English Medium Instruction Class: A Case for Language Policy and Planning

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Abstract

One way to enhance educational competitiveness in the global age is the development of English medium instruction (EMI) class. The development involves two questions, i.e., (1) whether such a class is feasible, and (2) whether a language policy and planning framework exists for such a program. This study attempts to answer the questions through a policy study. Firstly, an experiment was conducted at the English department at *Universitas Bengkulu*, Indonesia, in which a statistics course was conducted in English. Secondly, analysis was performed on two relevant Indonesian laws. The results were as follows. Firstly, the class average was > 70 and 92 % of the students got > 70 for their combined final scores. This showed that it might be feasible to set up an EMI. Further study is required to explore if such a class could be developed for non-English department students. Secondly, in Indonesian laws, the Indonesian language is obligatory for the medium of instruction. There are some provisions for English as the medium of instruction; however, their scopes are not very clear. Further study is required to find out the scopes and whether local language planning for EMI is possible.

Keywords: English medium instruction (EMI), Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), Language policy, Language planning

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Indonesia entered the era of globalization with the implementation of AEC (The ASEAN Economic Community) in 2016. Wangke (2014) declares that AEC originated from an informal meeting of ASEAN heads of states and governments in December 1996, in which an agreement was formulated for ASEAN Vision 2020: To create a stable, prosperous and highly competitive ASEAN economic region in which there is free flow of goods, services, investment, skill labor and freer flow of capital, equitable economic development and reduced poverty and socio-economic disparities in year 2020 (p. 6).

The mention of free movement of educated labors implies the need for improving the competitive power on Indonesian educational graduates. One aspect of the competitive power is fluency in English, as the most widely used in international communication. In this respect, Mr. M. Natsir, the Indonesian Minister of Research, Technology, and Higher Education, recommends that Indonesian tertiary institutions develop a bilingual language curriculum that use both the Indonesian language and English ("Bilingual curriculum", 2015). The curriculum is designed to prepare future graduates and enable them to compete in the AEC. Natsir's idea is in line with the general trend in various countries to establish courses that use English as the medium of instruction (Dearden, 2014). There are various definitions of EMI. However, as this study is more oriented toward a practical solution, the definition offered by Dearden (2014) is adopted, in which EMI refers to:

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The use of the English language to teach academic subjects in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English (p. 2). EMI may refer to two things. Firstly, EMI could refer to 'English medium instruction', or an instruction in which English is the language of instruction. However, EMI could also refer to 'English as the medium of instruction''. In this study, both are used interchangeably. Dearden (2014) reveals that a lot of countries adopt EMI to varying degree. Some implement it only at tertiary levels, while others also allow it at secondary and even primary levels. Some allow it for public and private schools, while others give more flexibility to private schools. Other writers (e.g., Islam, 2013; Floris, 2014; Vu & Burns, 2014; Simbolon, 2016) find that attitudes among stakeholders, i.e. administrators, lecturers, and students, also show variance. Whatever the situation maybe, there are two fundamental concerns that need to be addressed in cultivating an EMI class in Indonesia, in which English is a foreign language. Here, the use of English is not widespread; thus, the general mastery of English among the population might be not comparable to those in countries where English is a first or second language. Threfore, it is necessary to examine whether an EMI class is feasible to be developed. This matter needs to be addressed as one concern of an EMI program is the reduced capacity on the part of the students to understand the lecture (Floris, 2014). Furthermore, Indonesia, as an EFL (English as a foreign language) country, prioritizes the use of the Indonesian language in various public domains, in its language policy and planning. The scope for English use in public domains is limited. Therefore, it is essential to explore whether or not a legal framework exists as the foundation for the EMI class.

1.2. Research Objectives

In order to address the concerns mentioned in the background, two objectives were outlined. To address the first concern, it may be beneficial to conduct a pilot study to explore whether an EMI program could be effective. The pilot study needs to engage in a university-wide subject (applicable to all departments), so that its result could more or less be generalizable. A very promising subject is the statistics course, due to its university-wide nature and its much use of mathematical language, thereby reducing the linguistic content demand. The pilot study could be carried out in two manners. The first is to conduct an EMI class at a non-English department. The second is to implement an EMI class at the English department. In this respect, we would like to expose an unpublished pilot study for a statistics class for the English department students at the FKIP (Faculty of Teacher Training and Education), *Universitas Bengkulu*, Bengkulu, Indonesia. The English students were selected as they were considered as better prepared to attend an EMI program. If the program was successful, a further pilot study could be set up in statistics course for the students of other departments. To address the second concern, an analysis was performed on various laws that have articles on the use of languages in the public domains. If there are articles, or verses, that support the use of English as the medium of instruction, then a university could develop a framework for the bilingual class. However, if the articles/ verses do not exist, it is necessary to find another alternative. For that reason, the problems prepared for the study were twofold. The first was to find out whether an EMI prototype could be developed in a statistics course for the English Department at FKIP, *Universitas Bengkulu*. The second was to find out whether there was a legal foundation that can underlie an EMI program.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Theoretical framework for the first question

A theoretical framework for the EMI program was a revised version of the Krashen's input hypothesis, in combination with Swain's output hypothesis (2005), as reviewed by Luis (2016). He declares that comprehensible input is essential but not sufficient for achieving second language acquisition; in this respect, the output hypothesis may fill the gap and both could complement each other, in order to produce a more comprehensive hypothesis. Among various aspects, the following are prominent:

1. Comprehensible input

English is used not in language lessons, but on content area lessons, such as those in statistics. Thus, the focus is on meaning, not on form. In addition, the new information is delivered at a level slightly more difficult than what has been mastered by the students;

2. Low affective factor

The lecturer is not expected to give much correction to the language of learners, but limit the correction only on things that interfere with understanding;

3. Production

While students are expected to listen and read in English, they are also expected to speak in English, such as in asking question and engaging in discussion, and write in English, such as in completing an assignment and performing a test. EMI could be classified into two types, namely, the full immersion class, in which all activities are conducted in English, and the partial immersion class, in which some code-switching is allowed. In this study, within the classroom setting, full immersion class was implemented. However, outside of the classroom, students would probably use mixed languages. Thus, this study employed some hybrid type. Another theoretical framework was authentic instruction. Newman and Wehlage (no date) suggest that authentic instruction needs to engage students' mind and to ensure that the work has intrinsic meaning, or value, beyond achieving success in school. In this respect, a statistics course could be developed to be authentic, as the lecturer may show the utility of the statistical concepts and formulas for real researches and teaching tasks.

2.2. Theoretical framework for the second question

To address the second concern, it may be beneficial to review some concepts of language policy and planning. Quoting from Klose, Cooper (1984) defines language planning as the development of language status and body. He distinguishes three types of language planning, namely, status planning, acquisition planning, and corpus planning. Meanwhile, language policy is language planning that is performed by the government (Spolsky, 1991). Corpus planning is the development of the body of language, i.e., the grammar, vocabulary, and orthographic system. This is usually performed by a language institute. Meanwhile, status planning is the allocation of language use in the public domains, such as language in the workplace, language of national and regional governments, language of signage and language of literature, science and technology. Finally, acquisition planning is the use of language to expand its users, and consists of language as a subject, language for the medium of instruction, and language of mass media.

The use of language as a subject does not a problem, as English is offered as a required subject at the tertiary level. The problem is the use of English as the medium of instruction, as a bilingual class needs to use English as the language of teaching and learning. This requires a legal framework, which is usually established by the government. In other words, it requires a language policy and planning, which may or may not support the use of English as the medium of instruction. If this policy exists, various local agents, such as a university, could prepare a local language planning system pertaining to the university.

3. Method

This study employed a simple policy analysis, which according to Quade, in Dunn (1994), refers to "any type analysis that generates and presents information … to improve the basis for policy-makers to exercise their judgment …" (p.61). More specifically, this study was a language policy and planning study, to examine whether (1) an EMI pre-prototype can be developed for a statistics course for English department students (2) there is a legal framework that can serve as the foundation for the EMI.

3.1. Method to answer the first question

This study explored whether EMI in the statistics course could produce a similar result as the previous course that use the Indonesian language. Before this study was conducted, classes using the Indonesian language for instruction could generally attained an average class score of ≥ 70 and the majority (>50%) of the students could achieve at least 70. This study aimed to find out if an EMI class could attain a similar result. Hence, the design in use was a one-shot case study. An intensive class was developed for a statistics course for the students of the English Department at FKIP (Faculty of Teacher Training and Education) of Unib (*Universitas Bengkulu*), Bengkulu, Indonesia. Forty four students participated in the program. The Instruments were an assignment and statistical tests and consisted of (1) descriptive statistics, (2) correlational statistics, (3) inferential statistics (t-test). The materials for the course were developed according to the authenticity principle, as reviewed by Al Azri & Al-Rashidi (2014), in which authentic materials are produced for purposes other than to teach language. Concerning authenticiy, the statistics materials were geared for students' future work when they conducted researches. The materials came in handouts in English, prepared by the research team, with the help of statistics lecturers. The theory was compiled from a number of textbooks written in English. The data used in the lecture were authentic, i.e., coming from real studies. For assignment and tests, reserved data were used from unpublished studies.

In previous courses, due to the limited hours (only 2 credits was allotted, while in some comparable departments the allotment was 3 credits), it was difficult to cover, at the same depth and intensity, all topics. Therefore, an exploration was performed on the scripts that former graduates had written. The statistical concepts that were found in the majority of the scripts were given priority, while the rest were given less intensity. Based on the exploration, priority materials comprised descriptive statistics, correlation, hypothesis testing and t-tests. These materials were covered in depth and evaluated, while the rest, such as ANAVA and Chi-square, were taught, but not subjected to evaluation. It is to be noted that when this study took place, there was still the problem for acquiring legal SPSS copies for the students, As a result, exercises, assignment, and tests were performed by using calculator or the Microsoft excel program.

As for the treatment, it could be outlined as follows:

1. Meeting
There were 14 meetings, with a meeting lasting for 120 minutes, 20 minutes longer than the standard. The use of longer time was based on a preliminary try-out, in which the two-hour block was optimum for full comprehension of a topic unit;

 2. Language
In the classroom, the lecture, questions and answers, and discussions were conducted in English;

3. Instructor
   The first writer served as the main instructor. He happens to have some mathematics background in his previous education;

3. Evaluation

Evaluation was done in English and included mid test, assignment, and final test. Descriptive statistics was given for the assignment. Correlation and t-test comprise the tests (mid and final). For data analysis, post test score was obtained from the combined score from assignment (30% weight), mid-test (30% weight) and final test (40% weight). For example, a student got the following marks: Assignment score = 88.77, mid test score = 88, final score = 72. His/her combined score was (30% x 88.77) + (30% x 88) + (40% x 72) = 81.83 (A-). The adopted success criteria was two-folds, namely, (1) the majority (>50%) of the students got ≥70 for combined scores; (2) the class average of combined scores was ≥70.

3.2. Method to answer the second problem

In order to answer the second question, a doctrinal study was employed, one that consists of locating and analyzing primary documents of the law in order to find out the nature and limits of the law ((Hutchinson and Duncan, 2012). The legal documents were selected through purposive sampling technique. Here, exploration was performed to all cases that met some predetermined criterion of importance (Patton, 2008), namely, whether a law had a language-regulation component. A number of laws pertaining to the language use in public domains were examined. There were two laws that fitted the criterion, namely, the 2003 Education Law and the 2009 Language Law. In analysis, legal texts in language-related laws were examined and inferences were made as to whether a certain language use, in this context English as the medium of instruction, was covered by an article or a verse, through the use of reasoning and problem solving skills such as deductive reasoning, inductive reasoning, and analogy. The topic of interest was the domain of English use as the medium of instruction

4. Finding and Discussion

4.1. Finding and discussion for the first question

The post test score was obtained through the weighted combination of assignment, mid-test and final test scores. The complete distribution of scores is listed in table 1. Table 1 shows the class average = 82.38 (A-) and that that 43 students (97%) attained 70 (B) or more. Thus, the program was successful, in that it achieved the stated objective. The use of English as the medium of instruction did not diminish its effectiveness. In short, the EMI class was feasible.

Table 1 Summary of score distribution

No	Range	Grade	f	%
1	85-100	A	15	34%
2	80-84	A-	19	43%
3	75-79	B+	4	9%
4	70-74	B	5	11%
5	65-69	C+	1	2%
6	60-64	C	0	0%
7	<60	Others	0	0%
		Total	44	100%
		Average	82.38	

Several factors can be attributed for the success, regarding personnel, materials, and motivation and relevance. The first concerns the personnel. An EMI class requires that the teacher master two aspects, namely, content (such as mathematics, physics, or economics) and language (English). This combination is often difficult to obtain, due to the fact that English is a foreign language in Indonesia. As a result, the development of English fluency is not regarded as urgent and the attained fluency generally is not sufficient for teaching a content subject. It happens that the main investigator had a mixed background (English major and mathematics minor). Prior to the experiment, he had been teaching statistics for some time for the English Department. As such, he was able to conduct this program. The second concerns authentic material. The lecturing team compiled materials and data that were used in real studies in various unpublished researches. These materials have a high relevance for the students' needs when they perform their studies later. The raw data for assignment and tests were also taken from reserved data from actual researches. The lecture often emphasized that the lessons, assignment and tests they received were not simulations, but authentic materials, techniques and tasks, which they would need in the real task of doing research and teaching.

This, in turns, affects the third aspect, i.e., students' motivation. In this study, the lecturer undertook a conscious effort to develop students' motivation. From time to time, he would mention that the teaching and learning experience that the students acquired was similar, in a limited extent, to that of learning abroad, without having to spend money to travel overseas. This reminder, in addition to relevance, seemed to give them motivation. It was observed that, when the session was over and the lecturer left, many students remained busy working in the classroom, completing unfinished works.

This result is encouraging, as there is some evidence that an EMI class for content for the English department was feasible. Thus, it might be also feasible for other departments. Furthermore, *Universitas Bengkulu* (Unib) is not located in the metropolitan city and the students generally have a moderate English ability. Thus, if an EMI program could work here, it might work at other universities. However, some limitations need to be mentioned. The first is that due to the need for selectivity and the use of authentic materials, not all topics were evaluated. Thus, the result might be different if all topics were evaluated. The second limitation concerns the teaching staff. Prior to and during the study, the researchers tried to find lecturers from other fields of study who were willing to co-lecture; however, they were not available. One main reason, which they stated, was that instruction in English required a longer preparation, while they were already busy with their own works. As a matter of fact, this reluctance was observed by Vu and Burns (2014), in their study on EMI in Vietnam. The third limitation concerns time. In this study, the study time was longer. This was a two credit course, which normally consists of 100 minute sessions. In this study, the sessions lasted for 120 minutes. It is not clear if more allocation of time is possible with other departments.

4.2. Finding and discussion for the second question

In order to find a legal foundation for the development of a bilingual class, it is necessary to examine the Indonesian language policy and planning on this matter, in particular on the use of English as the medium of instruction. Several laws were examined and it turned out that only two laws were relevant, namely,

1.   *Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 24 Tahun 2009 tentang Bendera, Bahasa, dan Lambang Negara, serta Lagu Kebangsaan* [The Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 24 Year 2009 on Flag, Language, and State Symbol, and National Hymn], abbreviated to U 24 / 2009

2.   *Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional* [The Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 Year 2003 on National Educational System], abbreviated to U 20 / 2003

The relevant articles and verses from U 24 / 2009 are as follows.

Article 25, Verse 3

> *Bahasa Indonesia … berfungsi sebagai … pengantar pendidikan.*

> [The Indonesian language … functions as … the medium of instruction in education.]

Article 29, Verse 1

> *Bahasa Indonesia wajib digunakan sebagai bahasa pengantar dalam pendidikan nasional.*

> [The use of the Indonesian language is obligatory as the medium of instruction in national education.]

Article 29, Verse 2

> *Bahasa pengantar … dimaksud … dapat menggunakan bahasa asing untuk tujuan yang mendukung kemampuan berbahasa asing peserta didik.*

> [The stated medium of instruction … may consist of a foreign language in order to attain a goal that enhances the ability to use a foreign language among students.]

The relevant articles, from U 20 / 2003 were as follows.

Article 33, Verse 1

> *Bahasa Indonesia sebagai Bahasa Negara menjadi bahasa pengantar dalam pendidikan nasional.*

[The Indonesian language as the state official language serves as the medium of instruction in national education].

Article 33, Verse 3

Bahasa asing dapat digunakan sebagai bahasa pengantar pada satuan pendidikan tertentu untuk mendukung kemampuan berbahasa asing peserta didik.

[A foreign language could be used as the medium of instruction in a certain educational unit in order to support the mastery of a foreign language among students.]

From the wording of U 24 / 2009 and U 20 /2003, the medium of instruction must, in general, be the Indonesian language. Both U 24 / 2009 and U 20 / 2003 state that foreign languages could be used in certain educational units. The problem is that, with the respect to U 20 / 2003, on secondary level education, the Constitutional Court ruled that the use of foreign languages in education was against the Constitution This ruling pose a new problem: Does the Constitutional Court ruling also apply to UU 24 / 2009, and/or for tertiary education? If it does, then a legal foundation, for the establishment of a bilingual program at the university level, might be missing. By contrast, if the ruling does not apply to U 24 / 2009 or to tertiary education, then there is a room for the establishment of such a program. Still, in the latter case, there is a need for the development of a derivative regulations, such as *Peraturan Pemerintah (*Governmental Regulation)*, Instruksi Menteri* (Ministry Decree)*, or Peraturan Rektor* (Chancellor Regulation), in order to establish the scope and parameter for a bilingual class at the university level. With respect to the chancellor regulation, a micro language planning could be performed, in which an institution sets up some form of language policy and planning to fulfill its own need and solve its own language problems (Baldauf, 2006). This could be conducted by the university on its own or through cooperation with other universities.

5. Conclusion

An EMI class for a statistics class was successfully performed, through an intensive program, for the English department students. Various activities, such as lecture, discussion, assignment, and tests, were conducted in English. The materials were authentic and written in English. The result was that the class average was 82.28 (> 70) while the majority (97%) got the grades of 70 or more. In other words, the target for successful instruction was attained. Thus an EMI class in content area was proved feasible for the English department student. Further study could be set up for an EMI class in content area for non-English departments. An obvious subject is statistics, as it is offered to all departments. A promising candidate is the Biology Department, as a previously unpublished study revealed that their students ranked second, to the English department students, in the mastery of general and scientific vocabulary. Meanwhile, an examination on Indonesian laws, in particular U 20 / 2003, on education, and U 24 / 2009, on language, revealed that both allow the use of English as the medium of instruction. However, the pertinent article in UU 20 / 2003 has been annulled by the Constitutional Court. Further study s required to find out whether or not the annulment, which applies to U 20 / 2003, with the context of secondary school level, also applies to U 24 / 2009 and / or the tertiary level. If it does not apply, then the relevant articles in U 24/ 2009 could be used to develop lower regulations, such as *Peraturan Pemerintah* (Governmental Regulation), *Instruksi Menteri* (Ministry Decree), or *Peraturan*

Rektor (Chancelor Regulation) to form the legal basis for the bilingual program. However, if the annulment also affects U 24 / 2009, then the national government needs to develop a new law pertaining to this matter.

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