

**ASSESSING THE IMPACT AND CHALLENGES OF ENGLISH AS  
A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN INDONESIAN HIGHER  
EDUCATION: A PATHWAY TO GLOBAL INTEGRATION  
OR A BARRIER TO LOCAL IDENTITY?**

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**Abstract**

*This research examines the effect of the implementation and implication of English as Medium of Instruction in Indonesian higher education institutions. It further examines the impact of EMI on educational outcomes, cultural identification, and the linguistic future. The study assumes both the positive and negative significance of the above measures. Following the qualitative methodology, the case study conducted semi-structured interviews with 30 participants, including 15 faculty members and 15 students, from three diverse universities in Indonesia. The diverse perspectives demonstrate both the positive and negative impacts of EMI. While the research finds a positive correlation between EMI implementation and English proficiency, as well as better global engagement, the study also exposes such hindrances to the EMI as the language proficiency barriers and the issues of cultural displacement and lack of equity. Apart from that, the fears related to the erosion of Bahasa Indonesia and the local identity are also due to the friction between culture preservation in globalization integration. As a result, the policy recommendations are developed with the idea to propose the measures of the transition to the EMI, which does not replace the national educational practices and values.*

**Keywords:** English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI), Higher Education, Cultural Identity, Linguistic Impact, Educational Outcomes, Policy Recommendations

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The use of English as a Medium of Instruction in higher education is evidently growing globally, especially in the non-native English-speaking countries. The trend can be attributed to globalization, and the need for academic institutions to make their programs global, attract international students, and also prepare local students for global markets (Macaro, 2015). EMI is perceived as a means of enhancing a university's global reputation, competitiveness while at the same time offering language skills for the international workforce (Dearden, 2014).

In Indonesia, as in other countries, the EMI implementation was influenced by the aforementioned global trends, mostly driven by local specifics. English has become increasingly seen as the language necessary for academic and career progress. Given the expansion of the global job market, many Indonesian high education institutions have introduced English programs to attract more students and respond to the demands of the constantly changing job market (Hamid et al., 2015). As Hamid et al (2015) state, "employability and internationalization are two inter-related goals argued for justifying the need for English-mediated instruction".

Nevertheless, EMI implementation in Indonesia is not flawless. Firstly, the sudden increase in the number of EMI programs concerned many stakeholders about the language proficiency of faculty and students. Secondly, many questioned how EMI impacts the national language, Bahasa Indonesia, and whether its implementation may decrease the need and opportunities to use it in higher education and professional spheres (Dardjowidjojo, 2000).

The rapid proliferation of English as a Medium of Instruction in Indonesian higher education and its multifaceted nature creates a complex issue impacting the quality of education, overall linguistic proficiency, and cultural unity. While the ability to be more competitive in a global job market is beneficial, many stakeholders fear that students and faculty are not linguistically prepared for the demands associated with EMI. Additionally, there is a growing concern for the erosion of linguistic-cultural identity throughout Indonesia. Indicating the research problem of whether EMI is effective in fostering better academic and career opportunities for Indonesian students and understanding the potential linguistic-cultural sacrifices.

The striving of Indonesian higher education institutions to transform university programs to EMI in order to increase attractiveness, internationalization, quality, and to promote “international standards” make the problem topical and requires an urgent reflection on how EMI influence the equity and mother-tongue-based education in the Indonesian context. The use of EMI poses certain questions about the equal availability of quality education. Children and young people from various regional and perhaps even English language backgrounds might suffer in the academic setting, which could increase disparities (Hamid et al., 2013). Moreover, there is a concern that the prevalent use of English would simply corrode the academic use of native language, Bahasa Indonesia. This is very critical for Indonesia, as Dardjowidjojo has already emphasized that language is a natural cohesive factor (Dardjowidjojo, 2000).

Despite these advantages in terms of global integration and employability, however, it is important to consider the local educational needs and cultural specifics of Indonesia. In other words, the implementation of EMI should not follow the mission to “destroy” local languages and cultures (Coleman, 2006). Thus, this study consider how well EMI fits the Indonesian educational system. It also assesses the impact of EMI on the academic performance and English proficiency of students and its possible consequences for the society as well as culture.

The research aims to gather detailed insights into students' perceptions of their academic and personal experiences within EMI programs, focusing on their emotional and educational challenges, and how these influence their learning outcomes and satisfaction. Additionally, the study seeks to explore both faculty and students' attitudes towards the use of English and Bahasa Indonesia in academic contexts, aiming to understand their preferences, perceived benefits, and any concerns regarding cultural and linguistic identity. Lastly, the research aims to identify and analyze the strategies employed by both students and faculty to navigate the challenges associated with EMI, with the goal of highlighting effective practices and potential areas for support and improvement in program implementation.

The research questions are as follows: How do students perceive their academic experiences and challenges in EMI programs? What are the attitudes of faculty and students towards the use of English and Bahasa Indonesia in academic settings? Lastly,

what strategies do students and faculty find effective in overcoming the challenges associated with EMI?

The importance of the problem addressed within the study lies in the comprehensive consideration of English as a Medium of Instruction impact on Indonesian higher education. The focus on student perceptions related to academic experiences aims to uncover the underlying implications of EMI for student engagement, learning, and emotional well-being. These considerations are paramount to the identification of potential swings in access and outcomes and can help promote more equitable educational practices.

In addition, the exploration of faculty and student attitudes towards the use of English as a Foreign Language and Bahasa Indonesia addresses the salient issue of cultural preservation and linguistic identity. Knowledge about foreign and local views of English in Indonesia is critical because the country is noted for its rich history of language development and use, which has maintained high importance even in the modern, globalization-oriented world.

Moreover, such comparative knowledge can be shared globally, which would empower future research on the maintenance of cultural uniqueness in the educational sector in the era of globalization. Lastly, knowing effective measures to address EMI-related issues can help various stakeholders on a practical level. The study sets to provide knowledge about the successful cases and the areas that experience consistent difficulties to help educational institutions promote changes.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The subject of the broad implementation of the English as a Medium of Instruction has been extensively studied regarding various non-native English-speaking countries, thus, providing a series of both positive and negative results applicable to Indonesia. Indeed, while the sources frequently emphasize the advantages of promoting international integration and higher English proficiency, the scheme often causes considerable problems due to insufficient teacher readiness, student unpreparedness, and cultural aspects.

A systematic review further emphasizes the common utilization of EMI within higher education in Asian countries, Africa, and several European nations (Bolton et al., 2020). Countries consider the strategic incorporation of EMI into the education system to promote curricula internationalization and make the country attractive for international students. Indeed, EMI education is grounded on the assumption that it would enhance local students' employability in the international labor market. Nevertheless, EMI implementation significantly relies on the language proficiency of teachers and students, which differs among countries (Dearden, 2014; Macaro, 2015).

EMA programs in Indonesia exposed a substantial contrast in the English language preparedness of teachers resulting in poor transference of the subject matter. Many studies indicated that teachers are unable to communicate the complexity of a concept in English, thereby limiting student understanding (Haryanto, 2013). Indonesia is not the only country in which this occurs, Malaysia and Thailand also report similar experiences in

which teacher proficiency is directly linked to the progress of the EMI program (Kirkpatrick, 2012).

Cultural resistance is another reason for EMI that can be observed in different regions where local languages are seen as a vital part of the cultural and national domain. In countries such as Indonesia, stakeholders are worried about the prevalence of English taking over Bahasa Indonesia, which can weaken cultural cohesion and identity (Dardjowidjojo, 2000). Similar concerns have been expressed by people in the Middle East and certain countries in Europe where cultural dilution and alienation of local languages are feared (Phillipson, 2012).

Another serious issue pertains to the consequences of EMI to student learning. Evidently, ‘English is our second language’ and students who have language issues are prone to academic distress. More especially, in cases with ‘technical subjects and related topics’ when the information is delivered in English, it is harder for students with background in other linguistic groups or those exposed to less academically appropriate English. In contrast, ‘with higher language proficiency’ students achieve slightly better course grades and have more positive attitudes toward EMI (Hellekjær, 2009). As such, there is obviously a need for language support that would help students integrate into EMI environment productively.

Successful EMI implementation is impossible without proper policy formulation, including teacher preparation, curriculum development, and language support measures. The example of Singapore and Hong Kong proves that a rigorous teacher and student support is vital for high education-based EMI implementation (Li & Ruan, 2019).

In essence, the literature reviewed has identified a multidimensional intersection of educational policy, language skills, cultural identity, and teaching efficacy in relation to EMI. This intersection implies that usage of EMI, in general, should, in many cases, be based on the integration of global platforms with the local language, educational capacity, cultural perception, infrastructure, and other factors to avoid going against equity in education and cultural loss for abundant potential benefits and opportunities.

### **2.1. Discussion on the Benefits and Drawbacks of EMI in Higher Education**

The primary goal of EMI as one of the core approaches in higher education is to make the graduates more competitive on the global market and qualify for job opportunities. Improved English language skills better prepare students for occupying jobs in international markets. Moreover, the possibility to develop and deliver English-based courses makes institutions competitive international educators. Macaro (2015) emphasizes the possibility to attract international students and staff improving cultural diversity in the academic environment.

Although translated into many languages, the majority of academic materials, cutting-edge research, and academic discussions are available in English. Enabling students to access and explore this content is especially crucial for STEM disciplines. Dearden explains the broad access to contemporary science and technology ensuring the applicability of the EMI approach (Dearden, 2014). The regular application of English in the academic environment develops students’ language competencies valuable both for professional and personal growth. Moreover, such applied proficiency may boost students’ confidence in participating in international forums and collaborations.

Hellekjaer explains the possibility to develop professional language skills and become globally-minded managers (Hellekjær, 2009).

## **2.2. Drawbacks of EMI**

Both students and faculty need to have a good command of English to be effective in EMI. However, realistically, they may not have it, and this obstacle leads to miscommunication, lower academic performance, and student dissatisfaction. Often, universities need to spend substantial resources on language support services (Phillipson, 2012).

Some experts believe EMI undermines the use and influence of the national language and culture on a scientific and educational domain, especially in non-native English-speaking countries (Dardjowidjojo, 2000). EMI inherently favors students with higher English competence, perpetuating educational inequity as those students who are getting more disadvantaged come from a more challenging environment will experience even more complexity and greater struggle in EMI (Kirkpatrick, 2012).

EMI implementation requires adjustments in the teaching and learning methodology and content of existing curricula. Teachers may require further training regarding the presented materials, but curriculums will also need to be adapted to the target audience's cultural and linguistic context (Li & Ruan, 2019). As previous scholars underlined, the EMI implementation could not have support from different shareholders, claiming it is not essential and contrary to local language preferences (Haryanto, 2013).

While EMI presents several substantial benefits by opening international doors and improving English proficiency, it also brings significant challenges that can impact the educational outcomes and cultural integrity of a region. Successful implementation of EMI in higher education requires careful planning, significant resources for language support, and strategies to mitigate any adverse effects on local culture and non-English-speaking students. Institutions must weigh these factors carefully to determine whether EMI is the right choice for their particular context and how best to implement it to maximize benefits while minimizing drawbacks.

## **2.3. Insights into the Indonesian Higher Education System and Its Language Policies**

Indonesia's higher education system has rapidly expanded due to the growing demand for universities and relentless efforts to strengthen the country's competitive edge worldwide. The more public and private players have been joining those ranks throughout the archipelago. At the same time, the Ministry of Education and Culture regulates the system by creating various educational standards and policies to enhance the performance and accessibility of the higher education segment (Haryanto, 2013).

While originally, Bahasa Indonesia was used as the main medium of instruction in most Indonesian higher education institutions, but recent years have seen a drastic increase in the usage of English as well. The aforementioned trend can be explained by the globalization using English as a global trade language, and a range of programs designed to make graduates more competitive globally (Dardjowidjojo, 2000). EMI in Indonesia is part of the larger strategy to internationalize its higher education at large. It suggests that students should be ready for the opportunities and risks of a globalized world by having a good command of English and an opportunity to engage with international

networks and knowledge. Nevertheless, the outcomes reached with EMI implementation are rather challenging. These are associated with teacher EMI proficiency, student EMI proficiency, and the language marginalization trend discussed later more thoroughly (Phillipson, 2012).

The impression of EMI has further given rise to some challenges such as the requirement for enhanced English language coaching for students and faculty, in addition to a new argument about the balance and competition between universal connectivity in English and the need for solidarity across the national language and culture. In several curricular reforms, a variety of changes has been made that draws these issues, such as the formation of bilingual programs featuring English and Bahasa Indonesia, one of the official languages (Haryanto, 2013). In similar attempts to advance English language education, the Indonesian government has made several recent strides to improve the quality of English learning and increase the prevalence of English medium programs. These efforts extend to include training programs for teachers, collaborative agreements with universities abroad, and the implementation of schools that meet international standards (Sekolah Berstandar Internasional) with courses taught in English (Ministry of Education, 2003).

Thus, the system of higher education in Indonesia is currently undergoing transformative changes that meet the stakes of the globalized world. The path toward language policies introduction, as evidenced by EMI, is part of a multifaceted ambition to reconcile globalization and the opening of global opportunity horizons to native language skill sets within the nation and the particularity of cultivating learning languages and ingraining a cosmopolitan mindset in domestic educational provisions. It seems that language policies' success is contingent upon the education system's capacity to recruit its strengths and address the new language challenge and the challenge of compatibility for higher education in Indonesia.

#### 2.4. Review of Studies on Language Identity and Cultural Impact Due to EMI

EMI implementation in the non-native English-speaking countries has varied implications on language identity and cultural dynamics. The following synthesized studies reveal the effects of EMI based on what challenges the researchers have also encountered and what outcomes researchers have anticipated.

The process of EMI is often associated with giving prime importance to the English language, many students and faculty change their linguistic behaviors reporting a reduced use of mother tongues both in private and professional recommendations. For example, studies in Indonesia and several other Asian countries have pointed to the increasing opposition between identity and Esperanto, especially for students who might notice the physical surroundings of their culture on home soils (Phillipson, 2012).

The EMI program influences students' self-perception and the sense of who they are in society because the proficiency in English they gain is influenced by the second foreign language value and does not always satisfy linguistic identity components balanced. Interestingly, students' proficiency in English influences their identity compares, thus presenting the globalized component. It is also evident that EMI can both increase and decrease the opportunities' role, as performance studied note enhanced possibilities but diversity because of the language capabilities (Dardjowidjojo, 2000).

The cultural displacement is a phenomenon in which the cultural content and context come from Anglophone cultures more and more relative to the traditions and values of one's own. This tendency results in the decreased level of cultural transmission between generations as students tend to follow the global rather than local cultural norms (Haryanto, 2013). Resistance to EMI is visible among the different stakeholders, with educators, students, and policymakers afraid that English might hypothetically alienate native cultural and social cues. Nevertheless, some studies report on successful adaptive strategies in which EMI not only promotes the local language but also encourages bi-linguistic and bi-cultural approaches and does not eliminate the entire native cultural heritage (Kirkpatrick, 2012).

Various regions have developed educational policies addressing the challenges to mitigate the negative outcomes of the extensive use of EMI in schools. The policies primarily focus on harnessing the benefits of EMI while ensuring regional and local languages and cultures are maintained. Initiatives implemented under such policies include language revival, inclusion of education content in local dialects and bilingual education models (Li & Ruan, 2019).

References to the reviewed literature demonstrate that the potential of EMI to bring significant benefits in terms of educational and professional opportunities, by increasing English skills, is likely to reduce the status of local languages and their role in national identity. The ability to balance these possible outcomes largely depends on the choice of educational policies and practices. The implementation of EMI in a context-aware and culturally sensitive manner should approach the side of language policies that enable both global mobility and the idea of local cultural and linguistic integrity.

The analysis of the literature shows that, while English as a Medium of Instruction has been implemented in numerous educational settings across Indonesia, there are multiple key issues and gaps to be explored yet. On the one hand, EMI is associated with numerous advantages, yet on the other, multidimensional challenges associated with student readiness and preparedness, faculty training and EMI attitude, and broader cultural and linguistic implications exist. However, there is a lack of research regarding the interventions and practical strategies to combine EMI adoption and local languages and cultures preservation.

This study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge by exploring a new, context-specific insights into the effectiveness of EMI in the Indonesian higher education sector, focusing on the contemporary student and faculty experience that was not covered in the existing studies. An analysis of the impact EMI has had on the linguistic landscape in Indonesian higher learning and the implications of EMI for the status and use of Bahasa Indonesia in academic contexts. Practical strategies have been outlined to address the EMI-driven challenges that institutions and practitioners in Indonesia have implemented. Recommendations for policy and practice that are informed by empirical data on the effectiveness of these strategies and efforts have been developed.

This gap is significant for today's debates over the place of English in non-native environments and the need for educational policy to support equitable bilingual education that respects the cultural-metaphorical heritage of the learner. This study is essential because it will help policymakers and education officials in Indonesia to create a

diplomatic, smooth integration arrangement that supports international educational quality contextually.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODS

The study used a qualitative research design to investigate how the use of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in Indonesian higher education institutions affects academic performance, language identity, and cultural consequences. The design was appropriate due to its ability to provide detailed and dyed experiences of the parties involved in EMI implementation (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

Similarly, participants for the study were drawn from three Indonesia universities known for EMI programs. Universities were selected because they were believed to provide a representative balance based on location, size of the universities, and types of existing EMI offerings. Overall, the study involved 30 participants, of which 15 were EMI staff lecturers and 15 students. Purposeful sampling was employed to address a wide range of perspectives and experiences and across the faculty and student populations. (Palinkas et al., 2015).

#### 3.1. Data Collection Methods

Data collection was carried out with the help of semi-structured interviews. This technique was considered the most appropriate as it offered the flexibility necessary to address the research topics and, at the same time, provided appropriate structure to enable comparative analysis. The interviews took place in agreed settings that were convenient for the study participants, and the duration of one session was approximately 45-60 minutes. The interview questions were developed to ensure that the gathered data allowed investigation of participants' experiences and reflections related to EMI, attitudes and opinions about EMI's provisions and impacts, and stories and opinions relevant to linguistically oriented challenges of EMI. The pilot's study of the interview protocol was conducted to tests its questions' suitability and ability to prompt meaningful responses.

#### 3.2. Data Analysis Techniques

Thematic analysis was employed to interpret the collected data. A useful approach for the identification and reporting of themes, that can represent one or both manifest and latent content, this method can facilitate the systematic organization and description of the complete set in the general level of detail. The analysis was conducted following the six-phase process of Braun & Clarke: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

#### 3.3. Ethical Considerations

Supported by research ethics, the researcher received ethical approval for the study from the institution in which the lead researcher was affiliated. Furthermore, the subjects signed the form confirming that the information was voluntary, their responses confidential, and eliminations not to engage in any way. Anonymization of the data secured the subject's privacy. Throughout each element of this research, confidential data storage was maintained within each data at all times.

### **3.4. Design Paradigm**

The interpretivist paradigm underpins the study on the basis of the key assumption that reality is socially created and it can be best explored by examining the subjective meanings people give to their experiences. The interpretivist paradigm was instrumental in helping me to develop an understanding of how EMI affects people's learning and cultural experiences in Indonesian higher education.

### **3.5. Considerations**

Careful consideration was given to attending biases and the researcher's potential data influence throughout the study. Reflexivity was achieved by keeping a detailed research journal that wrote the researcher's reflections and thoughts and methodological decisions by enhancing transparency and accountability.

## **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1. Research Result**

#### **4.1.1. Effectiveness of EMI in Enhancing Educational Outcomes**

The results from the semi-structured interviews of both faculty members and students provide comprehensive insight into the effectiveness of English Medium of Instruction within higher education institutions in Indonesia. Results are categorized into several thematic sections based on the interviews' common themes and experiences of the participants.

#### **a. Academic Performance and Content Comprehension**

English proficiency also led to the observed amelioration in students' academic success. Thus, many students, similarly to Student 1 from Computer Science, orchestrating that although the primary challenges, the experience of pursuing their degree in a fully English-taught environment supported them in communicating with the vast amounts of available international academic resources and technical documentation, enough of which is in English. Faculty members, especially in technical areas like the Professor in Engineering described above, showcased that students who handle English well developed better comprehension of complex notions typically debated mostly in the most recent world literature. However, many of the same faculty expressed the concern that many pupils with shallow English proficiency possible had a misinterpretation risk or faced the comprehension lag.

#### **b. Engagement and Participation**

On the other hand, not all students enjoyed the same level of communication due to the language. For example, the student in question belonged to sophomore students at the faculty of International Business, who, like Student 2, positively assessed to studying in English. EMI provided an opportunity to create a more informal, interactive, and engaging learning environment, which is especially valuable in disciplines with frequent group work and presentations. Although the scenario creator believes that the same approach was perceived well by other students, some of them did not have a good command of the language and felt alienation and distrust. Such students experienced

difficulties expressing their thoughts and actively participated in discussions due to language constraints.

c. Language Development and Confidence

Most of the students reported that they had shown great improvements regarding their English language problems, feeling they did better because of the EMI system. Student 5 from Medicine felt that the daily use of English and the impact of the language in their academic capacities increased not only their vocabulary skills but also their confidence in using it professionally. Moreover, the faculty members saw this improvement and reported that the EMI system had played a major role in helping students in preparation for the global market. The students felt more confident and felt they would perform better in interviews and internships, which were a key requirement for specialists from Business and Science, who require their skills.

d. Cultural and Global Competence

The understanding of global cultural contexts also was believed to be significantly improved by both students and faculty. Faculty member 3, Senior Lecturer in Political Science, noted that global political debates became more comprehensive and informed thanks to students' more substantial knowledge of international sources and their comprehension of multiple perspectives due to producing English. Many students appreciate their international exposure and feel closer to global problems and developments. They also perceived that access to discussions with colleagues and industry professionals from other countries was a valuable prerequisite for their prospective jobs.

In conclusion, the potential added-value of EMI for educational outcomes is clear from the highlighted areas, including improved English proficiency, academic engagement, and fostered awareness of global issues. Nevertheless, it is worth emphasizing that not all students equally benefit from EMI. In this context, the mentioned language-barrier problems, especially among individuals with initially poor English proficiency, are particularly concerning, showcasing that certain safeguarding measures should be ensured to make EMI a positive driving force for students' experiences. This way, even though EMI definitely has substantial positive implications, their realization seems to require a mindful management process.

#### 4.1.2. Insights into the Challenges Faced by Students and Faculty with EMI

The focus on semi-structured interviews with students and faculty in Indonesian universities led to the identification of a range of challenges associated with English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) implementation. The perceived challenges were often undermining EMI's effectiveness for boosting educational outcomes.

a. Language Proficiency Barrier

English proficiency was often cited as problematic by both students and faculty. Many students, particularly those hailing from places where English is not largely used, seemed to struggle with the language that their academic work demanded. Student 1 from Computer Science confesses that the first months of their studying in EMI seemed

unbearable due to the language barrier, the complexity of which did not allow them to grasp complex technical concepts fully.

Specifically, faculty members also seemed to be struggling with their English proficiency. For some, such as Faculty Member 4 in Medicine, there was consistently present fear that they will not be able to present complex material accurately in English, leading to misunderstanding or misinformation on students' part. In subjects with highly specialized vocabulary or where language's precision is paramount, this issue was even more present.

b. Cultural Nuances and Contextual Understanding

Both students and faculty mentioned that because in Bahasa Indonesia one could insert leaner language, EMI led often to the loss of cultural subtleties that were more approachable in their native language. It was especially noticeable in Political Science and Law, where knowing the contexts of the country and the cultural peculiarities of the issue was critical. Political Science, Faculty Member 3 expressed that although the students found some opportunities to insert some elevating, inspiring language, the debates were often shallow. The reality is, they are not that comfortable speaking or arguing, especially on some sensitive issues.

c. Teaching and Learning Materials

Inadequacy of teaching and learning materials in English. A few faculty members noted that not all academic resources were available in English, especially those that engage local issues or contexts-specific needy studies. Faculty Member 5 in Environmental Science, argued that a shortage of localized study materials in English is a barrier to teaching and learning. Indeed, he observed that there were no materials in English to guide English on localized environmental Issues in Indonesia.

d. Student Engagement and Participation

In addition, EMI was also occasionally identified by faculty and students as likely to alienate or exclude students with lower English proficiency levels. With fewer students engaging in class discussions, group projects, and other forms of interactivity in the classroom, the learning experience as a whole was reduced in dynamism. Student 2 in the International Business program remarked: Students sometimes do not want to participate in a discussion or a video presentation, they may feel uncomfortable because of their poor language skills.

e. Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment and evaluation were another point where challenges were present in the EMI settings. For example, a considerable number of students and faculty were worried about the fairness and precision of assessment when carried in English. That is, a significant worry was the possibility that comprehension issues among the student population would result in worse outcomes. While they do not know less, the language might mark their performance during exams and the production of assignments. It was especially evident during high-stake testing and evaluation, where language levels certainly constituted a grading criterion.

f. Training and Support for Faculty

Many of the faculty members reported feeling that they had insufficient support to adequately transition them into English-medium instruction. I would say that more comprehensive training programs are required which would not only strengthen our English language skills but would also replicate pedagogical responses that are appropriate for EMI. For instance, Faculty Member 1 in Engineering talked about this feeling: We need continuous professional development to teach well in English.

The above challenges identified pinpoint the points needing substantial improvement in EMI permit in Indonesian universities. Although students upon admission is entirely independent of their EMI capability, the identified areas need to be tailored to enhance the fairness and inclusivity in academic English. The identified areas of improvement speak to the benefits and challenges arising from EMI. However, improvements in these areas will enhance the benefits accruing to the introduction of EMI in university education to continue benefiting student psychological development processes.

#### 4.1.3. Cultural and Identity Issues Related to the Use of English in Indonesian Higher Education

The use of English as a medium of instruction in Indonesian higher education has direct and indirect effects on cultural identity and the local language heritage sustainability. This section will reflect on the role EMI plays in these areas based on the interviews with the study participants.

a. Impact on Linguistic Identity

One of the key impacts of EMI is the reformation of the linguistic identity of students and faculty. All participants voiced their concern about the potential deterioration for Bahasa Indonesia status and common use due to the prevalence of the English language in the sphere of higher education. As Faculty Member 3 from Political Science have observed, English has become an indispensable tool to maintain global competitiveness, but the overuse of English language may destroy Bahasa Indonesia as a symbol of national culture and national identity. Students reported growing estrangement, particularly challenging for students coming from the regions where the local linguistic identity is strong. As explained by Student 3, Political Science: “English is not my first language and that makes me uncomfortable even if I know I have a strong grasp of it. I can’t say I like studying in English. I have a deep relationship with the issues and cultures of my region, and several nuances and references we make in my country can’t be translated into English”.

b. Cultural Displacement

The impact on the local Indonesian culture may result in cultural displacement since the educational knowledge and context would be more similar to the Western culture of knowledge transmitted in English and illustrated with more examples conducted within English-speaking countries. Therefore, less focused, and good explanations in English that suit contextual examples may weaken the transmission of common knowledge outstandingly explained in Bahasa Indonesia. Therefore, Faculty Member 5 in

Environmental science noted that discussions about the local environmental behavior are less resonating and rich in English due to the lack of conversation words and culture.

c. Global vs. Local Identity

Lastly, EMI supports students to interact on complex local and global identities. On one side, many students reaffirm their increasing appreciation of English as helping them acquire a global identity. However, most of them develop a pull-and-push relationship between a global identity and a link to their local roots. For example, Student 4 in Environmental Studies noted that whereas learning in English further enlightened their knowledge of global environmental matters, it has occasionally alienated them on local contexts and emphasis on local concepts such as good community relations.

d. Cultural Integration in Curriculum

The interviews suggest an increasing call to bring culture into the curricula, which is more than the mere focus on global competencies, with the native language of the local context. It includes work with local case studies, examples, and references, related to the Indonesia-based context. Such aspects feed into the EMI curricula for rich educational experiences among students involved, who value the cultural affiliation.

e. Resistance and Adaptation

Moreover, resistance to EMI is frequently fueled by fears of cultural invasion and loss of linguistic hegemony. Nevertheless, it should be noted that many universities start adopting new approaches and create solutions that would help to implement EMI without harm for students' native languages and cultures. For instance, some universities introduce dual-language programs or classes which discuss Indonesian studies in Bahasa Indonesian. For example, Faculty Member 2 explains that in Business Studies the school struggles to combine teaching of global business strategies and particularly Indonesian lessons regarding entrepreneurial traditions.

The extent to which EMI in Indonesian higher education is infused with cultural and identity implications is complex and compounded by other sociopolitical realities in Indonesia. EMI is an opportunity for global participation and development but also a threat to local conceptions of culture and socialization. Given the complexity of the interconnected challenges and opportunities EMI presents to education, policy and practice need to be responsive to local-global relationships that ensure that EMI access in education as an excellent platform for development provided such access that does not compromise the cultural and linguistic heritage of Indonesia.

## **4.2. Discussion**

The findings highlights that although EMI is used in Indonesian higher education, there are several factors related to educational outcomes as there is a complex relation of language and socio-cultural identity considerations. This discussion related these findings to relevant traditions within educational theory and sociolinguistics while providing a deeper understanding of EMI in a non-native English-speaking milieu.

a. Sociocultural Theory in Education

Taking all this into account, it should be said that Vygotsky's sociocultural theory serve as an ideal framework for assessing the effects of EMI implementation. In this case, EMI can be seen as a lens of new language and cultural reality imposed onto the existing educational sphere, which significantly distorts both cognitive and social structures within the group (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). Participants' struggles with language proficiency and cultural alienation could thus be conceptualized as the destabilization of sociocultural dialectics – the equilibrium that is required for optimal engagement with the curriculum. Therefore, it becomes apparent that language is not simply a neutral shell for instruction but constitutes a vital vehicle instrument for both cognition and culture.

b. Linguistic Imperialism and Language Ecology

In Phillipson's theory of linguistic imperialism, it is argued that the diffusion of the English language as a world language heightens the eminence of the local vernacular ultimately creating a set of linguistic pecking orders that can lead to cultural ubiquity (Phillipson, 2012). The response from both the faculty and students that the use of Bahasa Indonesia being undermined are in tandem with this argument. This means further that EMI may result in ecological imbalance in the AMD. To the extent that this is undermining the eminence of Bahasa Indonesia, EMI consequently signals the intensification of cultural globalization.

c. Bourdieu's Theory of Linguistic Capital

Bourdieu's idea of linguistic capital could help to explain the way English proficiency attracts rewards in EMI-enabled educational environments (Bourdieu, 1991). English is viewed as a hegemonic language of high capital in the global academic and economic sectors that spreads out rapidly outside the country's boundaries – thus English comprises a type of capital that members can invest and that impacts their mobility and economic resources. The success participant experience with EMI – in terms of enhanced employability, globalization, etc., – accurately demonstrates how English, in this situation, is a kind of linguistic capital. Nonetheless, a disparity of the distribution of this capital, especially among student language proficiency, reflects educational inequality.

d. Dynamic Systems Theory in Second Language Acquisition

Taking into account all the complexity of experience of the participants related to exposure to EMI, it is worth discussing language learning from the perspective of the Dynamic Systems Theory, which suggests that “language acquisition is a non-linear dynamic process involving the interaction of multiple factors including cognitive capacity, motivational state, and environmental context” (Cameron & Larsen-Freeman, 2007). Interviews demonstrate that EMI exposure has led to different results in language proficiency and academic achievement. It is possible to argue that the abovementioned theory describes the situation in this study the best.

e. Translanguaging and Identity

One possible solution to some of the challenges identified in the study is the promotion of translanguaging, which is described as using various linguistic resources to

aid learning (García et al., 2013). As a result, it could be suggested that the encouragement of using English and Bahasa Indonesia simultaneously in academic context may help to alleviate the issues with cultural and linguistic tension associated with EMI and create a more inclusive and productive educational atmosphere. This approach is also consistent with modern perspectives on identity, portraying it as dynamic and layered, allowing students to negotiate and reconcile their local and global identities.

The consideration of the findings through the lens of these theoretical frameworks has demonstrated the profound effects of EMI on the nature of educational work, language policy and cultural identity in Indonesian higher education. It calls for policy and practice responses that acknowledge and address the concomitant language and cultural issues of EMI, to ensure that it invariably adds to rather than detracts from the complex educational topographies

#### **4.2.1. Comparison with Findings from Other Regions or Similar Contexts**

The global nature of English as a Medium of Instruction implementation (EMI) has resulted in various outcomes and experiences in different educational settings. Combined with the help of data obtained from Indonesian higher education establishments and other regions, the study can provide wider insights into the difficulties and advantages of this approach, as well as potential solutions and policies.

Consequently, many East and Southeast Asian countries have followed the same model to improve their global competitiveness and students' English proficiency. Some South Korean and Japanese universities are examples of countries that have almost as widespread EMI programs as Indonesia with comparable goals. Nevertheless, in South Korea and Japan, like in Indonesia, the scarce English proficiency of students from low-income backgrounds hinders their engagement and academic performance (Byun et al., 2011; Rose & McKinley, 2018). Noteworthy, in these countries, there are strong language centers and additional remedial linguistic studies to assist the students. Thus, Indonesia could use this experience to improve its policy.

Just like Indonesia, countries in the Middle East such as the United Arab Emirates and Qatar have adopted EMI in their higher education. While the driving forces are similar, there is increased concern for the impact of language and culture in this region. According to Hopkyns (2014), the fears that Arabic may be eroded in the UAE have elicited heated debate and discussions. It implies that while internationalization is a critical factor, cultural preservation is also of concern to the region. These lessons are notable for Indonesia as the cultural identity is key for the country.

Similarly, in European countries where English is not the main language, such as Germany and Spain, EMI is more frequently employed in postgraduate settings. As a result of its global appeal to researchers and students, universities in these countries face challenges that are vastly distinct from those in Asian universities, focusing on total language accuracy and academic and technical English precision (Ball & Lindsay, 2013). Most of the research from Europe, and many have refuted the lack of English skills among academic lecturers as a barrier to EMI. They instead urge the establishment of faculty development programs to help instructors teach more effectively in English (Werther et al., 2014). This perspective might also be useful for Indonesia, which has recently become an important issue.

Likewise, in Africa, Rwanda and other countries use English, replacing the language of former colonialists (French, in the case of Rwanda) which the official language of instruction, as a way to step towards linguistic independence and participation in the global market (Samuelson & Freedman, 2010). The Rwandan case reflects the discords and complexities that may occur during such a rapid transition, even though they may manifest differently due to other transcultural diversities. Indonesia's issues with teacher proficiency and resource availability parallel those of Rwanda's, indicating similar stumbling blocks to rapid and unprepared EMI adoption.

The above comparison shows that, although the motivation for implementing EMI is often the same across regions—making a country or city more globally competitive and increasing access to the labor markets of other countries – the challenges still can be very different due to the peculiarities of the regional language, culture, and, consequently, educational background. Like in any other concerned region, in Indonesia, the realization of EMI can be successful if policymakers are capable to overcome the barriers identified by implementing comprehensive language support programs, teacher training, and curriculum development that takes into account the national identity. The cases from different regions show the necessity of actively involving the communities and other stakeholders into policymaking processes concerning EMI to adjust the policy to the needs and expectations of all stakeholders.

#### **4.2.2. Implications for Language Policy and Educational Practice in Indonesia**

The results of the study of the implementation of English as a Medium of Instruction in Indonesian higher education have several important implications for language policy and educational practice. The described implications can be useful for language policymakers, including politicians, educators, and other stakeholders to promote the positive drop down and mitigate the negative one, as well as to maintain linguistic and cultural integrity.

Firstly, Considering the issues of students' English proficiency levels, there is indeed a significant need for such extensive language support programs. In particular, they must offer pre-sessional and in-sessional English languages courses adapted to students' needs. Furthermore, continuous support of language, such as the use of writing centers and language tutors, helps students bear some of the linguistic burdens of taking EMI courses. This way, regardless of their initial English levels, all students can benefit from EMI.

Secondly, there is a significant challenge to tackle regarding the faculty's readiness to teach in English. To significantly improve faculty members' readiness to effectively teach in English, they must be adequately supported by higher education institutions to develop the necessary skills. Faculty development programs must be established which mainly emphasizes enhancing English language proficiency among faculty members and the effective pedagogical strategies for teaching English. For instance, this can be achieved by training faculty in bilingual teaching methods, which for instance is enabling them to use translanguaging to their advantage by effectively using both English and Bahasa Indonesia to enhance students' understanding and performance.

Thirdly, a sure way to circumvent the cultural and linguistic alienation that is a common byproduct of EMI is to incorporate local content and languages into the curricula. This method will facilitate the continuous centrality of local cultural contexts

and establish a well-balanced bilingual environment. Policy measures could intervene by incentivizing or obligating higher education institutions to include local case studies, examples, and materials into the course as part of the mandatory or recommended syllabus. This way, learners will stay connected to their culture while developing global competencies.

Fourthly, there is a need to promote Bilingual Education models as it is wrong to see EMI and the use of Bahasa Indonesia as a binary opposition. A more correct solution for educational policies would be to encourage bilingual education methods. They would keep both English and Bahasa Indonesia as languages of instruction and strive to develop students' proficiency of both. Such a policy would empower our nations' linguistic identities and provide our children with the instruments they will need to succeed in the global market in the future. Similarly, for EMI to be implemented effectively, all the stakeholders, including students, faculty, policymakers, and the society, have to be closely involved and engaged in the process. This is through consultations and continuous dialogue, which will help obtain insight and feedforward that will facilitate the continuous modification, adjustment and improvement of the policy. In addition, it supports the stakeholders' direct input into the policy to enhance their acceptance and efficacy.

Finally, regular assessments and research should be done to ensure continuous improvement of EMI policies and practices. However, while the assessment of EMI's academic outcomes is instrumental, its effects on educational policies, culture, and language should also be continuously monitored for changes to those aspects of education. Ultimately, the results should inform continuous improvements in EMI implementation that would enable its adjustment to match the requirements of the dynamic educational sector, students, and teachers.

In short, the implications of EMI in Indonesian higher education should be carefully balanced to allow for global integration and, at the same time, preserve and promote local languages and cultures. To achieve that, Indonesia needs to introduce full support systems for students, more program and faculty preparedness, local content integration, and bilingual models along with consistent stakeholder engagement and monitoring.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The current study contributes significantly to the understanding of the implementation and outcomes of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in Indonesian higher education. The findings have outlined the advantages and drawbacks of EMI, which are as follows: educational outcomes have grown as a result of the improved English proficiency among students and engagement with the global community while access and understanding were more limited for students with low language proficiency; cultural and identity issues with EMI have been also outlined as it raised concerns about the elimination of Bahasa Indonesia and local identities, leaving students and faculty to face the global and local struggle with equal strength; challenges reported with EMI were the ones related to language proficiency, cultural displacement, the need for faculty training, and the lack of a comprehensive language support system; faculty and student experiences showed that while both groups struggle with the additional language requirements, it undermines the teaching effectiveness and student participation;

however, they also acknowledge the benefits of EMI in terms of career opportunities and the ability to engage with global knowledge resources.

On the basis of these findings, the following recommendations should be proposed to policymakers, educational institutions, and future research: 1) Enhanced language support: the establishment of comprehensive language support centers should actively be involved in administering both students and faculty with the support necessary to heighten their English proficiency. Moreover, they should revise their teaching methodologies. 2) Faculty development programs: regular professional development programs center approaches to effective EMI and how to support faculty in English-medium instruction. The challenges faced working in English and how they could be addressed, if possible, should be also analyzed. 3) Curriculum integration: policymakers should promote the integration of local content and languages into the Indonesian curriculum. Academic approaches should be more clearly related to what occurs in Indonesia and how society should take all the measures. 4) Policy reforms: language policies should be created and implemented that reflect the importance of bilingual education and accessibility to using both English and Bahasa Indonesia as equals. Therefore, it can promote language diversity and cultural development. 5) Future research regarding long term impacts: Research should be done on the long-term impacts of EMI on students' long-term careers and language use boosted by the government base's overall need for change.

Thus, the issue of the tension between global integration and local identity preservation continues to be on the agenda of the EMI debate. Although EMI has numerous advantages in preparing students for the global market, it also exposes linguistic diversity and cultural identity to risks. Overall, the importance of developing EFMI strategies informs this study to boost the development of global competencies and, at the same time, enhance and promote local ties and language use. This is the only way for Indonesia to remain culturally and linguistically diverse while enjoying the opportunities that globalization offers. To conclude, the implementation of EMI in Indonesian higher education has driven changes in the field and both these changes appear crucial at this moment. Although the perceived push for integration and neglect of identity protection certainly has a rational basis, the objective of pushing forward high culture cannot outshine the alternative, equally important one. Therefore, inventive and inclusive policies and practices are needed to ensure that EMI benefits all stakeholders and has a useful impact on the Indonesian educational system.

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