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INDONESIAN STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH MEDIUM INSTRUCTION

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Abstract
There has been an increasing trend in Indonesian higher education to run international programs. As a result, English for Medium Instruction (EMI) has started to be implemented in several departments at Indonesian universities. To successfully implement EMI classes, lecturers and students do play significant roles. This paper aims to gain insights into students' perceptions of EMI and the challenges they faced in terms of understanding the subject content. Using convenience sampling, 35 undergraduate students of the International Psychology Program (IPP) at a private university in Indonesia were selected as the participants of the study. We used an explanatory sequential design using questionnaires and interviews as the instruments to collect the data. The findings revealed that the majority of the students have a positive perception of the implementation of EMI in their classes. However, its implementation also posed some challenges such as difficulties in comprehending lectures and the lack of ability in using English to conduct classroom discussions. The findings suggested the need for training before EMI courses that help students increase their English proficiency level as well as lecturers to improve their EMI pedagogic competence.

Keywords: English medium instruction, international program, perception, psychology students

Introduction
As internationalization has become a major world phenomenon, all countries apply different policies and different internationalization degrees (Kyrychenko, 2018). Following the same trend, Indonesia began to realize the importance of internationalizing education, which prompted the government to change its education policies to meet the needs. Gradually, many Indonesian higher education institutions are starting to keep up with this trend by opening up their international programs. They do so by implementing English as a medium of instruction (EMI). Its implementation is certainly seen as a way to secure a brighter future in global competition. Over the past decades, EMI has been researched due to its growing popularity.

For EMI to become successful, two inseparable aspects play an important role, namely, policy and practice in particular. On the policy front, policymakers

and stakeholders must first design specific regulations for implementing EMI. In his recent work, Alhamami (2021) stated that a clear higher education EMI policy will bring many benefits to institutions, teachers, and students. Unfortunately, there is no written specific regulation of EMI in Indonesian higher education (Simbolon, 2018). Therefore, there is an urgent need to design an EMI policy to standardize the results and maximize its benefits. As for the EMI practice in particular, the roles of practitioners and students are crucial since they are the ones who directly deal with EMI in the class. Zhang (2017, p.1) found that the student participants in their study consider the following major factors which contribute to EMI class effectiveness: "the lecturers' English proficiency, personality, commitment to students and teaching, teaching approach, and language use". These studies pointed out that higher education institutions must consider the attitudes and behaviors of all relevant parties, including students, lecturers, and decision-makers when developing their EMI policy.

Further undermining the practice, several studies have witnessed the actual implementation of EMI. Al-Hakim (2021) argues that as EMI increases English exposure and engagement, it significantly increases students' and teachers' English proficiency. EMI also increases the motivation of students and teachers in the learning process to deal with the demands of English used concerning work. Hence, it can be said that EMI benefits both students and teachers with a more comprehensive input. It shows them not only more complex linguistics but also subject content with a more global view.

In addition to its benefits, Al-Hakim (2021) also adds that EMI implementation faces several challenges in practice that can hinder the learning process. To better implement EMI and maximize its results, it is necessary to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the possible challenge from the practitioners' point of view. Following this suggestion, the present paper attempts to examine the practice of EMI, particularly by looking at the implementation of EMI in the international program of psychology, at the Department of Psychology, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang (henceforth IPP-UMM). Specifically, EMI at IPP-UMM has been implemented in one particular classroom every year since the academic year 2020. The class usually consists of 20-30 students who had passed the Test of Academic English Proficiency (TAEP) with satisfactory results, greater than 327. TAEP is a test developed by the UMM Language Center for admission testing and student placement. The test applies to the TOEFL framework.

Based on our preliminary observations at IPP-UMM, the majority of lecturers and students reported that challenges and obstacles persist throughout classroom teaching and learning, even when they perceive EMI as highly beneficial. We found cases where some lecturers complained about the difficulty of quickly understanding certain specific English dictions related to psychology. Some others acknowledged that the EMI pedagogy was somehow problematic for them. They specifically pointed out that the need to use correct grammar has somewhat hindered their teaching, which caused them to pause several times while explaining the subject content. Such remarks are in line with what was stated by Coleman et al. (2018) about the limited English proficiency of some EMI teachers and their fear of making language mistakes in front of their students. They argued that these challenges may stem from their lack of EMI pedagogical competence in specific disciplines.

From the students' perspectives, some of them reported that they are prone to use code-switching and code-mixing of English and Bahasa Indonesia in the class. They either automatically insert or change some English words into Bahasa Indonesia whenever possible. This is because they are not accustomed to using English in their daily life outside the class. The same problem was evident in Ibrahim's (2001) study, which found that low English proficiency is the cause of inefficient and ineffective EMI classes. Hence, this language issue can delay or even hinder the successful implementation of EMI in providing students with exposure to English and a broader view of the subject content.

The present paper aims to seek deeper insight into the students' perceptions of EMI practice and the challenges they face in terms of comprehending the subject content. The results derived from this paper can be used as a significant evaluation point for future improvement of EMI, particularly in the context of Indonesian higher education. As an example, in the Psychology Department, UMM, where this study takes place, all students are required to complete an evaluation assessment for each class they have taken at the end of each semester. Unfortunately, no section particularly evaluates the EMI implementation. The findings of this study may contribute to additional field reporting on EMI practice. Therefore, the present paper intends to answer the following questions:

1. What are IPP students' perceptions of EMI practice in their class?
2. To what extent does EMI class pose a challenge to content comprehension for IPP students?

Literature Review

English as a medium of instruction

Macaro et al. (2018, p.37) define EMI as "teaching a subject (other than English) in a nation where English is not the primary language spoken by the populace". Breeze and Roothooft (2021) referred to the concept of teaching a specific subject in a non-English-speaking country using English as a medium and without a clear language learning objective. It is implemented in formal education to ensure that students are exposed to the English language. Al-Hakim (2021) further argued that English Language Instructional Programs (EMI) are educational programs that teach subjects in English intending to inadvertently infect students with English. For the implementation, it is expected that the increased interaction in English during educational activities effectively improves students' English proficiency.

Many researchers have studied the impact of EMI on higher education in non-English-speaking countries. In the Thai context, for example, the study by Wilang and Nupong (2022) found that the benefits of EMI include improving students' English proficiency and making higher education more competitive to meet growing local, national, and international requirements. In a similar line, Phuong and Nguyen (2019) also found that EMI provides four clusters of benefits. These are cognitive benefits, resource availability, increased exposure to and opportunities to learn English, and increased employment opportunities for students. Through EMI, students can access resources that aren't available in their mother tongue and hence, increasing employment opportunities for students.

The benefit of EMI was also evident in another context. Denman and Al-Mahrooqi (2019) found that teachers and students in Oman's higher education

institutions recognized English as the language of science and technology, and believed that more exposure to the language could increase the student's chances of securing suitable employment upon graduation. Having this positive attitude towards English and holding the view that English is key to social and professional mobility, the teachers and students associated EMI with the development of social and professional skills. However, their study also pointed out some challenges of EMI, such as "limiting student course content understanding and family communication about their studies" (Ibid, p.317).

Apart from its benefits, EMI does pose several challenges for teachers and students as classroom practitioners. For teachers, the integration of content and language has become a challenge in the classroom. Corrales et al. (2016) found that some EMI teachers employ code-switching and purposely slow down their teaching to accommodate their students, who are primarily non-native English speakers. From the students' side, Galloway and Ruegg (2022) study found that students had difficulty understanding lectures, taking notes, and conveying subject matter content. Similarly, Joe and Lee (2013) mentioned that in non-speaking English countries, concerns about EMI have been raised such as the difficulty in lecture comprehension and ineffective interaction between lecturers and students. These language challenges reported by both teachers and students indicate the lack of language proficiency necessary to ideally run EMI.

Students' perception

In the teaching and learning process, it is important to note that learning is not a product or result. Lamatokan (2018) states that learning is an active process involving the evaluation of learning experience, knowledge acquisition, and construction. He argued that a learning process has a lot to do with the learner's responsibility to learn. Learners can choose what to learn, when, and for what. In choosing what to do with their learning, students rely on their view of perception.

Hafrizal et al. (2021) maintained that learners' positive and negative attitudes are rooted in their perception of certain objects or matters. It is this perception that drives a psychological process to respond and influences the willingness to understand certain objects. They further argued that each student may have a quite different perception of the same thing because each individual observes an object differently. Thus, investigating learners' perceptions can be a useful start to achieving an ideal teaching and learning process.

As perception is a key factor that helps students learn in the classroom, Pane et al. (2022) define perception as a process through which individuals can process positive or negative cognition responses through their five sensory experiences. It is obtained through the stages of selection, interpretation, and response. In the context of education, each student's perception can be very different depending on his/her various factors. This suggests that perception is the ability to see, understand, and interpret stimuli to produce interpretations.

A student's perception of the class is important in the teaching and learning process because it shapes how the learner responds to learning. Getting information about how they perceive the learning process can be an important factor in the success or failure of a particular instructional design in the class. Perceptions build people's beliefs and actions. Ibem et al. (2017) added that students learn more

effectively when they perceive the learning environment as positive. Positive and negative influences both play a role in academic success and failure.

Method

This study used an explanatory sequential mixed design. Ary et al. (2018) present it as a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches in multistep research. It aims to provide the relevant information necessary to understand the research question more efficiently. Creswell and Cheryl (2017) explain its steps that started with quantitative data gathering, which was then followed by qualitative data collection to illuminate or elaborate the previously obtained quantitative results. This design has the advantage of clearly identifying quantitative and qualitative parts, benefiting both the readers and those designing and conducting the study. After collecting and analyzing quantitative data, the researchers gathered and proceeded with the qualitative data.

The participants of the study consisted of 35 International Psychology Program (IPP) students of varying study levels. Of these, 15 were in their fifth semester and 20 were in their third semester. They were selected because they are students of the first two IPP classes since the program was established in 2020. First, participants were asked to self-assess their English proficiency and the results were as follows: 25% rated their English proficiency as poor, 36% rated it as good, 27% rated it as very good, and 12% rated it as very good. Even though the self-assessments of English proficiency are not completely accurate, they may provide a rough idea about the general proficiency level of the IPP students. The data from the Test of Academic English Proficiency (TAEP) were also collected as the general overview of students' English proficiency.

With the help of Google Forms, an online questionnaire survey was created and posted on their WhatsApp (WA) group class. The questionnaire survey consisted of three parts. The first part collected students' background information such as participants' gender, grade point average, and year of study, followed by the second part which collected students' perception toward EMI covering teaching and learning environment in the class, content comprehension, language issues, and EMI effectiveness. The questionnaire survey was adapted and adopted from Yang's (2017) and Tanjung et al.'s (2021) questionnaires on students' perception of EMI. Using a four-point Likert scale, the participants were asked to select one of the following four options: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Then, the final section was an open question that asked the respondents to share any thoughts they had regarding their experience with EMI.

To get in-depth information, semi-structured interviews were also conducted with four students presenting each class. The four interviewees were selected from their responses to the questionnaire. Informed consent was given to the interviewees. We also developed an interview guideline to help us with follow-up questions which were made based on the questionnaire results. The data from the interview were then transcribed, checked, coded following Lineberg and Koorsgard (2019), and eventually interpreted following Milles et al.'s (2013) framework.

Findings and Discussion

Students' perception of EMI

As can be seen in Table 1, the first eight items of the questionnaire, which show 0% Strongly Disagree replies, demonstrate how positive responses predominated the survey's results. In response to the statements "I am very passionate about studying Psychology in English" and "I like learning the courses and conducting the projects in English in my classes," 97.2% of students scored very positively on items 1 and 6 (M = 4.11 and M=). 71.5 percent of respondents to item 2 (M = 3.79) agreed that "The EMI runs well in every course." According to the statement of items 3 and 4, 54.5% of students can grasp the information offered in English by the lecturers and 50% of students were positive that all of their lecturers utilize English to teach/explain the course in my classrooms. The results of item 7 and item 8 (M = 3.84) then demonstrate that 82.8% of students were favorably inclined if they actively participated and spoke English in my classes to interact with the lecturer and friends and that 85.8% of students believed that EMI courses had improved both their oral and academic English.

Table 1. Psychology students' perception of EMI

	Question Item	SA %	A %	D %	SD %
1.	I'm very enthusiastic about studying Psychology in EMI class.	14.2	83	2.8	0
2.	The EMI runs well in every course.	0	71.5	28.5	0
3.	All of my lecturers use English to teach/explain the course in my classes.	0	50	50	0
4.	I can understand the materials delivered in English by the lecturers.	31.4	54.4	14.2	0
5.	The sources to study in my study program are available in English (such as books, audiobooks, journals, etc).	85.7	14.3	0	0
6.	I enjoy learning the courses and doing projects in English in my classes.	37.1	60.1	2.8	0
7.	I actively participate and speak English in my classes to interact with the lecturer and friends.	28.5	57.3	14.2	0
8.	EMI courses help me improve both my verbal and academic English.	0	82.8	17.2	0

The questionnaire's findings as seen in Table 1 largely concur with certain students' opinions gathered through the interview session. Some students claimed that the EMI program is good since it provided them with content comprehension benefits. It is supported by findings from Al-Hakim (2021) which revealed that EMI encourages the development of student's cognitive aspect, which is beneficial for their academic competence. Students' access to information about psychology from the source has also increased their enthusiasm for learning English. Phuong and Nguyen (2019) have also added that the students praised the usefulness of EMI programs in giving them a favorable setting to learn English in addition to an abundance of English-language resources. Additionally, they have become more active English speakers in the EMI classroom discussions. Even though the lesson is taught in English, a student has proven that the majority of students can follow

along with the lecturer's explanations of the material. They claimed that some of the program's teachers have international degrees and that the majority of them speak English well.

The students also further claimed that the lecturers' or the students' usage of EMI in class were still partial. The conclusion of Qiu and Fang (2022) that students' and teachers' lack of preparedness for EMI courses and their belief that language acquisition played a role in EMI courses may have influenced their choices for instructional behavior may have led to somewhat incomplete EMI implementation. The majority of the lecturers spoke both Indonesian and English in the lesson. Even though some lecturers didn't use English entirely when presenting the content, they still pushed their students to do so by making use of English learning resources and assigning projects in the language. Although it is done to prevent misunderstandings, all tasks must still be completed in English.

Challenges in the implementation of EMI class

The results derived from the questionnaire as shown in Table 2 indicate that nearly half of the students (48.6%) agreed that EMI has grown to be the primary cause of the difficulty in understanding the content. It is then contrasted by the finding of item 2 which showed that more than half of the students (65.8%) argue the fact that the textbooks and other sources are in English is mostly to blame for the difficulty in understanding the content. The majority of students (65.8%) believe that their language skills are sufficient for understanding the information in books and lectures in English. Furthermore, 72% of students disagree, saying that they must first spend some time learning the language before they can comprehend the material. More students (71.4% and 65.8%) corresponded that communication difficulties between lecturers and students hinder discussions and interactions. Due to their inadequate understanding of the material that they learned in class, they were unable to participate fully in peer discussions, or those with the lecturer. Lastly, 56.5% of students accepted that they frequently use resources in their native language (Bahasa Indonesia) to understand the material studied in English.

Table 2. The challenges encountered by psychology students during their EMI classes

	Question Item	SA %	A %	D %	SD %
1.	Using English medium instruction (EMI) is the main reason behind the difficulty of content comprehension.	0	48.6	51.4	0
2.	Difficulty in comprehending the content is mainly caused by the fact that textbooks and sources are in English.	0	34.2	65.8	0
3.	My linguistic proficiency is adequate for comprehending content in books and lectures in English.	34.2	31.6	34.2	0
4.	It takes me sometime to understand the language first and then grasp the content.	0	28.5	43.5	28.5
5.	Language barriers discourage discussions and interactions between lecturers and students.	28.6	71.4	0	0
6.	I cannot communicate effectively with the lecturer or express my ideas clearly in English.	34.2	65.8	0	0

7.	I have difficulty in participate in lecture discussion because I cannot understand the content of the lesson sufficiently to ask and answers questions.	0	54.6	43.4	0
8.	To understand content studied in English I often use resources in my native language	0	56.5	43.5	0

The questionnaire results were also confirmed by the results of the students' interviews. Difficulties in comprehending lectures in EMI were claimed as one of the most common issues raised by students who rate themselves as having insufficient English proficiency. Some who pose very good English pointed out how the lecturers' incompetency in providing the class with full EMI has hindered them in maximizing their content comprehension. It is also proven by Phuong and Nguyen (2019), who stated that the failure in subject content mastery is provoked by the unfulfilled requirement of meeting the minimum standard of English proficiency for EMI classes. With regards to challenges in comprehending textbooks/ course materials, some students claimed that they had already posed sufficient English for the needs of content comprehension. They also highlighted the challenges of content comprehension on EMI as the result of the incapability of both lecturers and students in discussing certain topics, as seen in the following excerpts.

> The hardest part of learning is probably communication, especially with lecturers. Sometimes I or my lecturer misunderstood something in conversation (Student 2).
> Some students can understand when the lecturers explain the lesson, while others don't. Approximately 60% of the classes can be understood by students with good English skills. Others with poor English language skills can only understand approximately 40%. (Student 6).

Overall, the students who participated in this study have experienced some content comprehension challenges in EMI classes. Among those challenges, comprehending lecturers and discussing the subject in English have been the most significant ones. This particular challenge confirms Denman and Al-Mahrooqi's (2019) findings. Furthermore, the success of EMI in giving students greater topic comprehension depends heavily on both the lecturers and the student's English proficiency. These findings support Simbolon's (2021) suggestion for better EMI preparation. She argued that it is essential to provide lecturers teaching EMI with English proficiency as well as pedagogy training (ibid). In a narrower scope, the findings of this study have provided some information about the IPP students' perceptions of the EMI programs at UMM. To maximize its merits and minimize its flaws, the program's administrators may want to re-evaluate how EMI programs are run.

Conclusion

This study aims to understand the Psychology department students' perceptions of EMI implementation and of the challenges they encountered in EMI class. The results of the quantitative and qualitative data analysis point out that, in general, students have a good perception of their EMI classes in terms of the

availability of resources, instructor sessions, and improved English abilities. However, they have also encountered several difficulties that are mostly the result of both students' and lecturers' lack of English language proficiency. Some challenges have also been drawn from how some lecturers tend to switch to their native language, highlighting the need to improve their EMI pedagogy in the classroom.

To acquire a better understanding of EMI, it is advised that additional studies be carried out on a bigger scale and using a range of research instruments. For instance, students in EMI classes from a higher level of study could be the focus of future research. This could aid researchers in gaining a better understanding of EMI programs and in figuring out whether EMI can eventually improve students' English proficiency and broaden their subject knowledge over the years. Additionally, it is also useful to carefully analyze how subject lecturers view EMI, as their perspectives on the pedagogical abilities required in EMI classrooms might provide insights for a better implementation of EMI in Indonesian higher education.

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