

Teachers' Perception on the Implementation of English as Medium of Instruction for Young Learners

Bayu Lesmana

Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang
lbayu5422@gmail.com

Annisa Astrid

Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang
anisaastrid_uin@radenfatah.ac.id

Eko Saputra

Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang
ekosaputra_uin@radenfatah.ac.id

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to ascertain how educators felt about using English as a teaching language for younger students. The method employed in this investigation was qualitative. The teachers at Pesantren Syuhratul Islam Gelumbang who use English to teach subjects other than English were the ones who were chosen to participate in this study. Based on the consideration, two teachers were chosen to be the research participants. The participants in this study were chosen through the use of a deliberate sampling strategy. The researcher employed observation and interview techniques to get information from the participants regarding this study. The data regarding the challenges teachers face while implementing English as a medium of instruction for young learners was studied by the researcher using thematic analysis. The result of this study showed that there were several perceptions from the teachers on the use of English as a medium of instruction: 1) EMI develops student communication skill; 2) EMI makes student listening skill better; 3) Teachers feel difficult to ensure the students to achieve the learning objective; and 4) Teachers feel difficult in determining teaching method. The study's conclusions suggested that English as a medium of education presented a number of challenges for teachers. They have therefore prepared effective teaching techniques that should be understood by the students and make for a more pleasurable learning environment in the classroom.

Keywords: English as a Medium of Instruction, Teachers' Perception, Young Learners

A. Introduction

English is a language licensed as a world dialect where anyone around this world could communicate with people who have a special dialect by use English. English is one of the world's dialects that is widely used as an imperative dialect and must be mastered by individuals to communicate with other individuals from other countries. Because English is a language that is patented as an international language where anyone in every part of the world could communicate with people who have different language by use English. English is a complicated language because there are many grammars and pronunciations that are sometimes difficult to pronounce. Learning to speak a foreign language/English requires knowledge that is not only related to grammar and meaning) but also knowledge about how native speakers use the language according to the context (Saepudin, 2014). Therefore, the more people are exposed to English, the easier it will be for them to master the language.

Exposure refers to the contact that learners have with the language they are trying to learn, either in general or with specific language points. Exposure to English can be the key for students to master the language, because the more often students are exposed to English, the easier it will be for them to understand and master the context of the language. According to Candilas (2016) Language exposure

is a key component in students' language development considering the field of speaking; the more participants are exposed to oral presentations and share ideas with others, the greater the opportunity to hone their speaking skills.

Exposure to English will greatly affect them in learning the language. Therefore, not only adults, but students are also required to be exposed to English as much as possible, and this can be started since they are in elementary school. Language exposure plays a major role in the learner's language production (Zoubi, 2016). In order for students to be more frequently exposed to English, teaching methods are also needed that can support this. English must be used by teachers as the primary language of teaching for one or more topics (Cenoz, 2015). One method that can be used is to apply EMI (English as Medium Instruction) in schools. EMI is a teaching method that is applied in schools by teaching non-English subjects using English.

Some elementary schools have made English as a compulsory subject at this time. Not only that, English is not only used as a subject but also used as the language of instruction for other subjects such as mathematics and science. The application of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in L2 classroom has been proposed. EMI would assist young learners in expanding their understanding. EMI encourages young learners to read literature, mainly English. In line with this, EMI will help young learners develop better thinking skills (Ismail & Shaban, 2017). The use of English as the medium of instruction in one or several schools is considered as part of the efforts of Indonesian educators to equip students with adequate English and knowledge in their fields so that they can compete internationally (Sahirudin et al., 2020). By using English as a medium of instruction students are expected to be willing and interested in learning English even more actively. Early childhood has an important role in encouraging the development of intelligence, physical, emotional and social in children (Ana, 2018). In addition, the amount of exposure and input in English for students will have a positive effect because students can study general subjects with English at the same time as integrated.

English learning in several Islamic boarding schools for the elementary school level is currently classified as poor. English learning in several Islamic boarding schools has not been designed based on the components contained in the learning process. This makes students at these schools lack language exposure to English. Even though English is an important language to learn. This is to make students confident to speak English. Using the right methods, English language learning needs to be promoted and improved both within and outside of the classroom. These methods assist students in developing their English language skills and their ability to communicate in the target language (Zoubi, 2018). Therefore, to increase students' exposure to English, several Islamic boarding schools implement policies to use English as the language of instruction for non-English subjects or commonly called EMI (English as Medium of Instruction). One of the Islamic boarding schools that applies this to increase language exposure to English to students is the Syuhratul Islam Gelumbang Islamic boarding school

Based on the preliminary study at Pesantren Syuhratul Islam Gelumbang, Muara Enim, an informal conversation with the head of this pesantren revealed that this pesantren is the only pesantren in Muara Enim that uses EMI. This Islamic boarding school uses EMI because this Islamic boarding school is a Modern Islamic Boarding School which was just built in 2016 and has started using EMI since 2020. The policy for implementing EMI at this Islamic boarding school is written in the circular letter of the pesantren head regulation No. 290/PPSI/III/2020. The aim of applying EMI for Islamic Boarding Schools is to produce students who can master good Arabic and English. The head of the Islamic boarding school also mentioned that in the first year the use of EMI experienced several problems, this was because teachers had difficulty conveying subject matter because not all teachers had an English background. In addition, students also experience difficulties in receiving subject matter. (A, Personal Communication, October 13, 2022).

In addition, teacher revealed that there are 11 subjects in this school and 2 of them are taught by using English as the medium instruction, there are Science and Mathematics. The implementation of EMI in this school is start from grade 4th. The reason why EMI is started use at grade 4th is because students at grade 1-3 is focused on studying religious matters, such as reciting and memorizing the Koran, and writing Arabic. (I, Personal Communication, August 20th, 2022).

Other teacher also revealed that there are any benefits and also threats when using EMI when teaching. The benefit of using EMI is it can help her and students to learn English together although it is not in English subject, so they can learn English every day, but the teacher also mentioned that sometimes it is hard to taught in English because sometimes she forgot some vocabulary and she needs to memorize the vocabulary first. The teacher mentioned that that things causing the learning and teaching got disturbed and make her loss of confidence (I, Personal Communication, January 25th, 2023)

Regarding the use of English as a medium of instruction, many research studies have been conducted (Toth, 2018; Putri, 2021; Oktaviani, 2019; Tang, 2020). First, Toth (2018) conducted a study to emphasize the language use policies, viewpoints or perspectives, and practices in a bilingual primary school for grades 4-6, where English was the major language of instruction for a number of courses.. According to Putri (2021) EMI has benefits and threats that occur when implementing EMI for young learners. Furthermore, Oktaviani (2019) said that study sought to explore the obstacles and viewpoints of educators about the implementation of EMI. Finally, Tang (2020) looked into whether students are adequately receiving the material provided during the learning process as well as the difficulties and significance of teaching EMI through lectures in the classroom.

The aforementioned research studies center on how educators view the employment of English as a teaching language. These studies focused on the advantages and disadvantages of language use in bilingual education as well as how it affects students' language proficiency. There haven't been

any studies looking into how teachers feel about using English as a medium of instruction for young students at a pesantren. As a result, the researcher was interested to do studies that centered on a single research subject.: What is the teachers' perception on the implementation of English as a medium of instructions for young learners at Pesantren Syuhratul Islam Gelumbang?

B. Research Methodology

This type of research is qualitative research which is often used to find out about a phenomenon as well as answers to questions for this research. Qualitative research is conducted to seek a specific process and phenomenon occurs in people (Creswell, 2014). This qualitative research is useful for finding out the problems of teachers in the application of EMI. To find out this can be found by first finding out what teachers face about the use of EMI. Because this study aims to find out the phenomenon of teacher perception in elementary schools in the use of EMI, the researchers decided to use a qualitative descriptive analysis, then the results of the analysis will be explained in detail.

In this research, purposeful sampling will be use to select participants where the participants will be recruited from the Pesantren Syuhratul Islam Islamic Boarding School teachers who teach children aged 6-13 years using English. Purposive sampling is the deliberate selection of a number of subjects and sites by researchers in order to identify the fundamental phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). Purposive sampling is often used with the aim of obtaining the information needed to help certain cases that have a purpose. Therefore, the researcher decided to use a purposive sampling technique for this study.

Criterion sampling is a part of the purposive sampling strategies that can be used as a participant selection. The logic of criterion sampling is to consider and study all cases that meet predefined critical criteria, thus explicitly comparing (or implicitly) criteria cases with non-criteria cases (Patton, 2015). Therefore, the objective of this research was to determine the teacher's perception of the advantages and threats of implementing EMI. The researchers employed multiple procedures to analyze the information using a thematic analysis. The investigator will first gather the information. The information will then be turned into a transcription. Read the data third. Coded the info after that. Fifth, use the codes to inform your own interpretation and ideas. Finally, the results can be verified to ensure that they are accurate (Braun and Clarke, 2021).

Findings and interpretations' accuracy must be preconcerted when collecting and analyzing the data. Validating findings means the researcher establishes the accuracy through member checking or triangulation (Creswell, 2014). Trustworthiness in a qualitative study is frequently served using terms such as credibility, dependability, conformability, transferability, and authenticity. Based on those explanations, the researcher decided to conduct trustworthiness in this study. This study used triangulation and member checking in establishing the trustworthiness of the data. According to Cohen et al (2017) 29 triangulations as the use of two or more methods to collect data on some elements of human behavior. The process of methodological triangulation entailed comparing information or data

in multiple ways. To determine teachers' difficulties, the researcher employed two types of data collection; observation and interview. The goal was to reduce the shortcomings and biases of any single method.

Based on an informal interview with a teacher at this pesantren, this pesantren applies EMI in teaching and learning activities. Then, research participants were selected from the teachers at the Syuhratul Islam Gelumbang Islamic Boarding School. Therefore, the researcher chose teachers who not teaching English subjects to be participants based on the above considerations, which of course already met the criteria for the purpose of this study. The first teacher that the researcher chose is a teacher who taught science. Then, the second teacher that the researcher chose is a teacher who taught mathematics and the last teacher that the researcher chose is a teacher who taught social studies.

In addition, the researchers also determined the selection of participants based on the class taught by the teacher, where in this study the researcher choose 3 teachers who taught in class 4. Grade 4 at this school only consist of 1 class and not classified like grade 4a, 4b or 4c. The researcher chose the teachers who taught in grade 4 because the researcher wants to see how does the EMI work for class that just starting implement it. Related to this, researchers assume that based on this phenomenon, the results of the application of EMI will be easily seen. Researchers avoid choosing teachers who teach in grade 6 because grade 6 is being prepared to take the final exam.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Results

Following analysis of the observational and interview the data, the researcher found several perceptions teachers claimed, such as: EMI develops students' communication skill; with the use of EMI some students have some improvement in their communication skill such as more confident and speak fluently in the class. EMI makes students' listening skill better; some students get better when listening in english. Teachers feel difficult to ensure the students to achieve the learning objective; the teachers claimed that it is hard to achieve the learning objective because some students do not understand if the material explained in English. The themes are:

1.1 EMI develops students' communication skills

Based on the study of interviews with two teachers, one with the initials I, a math teacher. Based on the interview data, it was discovered that EMI improves students' communication skills since EMI requires students to always communicate in English. As initially admitted by the teacher,

“I see an improvement in communication skills because I think there are some students who experience changes when speaking in class. When I force them to always speak in English everytime, the students' communication skill gets better. They start to speak confidence in a week to week. I can say this because I meet them every week in the class.

So, when there are some students who has an improvement, I can see and feel that”
(Personal communication, July, 20th, 2023)

According to the interview, it was discovered that students’ communication skill gets better in every observation in the class by the researcher. Some students start to speak confidently and fluent in every meeting. In the first researcher observation, when the teacher explains the material, some students do not have a confidence to speak in English to ask a question to the teacher. Then, in the next observation some student students start to raise their hand and ask a question to the teacher.

Another teacher who teaches Science in English initially L has the same opinion with teacher I

“My students have an improvement in communication in the class, some students seem more confident to speak in english after 4 meeting” (Personal communication, July, 20th, 2023)

According to the interview, it was discovered that when teacher L explaining the materials about human skeleton and the function, 2 students raised their hand to ask the teacher, and the students speak fluently.

1.2 EMI makes students’ listening skill better

Based on the data gained from the interview, the teacher found EMI makes listening skill better. The teacher i felt that his students' listening skills were getting better because the students seemed more able to convey back the lesson material that had been delivered by the teacher.

"Yes, there is. Because sometimes I use YouTube youtube to delivered the material. When I am in class, I often ask them about the learning material that has been taught, and they convey it back correctly”. (Personal communication, July, 20th, 2023)

This is consistent with my observations. Teacher I sometimes ask the students some question and the students can convey back the lesson material correctly.

Teacher I and the other teacher initially L share the same opinion. The teacher L stated that

“When the students can convey back the lesson material, I’m very happy. It means that my students listen to my explanation and they are can understand about what I’m saying”

This is consistent with what the class observed. Depending on the student's situation, the teacher may pose multiple questions to them at times. They pose a straightforward query at the outset. Then, if the students answer it correctly, the teachers ask another question that more complex. The student can answer all the question.

1.3 Teachers feel difficult to ensure the students to achieve the learning objective

According to the information gleaned from the interviews, the teachers found it challenging to guarantee that the pupils would meet the learning objective. Learning objectives become difficult to achieve because the teacher has to repeat every lesson material that has been delivered, thus spending more time so that students understand the lesson material better, while the learning objectives are limited to each meeting. This is because not all students can immediately understand the lesson material that has been presented. So, when there are students who don't understand, the teacher must convey the lesson material again until the students understand. As claimed by the teacher initially, I that

“With the implementation of EMI, I find it difficult to determine a learning method that is easy to understand for children. In addition, I often find it difficult to achieve the learning objectives because it is difficult to make students understand the material I convey, so I have to re-explain the material to ensure my students understand the material”. (Personal communication, July 20th, 2023)”

Similarly, observational data revealed that a student did not pay attention when teacher I was explaining the materials and do not understand about the material. Some students look confused. Then, the teacher repeats the material delivering to make sure all the students understand the material.

Initially, the other instructor, L, has the same viewpoint as teacher I. The teacher L, asserted

“Sometimes, I feel that the time for the teaching and learning activities is not enough. If the students do not understand about my explanation, I have to re-explain the lesson material. That's make the time for teaching and learning decreased. It's hard for me to achieve the learning method because the time is not enough” (Personal communication, July 20th, 2023)

This proven by the observation. When the teacher explains the lesson material about human sense organs and their functions, When the teacher explained, only a few students understood and actively answered the teacher's questions, while several other students did not understand the lesson material. So, teachers need to re-deliver the lesson material that has been delivered

1.4 Teachers feel difficult in determining the teaching method

According to the interview data, teachers found it challenging to determine effective teaching strategies based on the learning materials. Because the teacher has no background in English. It's hard for them to find an appropriate teaching method to deliver the material in English.

“This school offered a guidebook on teaching methods, so teachers can choose from a variety of strategies based on the needs of both students and teachers. The challenge is determining the best strategy based on the students' levels and instructional resources.” (Personal communication, July 20th, 2023)

It is proven by the observation, Teacher I using video as the teaching method which is it was used on the last meeting.

The teacher initially L has the same opinion with teacher I. Teacher L claimed that

“We already have a guideline for determining the learning method, so there are numerous methods that can be employed, however I sometimes have problems adjusting which approach is appropriate for the topic to be taught.” (Personal communication, July 20th, 2023)

This is consistent with my observations in class. Teacher L used the same teaching strategy as teacher I, which was to present the subject via video as the learning medium. In short, teachers must select the best method for the learning material in order for pupils to understand it.

2. Discussion

The researchers discovered that there were obstacles experienced by teachers in implementing English as a medium of instruction for young learners after utilizing theme analysis to analyze the data: (1) EMI develops students' communication skill, (2) EMI makes students' listening skill better, (3) Teachers feel difficult to ensure the students to achieve the learning objective, (4) Teachers feel difficult in determining teaching method. As a result, the discussion of those things will be explained below so that you can learn more about them.

Firstly, teachers stated that EMI developed students' communication skills. By implementing EMI, teachers can force students to always use English. When students are forced to always use English, they will get used to it so they will be exposed to more English. This may be related because EMI exposes students to English more than not using EMI. So, this can improve children's communication skills. Early exposure to different languages can help children improve their communication skills. (Satya & Durga, 2018) By making English the language of instruction in the classroom, this means that English is also used as a daily language which can expose students to more English (Sepyanda, 2017). Students who learn the same thing over a long time will have more opportunities to master that thing. This condition is in accordance with the benefits of EMI which can develop students' communication skills. When students are learning to speak English everyday it will be honing their communication skills too. The ability to speak English is also influenced by external factors such as teachers, environment and habits. The teacher said that some of the students he taught had experienced increased confidence in speaking English. Confidence in English is one proof that students' communication skills have increased. Most students had a positive perception or agreed upon English as a medium of teaching in order to develop their English abilities and confidence to speak up, as well as to grasp more of the English textbook or article and foreign culture. (Alhamami & Almelhi, 2023) In summary, the use of English as Medium Instruction will greatly affect the students, including students' communication skills.

Secondly, EMI makes listening skills better. Using English as the medium of instruction in the classroom can strengthen students' auditory processing abilities. By forcing themselves to continue practicing listening to English, students will get used to the correct sounds, intonation and pronunciation of English. This will help improve students' overall understanding and listening skills, so that students can convey back the lesson material that they have understood. Using the correct learning methods in implementing EMI will also have a positive impact. This can happen because teachers at Islamic boarding schools claim that their students' listening skills are better because they use videos as a learning medium. Using videos as a learning medium does require good listening skills, because otherwise the meaning of the video will be difficult to understand due to errors in listening to the explanation in the video. Students will be able to easily use English because they have been accustomed to listening and speaking English since they were in elementary school (Erliana, 2018). By implementing English as a learning medium for elementary school children where videos are the medium for delivering material, it means that their listening skills have been trained and ultimately improved. In addition, EMI can improve students' listening skills when teachers can find suitable teaching methods.

Thirdly, Teachers feel it is hard to ensure the students to achieve the learning objectives. The teacher felt that he had difficulty achieving learning objectives in class. Therefore, teachers have to repeat the explanation of the material so that it requires more and learning objectives become difficult to achieve because of this. This is because students and teachers have a lack of proficiency. Where, students find it difficult to receive learning material in class because it is delivered using a foreign language (L2). It is easier for students to understand lesson material if it is delivered using their mother tongue (L1). Children learn faster in their native language (Noor, et al, 2018) This greatly influences the learning objectives in the classroom. If teachers insist on delivering lesson material in English, what can happen is academic failure where students find it difficult to understand the lesson material and ultimately the learning objectives cannot be achieved. In this case too, teachers sometimes feel like they are in a dilemma because EMI requires the use of English in the classroom but if it is still forced then this can make things difficult for themselves and the students themselves. In the end, students do not pay serious attention to what the teacher is explaining and end up underestimating the subject matter. Because students cannot read and write fluently in the target language, assessing them based on their non-native language may result in underestimating their achievement of learning outcomes. (Alhamami, 2021 as cited in Hengsadeeikul, 2014). In addition, the use of English as medium instruction also could be giving a negative impact if the teachers and students have lack of proficiency. Teachers and students must be finding a way to solve problem if the teaching and learning progress do not run as it should.

The last, Teachers feel difficult in determining teaching method. The teachers found it challenging to select the best strategy based on the needs of the students. Sometimes the teachers out of teaching method to be used in the classroom because some teaching method doesn't suitable with the

students and the school do not provide a guidebook for the teachers. Cahyati (2019) noted that numerous language education approaches can be utilized. When dealing with English teaching issues, teachers must employ a variety of strategies for teaching the English language. It is connected to the finding in this study that teachers are constantly eager to test new teaching methods to find the suitable method for the students. Using a variety of approaches, particularly matching the method to the teaching topic, will assist teachers in developing a successful teaching process (Dearden, 2014). Furthermore, implementing proper teaching methods and strategies is difficult since teachers must consider not only how to transfer four language skills but also how to keep students motivated and enthusiastic about learning and practicing English.

D. Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the findings of the fourth chapter's study on instructors' perceptions of the use of English as a medium of instruction for young learners at Pesantren Syuhratul Islam Gelumbang, The researcher found several perceptions that teachers claimed, such as: (1) EMI develops students' communication skill; with the use of EMI some students have some improvement in their communication skill such as more confident and speak fluently in the class. (2) EMI makes students' listening skill better; some students get better when listening in english. (3) Teachers feel difficult to ensure the students to achieve the learning objective; the teachers claimed that it is hard to achieve the learning objective because some students do not understand if the material explained in english (4) Teachers feel difficult in determining teaching method; teachers claimed it is difficult to find suitable teaching methods because some teaching methods do not suitable with the students. Based on this study's result, there is a novelty in this study. Besides difficulties, policies, challenges, benefits and threats of 39 EMI were found, there were new findings regarding teachers' perception in implementing EMI for young learners.

1. For Teachers

The first is intended for educators who utilize English as a medium of education for young kids. Teachers must be aware of their students' requirements in order for EMI to function properly in the classroom. As a result, the learning objective will be met efficiently. The teacher can improve their teaching performance with this knowledge. Because no two young learners are the same, the teacher must employ a variety of methods to ensure that all students, particularly those with limited English proficiency, understand the lesson.

2. For School Principals

The second is for the principal of the school. When employing English as a medium of instruction, there are various aspects to consider. For example, choosing English-fluent teachers for specific subjects, or if this has already occurred, the school is expected to provide further English lessons or training to the

teacher as a provision to teach in English. The school must also supply an excellent teacher guidebook. This can contribute to the success of EMI in schools that use it.

3. For Future Researchers

The third option is recommended for a future researcher who wishes to do research on instructors' impressions of English as a medium of teaching for young learners. Future researchers should provide a clear explanation and gather fresh data on the views of other teachers toward adopting English as a medium of education. Hopefully, this study will serve as a springboard for future research on instructors' perceptions of utilizing English as a medium of instruction for young learners.

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