English for Specific Purposes ESP: An Existing Resource to English Medium Instruction (EMI) Implementation in Indonesian Higher Education

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Abstract

The article reviews current issues in the internationalization of higher education in Indonesia. English medium instruction (EMI), especially when offering an international class, is closely related to the agenda of higher education internationalization. Despite gaining popularity, EMI implementation encounters challenges. The studies report challenges especially experienced by the lecturers and students. The research also highlights that such challenges are due to a limited understanding of the institutional stakeholders in providing necessary support to both key universities stakeholders. This article also argues how English for Specific Purposes, or ESP, can be a solution to the reported challenges in the implementation of EMI. Using the review of documented studies on EMI and ESP in Indonesia, the research in this article uses a descriptive approach to argue for the potential of ESP practice implement EMI programs in Indonesia. Qualitative thematic data analysis is used to discuss how ESP can provide solutions. Some implications include a need for revitalization of the ESP curriculum where nurturing collaboration between English language and content lecturers and providing ongoing teacher professional development (TPD) to the teachers are key actions.

Keywords: *English Medium Instruction (EMI), English for Specific Purposes (ESP), International Class, Higher Education Internationalization, Teacher Professional Development (TPD)*

INTRODUCTION

Implementing English medium instruction (EMI) programs has become one of the trends on the agenda of internationalization of higher education around the globe. Expanding the digital market is one trigger of this agenda (Tran et al., 2023). Many education providers around the globe have managed to give access to international education (Wit, 2020). Some programs on the agenda include student and staff mobility and curriculum exchange among the universities, for which EMI is valued as an essential aspect.

English medium instruction (EMI) is defined as "the use of the English language to teach academic subjects (other than English itself) in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English." (Macaro, 2018, p. 19). The context of Indonesian higher education reflects this definition, mostly realized in the form of international class, a class designed to cater to the agenda of higher education internationalization (Lamb et al., 2021). The class is to facilitate both the inbound and outbound students and to be a form of a collaborative program between the institutions and their overseas partners. EMI courses are taught by content lecturers teaching non-English language courses like Science, Mathematics,

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VOL. 1 No. 2 August 2024
e-ISSN:xxxx-xxxx

Technology, Engineering, and Humanities. Types of EMI classes are various, including single and double-degree programs (Lamb et al., 2021) and bilingual classes (Simbolon, 2021).

Despite its increasing popularity, research showed challenges encountered by students and teachers in the EMI classrooms. For example, in Taiwan, Tien (2023) investigated students' perceptions of the advantages and challenges of EMI in Taiwanese higher education. They used a mix of quantitative and qualitative data from 136 second-year university students. The responses from the questionnaire and interview data highlight some key issues raised by the students. They include their lack of confidence in pronunciation and understanding their peers and foreign teachers' accents in English. In a similar context, another study was done by Phuong and Nguyen (2019) in Vietnam. They focused their research on 136 students' perceptions of EMI courses at a university in Vietnam. They used a questionnaire for data collection and invited six students for interviews. The results showed students' perceptions of benefits and challenges in the EMI classrooms. The students also expressed the benefit of EMI in helping them find more learning resources in English. Despite the benefits (improved receptive language skills and more access to learning resources in English), the students demonstrated the challenges in EMI, especially in comprehending English-written textbooks and course materials.

Some studies also suggest that necessary support should be provided to EMI practitioners (Chen et al., 2020; Briggs et al., 2018; Vu & Burns, 2014). Vu and Burns (2014) conducted a study at a public university in Vietnam. The research findings highlighted three main aspects that lecturers need in professional development. They are linguistics, content knowledge, and EMI pedagogy. A similar issue was also evidenced in the global survey by Briggs et al. (2018). One of the critical issues found in their study was the challenges encountered by EMI teachers in preparing the lessons. Chen et al. (2020) conducted their study at a university in China by including 20 EMI teachers. Their study adopted multilingualism and instructional design theories and recommended the inclusion of problem-based teaching in EMI lecturers' professional development curricula. Other studies suggest a need for collaboration between EMI content specialists and English language teachers. Galloway and Ruegg (2020) based their studies on universities in Japan and China and examined support given to EMI students. They administered questionnaires to both students and lecturers. One of the results from their study shows that English for Academic Purposes (EAP), resulting from the collaboration between instructors and content lecturers, was found to be helpful for students. In addition, their study suggested that the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course is helpful in supporting this.

In Indonesia, there are two main types of higher education: academic and vocational. An English language course is offered as a subject in the university's syllabus of a non-English language program. In the agenda of the internationalization of higher education, English language courses are offered in both Indonesian and English mediums, as well as international class programs, because English as a subject is compulsory. Lecturers commonly use English for Specific Purposes (ESP): either English for Academic Purposes (EAP) or English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). Academic higher education mainly uses English for Academic Purposes (EAP), and English language lecturers in vocational higher education commonly adopt English for Occupational Purposes (EOP).

From the perspectives of the teaching staff, the implementation of EMI and ESP can be similar. Their background is a context where English is not commonly used in society and as an official form of communication. The learning environment needs more facilities to support the students' learning in English. However, Their classroom approaches can be expected to differ because of their professional development background. ESP lecturers typically have an English

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teaching education background prior to they commence teaching position assignments. EMI mostly has no or limited professional development in teaching English when starting EMI courses. In addition, ESP teachers have more experience teaching English than EMI lecturers because EMI practice commenced its growth in 2016 (Sadiq & Simbolon, 2024). This article notes that EMI practice is commonly done by content or subject matter teachers and ESP by the English language course lecturers.

This article of this paper aims to provide a critical review of one potential solution to the challenges encountered in the EMI implementation. This research mainly aims to address two research questions:
1. What are the most reported challenges of EMI practice in Indonesian higher education?
2. What are the most reported challenges in ESP classes in Indonesian higher education?
3. How can English for specific courses (ESP) courses support the implementation of English medium instruction EMI?

METHOD

The research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach using reviews of literature. A collection of studies on the relevant issues in the topic was selected based on various sources and types of journals with various indexing levels. Some are from nationally indexed journals, and others are internationally indexed journals. Qualitative thematic analysis was used to discuss the potential of ESP in the growth of EMI implementation.

RESULT
1. What are the most reported challenges of EMI practice in Indonesian higher education?

As indicated in Table 1, some studies focus on the students' perceptions, and others on the lecturers.

Table 1. A collection of research on EMI implementation

No	Topic	Instruments	Key findings	Authors
1	University students' attitudes towards English Medium Instruction and academic language support: A view from Indonesia.	Questionnaires	- Student's positive attitude towards EMI programs; better job opportunities with EMI	Santoso et al. (2024)
2	EMI (English-medium instruction) in Indonesian higher education	Questionnaires, interviews	- Students have a positive attitude toward EMI of challenges - Background influences EMI perception - Teachers' practices of using Indonesian when teaching the EMI courses	Bolton et. al. (2023).
3	English as a medium of instruction in Indonesian higher education: A study of lecturers' perceptions	Questionnaires, interviews	- Teachers saw that English was necessary to be included in higher education curriculum due to the need for a global job market and	Dewi (2017).

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			interaction of the academia in an international scope.	
			- English and Indonesian languages co-exist in the Indonesian education context.	
4	Common sense and resistance: EMI policy and practice in Indonesian universities	Questionnaires	- Majority of the lecturers have positive attitudes towards EMI	Coleman et al. (2023)
			- EMI is viewed to contribute to the students' content learning and English proficiency	
5	Indonesian lecturers' challenges in EMI classrooms	Questionnaires	- Limited pedagogical approaches to EMI, lack of confidence in using English	Saragih, 2024;
6	EMI and Maritime English	Questionnaires	- Limited understanding of pedagogical approaches to EMI and its implications	Simbolon, (2023).)
7	Indonesian lecturers' perspectives on EMI practice in Indonesia	Semi-structured interviews	- The potential of using Indonesian and other local languages in EMI	Santoso & Kinasih, 2022

Students' perceptions

A study by Santoso, Hamied, and Muslim (2024) used quantitative and qualitative approaches. They administered a questionnaire online to 136 students in five universities in Indonesia. Interviews on academic language support were done with six students and three lecturers of the language centers. Key findings highlighted students' positive attitude towards EMI programs, which aligns with their expectations from the program. They viewed EMI as an instrument to access a better job and to improve their English skills. Their positive attitude towards the use of languages other than English was recorded.

Regarding language support, EAP was highlighted as one support model, yet it was reported to need to be improved. The study recommended reconceptualization of EMI, particularly contextualizing pedagogical approaches in EMI. The need for English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) to be embedded in the curriculum was another key recommendation of this study.

Another study was conducted in one of the prestigious private universities in Indonesia (Bolton et al., 2023). In the first phase of their study, they focused on investigating students' experience in the EMI program at a private university in Indonesia. They used mixed data collection methods using a questionnaire and five focus group interviews. Some topics they scrutinized in the survey included the students' perceptions of the challenges and their attitudes toward EMI education. Findings showed that many of the students have a positive attitude towards EMI. This finding can be related to the educational background of the students. Some of them were already in English medium schools. The findings of their response to somewhat low levels of challenges in studying in an EMI education can be related to the background. The students, however, used a substantial amount of language mixing in and outside the classroom.

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From the above studies, perspectives varied relating to the student's background. It also can be grasped that students need language-related support in EMI classrooms. The need for an EAP is highlighted, especially in participating in the EMI environment.

Lecturers' perceptions

From the teachers' experiences, studies of EMI in Indonesian higher education indicate a strong position of the Indonesian language as the national language, which is perceived as the unity tool among Indonesian citizens. Bolton and his colleagues' study (2023) also examined the lecturers' perspectives on EMI education. Key findings showed that many teachers practice using Indonesian when teaching EMI courses. They also stated various levels of student's English proficiency and its relation to their social background and geographical base. In terms of challenges, younger lecturers encounter fewer challenges when teaching in English. Despite the findings of their study, which showed both teachers' and students' positive attitudes towards EMI programs, they suggested further investigation, especially on understanding how EMI implementation can fit into the policy of national language promotion. This particular issue was included in a study by Dewi (2017). She examined 36 EMI content and English language lecturers' perceptions of EMI in Indonesian Higher Education. Some issues she asked the lecturers included their perceptions of the EMI in Indonesian universities' curricula and English and nationality. The lecturers came from public and private universities of both secular and religious types. Data collection was conducted through questionnaires and individual interviews. Sixteen participants were English language lecturers, while 20 were lecturers of other subjects. The study used a mixed methods approach with an emphasis on qualitative data. The results from the research indicate some key points. First, teachers perceived that English was necessary to be included in higher education curricula due to the need for a global job market and the interaction of academia in an international scope. Regarding the question about using English and Indonesian, the lecturers highlighted Indonesian as a national identity. Her study implied that the English and Indonesian languages co-exist in the context of Indonesian education and calls for further research to consolidate the role of each language.

Coleman and his colleagues did another study on EMI implementation in the Indonesian context (2023). They surveyed 24 institution managers and 281 content EMI lecturers from 41 universities. Findings showed that the majority of the lecturers have positive attitudes towards EMI and viewed EMI as contributing to the students' content learning and English proficiency. Their study also supported the findings of Dewi (2017) by showing indications of resistance to EMI, which needs further empirical studies.

In addition to mixed perceptions of EMI implementation in Indonesian higher education, challenges in EMI classrooms were documented. Most reported challenges encountered by the lecturers are dealing with students' limited English pedagogical approaches (Saragih, 2024; Simbolon, 2023), including balancing multilingual practice (Santoso & Kinasih, 2022)

2. What are the most reported challenges in ESP classes in Indonesian higher education?

A collection of studies on ESP practice in Indonesia are presented in Table 2.

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Table 1. A collection of research on ESP in Indonesian higher education

No	Topic	Instruments	Key findings	Authors
1	Students' perception of learning experience and achievement Motivation	Questionnaires	- Motivation is boosting the students' reading and writing journal articles and oral communication skills in both formal and informal contexts	Anwar & Wardhono (2019)
2	Design of reading module to address students' learning	Experimental research	- The experimental group of students performed better than the controlled group	Subiyanto et al. (2022)
3	Task-based learning teaching (TBLT) approach in ESP Class	Action research: Evaluation checklist, field notes, and reading comprehension test	- Positive impact of TBLT in ESP classes	Ardika et al., (2022)
4	Examination of teachers' need for EAP and EAP ability	Questionnaires	- Teachers' EAP level is between basic and intermediate - Writing a journal article and presenting at a conference are key reasons for an EAP course.	Kustati et al. (2020)
5	Teachers' challenges in teaching ESP students	Observation, Semi-structured interviews	- Teaching challenges include coping with students' low learning motivation and lack of quality resources for teaching English	Marwan (2017)
6	Teachers' challenges in ESP classrooms	In-depth interviews	- designing teaching materials for practical lessons (job sheets/worksheets)	Rahayuningsih (2016)
7	Investigation of ESP students' vocabulary learning	Observation and tests	- Vocabulary learning improvement using various media	Hardiyanti & Herda (2023)
8	Effectiveness of project-based learning (PBL) in ESP class:	Experimental pre and posttests	- Improvement in the language learning outcomes using PBL - academic performance improvement using PBL - The importance of instruction in PBL	Hidayati, et al. (2023)
9	Indonesian ESP lecturers' perceived challenges	Survey	- Insufficient teaching materials	Suherman & Kertawijaya, 2023)

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Students' perceptions

To date, a good deal of studies on the ESP practice in Indonesian higher education have been done. Some studies focused on the students' experience in ESP courses. For example, a study by Anwar and Wardhono (2019) sought to scrutinize Indonesian students' perceptions of learning experience and motivation for designing EAP in Industrial Engineering. They used questionnaires about their experiences, motivation, and needs in learning English. Findings showed that most students use EAP-led content to help their reading and writing journal articles and oral communication skills in the formal and informal situations. The research suggests a recommendation for a curriculum review, especially in increasing the number of credits for the EAP courses.

Subiyanto et al. (2022) conducted an experimental study on the design of a reading module on Ecolinguistic discourse in a state vocational university in Indonesia. Their study found that students in an experimental group performed better than the control group. It is worth noting that the purpose of the module's design is to address global issues – suggesting that ESP can be used to cater for students' need for awareness of the most current global issues.

In a similar context to Subiyanto et al. (2022) study, Ardika et al. (2022) investigated students' learning progress on reading skills by introducing the Task-based learning teaching (TBLT) approach. Their study found that TBLT had a positive impact on students' learning. It is worth noting that – no specific mention of students' profiles in their study, especially regarding their English proficiency, to measure the percentage of improvement in student achievement. However, their study appears to suggest the inclusion of TBLT in ESP classes. Based on both studies of Subiyanto et al. (2022) and Ardika et al. (2022), some interpretations can be grasped. First, the importance of reading skills for the students. As receptive skills, reading skills are key, mainly to introduce a specific discourse of a particular field of study and relevant terminology that needs to be mastered by learners.

Lecturers' perceptions

Kustati et al. (2020) focused their study on investigating lecturers' need for and level of English academic proficiency in using English. Using random sampling, they administered a questionnaire to 92 teachers. The research instrument was designed to assess their need for EAP and measure the teachers' EAP ability. Key findings showed that their EAP level is between basic and intermediate. The research results also showed that writing a journal article and presenting at a conference become key reasons for an EAP course. Another key finding also highlighted a need for collaboration with the respective academic department for support from the language center, especially in developing EAP course components.

Marwan (2017) and Rahayuningsih (2016) specifically researched teachers in Indonesia's vocational higher education. Marwan (2017) highlighted key issues in teaching challenges, including coping with students' low learning motivation and lack of quality resources for teaching English. The findings of a study by Rahayuningsih (2016) underscored specific areas of the teachers' challenges in designing teaching materials, especially for practicum section. This challenge is related to specified features in vocational higher education where learning is more focused on technical and practical aspects. Content knowledge, time commitment, and the limited understanding in selecting media for the students are key challenges faced by the lecturers in her study (Rahayuningsih, 2016)

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3. How can English for specific courses (ESP) courses support the implementation of English medium instruction EMI?

A critical review of some studies on the practice of ESP lecturers in Indonesia is presented to answer this research question. Three main studies are presented in Table 2. The research showed that ESP lecturers have some basic knowledge about the student's needs. For instance, a study by Hardiyanti and Herda (2023) examined 31 vocational high school students in vocabulary learning. Using the learning media of "flash card," the study found an improvement in vocabulary mastery and active learning engagement. Vocabulary learning is fundamental to the process development of both receptive and productive skills, hence can support the findings of studies by Anwar and Wardhono (2019), Subiyanto et al. (2021), and Ardika et al. (2021), who focused their research on the language skills. Thus, vocabulary is a must-have practice in an ESP and needs to be integrated into achieving the four language skills.

A study by Suherman and Kerytawijaya (2023) surveyed 50 ESP lecturers, asking about their teaching challenges. Insufficient teaching materials was reported to be the key issue. It is noted that most of the participants had more than five years of teaching experience. This particular background relates to how they addressed the problem. Some key strategies included adapting the already available materials and collaborating with content lecturers. The latter strategy supports the recommendation from the findings of the study by Galloway and Ruegg (2020).

Hidayati and her colleagues (2023) focused their research on seeking the impact of project-based learning (PBL) on the students' learning outcomes. They used an experimental research design to conduct a pre-test and posttest on 40 students. The results showed an improvement in the language learning outcomes, especially in the speaking aspect and academic performance. The monitoring was done by giving specific instructions relevant to the students' language learning needs.

DISCUSSION

Implementing international classes with English medium classes is challenging in some respects. Many stakeholders present the programs with limited preparation; hence, challenges can be expected, especially those faced by the students and lecturers (Briggs et al., 2018; Chen et al., 2020; Phuong & Nguyen, 2019; Saragih, 2024; Tien, 2023, &Vu & Burns, 2014). In addition, English learning has some implications that require certain effective strategies to support the students' learning. EMI practice is expected to remain ongoing (Macaro, 2018) in line with the globalization in the education sector, where the internationalization of higher education is still in demand. In Indonesia, a tangible solution to the so-called challenges could be revitalizing English for Specific Purposes (ESP) practice in Indonesian universities. There are some reasons for this proposal. ESP is a long-standing resource in Indonesian higher education. Teaching staff recruitment at the university level allows higher education English language teachers to have basic knowledge of the English language already because many of them have received a four-year teaching education.

It should be noted that teachers' English language proficiency and teaching quality can be varied depending on their background. On the other hand, EMI teachers need to gain more knowledge of English language teaching. Some studies reported in the earlier section, such as by Hardiyanti and Herda (2023), Hidayati et al. (2023), Suherman and Kertawijaya (2023), Subiyanto et al. (2022), and Ardika et al. (2022) are evidence of this argument. Some teachers have been

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familiar with some teaching approaches like vocabulary teaching as in Hardiyanti and Herda's study (2023), TBLT in Ardika et al.'s (2022), PBL in Hidayati et al.'s (2023), and adapting and designing learning materials in Suherman and Kertawijaya's (2023) and Subiyanto et al.'s (2022). Another reason for this proposition is that English language courses already exist in the Indonesian higher education curriculum. Almost all higher education curricula mostly include the English language as a "foreign language subject." It is worth noting that ESP teachers also have problems performing their teaching, including dealing with the learning materials (Rahayuningsih, 2021; Suherman & Kerytawijaya, 2023). On top of all, some studies on EMI have indicated a need for English for Special Academic Purposes (ESAP) (Santoso et al., 2024), which indicates the practice of EMI with the approach of ESP, where language support is considered essential.

Having discussed the key reasons for the importance of ESP practice in the agenda of the internationalization of higher education, some implications can be grasped. First, collaboration between ESP lecturers and content (EMI or non-EMI) lecturers becomes crucial (Galloway & Ruegg, 2020; Kustati, 2020). EMI content lecturers are capable of the content of a subject, while ESP teachers need support in this area. Hence, further research on how the collaboration can be done. Additionally, need analysis, key to the design of the course syllabus, is expected to be contextualized due to various learning goals embedded in the EMI programs. (Rachmawati, 2020, Syakur et al., 2020)

CONCLUSION

To conclude the study reported in this article, a critical review of the collection of studies on EMI and ESP in Indonesian higher education highlights the importance of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the growth of EMI. ESP can be a solution to challenges encountered by both EMI students and teachers. ESP courses and practitioners are existing resources to realize the goals of EMI, which are to facilitate English medium classes focusing on a subject matter and to develop students' English proficiency. Some implications of the potential of ESP include a review of the higher education curriculum, which becomes essential, especially the arrangement of ESP courses. From this review, ESP curriculum revitalization is anticipated as an essential action before implementing EMI. Revitalization may include rearranging the number of credits for the English language courses, providing support to the ESP teachers to improve their teaching performance, including initiating collaboration between English language and content lecturers, and facilitating ongoing professional development support. With relevant support, ESP, an existing resource in higher education in Indonesia, could offer international classes in Indonesia.

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