

# Understanding University Teachers' Perspectives of English Medium Instruction in Indonesia

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## ABSTRACT

Despite the massive growth of universities offering EMI in non-Anglophone countries including Indonesia, there is little research regarding the underlying rationales for the implementation of EMI and the perceptions of lecturers in relation to the enactment of EMI. Several studies have also highlighted the absence of official guidelines for EMI in this context, which has contributed to the dissimilar practices of EMI among Indonesian universities. This case study aimed to find out the underpinning rationales for the implementation of EMI at the Indonesian universities. It also aimed to investigate how lecturers at the Indonesian universities perceived the implementation of EMI. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine non-English lecturers from both state and private Indonesian universities. The results of this study showed that some factors, including promoting university internationalisation, enhancing academic reputations, and taking part in international competitions, were found to underpin the implementation of EMI. In addition, this study also underlined the issue of internationalisation in relation to *Englishisation* and its impacts on EMI. In this study, the participants' use of the Indonesian language intended to facilitate communication and understanding of content learning could also be seen as a way to value multilingual practices. Therefore, this study suggests that the Indonesian linguistic ecology where Bahasa Indonesia and English co-exist with the hundreds of local languages should be taken into consideration in the educational language policy-making.

## 1. Introduction

To date, Indonesia is known as the fourth largest population in the world which occupies thousands of islands across the country (The World Bank, 2022). In addition, Indonesia has more than 300 native languages and dialects spoken by different ethnic and cultural groups (BBC News, 2018). To unify such a diverse country, Bahasa Indonesia is utilised throughout the nation as an official language for communication. In other words, not only does it serve as a lingua franca, but also it functions as a symbolic unifying function for the nation (Ridwan, 2018). As the country's official language, Bahasa Indonesia serves as a representation of national pride, national identity, a unifying bridge between citizens, regions, and cultures, as well as a medium for uniting tribes, cultures, and languages (Bulan, 2019).

Nevertheless, the linguistic landscape of Indonesia has been experiencing a dynamic change, such as the penetration of foreign languages, particularly in urban society (Prayoga & Khatimah, 2019). The state of the world, i.e., globalisation, has had a significant impact on how foreign languages, like English, are used in Indonesia (Marsudi & Zahrok, 2015). On the one hand, globalisation has opened up possibilities for extensive international cooperation. For

example, since the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015, Indonesia has been committed to becoming an active player in realising the AEC targets. One of these commitments is to prepare university graduates to actively participate in the ASEAN market (AEC Council Minister Indonesia, 2020). Consequently, it is expected that Indonesian university students are proficient in using international languages, particularly English, to be able to compete at the global level. As a response to this huge demand, a number of universities in Indonesia, both public and private, have provided specific courses that implement English Medium Instruction (EMI) in the teaching and learning process for non-English study programs.

There have been numerous studies that have focused on EMI in various contexts. Research results have shown that there is some positive motivation regarding the implementation of EMI, e.g. improving English competence (Chapple, 2015; Costa & Mariotti, 2022), acquiring English as a communication tool in the global era (Hamid et al., 2013), taking part in the internalisation of universities (Mckinley & Rose, 2022; Zhang, 2018), modernising universities (Khan, 2013; Zhang, 2018), and increasing access to job opportunities (Barnawi, 2018, 2021; Bozdoğan & Karlıdağ, 2013).

With regard to the Indonesian educational policy, the government does not have a specific guideline which aims to regulate the implementation of EMI at the university level (Dewi, 2017; Simbolon, 2018, 2021). This suggests that these universities are putting EMI into practice on their own. Due to limited research in terms of the language policy, the rationales underpinning the implementation of EMI in higher education in Indonesia are still unknown. In addition, EMI lecturers do not have adequate knowledge of how to implement EMI in the teaching process (Macaro & Han, 2020). For example, lecturers are often confused between the terms *bilingual class* and *international class*. The lack of clarity surrounding the terminology may be due to insufficient information about EMI and its pedagogical practices. Hence, this distinct interpretation of EMI has also affected the extent to which English is used as a medium of instruction. Click or tap here to enter text. Even when the class is conducted fully in English language, the focus has mainly been to improve students' limited English skills and not to the subject course (Simbolon et al., 2020). This phenomenon may exist due to the problem with students' English proficiency, such as limited English listening and writing skills (Khasbani, 2019; Rogier, 2012) as well as poor vocabulary knowledge (Macaro et al., 2016). Consequently, there has been a concern raised by some scholars to provide sustainable teacher development available for EMI teaching (Dearden & Macaro, 2021; Macaro, 2019). Given Indonesia's active involvement in participating the AEC, it is possible to predict that EMI will be implemented in Indonesian universities more extensively. Considering that no explicit regulations have been formulated to accommodate this internationalisation agenda, understanding the driving forces behind the implementation of EMI in Indonesia is deemed crucial. Moreover, it is also important to understand how lecturers respond to the top-down initiation of EMI since at the micro-policy level, they often grapple with the changes in MOI. This study aims to address the following research questions:

1. What are the underpinning rationales for the implementation of EMI at the Indonesian universities?
2. How do lecturers at the Indonesian universities perceive the implementation of EMI?

It is expected that the results of this study are significant to inform stakeholders relevant to the implementation of EMI in Indonesia in terms of the policy-making and the pedagogical practice of EMI, particularly in the Indonesian universities. Despite the urgent need for adopting this global phenomenon to the local context, this study outlines the importance of understanding EMI in the Indonesian multilingual setting with a different lens. The implications are further discussed in Section 6.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. EMI as an emerging approach

There has been a significant shift in the aim of language education in many educational settings, moving away from acquiring the language for communicative purposes to learning 'content' through the language (Ibrahim, 2001; Walkinshaw et al., 2017). This phenomenon is labelled quite differently, for example, in North America it is referred to as 'immersion' or 'content-based learning' and in Europe, it came to be called 'content and language integrated learning' (CLIL) (Coyle et al., 2010; Macaro, 2018). The terms are usually (but not exclusively) associated with a secondary school context (Lasagabaster, 2019; Urmeneta, 2013). The purpose of this approach in Canada and European countries is similar, that is, to provide a multilingual education for linguistically diverse students in order to equip them to meet opportunities and challenges in the increasingly multicultural world (Barnard, 2014). In this paper, we focus on English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in higher education. EMI is a term that is still inconsistent since its meaning keeps evolving (Airey, 2016; British Council, 2013). Dearden (2014, p. 4) defines it as:

*"The use of the English language to teach academic subjects in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English."*

This definition resonates with Macaro et al. (2018) conceptualisation of EMI which differentiates the utilisation of English as a medium of instruction to teach content in Anglophone countries such as, the UK, the USA, Australia, and Canada from countries where English is not the first language of the majority of the population. Macaro (2018) however, acknowledges that this definition is problematic as the term 'first language' is not always straightforward, especially in multilingual countries where multiple languages co-exist in a speech community. Airey (2016) has attempted to make a distinction between EMI, CLIL, and EAP/ESP. In his model of a language/content continuum, EAP emphasises students' language competence while EMI is placed at the other end of the continuum as it focuses on content learning. Meanwhile, CLIL is in the middle of the continuum as it gives equal weight to both content and language. Macaro (2013) argues that this view regards EMI as a fixed notion since it attempts to compare EMI to other similar practices. Nevertheless, Macaro (2013) has criticised this approach to EMI since viewing educational notions as a fixed entity could be problematic. He further argues that EMI is a fluid concept which always goes through a process of evolution. In this sense, the conceptualisation of EMI will largely depend on research evidence that informs EMI practices, involving relevant stakeholders and end-users of EMI.

In this study, we follow Macaro's (2013) stance that goes beyond the dichotomy of EMI. Underpinned by Phillipson's (1992) use fallacies in linguistic imperialism, Knagg (2013, p. 24) has proposed some fallacies of what EMI is: one of which is "the on-off fallacy" that regards EMI as "an on-off switch, a black and white concept". It is important to note that EMI is a dynamic notion which operates at varying levels of educational institutions and classrooms. This perspective also applies to the extent to which English is used in student-teacher interactions inside and outside classroom contexts; what kind of 'E' in EMI is enacted in the EMI policies; and whether multilingual language practices are legitimated in such programmes. Since the term 'EMI' is still ill-defined and its conceptualisation is context-dependent, this study seeks to contribute to advancing the notion of EMI that is also shaped by lecturers' attitudes towards and understandings of the concept and practice of EMI.

Despite its nuanced concept and blurred boundaries between EMI and other-related educational practices, EMI has gained much attention in many Asian educational settings, for example in Vietnam (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2020), in Malaysia (Hasim & Barnard, 2018; Rahman et al., 2021), in China (Galloway et al., 2017; Yuan et al., 2020), in Korea (Kim, 2017), and in Indonesia (Hamied & Lengkanawati, 2018). Numerous western universities have also established bilateral relationships with universities in Asia to administer EMI programmes in various academic disciplines (Barnard, 2014). Even some of these universities have established their own campuses in countries such as, Malaysia, Japan, Vietnam, and Indonesia, on account of "capitalising on the hard currency of higher degrees earned in English in English institutions" (van der Walt, 2013, p. 63). Following this trend, some Asian countries like Malaysia, Japan, and Hong Kong, have enacted regulations that universities should use English as a medium of instruction in a range of programmes (see Hasim & Barnard, 2018; Saeed et al., 2018). The impact of the rapid growth of EMI can be seen in the increasing number of universities that offer EMI programmes across Asia (see Macaro et al., 2018) in order to meet the inevitable demand for English as well as to keep up with its growth as "the dominant lingua franca of academia" (Galloway & Rose, 2021, p. 1).

## 2.2. EMI in Indonesia

In the Indonesian educational context, a medium of instruction (MOI) is not a new issue since it is as far back as 1950s that a foreign language, i.e. Dutch, was used to train medical assistants in the first tertiary institution, University of Indonesia, in Jakarta (Hamied & Lengkanawati, 2018). Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) established in 1920 also particularly stated in the document issued by ITB School of Pharmacy that Dutch or English was used to deliver the lecture (Hamied & Lengkanawati, 2018). Since then, many universities in Indonesia have developed EMI programmes to develop bilingual competence (Tamtam et al., 2010).

Globalisation and the growing need for English as a key to global relations, economy, technology, and information have triggered the rise of EMI in many contexts, including Indonesia (Despitarsari, 2021; Dewi, 2017; Khasbani, 2019; Simbolon, 2018). Moreover, Indonesia has become one of the most populous countries in the world with impressive economic growth and geographic advantages (Hamied & Lengkanawati, 2018). The important role of Indonesia in international trade transactions has made the country appealing to its neighbouring regions, reinforcing English to become the international language for communication (Hamied & Lengkanawati, 2018; Khasbani, 2019). As a result, Indonesia has an urgent need to face this challenge through its educational system in order to prepare its citizens to engage in communication and to compete with people coming from different cultural backgrounds in this globalised world.

In 2003, bilingual programmes or RSBI (Pilot International Standard Schools) began to bloom at the school level where the MOI changed from Bahasa Indonesia to English or a mix of both. Nevertheless, this programme was cancelled in January 2013 since it attracted many criticisms, e.g., providing unequal access to education for all Indonesian students (Cahyani et al., 2018). Hence, the government has encouraged Indonesian universities to offer EMI programmes, aiming to equip their graduates with English skills. As stated in the Law of National Education No 20/2003, universities could adopt a foreign language as a medium of instruction. Even though there is no explicit statement which emphasises English as the language of instruction, the significance of English in various domains of life seems to be the rationale for administering EMI courses (Simbolon, 2018, 2021). In addition, ASEAN Economic Community (MEA) with the principle of "Free flow of goods, service, investment, capital and skilled labour" being one of the four MEA foundations (ASEAN, 2015, p. 4) has provided a solid foundation for the implementation of EMI in Indonesian universities. In practice, many Indonesian universities have offered two models of delivery, i.e. 'regular programmes' and 'international programmes'. While the former uses Bahasa Indonesia as the MOI, the latter utilises English. However, 'international programmes' are not always attended by international students, whereas 'regular programmes' are attended by domestic students (Dewi, 2017). Both programmes could be attended by any students depending on their preferences and language competence as well as their ability to pay higher tuition fees for the international programme (Cahyani et al., 2018; Dewi, 2017; Simbolon, 2021).

Despite its promising trend, the implementation of EMI is not without criticism. The issues around students' English proficiency, teachers' qualifications, and language hierarchies have been underlined by some scholars (e.g. Hamied & Lengkanawati, 2018; Khasbani, 2019; Ross & Coleman, n.d.). The status of English as a foreign language

in Indonesia has been a challenge in the implementation of EMI. As Hamied and Lengkanawati (2018) argue, the inclusion of English in the early education stage will likely influence EMI implementation's success at the tertiary level. Unlike other countries in Asia, English has become an optional subject at the primary level (Kirkpatrick, 2011). Moreover, many students have limited opportunities to use English in daily interactions unless English has become one of the main linguistic tools in their language repertoire. Even so, they have to deliberately construct these English-speaking spaces. Another concern is that many EMI programmes do not have qualified teachers to teach content in English (Khasbani, 2019). Ensuring teachers' linguistic competence is crucial as it contributes to the effective transfer of knowledge and classroom communication. Therefore, some scholars have proposed some pedagogical models that could be applied to EMI classes with the aim to support students in co-constructing knowledge by means of the collaboration between content and language practitioners (see Lin, 2016). Lastly, the multilingual nature of Indonesia has placed English in an intricate position where it co-exists with the national and local languages (Hamied, 2012; Zein, 2019, 2020). In this sense, EMI may benefit speakers of English and on the other hand, disadvantage speakers of other languages (Kirkpatrick, 2014). As a result, the issue of unequal power relations between languages is quite apparent in this multilingual setting. This concern has been raised by scholars who argue that a unique linguistic landscape and socio-political context should be taken into consideration in designing and implementing educational language policies.

Even though some research has attempted to examine EMI in the Indonesian context (Despitari, 2021; Dewi, 2017; Hamied & Lengkanawati, 2018; Khasbani, 2019; Simbolon, 2018; Simbolon et al., 2020), research aiming to address lecturers' perceptions towards EMI is still limited. The purpose of this research is to investigate the implementation of EMI based on the perspectives of lecturers. The role of lecturers is crucial as their pedagogical and professional competence will contribute to the success of EMI teaching (Yuan et al., 2020). They are also expected to be able to balance the presentation of content materials with the use of English as a means of communication in classrooms. Taking this into account, the study aims to investigate the underpinning rationales for EMI in the universities in Indonesia as well as the perception of lecturers regarding the implementation of EMI in non-English majors.

### 3. Method

This research used a case study approach, which aims to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under scrutiny in its real-life setting (Gray, 2014; Yin, 2009). The case explored in this study was the lecturers' perceptions towards in the implementation of EMI at the university level. The use of case study allowed the researchers to explore 'how' and 'why' questions regarding EMI, i.e. how and why

EMI is implemented in the universities being studied. In addition, its flexible design may also uncover the relationship between the phenomenon and the context where it occurs, thus providing a more comprehensive picture of the case being investigated in its specific setting (Gray, 2014; Robson & McCartan, 2016).

This study used semi-structured interviews to facilitate unexpected themes to emerge. A set of interview questions proposed by Dewi (2017) were adapted to investigate the lecturers' views of the implementation of EMI in the Indonesian universities. The interview questions cover the role of English in this modern era, the emerging market of EMI, the implementation of EMI in higher education, and the benefits as well as challenges in teaching EMI.

The interviews were conducted and recorded via Zoom Meeting, and each lasted between thirty to forty minutes. Before the data collection process, the participants were informed that their responses would not affect their professional careers in any way since their identities and institutions would not be revealed to protect the confidentiality. Thus, this study used pseudonyms and gave general information about the teaching subject and the status of the universities, e.g. state or private university.

This research used purposive sampling to recruit participants who could facilitate the exploration of the issue relevant to this study (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Some criteria for selected participants were established, e.g. teaching non-English majors using English as a medium of instruction and having at least two years of teaching in EMI classes. The information about the participants in this study can be seen in **Table 1** below.

**Table 1.** Information about the participants

No	Pseudonyms	Gender	Teaching Subject	University
1	Charlie	Female	Finance	Private University
2	Romeo	Male	Computer science	Private University
3	Zulu	Male	Statistics	Private University
4	Deborah	Female	Economic s	Private University
5	Michael	Male	Computer science	Private University
6	Oliver	Male	Business Managem ent	Private University

7	Norah	Female	Law	State University
8	Patrick	Male	Law	State University
9	Delta	Male	Social Politic Science	State University

The data obtained from the interviews were analysed using the thematic analysis (Terry et al., 2017). The procedures of the data analysis followed these procedures:

- Getting familiar with the data, including transcribing, read, and re-read the interview data.
- Constructing codes, drawn from relevant literature and the data itself. Both deductive and inductive approaches facilitated pre-determined codes and emerging codes to be included in the data analysis.
- Constructing themes, categorising similar codes to potential themes.
- Defining and labelling themes, drawn from relevant literature.
- Writing up the report, including revealing codes and themes and selecting relevant quotations from the interview transcript to support the discussion of research results.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. The Role of English

The participants expressed their views on the roles of English in the strategic domains of life. All of them also emphasised the importance of having some degree of English proficiency in order to compete globally, for example:

Deborah: “With the development of technology, ... [Being proficient in] English has finally become an obligation. In fact, maybe in some companies... English is no longer considered special... If the candidate could speak Mandarin or Japanese; it would be a plus point for them. So, in my opinion, it [English] has become a necessity and an obligation... If we want to survive in today's world, we have to be adaptive, right?”

Delta: “[Being able to use] English is very important, especially in the field of international relations... It has become the official language for us to communicate with people from other countries... to engage in international transactions, build international cooperation with our neighbouring countries.”

Norah: “Without English, I think we cannot show our ability to the world... English has become the main language for communication across the globe.”

With reference to the educational sector, some of the participants highlighted the added value that students may benefit from their ability to use English, for instance:

Charlie: “It [students’ abilities in speaking English] could boost their confidence... It [English] could help them interact with their peers, lecturers, and society at large... Based on my experience, students who are not excellent in their academic achievement but they could deliver their thoughts and ideas in international forums or communities, for example, in student exchange programmes, are more outstanding.”

Oliver: “Well, it [English] makes them able to understand a wider range of sources. When, for example, I give an assignment from a journal or a business case that mostly uses English, they can understand the existing problems, as well as the context, the essence of this problem, and how to solve it... the students [who join the regular programme] often face difficulties [in understanding materials presented in English].”

Patrick: “I think that students could participate in international conferences... understanding global issues happening around the globe...”

Working as a lecturer in a private university in Jakarta, Michael who came from a small town in Central Java admitted that his English was not good compared to “*rich people*” (his original statement) in Jakarta. Fortunately, his capability of using English was getting better since he was forced to do presentations and write essays in English. He stated:

Michael: “For me, the use of English has unlocked access to knowledge...I am internationally-minded. English makes me able to compete internationally.”

Another participant also pointed out that being able to use English provides greater opportunities for students to access a wide range of good quality materials.

Zulu: “We know [that] materials that have excellent qualities are presented in English textbooks, journal articles... If we just refer to textbooks in Indonesian... they are still very limited.”

Based on the research results, all of the participants regard English as having dominant roles in developing one’s ability to enhance their competitiveness. Some of the participants have also underlined the need for acquiring English skills that could help them communicate with people from different countries. It is also interesting to see how English proficient students are deemed to have some added values which contribute to their self-development. One of the participants, for example, regards students who could speak English despite their poor academic performances are “*more outstanding*” (Charlie). Oscar has further compared students in the EMI and non-EMI programme, with the former being more proficient in comprehending materials in English. These findings may demonstrate how the participants in this study have acknowledged the superiority of English in equipping individuals to participate in global competitions and transactions as well as to raise one’s academic status.

In addition, some of the participants have seen English as the forefront of linguistic tool which could provide more opportunities for students to gain and construct knowledge through various educational resources that are primarily available in the English language. For these participants, English has dominated science and scholarship as never before as it has become a lingua franca in the academic domain. Zulu, a statistic lecturer, has also said that high-quality textbooks published in Indonesian are still few, thus, being able to understand reading materials in English becomes unavoidable to support both teaching and learning process. Another participant, Michael, has also mentioned that he is “*internationally-minded*” as he is able to learn through English. Before working as a lecturer, he was a student in an international programme at the same institution. Being immersed in the EMI programme as a student has arguably shaped his perspective towards the concept of “*internationally-minded*”, although he does not further clarify what it exactly means for him.

#### 4.2 The Conceptualisation of EMI Enacted in Universities

There is no general consensus with regard to the definition of EMI since its meaning is still evolving. The varied conceptualisations of EMI are also reflected in the findings of this study, for example:

Charlie: “In the finance Department, we have both regular and international programmes. The regular programme has also internationally accredited. The School of Accounting itself got the accreditation from Taiwan... The Finance Department has also affiliated with CFA, so some of the [core] courses are required to use English as a medium of instruction. In the Finance international programme, we have a double degree programme. It means that students will earn two degrees recognized by international companies...All is administered in English.”

Charlie also stated that she had some international students studying in the international programme and inbound and outbound students joining the student exchange programme. As the finance department has run a double degree programme, the lecturers should follow the curriculum assigned by the partner university from Australia. This also means that all the assessments, assignments, and examinations are prescribed to ensure the standardisation of the teaching and learning process.

This conceptualisation of EMI can also be found in Delta’s responses during the interview, for example:

Delta: “English is used 100% in our [international] programme...In the regular programme, some courses also use English as a medium of instruction... We have established some international cooperation with our partner universities abroad...a double-degree programme. In our programme, we usually receive five to ten international students each year... from Japan, Australia, Korea, Latin America, and European countries.”

He further stated that the international cooperation between Indonesia and other countries could also result in the increasing number of international students studying in the university. This is also in line with Oliver and Deborah’s statements regarding how EMI has been implemented in their university:

Oliver: “The international programme is very important because students will earn double degrees from our university and our partner university.... Students will study in our campus for two years and have an opportunity to study abroad for two years.”

Two other lecturers from the same university, Norah and Patrick, also expressed similar perspectives towards this issue. They stated that the Law faculty offered two types of programmes, i.e., regular and international programmes. While the former used Bahasa Indonesia as the medium of instruction, the latter used English. Patrick also revealed:

Patrick: “But of course, the international programme charges a higher tuition fee compared to the regular [programme].”

This view is also shared by some of the participants in this study, stating that students are required to pay more expensive fees in the international programmes.

Zulu and Michael shared a similar response when asked about how EMI is operationalised in their universities:

Zulu: “EMI has been implemented since the establishment of this university. However, we used the bilingual approach to teach the students at that time since they were not really proficient in English.”

Michael: “Since it [the university] was founded in 2000, it has implemented the so-called EMI. Everything is taught in English except for MKDU courses... So indeed, what has become the promotional strategy is [the] English.”

While the other universities being studied have differentiated the EMI programme, labelled as the international programme, these two universities did not apply such a policy since all the programmes used English as the medium of instruction.

In addition, the participants also revealed how languages are used in the EMI programme. While most of the participants said that English was used as a medium of instruction from the establishment of the international programme, Zulu mentioned that the bilingual approach was initially implemented to assist students with low English proficiency. Despite the varied usage of English in the EMI programme, none of the participants denied that they used Bahasa Indonesia to a certain extent to solve practical classroom challenges. Even some of the participants, e.g., Romeo, Zulu, and Patrick, allowed their students to use Bahasa Indonesia in group discussions in order to create a more comfortable classroom atmosphere.

A special case is also found in one of the participants' institutions which belongs to a foreign university in Australia and has established its campus in Indonesia since October 2021:

Romeo: "All of them [students] are Indonesian students. We have not opened the programmes for international students due to administrative issues... But we have lecturers from abroad as well, not all is local lecturers."

With regard to the administrative requests for the lecturers in the EMI programmes, all of the participants admitted that there were no specific English language requirements from their universities. They were not required to submit any TOEFL or IELTS certificates as proof of their English language proficiency, although some of them had assumed that the interviews with the university officials might aim to assess their English competence. The lecturers from the state universities also stated that they followed the lecturer recruitment held by the Ministry of Education without any further selections focusing on their English language abilities. Nevertheless, the lecturers from the state universities in this study agreed that the lecturers teaching the EMI programme were qualified to teach the EMI programme. As Delta stated:

Delta: "All the lecturers in this university are capable of teaching through English... The recruitment process is very challenging for prospective lectures. So, if they are accepted to work here, they must be excellent."

The other lecturers assumed that their academic degrees obtained from universities abroad had made them eligible for teaching the courses in English. Even some of the participants said that the partner universities also took part in the lecturer recruitment to ensure that the prospective candidate was qualified to teach in the respective university.

Although no specific requirements had been made regarding the lecturer's English ability, all of the participants mentioned that prospective students should meet certain English proficiency scores. This was to ensure that students had necessary English skills, including listening, reading, speaking, and writing, so that they could follow the content learning delivered through English.

This study arguably revealed an unexpected finding that only two of the participants claimed that there was an internal assessment administered by the quality learning department of the university that aimed to monitor their teaching process. Among several marking criteria, one of them was whether or not the lecturer used English in the classroom. Charlie, for example, stated that the assessor would observe her teaching practice without prior notice as a form of internal evaluation, although she also admitted that there was no sanction issued by the university if the lecturer did not follow the prescribed language policy. Another participant, Zulu, mentioned that the teaching process was recorded, thus, the recorded pedagogical practice could be used to check whether the lecturer adhered to the standard

educational procedures. Apart from these two participants, most of the participants' performances in teaching curriculum subjects using English were not regularly evaluated by the universities.

### 4.3 The Rationale for the Implementation of EMI

In this study, all the participants agreed that integrating EMI was important to receive international accreditation. They also shared how their university's current goal was to improve its ranking.

Charlie: "I think it's because we need international accreditations... Our aim is to internationalise this university... We expect to achieve a higher ranking."

The implementation of EMI was also carried out to foster greater international collaboration with partner universities. Zulu, for instance, mentioned how his students at his university took a double degree program through a collaboration with Arizona State University. In this sense, EMI was to support the internationalisation of the university:

Zulu: "We have had a partnership with Arizona State University (double degree). We also have some international students in some of our programmes."

Norah: "This [EMI] programme is to show our 'existence' to other universities. We have proven that we are able to administer this programme to internationalise our university. If we want to compete with other universities abroad, we have to be able to open an international programme for our students."

Deborah: "So international class students are required to do... whether it's a dual degree, or an exchange, or a short course."

To put it another way, the implementation of EMI has evolved into a tool for demonstrating its viability to other universities as the program expands the opportunities available to several international partners. Two participants provided some intriguing reasons for putting EMI into place. As opposed to bringing the university to the outside world, the implementation of EMI could bring the international world to the local context:

Michael: "... the aim was to provide international quality for Indonesians. So, initially, the establishment of this SGU was triggered by the financial crisis [experienced by Indonesia in 1999]."

Romeo: "Since this is an international university, the delivery of lesson materials is of course in English... This is a new branch in Indonesia."

The motive of bringing the universities to achieve the highest ranking in this context was to convince parents and students that they could experience the international standard university in Indonesia. These participants also stated that offering distinctive majors such as mechatronics and biomedical engineering, and utilising English as a medium

of instruction had successfully attracted students to enrol on these universities.

All in all, all of the participants agreed that the underlying reason for integrating EMI was to achieve a higher ranking and receive international accreditation. The participants stated, however, that there were no established regulations and norms regarding how the EMI should be implemented in higher education. It is also interesting to note that no teacher training whatsoever was provided for all of the lecturers.

#### 4.4 Perceptions of Lecturers towards EMI as a Form of Englishisation

The results of this study demonstrated the participants' views towards the implementation of EMI at the university level. Despite the caveats entailing EMI, all of the participants generally showed a positive perception of the enactment of EMI since they agreed that it had offered innumerable advantages for the relevant stakeholders involved, including students, teachers, and institutions (see Section 4.5).

In addition, the interview results also revealed how the participants attempted to make sense of the proliferation of EMI in the Indonesian contexts. Many of them perceived EMI as having nothing to do with the so-called linguistic imperialism. They further stated that the massive exertion of EMI did not have any significant impact on their identity, for instance:

Deborah: "... English is not imperialism or domination. Yes, the point is that if we want to survive, we have to adjust, and adapt."

Charlie: "I think it's too far [to think that EMI is a kind of imperialism] ... English is a means of communication so that we can obtain competitive advantages."

Michael also stated that he showed his identity as a Javanese by maintaining his local accent when speaking English. Having experienced as a student and a lecturer in the EMI programme, during the interview Michael did not state that he had made any attempt to imitate the so-called native speakers:

Michael: "I'm Javanese, I grew up in Javanese family, so my identity is still Javanese... English is the first international language in the world. So yes, I forced myself to speak English even with the medhok [strong Javanese] accent."

These participants viewed EMI as a prerequisite condition to compete globally and finally lead this nation to become a developed country. They also acknowledged that English had become an international language that held a crucial role in international relations across countries. As Oliver stated:

Oliver: "We have to realise that we need one language that can be used to communicate with other people from different countries and cultures. That's why we need to learn the language that are understood by many people."

Deborah also pointed out that the fear of English was not reasonable as English was required for students to "progress" (her original word). Moreover, Michael seemed to perceive that English had been "a common thing" (his original words) for him, thus, he did not consider it as a form of imperialism. In other words, he thought that English had been so internalized that it became part of his life. As a result, he felt that there was no need to question the strong domination of English, particularly in educational settings.

Some of the participants, however, showed some concerns regarding the widespread of English through the implementation of EMI:

Zulu: "But if we do not know how to use English and Bahasa appropriately, for example we mix both languages just as in anak Jaksel [...], I think it shows that we have an identity crisis... We have to be able to use each language appropriately... appropriate grammar and vocabulary."

Norah: "Sometimes I feel writing in Indonesian is more difficult... I wrote many articles in English. I don't know if that also affects my writing skills in Indonesian... Somehow I think that much exposure to English could threaten our abilities in other languages."

Zulu also stated that one's English abilities could be used to label his/her social status:

Zulu: "Being able to speak English doesn't mean that we are cool... But having adequate proficiency in English could make us understand, for example, news in English without looking at the subtitle."

He argued that one's intellectuality could not only be determined by his/her English ability. His perspective also corresponds to Deborah's statement, although both of them had a quite distinct view towards how EMI contributed to linguistic imperialism. Raised in Yogyakarta, Deborah stated that EMI was regarded as "too prestigious" (her own word) in this context. She further clarified that the location where EMI was implemented could also affect how society perceived this programme. In her opinion, people who lived in Jakarta might perceive EMI relatively differently compared to those who were in other parts of Indonesia, where acquiring English abilities had not been seen as a priority.

#### 4.5 Possibilities and Challenges in EMI

The participants expressed their views towards the advantages of implementing EMI in their universities. Zulu, Charlie, and Delta highlighted how EMI could equip both students and teachers with adequate English skills:

Zulu: "For the lecturers, they will be more confident and build a good habit in presenting materials in English. For the students, English prepares them to upgrade their skills, e.g., they may want to pursue their master's degree. So, they have already experienced being in an international situation."



Charlie: “What we are looking for is competitive advantage... That’s why parents want their children to learn English. There is something more that we can ‘sell’ with English.”

Delta: “The students are more confident... it is easier for them to get a job in the future because they already have English skills. For the lecturers... they can upgrade their skills... write journal articles in English.”

These participants believed that EMI could provide students with increased access to better employment as they had acquired the necessary English skills to engage in international communities. In addition, they also highlighted that EMI teachers could improve their professional development as a teacher and as a researcher.

In this study, some of the participants identified the international competition as the impetus for the implementation of EMI:

Romeo: “Our quality of education should be ‘international’, but we have to have impacts on the local context. ... In terms of human capital, we have to be able to compete globally.”

Romeo also stated that EMI was very relevant to his university which only offered master’s degree programmes. He further explained that his students were mostly corporate employees who had been working in international companies. Thus, they would benefit from the extensive use of English, which was deemed an important tool to increase the quality of human capital.

The other participants shared a similar perspective on this matter:

Patrick: Our university can compete with other universities, especially in the South East Asian context... They [international students] could see that universities in Indonesia could have an international standard of teaching and learning process.”

Norah: “Our students have extra skills that can be beneficial for them in the workplace... [The students] can stand out in international communities... [the students] can compete with other students in western universities.”

Interestingly, one of the participants revealed that the university could receive a higher income since both local and international students were required to pay more expensive tuition fees to enrol on the EMI programme:

Delta: “... to become a prestigious and recognised university in the world... And we cannot deny that the university can gain more profit.”

These participants emphasised the potential benefit of EMI that could increase the standard quality of the university so that universities in Indonesia could compete with other universities abroad. The notion of ‘competition’ in this sense corresponds to the participants’ responses that achieving international rankings was of the utmost importance.

Despite the numerous potentials of EMI, the participants also stated some concerns regarding the implementation of EMI. Many of them said that explaining complex concepts that required teachers’ adequate English proficiency had become the greatest challenge:

Oliver: “They [international students] said, it’s difficult for them to follow the lesson because of our accents.”

Charlie: “It [English] is not my native language. Sometimes, I need to think before talking to my students.”

Deborah: “Uhm, I’m not really good at English... For me, the biggest challenge is when I forget the vocabulary. So, for example, when I was teaching, I suddenly went blank.”

Norah: “We [the teachers] need to teach cognitively demanding concepts, and how could we explain them to our students with simplified sentences in English?”

For these participants, there was room for Bahasa Indonesia in the EMI programme in order to scaffold students’ content comprehension. Not only teachers’ English competence, but for some of the participants, students’ English abilities could also affect the effectiveness of EMI:

Zulu: “I think one of the most challenges in EMI is students’ low proficiency in English. In the statistic course, I use general and common terms to understand concepts.”

Romeo: “The problem is how to deliver technical concepts with English, so that it’s easy for my students to understand. Students’ English proficiency is varied. Some of them may not understand what I explain in English.”

Although many of the participants considered ‘internationalisation’ as an advantage of EMI, one of the participants regarded it as a challenge:

Delta: “I think the main challenge is that we have to change our way of thinking in order to become ‘internationalised’ because internationalisation is not only about the status of a university. It is also about how we can think ‘internationally’.”

In this case, Delta extended the meaning of internationalisation to a broader sense, that is, how teachers and students could make sense of the world, going beyond a simplistic view of events happening around them. For him, this required a critical evaluation of their life experiences as individuals and groups that could shape their critical thinking skills.

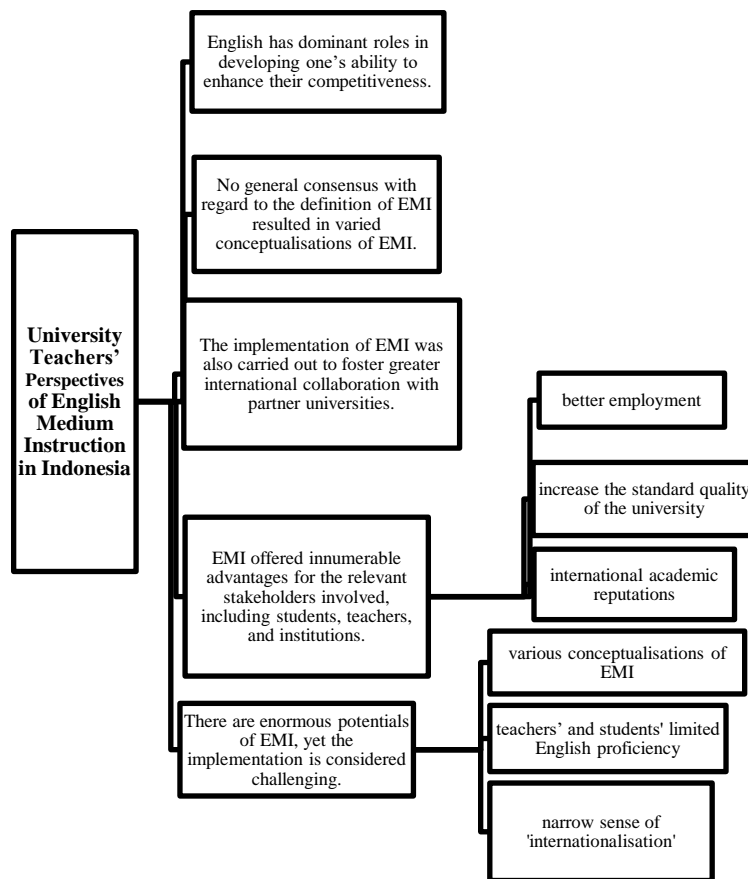
To sum up, the participants had nuanced perceptions of EMI as they seemed to still grasp the conceptualization of EMI in their own institutions. While they were aware of the enormous potential of EMI, they admitted that its implementation was not an easy task. Since they had integral roles in EMI, they expected to have sustainable teacher training as a form of professional support.

## 5. Discussion

EMI programmes in higher education have been increasingly developing in various contexts and Indonesia is no exception. This study sought to unpack the rationale for the implementation of EMI in the Indonesian universities and to investigate the lecturers' perspectives with regard to both possibilities and challenges of EMI in this context. Informed by semi-structured interviews, this study examined the underpinning principles that may trigger the spread of EMI with reference to the roles of English language and *Englishisation*. In addition, this study shed light on the diverse conceptualisations of EMI, reflected in how the universities label such a programme, use the language(s) as

a medium of instruction, set recruitment criteria for lecturers, and assess lecturers' teaching performances. In relation to opportunities and challenges faced by Indonesian EMI lecturers, this study investigated the possible benefits and obstacles of EMI contributing to students, lecturers, and educational institutions.

The findings of this study suggest that the inclusion of EMI in the tertiary curriculum offers numerous advantages for both students and lecturers. In line with some previous studies (e.g. Hamied & Lengkanawati, 2018; Jiang et al., 2019), several sub-themes, e.g. increasing confidence, improving English skills, having better future careers, have emerged from the data.



**Figure 1.** Thematic framework of Teachers' Perspectives towards English Medium Instruction in Indonesia

With regard to the institutional factor, the rationale for the implementation of EMI appears to be supported by the need for achieving international academic reputations. This corresponds to the results of some studies (e.g. Hamied & Lengkanawati, 2018; Lamb et al., 2021; Simbolon, 2018), revealing that English is perceived as having an indisputable role in the internationally competitive market. The current study specifically found that international university rankings were to secure reputable positions among

universities across the globe. This perspective is closely related to *internationalisation*, as stated by some of the participants. The growth of EMI due to the internationalisation purposes is also reflected in prior research (e.g., Yuan, 2020; Zhang, 2018). In a nutshell, the notion of internationalisation in higher education refers to the incorporation of global or intercultural dimensions into the objective or delivery of teaching and learning (Knight, 2004, 2013). This definition has been extended to include the

concept of intentionality into the process of integrating international aspects into tertiary education and to add explicit purposes, i.e., to improve the quality of education and to contribute to society at large (de Wit et al., 2015). Unlike two of the participants in this study who touched upon the importance of improving educational quality and impacting local people, the other participants seemed to perceive internationalisation as merely a way of competing with other universities. This may indicate that the implementation of EMI in this context is largely determined by “political and ideological grounds rather than educational ones” (Kirkpatrick, 2006, p. 71). In this sense, the idea of internationalisation aims to make the university more prestigious, increase the intake of foreign students, and compete among state and private universities (Macaro, 2018). It could not be denied that these forms of internationalisation results in financial benefits for the universities, which have become one of the driving forces in the implementation of EMI (Simbolon et al., 2020).

It has become apparent that the results of this study demonstrate the significance of English for improving global competitiveness. In other words, for the participants, the spread of English in this context is unavoidable, therefore, acquiring English is a must in order to engage in successful international participation, particularly in the educational domain (Bowles & Murphy, 2022; Galloway & Rose, 2021). The increasing status of English as a global language has raised an issue regarding *Englishisation* (F. Costa & Mariotti, 2022), referring to the growing presence of English at all levels in the academic setting (Galloway & Mckinley, 2019). Some scholars (Haines et al., 2022; Phillipson, 2015) argue that *Englishisation* could serve as either a blessing or a threat in higher education. In this present study, English language requirements were applied to the prospective students enrolling on the EMI programme. Although none of the participants was required to meet a certain standard of English language proficiency, they presumed that their qualifications for being graduated from foreign universities had contributed to faculty hiring decisions. This phenomenon may indicate that *Englishisation* could arguably lead to social injustice, i.e. both students and lecturers with limited exposure to English have limited opportunities for experiencing ‘the internationalisation’ in higher education.

The fact that Indonesia is a multilingual and multicultural country with hundreds of local languages should be taken into account in its language policy-making. This linguistically diverse country has consequently faced a complex issue regarding language policies and practices. The national language policy has gone through a long journey constituting important moments such as, the Youth Pledge in 1928, the First until the Third Language Congress in 1950s-1970s, and other subsequent congresses (Hamied, 2012). These historic events have contributed to the status and function of languages in Indonesia. Bahasa Indonesia

has gained the status of national language, while other indigenous languages have the status of regional or local languages.

The country’s linguistic ecology has also expanded due to the dominant roles of English in the global level. Nevertheless, positioning English within the richness of languages in Indonesia is an intricate phenomenon (Zein, 2019), let alone including it in the Indonesia’s education curriculum and offering it as a MOI. Some of the concerns include in what level of education English should be introduced, how the incorporation of English could affect one’s mastery of Bahasa Indonesia and local languages, and whether the government have sufficient numbers of qualified English teachers, not to mention teachers who can deliver content through English.

The dilemma mentioned previously are also reflected in some of the participants’ responses. They showed some apprehension concerning how the dominant roles of English could negatively affect one’s ability in using the Indonesian language for academic purposes. The same unease about *Englishisation* can also be found in Murphy & Mengistu (2022) research, revealing that it could pose a risk to the multilingual setting of tertiary education. In this current study, the participant’s use of the Indonesian language intended to facilitate communication and understanding of content learning could also be seen as a way to legitimate multilingual practices. Although the monolingual English instruction remained popular, the participants had a more flexible stance towards the utilisation of English. None of them regarded the use of students’ own language as tainted. In contrast, they gave space for other language(s) to support students’ content knowledge despite the English-only policy imposed on the EMI programme. The result of this study is similar to what Kirkpatrick (2019) has argued that EMI should not enforce the exclusive use of English as the linguistic resources of both teachers and students actually play significant roles in comprehending the content successfully. To put it another way, the implementation of EMI “must be conducted within a framework of multilingualism” (Kirkpatrick, 2019, p. 293). The implication of this view is that the ‘E’ in EMI should be understood to also cover other English varieties instead of using a native speaker variety of English as a benchmark.

In addition, the findings of this study suggest that EMI is conceptualised differently within the participants’ institutions. These varied characteristics and aims of the programme could be shaped by the institutional context (Chalmers, 2019). For example, the way universities structure their curricula, how they provide professional support for EMI teachers and students, and how they use languages as a medium of instruction are informed by the opportunities and the limitations existing in each educational setting. Unfortunately, similar to some research results (e.g., Macaro & Han, 2020; Yuan, 2020), all of the participants in

this study did not receive any training and support to improve their teaching strategies and facilitate students' various needs. Obtaining PhD degrees in English-speaking countries seemed to be the underlying reason for encouraging the lecturers to teach EMI, as if assumed English proficiency is the major requirement for teaching the programme (Kuteeva, 2014; Worthman, 2022). Without sufficient training and preparation in EMI teaching, some teachers grapple to make meaningful connections between language and content, which are deemed important to mediate students' mental processing and co-construct content knowledge (Yuan, 2020). As for students' support, the universities in this study did not offer language support in the form of academic English courses (EAP courses) for both local and international students. According to the participants, the universities fully relied on the admission requirements, e.g. TOEFL or IELTS certificates, assuming that these standardised tests could adequately predict students' abilities in following EMI in the long run. Numerous scholars (e.g. Hamied & Lengkanawati, 2018; Macaro, 2019) have suggested that extra language support for students is required to equip them with sufficient language skills. Indeed, the awareness of educational institutions regarding students' language needs will largely affect the successful implementation of EMI (Bienzobas et al., 2019; Hua, 2019; Macaro, 2020). Focusing solely on the teaching of content without investing in professional development and in the integration of ELT into the EMI programme could be considered an unethical responsibility of universities (Mckinley & Rose, 2022).

To sum up, the overall results of this study suggest that the implementation of EMI requires deliberate planning which should go beyond making English the medium of instruction (Worthman, 2022). It seems apparent that the universities involved in this study have placed a heavy emphasis on the competitive advantages EMI could offer. As a result, these universities may not have solid theoretical and pedagogical underpinnings for the enactment of EMI, particularly in the Indonesian context. As some scholars (Khasbani, 2019; Worthman, 2022) argue, EMI requires a transformation in the curriculum which should take into account the interconnectedness between English language teaching and the pedagogical setting. In addition, the multilingual nature of Indonesia has contributed to the intricacy of EMI. A crucial issue of how the implementation of EMI could be grounded in multilingual and multicultural resources should become one of the considerations in the language planning and policy-making (Chalmers, 2019; P. I. de Costa et al., 2020; Hamied & Lengkanawati, 2018). It is essential to note that adopting the educational policy that has been reported successful in other countries requires thorough examinations as to whether and to what extent such a policy could fit in with a particular teaching context.

## 6. Conclusion

The results of this study have demonstrated that the implementation of EMI is driven by various factors such as, encouraging internationalisation among universities, increasing academic reputations, and participating in global competitions. The participants in this study have generally shown a complex perception toward EMI given both potential benefits and challenges that EMI offers. Some concerns about EMI have also been underscored, e.g., students' difficulties in understanding content, lecturers' abilities in delivering materials in English, and a lack of professional EMI support for teachers and students.

This research, however, is not without limitations. The number of universities participating in this study was limited by the access to potential respondents. Since this research employed a case study approach, it does not aim to generalise the findings to represent the majorities of universities in Indonesia. The number of respondents could have been expanded if we could balance the number of state and private universities involved in this study. Nevertheless, the results of this study have some degree of transferability, meaning that they could be transferred to other research contexts that share similar characteristics to the present study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). It is also important to acknowledge that the data in this study relied on the participants' subjective views towards the issues under scrutiny. Data triangulation using other data sources, e.g. policy documents and classroom observation, would have enriched and improved the rigour of this case study. However, restrictions on the access to other potential research data has become a challenge as this study deals with institutional policies and practices.

Despite these limitations, this study has offered both theoretical and pedagogical implications. In terms of the theoretical sphere, this study has deepened the scope of the current literature in EMI from the perspectives of university lecturers in the Indonesian setting. It has also underlined the issue of internalisation in relation to *Englishisation* and its impacts on EMI. Hence, this study has shed light on the importance of looking at EMI with a critical eye, so that its establishment does not merely adopt what has been carried out in other states. As Dewi (2017) argues, irrespective of the advantages of EMI, English is not a neutral language as it is packed with certain values and ideologies. Therefore, when it comes to language planning and policy, the Indonesian linguistic ecology where Bahasa Indonesia and English co-exist with the hundreds of local languages should be taken into consideration. This study has thus contributed to providing a different lens for reviewing EMI from the perspective of multilingualism. With regard to the pedagogical sphere, this study has highlighted the need for providing sustainable professional development for EMI lecturers as well as EAP courses for EMI students. This study has also called for balancing language policy-making which acknowledges English as a global language and at the same

time, places equal importance on the maintenance of Indonesian and local languages (Zein, 2019, 2020).

Clearly, given the rapidly expanding EMI programme in Indonesia, empirical research in this context is still lacking. Further research could investigate EMI from the perspectives of other relevant stakeholders, such as students, administrators, and government officials in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of EMI in the Indonesian setting. Another possible research area is the effectiveness of EMI in enhancing students' content knowledge and English competence to inform best practices and provide a strong rationale for its implementation in higher education.

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