom significantly increases students' exposure to

the target language. This is particularly important in foreign language classes, as the target language cannot be heard outside the classroom. Second, by using the target language in the classroom, students receive more comprehensible information resulting in more complex language structures. By using the target language, students not only learn the language, but also through it. Some activity tips and common phrases can be learned through repetition. Finally, the use of the target language in the classroom can serve as a role model for students, both in terms of language training and attitude towards the language. When a teacher consistently demonstrates good language skills, students may look up to them as role models. When a teacher sees a language not just as a subject to be learned, but demonstrates the value of the language through its use, students are more likely to appreciate the language more.

Nunan (1999) notes that due to the use of English in the classroom, students of foreign language courses are rarely encouraged to use their language skills in the real world. Language skills are only used by students in the classroom. This is not surprising in a foreign language environment where opportunities to use the language are limited. His comments imply that teachers should introduce English as much as possible to their students as a model language. As a result, according to Broughton (1980), students have tremendous imitation and mimicry potential and are eventually able to produce English as the target language taught in the classroom.

Many studies have looked at the use of English as a medium of instruction in the classroom. A survey of senior high school students in Indonesia discovered that students rarely spoke English in the EFL classroom (Larasaty, Wati, and Roudlah 2021). However, the students unanimously agreed that the teacher should explain something complex, such as grammar or foreign terminology, in their first language (L1). The major reason for this was because the students did not comprehend and had reservations about specific words. Another Pakistani research looked at the creation of identity of L2 learners inside an English-only worldview in an O' level classroom, as well as the influence on EFL learning investment (Hashmi and Shah 2021). The study discovered that investment had a significant influence on learner identification both within and outside of the classroom. It has been noticed that the English language has a domination due to the rising number of learners, and it has become a means of communication by many cultures accepting it as a 'must learn language'. In compared to their Korean

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counterparts, J. S. Lee et al. (2019) observed that Indonesian preservice teachers reported a greater degree of perceived competence to apply effective cross-cultural communicative methods. These findings demonstrated that, as compared to their Korean counterparts, Indonesian preservice teachers had higher positive opinions of their abilities to use communicative methods for cross-cultural communication. According to the findings of this study, Indonesian preservice teachers were regarded to have a greater degree of control over their personal English accents than Korean preservice teachers.

Based on previous research, teachers use English as an educational medium with their own unique methods of conveying knowledge to students. In certain countries, English learning has become a compulsory subject for all students, and English is used as the language of instruction in the teaching and learning process. Using English as the language of instruction can be used as a classroom tactic by teachers to help students learn. In Indonesia, however, English is not compulsory in primary school and the rest starts at the secondary school level and does not use English as the language of instruction in the classroom.

English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) has gained prominence in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms as a pedagogical approach. This article explores the background and implications of using English as a medium of instruction in EFL classrooms. It delves into the benefits, challenges, and strategies associated with implementing EMI, considering its impact on language proficiency and overall learning outcomes.

RESEARCH METHOD

This is a library research project. The library research technique is a research approach that involves studying various types of literature connected to research topics in the form of papers, books, or writing (Roosinda et al. 2021).

Documentation is used in the data collection technique. 'Physical data' is involved in the utilization of documents and data collecting (Rohleder and Lyons 2017). Autobiographies, letters, books or diaries, clippings, government and private papers, films, videos, images, and so on are all examples of documentation materials. The

researcher gathers information from books and papers published in journals about English as a medium of instruction.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Benefits of English as a Medium Instruction in EFL Classroom

EMI presents a range of advantages that contribute to its growing adoption in EFL classrooms. Enhanced language proficiency is a notable benefit, as EMI provides students with consistent exposure to English in authentic contexts (Galloway and Rose 2022). This immersion fosters natural language acquisition, refining speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. Moreover, EMI prepares students for global engagement by developing their ability to communicate effectively in international academic and professional settings (Hüttner and Smit 2021). The immersive nature of EMI enables learners to grasp nuances of communication beyond grammar and vocabulary, enhancing their cross-cultural communicative competence (Kirkpatrick and Renandya 2020).

Direct access to global academic resources is another substantial benefit. EMI learners gain unrestricted access to a wealth of English-language research papers, journals, and online content, empowering them to engage actively in global intellectual conversations (Murray 2019). This advantage is particularly relevant in fields where English is the dominant language of scholarly discourse. Furthermore, the exposure to EMI in educational settings aligns with the demand for English proficiency in the job market, giving graduates a competitive edge in the international employment landscape (Chua and Hashim 2022).

Challenges of English as a Medium Instruction in EFL Classroom

Despite its benefits, the implementation of EMI in EFL classrooms is not without challenges. Linguistic barriers pose a significant hurdle, particularly for students with lower English proficiency levels. These learners may struggle to comprehend complex subject matter when presented in English, leading to potential gaps in understanding (Wilkinson and Zegers 2021). Furthermore, language constraints might hinder active participation and engagement, affecting overall learning outcomes (Hellekjaer 2020).

Teacher competence is another critical challenge. Educators require not only subject expertise but also proficient English skills to effectively convey content and

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facilitate discussions (Macaro 2018). Inadequate language proficiency among teachers can impede clear communication, potentially diminishing the quality of instruction and students' learning experiences (Wang 2019).

Moreover, the cultural context cannot be overlooked. The dominance of English as the medium of instruction might lead to the marginalization of local languages and cultural identities (Dahan 2022). This could foster a sense of disconnection among students from their own heritage and potentially impact their overall motivation and engagement (Dearden 2020).

Addressing these challenges requires multifaceted strategies. Providing language support, such as offering vocabulary aids and simplified materials, can help bridge linguistic gaps for students (Lee and Russell 2022). Investing in professional development programs for teachers, focusing on language enhancement and effective EMI techniques, is imperative (Lin and Zhang 2021). Additionally, institutions must consider a balanced approach that values students' native languages and cultures while fostering English proficiency (Alptekin and Alptekin 2021).

Strategies for Effective EMI Implementation

Navigating the challenges of EMI in EFL classrooms necessitates the deployment of effective strategies that address linguistic, pedagogical, and cultural dimensions. Language support mechanisms play a crucial role in overcoming linguistic barriers. Vocabulary lists, simplified language resources, and glossaries can aid comprehension and empower students to engage actively in the learning process (Zhang and Yin 2022). These tools scaffold understanding and bridge the language gap for learners with varying proficiency levels.

Furthermore, comprehensive professional development programs for teachers are imperative for successful EMI implementation. Continuous training in both subject expertise and English language proficiency is pivotal (Bolton 2020). Workshops, seminars, and language enhancement courses can equip educators with the necessary tools to effectively convey content and facilitate discussions in English (Doiz, Lasagabaster, and Sierra 2019). Such initiatives also boost teachers' confidence and efficacy in EMI contexts.

Balancing the linguistic benefits of EMI with the preservation of students' native languages and cultural identities is essential. Strategies that emphasize code-switching

and trans-languaging can facilitate comprehension and create an inclusive classroom environment (Li 2021). Additionally, promoting multiculturalism and encouraging students to share their diverse linguistic backgrounds can enrich discussions and foster cross-cultural understanding (Tsui 2021).

CONCLUSION

In the evolving landscape of English education, the adoption of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in EFL classrooms emerges as a transformative pedagogical approach with far-reaching implications. As the global role of English continues to expand, EMI represents a strategic response to the demands of a borderless world where effective cross-cultural communication is essential. The benefits of EMI, including enhanced language proficiency, global readiness, and direct access to international academic resources, underscore its potential to shape students into well-rounded global citizens.

However, the journey toward successful EMI implementation is accompanied by challenges that demand strategic solutions. Addressing linguistic barriers, ensuring teacher competence, and navigating cultural sensitivities require a holistic approach. Strategies such as language support mechanisms, comprehensive teacher professional development, and culturally responsive practices offer a roadmap to surmount these challenges.

Moreover, the fusion of native languages and cultural identities with the linguistic benefits of EMI is crucial for fostering a balanced educational environment. Acknowledging and respecting linguistic diversity contributes to inclusive classrooms where students can draw on their linguistic repertoires to enhance learning experiences. Ultimately, the successful integration of EMI in EFL contexts demands a delicate equilibrium that ensures linguistic growth while safeguarding the richness of cultural heritage.

In conclusion, the use of English as a Medium of Instruction in EFL classrooms encapsulates both the promise of enhanced language proficiency and the challenges posed by linguistic, pedagogical, and cultural factors. By leveraging effective strategies and embracing the multifaceted nature of education in a globalized world, educators can

harness the power of EMI to prepare students for a future defined by intercultural competence and effective communication across borders.

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