

Teacher's Perspectives and Challenges towards English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI)

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Abstract: Globalization has triggered the use of English in all aspects of life among others communication, technology, media, business, and academia. This leads to the increasing number of institutions around the world to use English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in their classroom practices. However, there are many controversies among teachers in the implementation of EMI in teaching content subject. These pros and cons are caused by the challenges that teachers faced such as their quality, guidelines, resources, and student's English proficiency. This paper aims to describe teacher's perspectives and challenges towards the implementation of English as a Medium of instruction.

Keywords: *English as a Medium of instruction (EMI), controversies, perspectives, and challenges.*

Abstrak: Globalisasi telah memicu penggunaan Bahasa Inggris di segala aspek kehidupan seperti komunikasi, teknologi, media, bisnis, dan dunia akademik. Hal ini juga menyebabkan peningkatan jumlah institusi di dunia yang menggunakan Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa pengantar dalam proses belajar mengajar. Akan tetapi ada banyak kontroversi di antara guru dalam penerapan Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa pengantar dalam mengajar di kelas. pro dan kontra ini disebabkan oleh tantangan yang di hadapi guru seperti kualitas guru bimbingan kelas, pedoman, sumber daya, dan kesulitan bahasa. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan perspektif guru dan tantangan yang di hadapi guru dalam penerapan Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa pengantar di kelas.

Kata-kata kunci: *Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa pengantar, kontroversi, perspektif, dan tantangan.*

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English has now acquired the status of a “global language” (Crystal, 2003) It is estimated that over 80% of interactions in English worldwide are between non-native speakers (Graddol, 2006). Speakers of English as a first, second, and foreign language are said to have increased from 1.2 billion in 2003 to 1.5 billion in 2006 (Crystal, 2006).

Moreover, According to Naisbitt and Aburdene (1990), over 80% of all information stored in computers all over the world is in English, and more than half of technical and scientific periodicals in the world are written in the language, which also serves as the language of modern telecommunication technologies, medicine, electronics, and space technology. Therefore, the mastery of English is a must.

The education sector has been influenced significantly by the globalization of English as a medium of instruction. There are a growing number of educational institutions in non-English speaking countries have implemented EMI (Coleman, 2006). Moreover, there are more content-area courses in tertiary EFL academic environments that are now offered through English-medium instruction (EMI) (Nunan, 2003). This global trend has shown no sign of fading and has gained momentum in recent years that is likely to continue into the foreseeable future (Dearden, 2014).

Indonesia is at its stage in the competition of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). One of the four supporting foundations is the free flow of goods that the Indonesian Minister of Research and Technology and Higher Education (Menteri Riset dan Teknologi dan Pendidikan Tinggi, or Menristekdikti) interpret as a pillar of borderless region, through which an international language is utilized (Nasir, 2015). Besides, the minister of Education and Culture said Indonesian students need to master at least three languages; Local language, Indonesian language, and International language which is English to compete in AEC (Baswedan, 2015).

In line with the Minister of Education, the Indonesian government develops a policy which is stated in the Law of National Education System No. 20 Year 2003 Article 33 Verse 3 about the use of foreign language in the teaching and learning process. It is said that a foreign language can be used as a medium instruction in a certain education unit to support the students’ language competence (National Education System, 2003).

Furthermore, According to Panduan

Penyelenggaraan (2009), Indonesia needs to improve the education quality due to the increasing competition among countries and the demands for quality human resources that have strong competitiveness. Therefore, According to the law of National Education System Article 50 Paragraph (3) of Law No. 20 the Year 2003, Indonesian government emphasizes that every district/ provinces government must hold an International Leveled School (*Sekolah Bertaraf Internasional*) at least one International Leveled School for every unit of education institution. In the international school, English is used as a medium of instruction. In brief, with the improved English through EMI, this skill is believed to be a golden ticket to a global world (Dearden, 2014).

However, English proficiency in Indonesia is still categorized as unsatisfactory. According to EF EPI (English Proficiency Index 2019) Indonesian proficiency world rank in 2019 was the 60th out of 100 countries with the score 50.06, which indicates that Indonesia was in a low proficiency level. Meanwhile, according to Asia EF EPI Rankings (2019), Indonesian Proficiency level was on the 13th out of 25 countries in Asia. Considering this fact, using English as a medium of instruction is one of the ways to improve students’ English proficiency.

EMI has gained popularity, as one of the most effective strategies for coping with internationalization (Tsuneyoshi, 2005). Dearden (2014) defined English as a medium of instruction as the use of the English language to teach academic subjects in countries where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English. Moreover, According to Baker (2011), EMI is a model of bilingual teaching in which some of the curriculum content is taught in English, which is not students’ first language.

EMI is very beneficial, According to Dearden (2014), English as Medium of Instruction (EMI) is considered by the policymakers as a way to internationalize their educational offer, to create opportunities for the students to join the global academy, and the business community. Besides, According to Kym & Kym, 2014, by improving students English through EMI there could be enhancement competitiveness on the job market and students could prepare in a better way for an international career (Tatzl, 2011).

Perspectives

British Council sponsored a survey which

involved 55 countries across the globe and reported that 51% of the respondents are of the opinion that English as Medium of Instruction was thought to be controversial, while 38% express their opinion in favor of using EMI, and 11% did not give an answer (Dearden, 2014).

There are several studies who have reported there are a positive correlation between EMI exposure and English proficiency (Aguilar and Rodríguez, 2012; Park, 2007; Tatzl, 2011; Wong and Wong, 2010). Teachers' have positive perceptions of advantages of EMI because they viewed that EMI practice might improve their own (Floris, 2014) and students' English skills (Aguilar, 2015; Arnó-Macià&Mancho-Barés, 2015).

A study conducted by Sultan, Borland, and Eckersley (2012) found that the EMI program performed better in their national English examination in terms of their grades than their counterparts who were enrolled in a non-EMI program. Besides, many of the existing studies in China have considered EMI as a useful way to improve student content knowledge and English proficiency (Yu, 2008). Moreover, Wu (2006) showed that most students, even those who confessed that they did not have a good command of English, thought that EMI was an effective language policy. The findings also suggested that most students were aware that learning English by using EMI in the classroom was one of the most effective ways to improve their English. Furthermore, Chang (2010) which also revealed that most of the Taiwanese students agreed that English instruction helped them to improve their English language proficiency, especially in terms of listening.

On the other hand, A study conducted by Schützenhöfer and Mathelitsch (2001) found that the instruction of content subjects through the medium of a foreign language often increases students' motivation. Also, Seikkula-Leino (2007) also found that students' motivation increased even though there was no significant difference in their achievement in comprehending the content compared to the students with the first language (L1) only instruction.

Another positive view also showed by one of the lecturers in Indonesia, the findings from survey questionnaires and interview data show that most lecturers held positive views on the implementation of integrated Mathematics and Science teaching in English. They revealed that integrated Mathematics and Science teaching in English rais-

es lecturers' motivation and increases their content knowledge acquisition (Mirizon, et al, 2019). Despite of the benefits, there are a lot of controversies in implementing EMI in teaching content. Some teachers view the use of EMI will affect students in understanding the content. A study by Kang and Park (2005) reported that students in Korea tended to use Korean rather than English in activities. The research result showed using English in lectures ended up less efficient compared with using their first language because of their low English proficiency and being afraid of teacher's teaching methods. Wu (2006) found that low English proficiency, makes EMI students feel difficult to understand the course content, stopping students from expressing themselves smoothly in class, and discouraging discussion and interaction between professors and students. Moreover, Vinke (1995) found that lecture comprehension was significantly lower for students taught using EMI compared with those who were taught in their language.

Besides, Sert (2008), after examining EMI's effectiveness at three Turkish universities, suggested that while EMI was not effective for language skill development, it was insufficient, and lacking in efficiency, concerning academic content acquisition. In a similar vein, Coleman (2006) argued that although the gains from EMI outweigh the losses, EMI does create risks of domestic language attrition and cultural identity loss. Moreover, Kırkgöz's (2005) study of 203 university students found "detrimental effects of learning subjects through another language such as a feeling of being distanced from their native language and culture" (p. 101). However, these controversies happened because of some of the challenges faced by the teacher. If the teacher can overcome the challenges then the result from the implementation will give more advantages rather than disadvantages. Due to the urgency of mastering English in all aspects, Using EMI in the classroom will help the student to compete with others.

Challenges

Teacher's quality

Teachers are the most important school-based influence on student academic performance (Hattie, 2003). Besides, teachers play a fundamental role in their learners' academic achievement and their quality can highly influence student outcomes (Wibowo, 2014). Teacher's quality is one of the chal-

lenges in implementing English as a Medium of Instruction. According to Mellion (2008), Teacher's inadequate professional use of English has become widely recognized as one of the main factors producing negative outcomes in many EMI settings.

Dearden (2014) found there is little or no EMI content in initial teacher education (teacher preparation) programs and continuing professional development (in-service) courses. Moreover, she found that overwhelmingly, 83.6 % of respondents in the 55 Countries study felt that there were not enough qualified teachers. In line with that, a study conducted by Lim, Gan, and Sharpe (1997) reported that English-medium teacher education programs in Singapore did not necessarily prepare prospective English immersion teachers with adequate communicative competence to serve as suitable language models in the classroom. Furthermore, Manh's (2012) review study in Vietnam revealed that many of the lecturers lacked adequate oral skills.

Following those statements, the findings from different countries also show the same results. In Netherlands, Vinke et al. (1998) found that the lecturers employed slower speech rates and less flexibility in dealing with unpredicted incidents and various challenges in language use. They had difficulty in expressing themselves effectively, especially in paraphrasing, searching for words, and refining statements.

In Italy Secondary school, mathematics teachers were asked about their attitudes to different aspects of CLIL (Favilli, Maffei, & Peroni, 2013), and they reported some difficulties related to their linguistic ability. Moreover, In Turkey, Başıbek et al. (2014) found teacher have difficulties in teaching their students because most of the problems were in connection with the students' lack of proficiency in English

In Malaysia, Othman and Saad (2009) found in Malaysia science class the pre-service teachers must speak slowly articulate words correctly and clearly so that students understand them. The reason for doing so is not only due to students' low proficiency but also because some of the pre-service teachers feel that they are not fluent enough in English. Besides, Tan and Lan (201) found that teaching content subject such as Mathematics by using EMI is challenging because the students low proficiency. If teacher teaching in Bahasa Malaysia, the students would understand a lot more mathematics however, if

the teacher teach in English some students might understand as little as 60%.

In Indonesia case, Ibrahim's (2001) review of the Indonesian context, lack of teacher proficiency posed a "threat", leading to communication breakdowns, loss of rapport, and lack of discussion in the classroom. In addition, a study by Ministry of Education and Culture on English language competences of teachers and principals in 549 international standard schools in 2009 found that the overall picture is of a teacher workforce is not ready to function in English and more than half of all teachers possess a level of 'novice' (Dearden, 2014).

Guidelines

The Guidelines role in the teaching and learning process quality is undeniable. Dearden (2014) found there are 60 percent of countries among 55 countries that have no guidelines in implementing EMI and only 27.3 percent have guidelines. This lack of the guidelines causes the mismatch between goals and actual implementation (Manh, 2012; Sert, 2008). One of the mismatches is the technique of code switching. Dearden (2014) found that 76 percent of respondents reported their country as having no written guidelines specifying whether or not English should be the only language used in the EMI classroom. This fact leads to the confusion whether teacher use English-only or code-switching and it caused a controversy.

According to Hughes et al. (2008) when a speaker is not fluent in the target language, it is code-switching that helps continue communication. However, some teacher may take it for granted that the first language will provide a substitute for learning (Vu and Burns, 2014). Kyeyune (2010) said that the alternative of code switching is pedagogically "wrong" because it fails "to facilitate the development of learners' academic literacies" (p. 179). In brief, clear guidelines are needed because it affected the teaching and learning process. A research conducted by Astika and Wahyana's (2012) showed that the fact that schools provided no guidance and support to enable the teachers to successfully use EMI caused teachers' lack of confidence in their EMI teaching strategies.

Resources

Vu and Burns (2014) found that inadequate supplies of reference materials and teaching equipment are challenges that teachers faced in the class. The resources such as textbook,

activity book, reference book, and teacher book are not available to help the teacher to teach content subject in English while these are the essential parts in the success implementation of EMI. Resources also help the teacher on how to teach the content subject related to several terms that is used in English. It's also more effective and essentials that the teacher didn't need to spend their time to find the proper materials for their students. In addition, According to Kaplan and Baldauf (2005), Successful implementation of EMI programs requires adequate resources and generous funding. Besides, Nhung (2019) found that lack of resources and facilities might have exerted a lot of pressure on lecturers to fulfill teaching duties.

Student's English Proficiencies

Linguistic difficulty is not only experienced by the teacher but also students. Some studies found that students' low proficiency and the failure in the classrooms were because of their low proficiency in English (e.g., Doiz et al. 2013; Kyeyune 2010; and Tsuneyoshi, 2005). Inadequate English proficiency gives an effect on the implementation of EMI. Boztas (1995) found student's low proficiency in English makes them have a low level of participation in the classes during the lesson. Besides, Tsuneyoshi (2005) found that students found it difficult to understand the lesson. This problem in the teaching and learning process becomes a challenge faced by the teacher because they need to think about how the students with low proficiency catch up with the lesson. Ashcraft (2006) found that content lecturers face the challenges of teaching their subject courses in English to students who are not proficient enough to follow lectures. Some of these lecturers felt frustrated because, in addition to their academic fields, they have to scope with language issues in their classrooms, which demands extra knowledge and skills regarding the second language acquisition process. On the other hand, Othman and Saad (2009) found that the teacher sometimes has to do code-switching or translating to facilitate the flow of instruction and to make sure the learners with low proficiency could follow the lesson. Furthermore, Vu and Burns (2014) found that students' English ability is one of the potential challenges for EMI lecturers and it was difficult to improve students' language skills to equip them for EMI within the short time available. Meanwhile, students' diverse language abilities

required more effort and resources from content lecturers who had to spend time adapting to teaching materials and activities.

CONCLUSION

This article explains the pros and cons of teacher perspectives towards the implementation of EMI and teacher challenges. Regardless to the disadvantages of the implementation of English as a Medium of Instruction, implementing EMI in classroom practices in this globalization era really supports educational system to be better and can produce good quality of students that can fulfill the requirement of the worlds in many aspects. Implementing EMI has a lot of challenges that faced by the teacher such as first, teacher's quality, the teacher don't have a training about how to implement EMI in their class, how to use the term in their subject in English and they have a low proficiency in English. This leads them to feel not confidence in teaching. Second, there are limited resources such as text book and teaching materials for teaching EMI class. Third, there are no guidelines in most countries on how to implement EMI. Third, lack of teaching resources such as textbook, e-book, activity book, and references book. Fourth, teachers found it difficult to teach students that has low proficiency in English because the students couldn't understand what the teacher explained and the teacher have to do code switching in the classroom. In brief, if teacher's aware of this challenges teacher can figure out how to overcome this challenges so that the implementation of EMI runs well and produced more advantages rather than disadvantages to the students.

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